THE QUESTION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN

V. S. NAIPAUL'S *MIGUEL STREET*, *HALF A LIFE*, AND *MAGIC SEEDS*

2021
PhD THESIS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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PhD Thesis

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KARABUK

June 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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FOREWORD

This dissertation explores the question of cultural identity during colonial and postcolonial periods in the selected works of V. S. Naipaul. Identity became a prominent issue, particularly during the period of decolonization. It was a period when the conscious of cultural identity commenced to be the primary issue for the subjugated people living in or out of their own countries. Following World War II, this trendy topic was commonplace in the works of men of letters and originally belongs to the Third World nations and nationalities. This dissertation has demanded much time and energy to be completed.

During the research and writing processes, my supervisor Prof. Dr. A. Serdar Öztürk helped me enormously; he has given me insight into the core arguments and contributed profoundly to the discussions. Without his help, this dissertation would not come fruition. I would also like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. A. Serdar ÖZTÜRK, the head of the department of English Language and Literature at Karabuk University, for his continuous support and help. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their endless support and patience. I am hereby humbled by their attention and the time they have chosen to allocate to this presentation.

M. Zafer AYAR

Karabuk, 2021

ABSTRACT

It has always been difficult to give a new pace to culture and cultural identity for those leaving the lands they were born in. Although culture and cultural values along with cultural identity are dynamic facts, there is generally an instinctual demand for the original culture. When the Third World countries were exposed to colonial oppression, they went through a long process of cultural transformation. Many colonized countries came face to face with new cultural dictations imposed on them by the colonizing ideology. Although the situation varies from generation to generation, subjugated citizens, enslaved indentured workers, and displaced elites always longed for their authentic culture and cultural identities. This transformation, of course, did not take place overnight. Indeed, it was a centuries-long process for the colonizer countries to implement such debilitating measure in the cultural, political, and social sense. Therefore, it is not an issue for the Third World subjects to work to reverse the situation in their own favor. As of the mid-20th century when the decolonization gained a fast momentum, many critics, especially those directly linked to subjugated cultures, dealt with the issue of cultural values. One of the forerunner critic of this trend was Homi Bhabha whose criticism in the cultural sense is still accepted in the literary circles. If it is the topic related to 'cultural identity' it is unavoidable to associate Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* with that of other world-famous critics such as Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak and many others. In other words, he has always been in interaction with all the other postcolonial critics of the postcolonial period. In tandem with the question of cultural identity, this dissertation intends to tackle this issue from the perspective of Bhabha's a number of critical terms such as "hybridity," "mimicry," "ambivalence," "unhomeliness," "third space," and so on and so forth. All the aforementioned critical terms will be applied to V. S. Naipaul's *Miguel Street*, *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* with a motivation to clarify the condition of postcolonial cultural identity in postcolonial era.

Keywords: cultural identity, decolonization, hybridity, unhomeliness, mimicry, third space

ÖZ (ABSTRACT IN TURKISH)

Doğdukları toprakları terk eden bireylerin kültür ve kültürel kimlik gibi konulara yeni bir yön vermeleri her zaman zor olmuştur. Kültürel kimlikle birlikte kültür ve kültürel değerler dinamik unsurlar olmasına rağmen, otantik kültür için genellikle içgüdüsel bir istek söz konusudur. Üçüncü dünya ülkeleri sömürge baskısına maruz kaldıkları dönemde bir değişim sürecinden geçmişlerdir. Birçok sömürge ülkesi sömürgeci ideolojinin kendilerine dikte ettiği kültürel yaptırımlarla yüz yüze gelmiştir. Kuşaklar arasında farklılık gösterse bile bastırılmış halk, vasıfsız sözleşmeli işçiler ve vatanlarından edilmiş olan elit kesim daima kendi otantik kültürlerine ve kültürel kimliklerine özlem duymuşlardır. Elbette bu değişim bir gecede olmamıştır. Gerçekte, sömürgeci ülkelerin sergilediği kültürel, politik ve sosyal anlamda böylesine zayıflatıcı bir faaliyet yüzyıllardır süren bir süreçti. Bu sebeple, üçüncü dünya vatandaşlarının bu durumu kendi iyilikleri için tersine çevirmesi söz konusu değildir. Kolonileşmeden kurtulmanın hız kazandığı 20. yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren, birçok eleştirmen, özellikle himaye altına alınmış kültürlerle doğrudan bağlantılı olanlar, kültürel değerler meselelerine ağırlık vermiştir. Bu hareketin öncü eleştirmenlerinden biri, kültürel anlamda eleştirisi edebiyat çevrelerinde hala kabul gören Homi Bhabha idi. Eğer konu 'kültürel kimlikle' ilgili ise, Bhabha'nın *Kültürel Konumlanış* isimli eserini Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak gibi dünyaca ünlü diğer eleştirmenlerinki ile ilişkilendirmek kaçınılmazdır. Başka bir deyişle, Bhabha her zaman sömürge sonrası dönemin diğer tüm eleştirmenleriyle etkileşim içinde olmuştur. Kültürel kimlik sorunu ile birlikte, bu tez bu konuyu Bhabha'nın 'melezlik', 'taklitçilik', 'kararsızlık', 'ev yoksunluğu', 'üçüncü alan' ve benzeri gibi bir dizi kritik terim açısından ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Yukarıda belirtilen bütün kritik terimler V.S. Naipaul'un *Miguel Street*, *Half a Life* ve *Magic Seeds* adlı eserlerine sömürge sonrası sömürgeye bağlı kültürel kimliğin durumunu açığa kavuşturma motivasyonu ile uygulanacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kültürel kimlik, kolonilerin çözülme süreci, hibrid kültür, vatansızlık, taklitçilik, üçüncü alan.

ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION

Title of the Thesis	"The Question of Cultural Identity in V.S. Naipaul's *Miguel Street, Half A Life* and *Magic Seeds*"
Author of the Thesis	M. Zafer AYAR
Supervisor of the Thesis	Prof. Dr. A. Serdar ÖZTÜRK
Status of the Thesis	PhD
Date of the Thesis	14.07.2021
Field of the Thesis	English Language and Literature
Place of the Thesis	KBU/LEE
Total Page Number	151
Keywords	Colonialism, Cultural Identity, Mimicry, Hybridity, Third Space, Unhomeliness

ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ (in Turkish)

Tezin Adı	V.S. Naipaul'un Miguel Sokağı, Yarım Hayat ve Büyülü Tohumlar adlı eserlerinde Kültürel Kimlik Sorunu
Tezin Yazarı	M. Zafer AYAR
Tezin Danışmanı	Prof. Dr. A. Serdar ÖZTÜRK
Tezin Derecesi	Doktora
Tezin Tarihi	14.07.2021
Tezin Alanı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Tezin Yeri	KBU/LEE
Tezin Sayfa Sayısı	151
Anahtar Kelimeler	Sömürgecilik, Kültürel Kimlik, Taklitçilik, Hibrid Kültür, Üçüncü Alan, Vatansızlık

ABBREVIATIONS

MS: Miguel Street

HAL: Half a Life

MS: Magic Seeds

EA: The Enigma of Arrival

INTRODUCTION

"We become what we see of ourselves in the eye of others" (Naipaul, 1995, p. (25).

Since the existence of humankind, the world has been changing and evolving owing to his activities. The desire to discover new lands with the intention of acquiring and exploiting them has been carried to the extreme by imperialists, or colonialist powers, who have brought about unacceptable situations such as displacement, cultural and religious imposition, and slavery. Imperialist powers like Spain and Portugal created powerful armadas to travel to overseas lands and settle there to colonize them. By the mid-16th century, both countries had multiple colonies around the world. With the rise of the Renaissance in Europe, Britain, which had been exposed to many wars and invasions, entered the scene as a powerful country, having established its own naval force, which defeated the Spanish armada and declared its dominance in the maritime warfare against other powerful countries. As of the early 17th century, British imperial and colonial activities influenced many different parts of the world, including America, Canada, Australia, some parts of Africa, the Caribbean Islands, India, and many other countries. The Industrial Revolution that took place in England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries can be considered as a turning point in the history of the world. It was the period in which many social and economic changes took place, such as unexpected population growth, excessive production, need for workforce and natural resources to keep up with growing demand. This period forced many industrial countries to search for new markets for their products and cheap labor for their factories. The result was the establishment of imperial structures in underdeveloped countries, which was a lucrative activity because it enabled imperial powers to take control of the lands, carry out slavery for cheap workforce and create new markets for their merchandise. This also heightened the search and exploitation of natural resources.

The colonial period along with its associated activity, imperialism, had great unfavorable social impacts on the Third World countries. Most colonized countries suffered drastic and fundamental changes to their social and cultural values. Many of

the subjects of those nations were faced with issues of cultural identity, religious problems, and ethnic instability, which led to much turmoil within those societies. As a result of intense exposure to colonial activities of western dominions, there appeared a mixture of culturally corrupted, religiously and ethnically converted, and socially and politically exploited nations who either willingly or reluctantly surrendered to the practices of the colonizing ideology. Third World countries produced two opposite groups: those who demonstrated their willingness to be subjugated and those who rejected the imposition of any assets by the colonizers. The former group of subjects worked in harmony with settling colonizers, welcoming almost all of their practices while the latter group of citizens were forced to accept the values of the colonizer or they were subjected to ill-treatments by the colonizing mindset. Subjects of the latter group were either displaced by force and enslaved to work on plantations or were victimized in domestic and ethnic clashes sparked by the colonizing military forces and ethnic groups supported by them.

However, as of the early decades of twentieth century, the outbreak of World War I and its consequent negative impacts on the colonizing nations incited nationalistic awareness of colonized Third World countries. The decades following the First World War up until World War II were a period for spreading nationalistic awakening for the countries under colonial rule. Third World nations who were under relatively harsh dominion of European colonialism struggled much in their attempt to gain more independence in terms of social, economic, political and cultural activities. This sort of consciousness of the concepts of nation and nationhood reached its climax when the decolonization phase was initiated following World War II, which undermined the world powers. This financial and political undermining forced the pace of decolonization, and many of the colonized nations gained independence in the following decades shortly after the mid-20th century.

As for the postcolonial period and postcolonial literature, it was the proper time period for the subjugated elites to raise this nationalistic awareness and consciousness

of being independent, writing from the view point of colonized people. Postcolonial literature was mostly based upon the relations and interactions between center and periphery—the former is related to self, while the latter refers to the Third World citizens or the subjugated colonized people. The ways in which cultures interacted with one another gave rise to a cultural phenomenon that produced clashing cultural understandings such as hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, in-betweenness, and appropriation, all of which served to create a third space which is a secure zone to integrate into a new culture. Together with all these culturally transformative processes, postcolonial literature has dealt with cultural issues and identity problems and developed a sense of belonging either on behalf of the colonizing center or the colonized other.

Along with all these developments, the dislocation of native people and the destruction of the local regions and their socio-cultural, religious, political and economic infrastructures resulted in a series of problems for the indigenous people. They were either stranded on their own lands or were displaced for the benefit of the colonizing countries. Before the abolition of slavery, between the 1830s and earlier decades of the 1900s, thousands of indentured Indians were transported aboard ships to different parts of the world as low-wage workers, with the intention of resuming agricultural activities. One of these places was the Caribbean, which was a suitable place for sugar and other types of agricultural plantations. Most of the indentured workers were uneducated and unqualified. Throughout this long and fitful transportation and transformation, the social and economic structures of the islands were negatively impacted. The indentured people were in such high numbers that they spread all over the Caribbean and soon posed a threat to the colonial powers and planters. They protested the unsanitary conditions they were exposed to during transportation and plantation. Many of them suffered from fatal diseases and lost their lives. Ramdin Ron clarifies the situation of those who survived in these challenging conditions as "[t]hose who did survive deserve much respect for their survival was due largely to their fortitude and resilience" (Ron, 1999, pp. 54-55). He highlights the vehemence of the ever-present challenging conditions far from humane and sanitary by accentuating on the results that "[I]n their alien environment, disease,

bad housing, lack of medical attention and malnutrition contributed to an unusually high number of suicides" (p. 55). To undermine the cultural presence of indigenous people and strengthen colonial presence in the new territory, the British Empire pursued different methods to justify its expansion. Brydon and Tiffin (2001) argue that "cultural imposition took place on the home ground of the colonized people and lines between colonized and colonizer were clearly drawn" (p. 12). Colonial countries always represented power, civilization, and superiority, whereas the colonized were seen as having inferior rank such as "less human, less civilized, as child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass" (pp. 75-6). It is obvious from Boehmer's (2005) remark that the British Empire was of the opinion that by demonstrating the positive sides of white culture and accentuating the negative side of indigenous culture and people, it was possible to create an atmosphere of cultural assimilation. While doing so, colonial ideology did not remain indifferent to the cultural values of indigenous people. Among these values were the "non-European texts, scripts and artifacts made by colonized people" (p. 19). This was done by the Empire in an attempt to "legitimize colonial rule in an indigenous style" (p. 19). It was one of the most effective steps to control the natives' literary and cultural assets in an attempt to prevent a probable menace to their existence on a foreign land. Then, of course, follows the process in which "the English language and culture were transported (whether by settlers, convicts, or slave masters) to a foreign territory where the indigenous inhabitants were either annihilated or marginalized" (Brydon & Tiffin, p. 12). The location and imposition of imperial culture into new territories was the key element in surviving there; otherwise, it would have been impossible for the new settlers to lead a presence without introducing their so-called gifted and elaborate cultural values. This was the initial way to make indigenous people turn their back on their own cultural values. Many of the writers of the period tried to encourage imperialist and colonialist activities as of the early phases of the colonial period. One of the best examples of these writers is Daniel Defoe; in his masterwork *Robinson Crusoe* (1995), he reflects the supremacy of colonial powers in every sphere over the colonized. John Thieme (2001) enables us to look at Defoe's novel

13

from a colonial perspective by shedding light on the characters and events from this viewpoint:

> Crusoe is shipwrecked in the Caribbean. (…) the geographical coordinates given for the island in Defoe's novel clearly locates the Caribbean region and it has been popularly identified with Tobago. Given that the text can be read as a blueprint for colonialism, since Crusoe effectively develops an embryonic plantation economy, staffed by a one-man subservient labor force in the person of Man Friday, albeit without the benefit of a market in which to sell his produce, one might expect Caribbean responses to *Robinson Crusoe* to be particularly defined by colonial encounter, with Crusoe being constructed as arch-colonizer and Friday as a colonized Caribbean subject (p. 56).

If this is the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, it is not difficult to evaluate the situation in Third World nations. The colonizer came to the island not only with his power to produce, build cozy shelters, and till the soil but also with his civilized manners and instruments to tame uncivilized people of the region. Yet the colonized did not easily submit to the colonizer in the way Friday submits to Crusoe.

The early colonial period continuously demonstrates the resistance of the native to imperial power and European culture to some extent. However, this resistance was not often an organized one, so it did not pose a severe threat to the colonizer. Many of the people in the region had to surrender to the oppression enforced by the imperial ideology. As Said states in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) that "[y]et though imperialism implacably advances during the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries, resistance to it also advanced" (p. XXIV). Robert Young (2003) clarifies the nature of this resistance in his book *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* with these lines:

> Throughout the period of colonial rule, colonized people contested this domination through many forms of active and passive resistance. It was only towards the end of the 19th century, however, that such resistance developed into coherent political movements: for the peoples of the earth, much of the 20th century involved the long struggle and eventual triumph against colonial rule, often at enormous cost of life and resources. (p. 3)

This resistance indicates the beginning of decolonization, namely the demise of British colonial rule and disintegration of Commonwealth countries. John Mcleod, in his book *Beginning Postcolonialism* (2000), explains decolonization in three different phases. The first phase is "the loss of the American colonies and declaration of American independence in the late eighteenth century" (p. 9). The second period is the one in

which many other countries like New Zealand, Canada, Australia and southern African countries revolted against the colonial powers. However, the most profound effect over imperialism and its consequent colonialism was native military reactions and the spirit of national freedom following 2World War II when the imperial powers, specifically Great Britain, started to lose their power and the will to control the overseas colonies. The chain of events started with the American Revolutionary War against British dominance and reached its climax during the First and Second World Wars, which had negative impacts on British sovereignty and led to the declaration of independence for colonized countries. This chain of events indicates that colonized countries have never fully submitted to or accepted the impositions made by the colonizer.

In the aftermath of World War II, with the successive independence of colonies, the psychological, political, cultural, religious, and social effects of colonialism have been present until recently or even today. The roots of imperialist imposition were, in one way or another, so strong that it was not easy for those who were exposed to any sort of dominance or imposition to make away with the consequences over time.

The postcolonial period is not, of course, completely independent from the colonial period. It is the product of harsh resistance to colonial rule and the effects of the colonial machine. Stuart Hall states that life is in many ways is delineated by numerous effects of the colonization (as cited in Mcleod, 2000, p. 32). So, it can be said that postcolonial period was the re-evaluation of the colonial period from the viewpoint of indigenous peoples. It was challenging for them to erase the negative effects of the colonial era. Although colonial mentality sees colonizers as bringing civilization and a modern way of life to the region, this was not the case for indigenous people. Many of the colonized were somehow affected by the colonizers' ill-treatment of them such as slavery, displacement, replacement, and oppression. Mcleod states that "[i]t does not define a radically new historical era, nor does it herald a brave new world where all the ills of the colonial past have been cured. Rather 'postcolonialism' recognizes both historical *continuity* and *change*" (p. 33). It is this historical continuity that has a strong

connection with the colonial period, a change through which colonized countries and their people struggle by endeavoring to return to their values, cultural assets and religious practices.

What is more, the historical process was in harmony with the literary process in the course in which social and political changes took place. In literature, the colonial period was followed by Commonwealth literature and then postcolonial literature. Before touching upon the Commonwealth literature, it seems sensible to explain how the term "Commonwealth" was coined in the course of historical developments. C. L. Innes (2007) explains that simultaneously with the breaking up of the British Empire occurred the foundation of the British Commonwealth, a neo-imperial foundation reuniting former British colonies (p. 3). What postcolonial literature and Commonwealth literature have in common is that both have a connection with the colonial period. Commonwealth literature refers to the literature in English which emerged in a selection of countries with a history of colonialism from the 1950s onwards (Mcleod, 2000. p. 10). This literary formation gathered most writers "from the predominantly European settler communities, as well as writers belonging to those countries which were in the process of gaining independence from British rule" (p. 10) under the umbrella of Commonwealth literature. Most of the postcolonial writers from former colonies were the product of this literary movement. Among these writers were V. S. Naipaul, Wole Soyinka, George Lamming, Samuel Selvon and many others. In his book *Postcolonial Literatures in English*, in an attempt to illustrate the importance of literary figures who have dominated the second half of twentieth century, C.L. Innes argues that:

> … the influence of the Black Power and Black Art movements in the United States, and the combination of Asian and Caribbean radicals in Britain, joining forces under the label "black British" to contest racial prejudice and discrimination in education, law enforcement, housing and employment, as well as in society as a whole, encouraged an increasing emphasis on issues of identity, racial and cultural difference, and social and economic empowerment particularly with regard to people of African and Asian descent. (p. 5)

Of course, postcolonialism is not a haphazard period following colonialism. This period follows harsh and challenging struggles of dominions against the colonizing powers. Loomba (2005) clarifies postcolonialism "not just as coming literally after colonialism

and signifying its demise, but more flexible as the contestation of colonial domination and legacies of colonialism" (p. 16). As Loomba points out, postcolonialism is a period of struggle in erasing the ruins and remains of colonialism. The proportion of cultural decadence, religious degeneration, and social disruption was considerably high, so it has not been so simple to re-establish social recovery immediately. It is also a period of striving to survive in a predominantly foreign culture imposed on the colonized. According to Loomba (2005), "[s]uch a position would allow us to include people geographically displaced by colonialism such as people of Asian or Caribbean origin in Britain as 'postcolonial' subjects although they live within metropolitan cultures" (p. 16). Leading life with the practices of metropolitan cultures does not make one a part of metropolitan culture but rather a citizen of displaced colonies. Thus, most of them developed a sort of ambivalent attitude, hybrid culture, and behavioral mimicry as a result of the mixture of two or more different cultures.

The postcolonial period and postcolonial literature are two different spheres whereby in the former, the colonized find a stage to perform their resistance against the colonizing mindset, and in the latter, the rising rhetoric from this resistance. Therefore, the relationship between colonialism and postcolonialism is not so simple as to make a straightforward distinction between the two terms. The former has a history of more than 400 years, and the latter has a brief history that has been blended with and shaped by the former period. Shaping an established culture and being born in that new culture is an unavoidable consequence for those displaced from their motherland and forced to settle in another. So, it can be stated that having roots in colonial domination and bias, postcolonialism develops out of 400 years of cultural and historical relations between colonies in the Third World and the Western countries (Bressler, 2007, p. 236).

Throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods, "identity" has become a widespread social issue not only for the Third World nations and citizens but also for the British Empire. The Empire strived to impose its cultural norms while the Third World nations endeavored to preserve and maintain their cultural values. These two

above-mentioned periods created a new atmosphere in terms of cultural identity, and thus the periods resulted in cultural transformation. The former period was the colonialist domination over the colonized in all aspects, a period which can be regarded as the era of considerable transformation of the colonized into a new cultural process in the sense of social, political, cultural, and economic changes. However, the postcolonial period has witnessed the collapse of colonialist domination over the Third World societies to some extent. This period reveals that Third World citizens are somewhere between the culture of "self" and the culture of "other," and it also gives rise to an understanding of reshaping, reinvestigating, and restructuring their own cultural values. They began to question the cultural values imposed by the dominant white culture and started a quest for their own cultural norms. The re-establishment of indigenous culture paves the way for an era in which "identity" is the fundamental element to be rediscovered.

The focal point of this dissertation will consist of two main parts: First of all, before scrutinizing *Miguel Street*, *Half a Life*, and *Magic Seeds* by V. S. Naipaul from the perspective of cultural norms and issues related to critical theories by Homi Bhabha, it will touch upon the social, political, and historical background as well as cultural issues that have constituted a sort of cultural clash between the colonizers and the colonized. In this context, chapter one will include developments during the colonial and postcolonial periods, respectively, which form the basis of this study. Social, political, historical, and literary developments such as decolonization, commonwealth, and postcolonial literatures will be dealt with in an attempt to clarify the background of texts written to highlight the conditions of Third World subjects.

In connection with the culture and identity that have been under the impact of the colonizer, the second chapter will be based upon mimicry and hybridity in *Miguel Street*, a short novel consisting of different short stories. Naipaul depicts a vivid picture of those living in Miguel Street and the transformation of people's lifestyles with the influence of dominating cultural values. In that sense, he is critical of the changing

lifestyles as well as supporting that change to some extent. Naipaul himself, as a mimic and hybrid individual, is not certain in his criticism and hesitant to mirror what is happening in these micro-surroundings that reflect the bigger picture behind what is visible and obvious in Third World nations.

In tandem with the components of cultural identity, chapter two will tackle the issues of unhomeliness and sense of belonging that Willie Somerset—the protagonist in *Half a Life*—is in pursuit of discovering, since he starts questioning his existence in India, London, and Africa. Willie himself is in a constant search for his identity by experiencing unhomeliness and a sense of belonging due to his ambivalent dislocation between India, London, and an unnamed country in Africa. His rootlessness and attempts to find a fixed place and identity force Willie into a complex situation as he tries to reach a resolution in terms of finding a home, fixed identity, and a sense of belonging. Wherever Willie travels he feels as if he is in psychological exile as a result of a recurrent sense of unhomeliness and his feeling of not belonging anywhere.

In the last chapter of the study, Naipaul's *Magic Seeds* will be the main focus in terms of the "third space" that Bhabha (1994) clarifies as "these in-between spaces that provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation" (pp. 1-2). It is this space that blends the root cultural values with current cultural values imposed on Third World countries by the dominant colonial cultures. With the interaction of different cultural values, the third space is a metaphoric space where hybrid cultural identities emerge. Willie represents this hybrid culture through his shifts between different spaces and his interaction with varied cultures in his efforts to establish a fixed and secure identity. What makes him a character of in-between different spaces is his displacement in his sense of belonging, experiencing a hybrid existence between his marginalized other or periphery and the center.

In conclusion, culture and identity are central to the many of Naipaul's works as they were the social issues that abound in Third World nations following the colonial

period. Seemingly, Naipaul favors the culture of the British, but in reality, he is a writer whose novels and travelogues are somehow connected to Third World nations in their settings and subject matters. In one of his articles called "Jasmin," Naipaul expresses his ambivalent attitude by accepting the English language as his own but rejecting traditional values of that culture (Mittapalli & Hensen, 2002, p. 13). His idea indicates that despite all the efforts of the Empire to assimilate whole Third World nations and cultures into its own, writers under the influence of that kind of cultural assimilation and thus cultural estrangement are of the opinion to preserve and maintain their own cultures. Naipaul has never accepted himself as a part of British culture, and his focus has been the vicinities which he was born and raised in. Naipaul exposes the problems of identity with mimicry and alienation in his fiction in an attempt to satirize his own society in which he was once a member.

CHAPTER ONE: DISCOURSE IN POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD

"We is just a tiny little dot on some maps. If you ask me, I think Hitler ain't even know it have a place called Trinidad and that it have people like you and me" (Naipaul, 1985, p. 102).

1.1. Transition from Colonial to Postcolonial Period

Throughout the history of the world and its formation on social, political, economic, religious, and cultural bases, there have always been fierce rivalries and clashes as well as unexpected cooperation between countries to establish a new world order. All the related social developments and their aftermath helped countries reshape their policies in all types of social sciences ranging from history, religion, and politics to literary studies and philosophical theories. Each historical period produced its own discourse and related terms to legitimize and consolidate its entity in the philosophy of social sciences. Since its beginning in the late 15th century and lasting until the second half of 20th century, the colonial period encompassed some crucial events. Such events as naval warfare between Spain and the Empire affected overseas territories, also referred to as the "developing countries," and colonial and imperial processes. The French and Industrial Revolutions contributed to the high colonial period throughout the reign of Queen Victoria. The World Wars led to the demise of the Empire after World War II. Along with all these historical and social occurrences, it was an opportunity for a shift in power for some countries, especially for the superpowers. Additionally, it was a time of relentless displacement for indigenous people in the Third World countries and their consequent enslavement. Moreover, with the emergence of the French Revolution, on the one hand, and the collapse of the feudal system, a new but dominant social class called the middle class emerged and reshaped the class consciousness in societies. On the other hand, the Industrial Revolution, which took place around the same time period as the French Revolution, gave rise to the acceleration of colonial activities with an increased demand for raw materials, cheap labor, and new markets for European counterparts. Güneş accentuates in his book *Modernism in Literature* (2012) that "England is an insular country where people have had many sea experiences, which have

affected the lives of English people in various ways" (p. 222). This way of life had a strong connection with their will to navigate overseas. These travels made substantial contributions to the colonial activities of the British in and out of Europe as clarified by Güneş that "English people have found themselves closely united with the sea, traveling across the world as a colonial power" (2012, p. 222).

The initiative behind the Empire's expansion has always been supported by justificative mottos so as to validate its presence on foreign lands and in the minds of indigenous people. "Colonialism involves the consolidation of imperial power, and is manifested in the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands, often by force" (Boehmer, 2005, p. 2). As is explicitly accentuated by Boehmer, colonialism is not a innocent, harmless process as claimed by colonizer countries; rather it has been a process of exploitation of all sorts, displacement of natives and imposition of their own mindsets, and remaining indifferent to the rights of the local inhabitants. The underlying purpose of the colonial period was to bring those countries the blessings of the modern Western civilization, which could not go beyond a mere fallacious slogan of the colonizing ideology. Their initial hopefulness turned, in time, into desperation in the sense that they not only lost their lands, but their culture, language, religion, and literature as well as their history. In almost all mentioned spheres, indigenous people were exposed to imposition and enforcement by the establishment of colonies in their countries or taken to other countries as slaves or as so-called scholars. Ania Loomba (2005) states that:

> Both the colonised and the colonizers moved: the former not only as slaves but also as indentured labourers, domestic servants, travellers and traders, and the colonial masters as administrators, soldiers, merchants, settlers, travellers, domestic staff, missionaries, teachers and scientists. The essential point is that although European colonialism involved a variety of techniques and patterns of domination, penetrating deep into some societies and involving a comparatively superficial contact with others, all of them produced the economic imbalance that was necessary for the growth of European capitalism and industry. (pp. 9-10)

Inequality created by colonizers would not be welcomed among the colonized subjects in and out of their homelands, and this would lead to a sort of uneasiness and turmoil among the indigenous population and consequent upheaval against the colonizer. What

22

Loomba highlights in the quotation above is her clarification of the categorizations of "colonized" and "colonizer" in the social context and the colonizer's creation of a subordinate stratum in an attempt to govern and exploit. For subjugated citizens, exploitation without limitation varies from one country to another. This includes exploitation of natural resources and exploiting them physically. Colonizers' coinage of disturbing binary oppositions such as civilized and uncivilized, modern and savage, self and other, superior and inferior, educated and uneducated also contributes to the reaction of the colonized towards the colonizers. That is, colonizers' divergence from their initial purpose to civilize those Third World backward countries creates a sort of awareness among the colonized populations that the colonizer aimed not to civilize but to exploit them in various aspects. Therefore, resistance against colonial ideology and colonial administration emerged and re-emerged in various times in colonial history in order for indigenous people to reclaim their rights. "Throughout the period of colonial rule, colonized people contested this domination through numerous forms of active and passive resistance. It was only toward the end of the 19th century, however, that such resistance developed into coherent political movement" (Young, 2003, p. 3). Of course, those organized movements were influential in the declaration of independence when the Empire was truly exhausted due to two World Wars. As a result of much of this resistance taking place in African, Asian, and South American countries, the people of these regions were severely affected by displacement, cultural imposition and decadence, being politically excluded, enslavement, and assimilation throughout the colonial process, mainly during the 19th and 20th centuries. "…for the peoples of the earth, much of the 20th century involved the long struggle and eventual triumph against colonial rule, often at enormous cost of life and resources" (p. 3). As a result of unorganized displacement and enslavement, unsanitary living conditions, lack of accommodation, burden of overwork, and countless other unfavorable conditions and situations, there occurred a harsh resistance against colonial mindset, particularly during the 20th century.

Colonialism was a process of "reshaping structures of human knowledge" (Loomba, p. 53). During this formation and also transformation, colonized nations were considerably affected by various activities of the colonizer in all aspects of life. Colonizers' activities in the areas of religion, language, literature, and education system left corrupted countries behind for whom "no branch of learning was left untouched by the colonial experience" (p. 53). In this respect, missionaries were sent to colonized lands to convert the people of those countries to Christianity and establish churches and missionary schools in various districts. Those missionaries and other travellers gathered information about the colonized countries in order to use it in the colonial process. In literary and cultural senses, colonizers brought their literary ideology to those lands and they imposed not only their cultural assets and practices but also their language as the official one to be used to in government offices and at schools. Most of the indigenous texts were translated into colonizers' own languages, which was another way of enforcing their languages on indigenous people. "Under colonialism, the colonial copy becomes more powerful than indigenous original that is devalued. It was even claimed that the copy corrects deficiencies in the native version" (Young, p. 140). That is to say, translation became a different mode of cultural decadence and a form of dominance over the colonized through different text in the imposed language. Furthermore, Young puts emphasis on the translation of the texts by highlighting its significance in the efficiency of the process that "[t]he initial act in colonization was to translate significant indigenous written and oral texts into colonizer's language. In this way, translation transformed oral cultures into webs and snares of writing" (p. 140). In other words, translation was a way of declaring indigenous language null and void, a method, to some extent, to eradicate native languages or dialects on the invaded lands.

> With colonialism, the transformation of an indigenous culture into the subordinated culture of colonial regime, or the superimposition of the colonial apparatus into which all aspects of the original culture have to be reconstructed, operate as process of translational dematerialization. At the same time, though, certain aspects of the indigenous culture may remain untranslatable (pp. 139-40)

Not only in literary terms, but in cultural terms did there exist a kind of translation from indigenous to colonial culture in an attempt to subordinate the native culture in the minds

of the colonized. The process might appear perfect at first sight, disregarding any inflexible sides to a culture. However, this inflexibility and the permanent norms and practices of indigenous people would help them regain their national and cultural autonomy but not to a perfect level. That is why Young claims that "translation is also a kind of metaphorical displacement of a text from one language to another" (p. 139). Displacement does not only take place in its literal meaning but also in religion, culture and language metaphorically. Although colonialism is a political and historical process, its adaptation and integration into literature and literary works is unavoidable. Authors like E. M. Foster and Joseph Conrad wrote about the colonial period, either for or against it. While the former defends the colonial ideology, the latter is harshly critical of the process.

Colonialism covers a long span of time through which a great many struggles have taken place between the colonizer and the colonized. The period involves the exploitation of underdeveloped countries and, in return, prosperity and fortune for colonial nations. "It was military conflicts, displacement of people and quest for profits which shaped the empires at that time" (Boehmer, p. 15). This is exactly what Britain did during the colonial period and Boehmer clearly explains the situation claiming "Britain, it was believed, has a destiny and duty to rule the world, or at least that one-quarter of earth's surface over which the Empire now extended" (p. 29). Colonizers overtook the responsibility or the mission of occupying foreign lands and caused much disturbance using military force. It was not a process that could easily be accepted by indigenous people and one that would later be rebelled against. The first half of the 20th century was turbulent, and the events of that period were heralding a power shift on behalf of the colonies, in that the World Wars and the Wall Street Crash and the subsequent Great Depression, which occurred between the World Wars, led to the undermining of the British Empire, which accelerated after World War II. As a result of turbulent years, many of the colonies celebrated their freedom, and with the demise of the British Empire, a new process called decolonization, and then postcolonialism, started.

1.2. Neocolonialism

Neocolonialism refers to a new period that spans the last phase of the colonial period, namely the period of decolonization. Throughout the neocolonial period, colonial countries and already emerged superpowers appeared to be much more determined in their attempt to exploit and fulfill their colonial ambitions in the economy of the world's trading markets, imposing and influencing the educational and cultural institutions, but not in a direct way, as was the case in the colonial period. Actually, Nkrumah, who coined the term, "argued that neocolonialism was more insidious and more difficult to detect and resist than the direct control exercised by classic colonialism" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 146). This new form of domination was not only social and cultural but also political, as the new colonial process caused uneasiness and instability in the Third World countries, especially after they declared their independences. The neocolonial period is considered as "insidious" in its essence, as it refers to a new way of governing the colonized nations economically, politically, and culturally not only to destabilize those countries but also to interfere in all the activities they are engaged in. The neocolonial period is accompanied by globalization, which has been the most effective way of interfering in the economies of the Third World nations, exploiting their ground and underground resources along with their cheap workforce. "Despite the efforts of philosophers, critics and intellectuals, however, neo-imperialist oppression remained formidable long after many colonies achieved independence" (Hiddleston, 2009, p, 179). As Hiddleston stresses, the period that comes after colonialism and the decolonization of the colonized countries is deprived of being fully independent. It is because of this that the newly independent countries have long been undermined by the colonial powers. This undermining ranges from social, political, and economic spheres to cultural norms of all sorts. Therefore, their adaptations to new ways of life as independent nations did not materialize within a short period.

The neocolonial period is, by and large, considered the most destructive phase of the colonial period in its application of colonial practices in the colonized countries. In

its ambiguous application in underdeveloped countries, it comes into existence as a new form or method of imperialism under the guise of introducing new developmental instruments in those backward countries. These developmental instruments range from social and cultural to economic, military, and educational.

As well as its usage in political, cultural, and economic contexts, neocolonialism has long been adapted into postcolonial critical theory since the decolonization period started in Asia and Africa following World War II. It appeared as a new initiative and motivation for the colonizing ideology in order not to lose its efficiency and colonial domination over subaltern countries and cultures. Neocolonialism is the last but unfinished stage of the colonial period that started in the sixteenth century and has continued up to the present. In this regard, throughout the postcolonial period, postcolonial critics try to clarify the effects of this long process on underdeveloped countries and their subjugated subjects as well as their reactions and resistance to this centuries-long period.

1.3. Commonwealth and Postcolonial Literatures

"The superior technology killed us. We have witches who fly in the air. But when we saw aircraft we came to abhor what was our culture" (Naipaul, 2010, p. 164).

Following the years after World War II when the British Empire began to lose its colonies, the terms "commonwealth countries" or "commonwealth literature" were a seemingly innocent initiative used to keep the colonies under control by imposing a literature in English. Although most countries acquired their independences from the Empire, many of them continued to keep in touch with the "Metropolitan," as it was difficult to abandon all traditional and conventional values imposed by the colonizer. That was because the Empire attempted to interfere with the probable harsh criticism against its practices during the colonial period.

> One important antecedent for postcolonialism was the growth of the study of 'Commonwealth literature' was a term literary critics began to use from the 1950s to describe literatures in English emerging from a selection of countries with a history of colonialism. It incorporated the study of writers from the predominantly European settler communities, as well as writers belonging to those countries which were in the process of gaining independence from British rule, such as those from African, Caribbean and South Asian nations. (Mcleod, 2000, p. 10)

Many authors like R. K. Narayans, George Lamming, Katherine Mansfield, and Chinua Achebe were among the commonwealth literary figures from the countries historically connected to British domination. Postcolonial canonical literature was obviously a result of Commonwealth literature. "In the first of these fields, the term 'post-colonial' is an outgrowth of what formerly were 'Commonwealth' literary studies—a study which came into being after 'English' studies had been liberalized to include 'American' and then an immediate national and regional literature" (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 105). Commonwealth literature intended to create another supremacy or dominance over the colonized countries in terms of cultural norms and practices of the Western ideology. It was a new subdivision within Western literature that did not merely exploit the indigenous writers and literary works. However, with the emergence of Commonwealth literature, the Western ideology discovered a new way of vindicating its occupation and its presence in those foreign lands.

The formation of Commonwealth Literature was apparently no more than a political move with an underlying purpose of procrastinating the fast phase of the decolonization process and initiating a period of a new colonial phase. Unlike the expectations of the Western ideology, Commonwealth literature has received much criticism from the critics and writers in the once-colonized countries appraising "the official account of the benefits which imperialism had supposedly brought to former colonial, which had more or less implicitly informed early versions of "commonwealth" literary studies" (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 30). In parallel to those developments, some literary figures raised their voices, questioning and criticizing the presence of the colonizer in their countries. Such works as "*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) by Walter Rodney and *The West and Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slaves and the African Elite* (1975) by Chinweizu" (p. 30) were highly influential in making colonial realities public in the eyes of indigenous people. Such critical works re-evaluated the situation and warned people about probable issues they would encounter in the neocolonial process. Excluding some of the former colonies like America and Ireland from the organization, "[t]he British Commonwealth category involved an emphasis on English-speaking countries, writing in the English language (and exclusion of writing in indigenous languages) and an emphasis on literary text" (Innes, 2007, p. 5). All the attempts put into practice by the "Metropolitan" did not work efficiently because there was a more organized group of writers and activists who questioned all the ills of colonial mandatory even outside their countries. Innes elaborates this in his book *Postcolonial Literatures in English* with the following lines in order to draw attention to the issues related to the minorities in Britain and America:

> However, the influence of the Black Power and Black Arts movements in the United States, and the combination of Asian and Caribbean radicals in Britain, joining forces under the label 'black British' to contest radical prejudice and discrimination in education, law enforcement, housing and employment, as well as in society as a whole, encouraged an increasing emphasis on the issue of identity, racial and cultural difference, and social and economic empowerment particularly with regard to people of African and Asian descent. In Britain and North America, academics and writers whose origins were in Africa, the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent and Palestine became prominent intellectual leaders elaborating the connections between written discourses and Europe's political domination over the rest of the world. (p. 5)

Along with all the developments in Commonwealth countries where literary texts were produced for and against Commonwealth literature, it gave rise to the emergence of postcolonial writing. Postcolonial literary and critical texts harshly criticized the practices of the Western ideology while redefining and determining position of postcolonial Third World societies and nations. None of the historical periods remained permanent in the history of the world, instead each new period appeared as a reaction to the previous one. Some of those time periods overlap as is the case in the second half of the 20th century. Years following the World War II up to present encompass equally important historical as well as literary periods. In other words, the second half of the 20th century is called postmodernism in the western world, post industrialism in history and postcolonialism in eastern countries. In the historical context, decolonization started at the turn of 20th century when the British Empire commenced slowly to lose its domination over its colonies politically, ideologically and economically. "Many scholars believe that this event marks the beginning of postcolonialism or Third World studies, a term coined by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy" (Bressler, 2007, p. 237). With the independence of India in the mid-20th century, several prominent writers produced a variety of texts in order to create awareness about the negativity of colonial period and to gain consciousness about its realities.

Most texts have been critical of the colonial ideology such as Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Achebe's masterpiece *Things Fall Apart* (1958), George Lammaimng's *The Pleasure of Exile*, Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin's masterpiece *The Empire Writes Back* all of which will contribute to the significance of this study in following parts. Many of the authors and critics were somehow critical of the colonial period and its consequences over the colonized nations. One of the striking examples is Fanon's T*he Wretched of the Earth* in which he underlines that "the native proletariat, "the wretched of the earth," are left on their own, often in a worse situation than before the conquerors arrived" (p. 239). However, the situation was not different when the Empire first arrived in India when they discovered that the country for which they claimed to bring civilization had already

flourished in many industries and businesses. What they achieved there was no more than turning the country into a "wretched" rather than bringing civilization and prosperity by using all sorts of oppression and suppression so as to eradicate the traces of an already present civilized nation. That's why 'postcolonial theory, on the other hand, moves beyond the boundaries of literary studies and investigates social, political, and economic concerns of the colonized and the colonizer' (p. 242). Colonial and postcolonial periods interchangeably established a sort of dialogism between western and eastern countries, both periods have produced a multicultural and multiracial societies due to protracted displacement and enslavement processes out of which various texts and terminologies have been produced. "Colonialism expanded the contact between Europeans and non-Europeans, generating a flood of images and ideas on an unprecedented scale" (Loomba, 2005, p. 54). Many of the critics and writers in the postcolonial period are of the opinion that the images and ideas produced during the colonial period contributed to the superiority of European presence while crystallizing inferiority of Third World nations and subjects.

As Robert Young accentuates on in his book *Beginning Postcolonialism* 'Postcolonialism claims "the right of all people on this earth to the same material and cultural well-being. The reality, though, is that the world today is a world of inequality, and much of the difference falls across the broad division between people of west and those of the non-west" (Young, 2003, p. 2). The broad division was deepened by the intentional implementation of binaries by the western mind-set in order to affirm the backward position Third World countries have been deemed worthy of. Whether intentional or not, all these binaries addressed to the eastern world were intended to create a negative image of eastern lifestyles in its totality in the minds of indigenous people. With binaries such as occidental/oriental, self/other, civilized/backward, white/black, master/slave, natives of eastern countries came to a realization that none of these binaries has to do with bringing civilization to their countries on colonizer's side. "It (postcolonial era) does not define a radically new historical era, nor does it herald a brave new world where all the ills of the colonial past have been cured" (Mcleod, 2000,

p. 33). Of course, it would be difficult for Third World nations and citizens to get rid of the ills of the colonial period that had been functioning in almost all institutions in their countries ranging from political and economic institutions to all cultural assets. For the people of colonized countries, there was no other option than living with traces of colonizing ideology that would later serve coinage of such terms as ambivalence, mimicry, double-consciousness, hybridity, in-betweenness, cultural issues, identity, diaspora, all of which have, unavoidably, connection with colonial ideology.

> Rather, 'postcolonialism' recognises both historical continuity and change. On the one hand, it acknowledges that the material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today, even if the political map of the world has changed through decolonization. But on the other hand, it asserts the promise, the possibility, and the continuing necessity of change, while also recognising that important challenges and changes have been achieved. (p. 33)

In a sense, postcolonialism has not come to a conclusion with the preceding period; rather, it established an ambivalent relationship with it. The colonial period and the colonizer's mindset contributed to the embodiment of postcolonial ideology on behalf of the colonized nations. Was it really easy for colonized countries to eradicate impressions of the colonial period? Of course, this is not necessarily a simple situation or question to tackle, since the preceding period progressed and infiltrated the minds and lives of indigenous people and it would not be a matter to reverse overnight. "Post-colonialism deals with the effects of colonization over cultures and societies. As originally used by historians after World War II in terms such as the post-colonial state, 'post-colonial' had a chronological meaning often designating the post-independence period" (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 168). It was not, of course, an independence in its totality yet a dependence or connection with the colonial period because most postcolonial writers have dealt with the reflection of colonial ideology in the postcolonial period that forms the very basis of post-independence literature.

1.4. Cultural Identity in Postcolonial Era

Almost all definitions related to culture and cultural issues have been substantially controversial in social and human studies. In its most basic and simple definition, as Stuart Hall underlines, "[i]n more traditional definitions of the term, culture is said to embody the 'best that has been thought and said' in a society" (Hall, 1997, p. 2). Hall's definition of culture is backed up with the definition Ponzio provides as "[r]ather than viewing culture as a thing apart with embodied, stable meanings, dialogists start with the assumption that culture includes sets of ongoing social practices" (Ponzio, 1990, p. 35). Inasmuch as both definitions regard culture as a social phenomenon, the former claims that it is what is thought, said, and then turned into norms and values in a certain society. The latter formulates culture with that of "ongoing social practices" within a society. Culture, in its more general definition, is a combination of both abstract and concrete set of rules set by a society. "As culture is transmitted by processes of teaching and learning, by what is called "inter-learning," the essential part of culture is to be found in patterns embodied in the social traditions of the group, that is, the knowledge, ideas, beliefs, values, standards and sentiments prevalent in the group" (Fairchild, 1967, p. 80). As a matter of fact, Fairchild's definition of culture refers to a set of norms and practices that are adopted by those who are not members of the society a culture has produced. This is what Third World societies did in the colonial period and how hybrid cultures and cultures in-between came into being as a result of harsh exposition to Western cultural practices.

As one of the prominent pioneers and key figures in postcolonial literature, Said's contribution to postcolonial literary theory cannot be underestimated, as he has authored two prominent books *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, which gave impetus to literary criticism in English literature from the 1950s onwards. Imperialism, colonialism, and cultural dissemination are organized activities put into action by the colonial mindset in an attempt to control territories from a distance and impose dominance over them. Edward Said, as a postcolonial critic and observer, argues that imperialism always has connections with culture, because without cultural influence,

imperialism cannot function properly. According to Said, "imperialism means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; colonialism, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (1993, p. 9). Western imperial powers utilized varied ways of establishing a firm existence in their colonies to secure their presence on foreign lands. It is clear from the remark Said made while clarifying imperialism that "the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory" justifies the inclusion of cultural practices in the process. The word "attitudes" represents the way of living, all types of practices, religion, language, and in brief, all sorts of cultural values inherent in any society.

> Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classics nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like "inferior" or "subject races," "subordinate peoples," "dependency," "expansion," and authority." Out of the imperial experiences, notions about culture were clarified, reinforced, criticised, or rejected. (p. 9)

By paying attention to the 19th-century terminology, it is not difficult to comprehend the purpose of imperial ideology, which was their priority to acquire the territories. Then they proceed to govern the peoples by imposing cultural values. Imperialism is not a mere military process but a process that manages the colonizing process from a psychological perspective. *Culture and Imperialism* is a representational idea that establishes a relationship between the Metropolitan and the colonies, decolonization and rebellion, knowledge and power, suppression and acceptance, dominance and submission, cultural imposition and integration, oriental and occidental, etc. "For any European during the nineteenth century—and I think one can say this almost without qualification—Orientalism was such a system of truths, truths in Nietzsche's sense of the word. … every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric" (Said, 1993, p. 204). With an instinctive manner inherent in their nature, those of the Western world exploited Third World nations, deepening racist hatred, imperialist radicalism, and provoking the ethnic

variations, all of which created centuries-long instability in colonized territories and displaced Third World subjects in their new locations.

As the inspiration for this study, the definition of "identity" is a priority because almost everything to be tackled throughout this work will be related to identity. Avigail Eisenberg defines identity as the "attachments that people have to particular communities, ways of life, and sets of beliefs, or practices that play a central role in their self-conception or self-understanding" (2009, p. 18). During the colonial period, the British Empire did not only invade the lands and institutions of black people but also tried to invade their minds and integrate them into its own culture. Colonialist ideology forced upon people new lifestyles, sets of beliefs, and practices which were an effective way of repressing the black culture and forcing them to submit to what the white culture entails. What makes identity essential for those living in the so-called "barbaric" countries is that it enables them to find something which appeals to their tastes, cultural and social values, and religious practices. In this sense, identity is not a mere idiom but a process that has been evolving since the very beginning of the colonial period.

According to Stuart Hall, "we should think of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (as cited in Woodward, 1997, p. 51). As it is understood from Hall's remark, identity is not a stable concept but an acting, living, and changing one which is always in search of desires, values, and opinions. Therefore, as it has many different definitions and attributions, it is appropriate to narrow the term "identity" and integrate it into culture because "the term 'identity' covers more ground in the sense that it can refer to religious, linguistic, gendered, Indigenous, and other dimensions of self-understanding" (Eisenberg, 2009, p. 20). *Cultural identity* is the most appropriate term that best describes the condition of people in the Third World countries during the colonial and postcolonial periods. According to Wolfreys et al., culture is "the patterns of human knowledge that refer to the customary beliefs, social formations, and traits of racial, religious, or social groups" (Wolfreys et al., 2002, p. 27). When culture and

identity are intermingled, the term "cultural identity" reveals not only their self-identity but much about the Caribbean history, traditions, and values.

Stuart Hall highlights that there are two different ways to take cultural identity into consideration. Primarily, Hall defines cultural identity as "in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of 'one true self,' hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves,' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (cited in Woodward, p. 51). In his first definition of cultural identity, Hall clarifies its boundaries by providing us with a clear-cut separation from his second definition. It can be learned from this definition that the first type of cultural identity focuses on the cultural identities that "reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, 'one people,' with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history" (p. 51). In other words, cultural identity, in this respect, is the focal point that stabilizes the origin of cultural values on a fixed ground despite the changes in the history of peoples. The colonial period stimulated this kind of change in the history of the Caribbean but it was cultural identity that helped people remain bound to their desires, values, and opinions. Hall reiterates that "this 'oneness,' underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence, of 'Caribbeanness,' of black experience" (p. 51).

In his second definition of cultural identity, Hall underlines that "as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are' or 'what we have become'" (p. 52). From this perspective, it is the colonialist's intervention in the history of Caribbean and in the cultural and social institutions that have lost their origin significantly, and cultural identity, in this respect, became a "matter of becoming as well as of being" (p. 52). As it has a connection with history, that is to say it comes from the past and goes to the future, cultural identity is shifting ceaselessly. This is the result of unavoidable colonial interference in the cultural process of the Caribbean, and not only did the Empire have

the power to make the Caribbean feel alienated and ambivalent to their cultural values but it also "had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other'" (p. 52). In *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft et al. summarizes the condition of "Other" with these lines:

> … The dominant discourse constructs Otherness in such a way that it always contains a trace of ambivalence or anxiety about its own authority. In order to maintain authority over the Other in a colonial situation, imperial discourse strives to delineate the Other as radically different from the self, yet at the same time it must maintain sufficient identity with the Other to valorize control over it. (2002, pp. 101-102)

"The process of cultural identity can be dealt with from three different sides. This threefold connection includes Africa, Europe, and the New World. The first link of the chain was, of course, African presence that was the representative of 'the repressed'" (Woodward, p. 55). Enslaved by the colonial powers, Africa played an important role in Caribbean culture because its presence was felt almost everywhere such as "everyday life, customs of slave quarters, in the languages, in names and words, in the stories and tales told to children, in religious practices and beliefs and in crafts and music" (p. 55). That is, culture is closely related to identity, so it is influential in the way people adapt themselves to it. The second link of the chain was Europe which was the representative of power, the side that dominated the black culture, and the side of "endlessly speaking" (p. 56). European culture was always on the stage along with its power and had always played the dominant role until the postcolonial period. Its influence was clearly seen in the indigenous culture. Not only did its physical presence disturb the region but also its language and values "interrupts the innocence of the whole discourses of 'difference' in the Caribbean by introducing power" (p. 56). The last link of the chain was the New World, which harbored different people from different cultures and "is the juncture point where the many cultural tributaries meet" (p. 57). The New World was similar to a concentration camp which was an evidence of displacement. It had no original cultural identity and was shaped by the new settlers who had migrated from different cultural backgrounds. It was a melting pot of different cultural identities from Asian, European, and African backgrounds.

The postcolonial era is, of course, the product of the colonial period against which the postcolonial conscious has developed many counter-strategies in an attempt to diminish the ill effects of the previous period. It was a period of the awakening of nationalist sentiments and movements, a period of rising consciousness about the impositions of the colonizer, and unavoidably a period locked in between the two cultures owing to the hypocritical applications and practices and corruptive impositions of the Western ideology. Since the declaration of independence, most writers from and out of their home countries commenced to write in the language of the colonizer so as to create a much more influential medium for the readers all around the world. Moreover, most writers like Homi Bhabha, Salman Rushdie, Sam Salvon, Frantz Fanon, V. S. Naipaul, and many others started to produce considerably important literary works criticizing or, to some extent, supporting the colonial ideology. The postcolonial cultural studies resulted in shaping questions in the minds of people regarding imperialism, colonialism, and the so-called "civilizing" movement. Such cultural terms as *mimicry*, *ambivalence*, *hybridity*, *unhomeliness*, and *in-betweenness* by Bhabha; *self*, *other*, *oriental*, *occidental*, and *culture and imperialism* by Said; and *subaltern* by Spivak were coined in the postcolonial era to highlight the cultural issues that Third World countries and their people had been encountering since the invasion of their lands.

Cultural identity is a central theme in V. S. Naipaul's *Miguel Street, Half a Life and Magic Seeds*, which are the subjects of this study. Naipaul is a prolific writer of Commonwealth literature and is considered one of the cornerstones of postcolonial writing. Born in Trinidad and educated in Oxford on a state scholarship, he dedicated himself to writing about the problems of Third World countries without criticizing the Western ideology in order to secure his place both in English literature. Bruce King states that "he is part of a generation that had to face the problems and confusions that resulted from the withdrawal of imperial order" (2003, p. 4). His ambivalent opinions about colonial powers are also noteworthy in that "he blames European imperialism for the horror of slavery and for the problems it left its former colonies, while praising it for bringing peace and modern thought to areas of the world that remained medieval and

debilitated by continual local wars and destructive non-western invasions" (p. 4). Most of Naipaul's writings somehow reflect real events and real characters. King expresses that "[m]uch of what Naipaul writes about is based on real people and actual events; they are changed and re-imagined as they become part of fiction" (p. 18). As a witness of the colonial period, Naipaul tackles different themes in his works, such as displacement, assimilation, identity, alienation, and mimicry, which were particular to the period. Boehmer points out that "[a]s a writer enamored of British culture, and scornful of formerly colonized societies, Naipaul is central to any discussion of assimilation and duality of postcolonial identity" (2005, p. 167). From this perspective, Naipaul himself can be considered as an identity problem that originates from his uncertainty about which culture he subscribes to. He feels himself alienated from his own culture simply because he was educated in English culture and wrote in the same language. Boehmer remarks that "he has himself acknowledged that his identification with English culture is a product of growing up on the colonized periphery" (p. 168). According to Boehmer "Naipaul's devotion to minute dissections of the cultural paralysis in his novel and travel writings recalls James Joyce and hypocrisies of once-colonized nations recalls Joseph Conrad" (p. 168). Therefore, it is apparent that he remained under the influence of prominent literary figures of the late colonial period.

Cultural activities are operational incentives that aimed for an overall submission of indigenous people in the face of western cultural manipulation. "As well as direct and indirect economic control, the continuing influence of Eurocentric cultural modes privileged the imported over the indigenous: colonial languages over local languages; writing over orality and linguistic culture over inscriptive culture of other kinds" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 57). In all its literary initiatives colonial ideology considers itself superior and privileged over almost all things related to the cultural assets of indigenous cultures. Within this context, the Eurocentric cultural mandate appears to be not only influential over the social, cultural, and literary instruments but also in every initiative that the colonized nations take into consideration.

1.5. V. S. Naipaul and Postcoloniality

"The colonial text, be it by Messeh, Conrad or Naipaul, is constructed in the space of in-betweenness" (Lane, 2016).

As one of the controversial writers of the postcolonial period, Naipaul's contribution to postcolonial writing cannot be underestimated when one takes what he produced into consideration in terms of literary quality. Bruce King asserts that "his career and achievement can be seen as part of the worldwide political and cultural changes that produced such significant writers as Achebe, Wole Soyinke, Derek Walcott, Margaret Atwood and Salman Rushdie" (King, 2003, p. 4). Much of what all these writers produced originated from the remains of the imperial powers just after they withdrew from colonized lands. Naipaul designed his art on a manner of ambivalence, and he has neither rejected the ills of colonial ideology nor defended his own country against the results of all such ill effects.

The reason why he was not critical of the colonial ideology stemmed from the fact that "he praised imperialism for bringing peace and modern thought to areas of the world that remained medieval and debilitated by continual local wars and destructive non-western invasion" (p. 4). Naipaul has not been of the idea that imperial ideology was solely responsible for the destruction which India and other Third World countries and their citizens in the Western countries were exposed to. What he believed about the process of colonialism and imperialism often contrasted with the ideas of other commonwealth and postcolonial writers and historians. On the one hand, he praised the practices of the Western ideology, and on the other hand, he put the blame of the sufferings India experienced on Africans and Muslims. Naipaul has always distanced himself from his ethnic and cultural background for the reason of securing a safe position in Western literary circles. "Much of what Naipaul writes about is based on real people and actual events; they are changed and re-imagined as they become part of fiction" (p.18). Actually, it is a reality that Naipaul was a traveler and picked real stories from

the countries he visited throughout his life. He also used autobiographical elements and experiences in his novels from *The Mystic Masseur* to *A Way in the World* in 1994.

> Most of his novels and travel writing are devoted to minute dissections of the cultural paralysis (recalling Joyce) and the hypocrisies (recalling Conrad) of once-colonized nations. His willed alienation, though often singularly hostile, bears the symptoms of a first-generation colonial seeking distance from origins and the freedom of self-expression. Indeed, he has himself acknowledged that his identification with English culture is a product of growing up on the colonized periphery. In several works Naipaul gives perspective analysis of colonial self-estrangement. (Boehmer, 2005, p. 168)

He is not necessarily biased for the superiority of colonial ideology, but as a student who received a scholarship from Oxford University and grew up with Western norms and notions, he feels he is inclined to Western lifestyle. His intentional alienation is a result of living, growing, and experiencing the changing cultural identity of the West Indies and growing up in the "Metropolitan" with turbulent memories of the past which consciously or unconsciously affected him throughout his literary life. Brian W. Shaffer raised some questions regarding Naipaul's position in the literary arena asking, "Is Naipaul a West Indian/Caribbean writer, a writer of the Indian diaspora, an English writer, or a postcolonial writer?" (1996, p. 441) Shaffer himself responded to his own question by underlining the situation that evidenced Naipaul's condition saying "the answer perhaps all of these and no one of them solely" (441). To a great extent, Shaffer answered his own question in line with the personal and literary background Naipaul exhibited through years, producing varied literary works with settings and characters belonging to different time periods and countries. Therefore, in response to Shaffer's question, "we must say he has established the paradigm of the writer of English as a world literature, and for this reason and others, his place is its emerging canon is secure" (442). Within this related period, Naipaul has consolidated his position in and around literary circles adapting himself to the world literature written in English and distancing himself from his own cultural roots. He did not break all his connections or turn his back on his ancestral background, for they provided him with the necessary sources to be productive in his writing. As is the case in most of his writings, "his fiction is designed to convey to the reader the experience of a particular situation in which alienation and absurdity occur in contemporary life" (Kamra, 1990, p. 39). Many a character in his

novels experience a meaningful alienation in socially and culturally hybrid yet extremely absurd modern society. The hybridity and absurdity are the product of colonial ideology and its resultant slavery that paved the way for the formation of culturally hybrid communities—a mixture of Third World subjects from colonized countries.

Such re-formations of communities out of ethnically and culturally varied groups of people were blended with Western colonies—the whites from colonizer countries— and contributed to the creation of "black skins" and "white masks" as Fanon claimed in one of his masterpieces. His fictional writing, Kamra asserts, "can also be considered as a tracing of links between the actual and the artistic worlds of the writer" (p. 39). Depicting a vivid panorama of Third World countries and artificially formed communities like the Caribbean Islands, Naipaul represents a unique literary existence in blending fiction with that of non-fiction. In that sense, the triangle shaped by Third World countries, Europe, and the Caribbean Islands forms the basis of his exotic settings in the spatial term. "For Naipaul, the colonial is not just any oppressed or exploited member of what is frequently called the Third World" (Angrosina, 1975, pp. 1-11). Of course, being the colonized was more than what was put forward by many others rather than Naipaul himself. Angrosino claims that Naipaul acknowledges the fact that "to be colonial implies that the psychological loss of identity which is the result of oppression has occurred within a context of spatial displacement" (pp. 1-11). In connection with this spatial displacement it is absolutely a fact that human psychology has been affected negatively by such involuntary movements. This is what makes this psychological loss of identity a core issue in almost every one of Naipaul's writings.

His writings "which treat life in postcolonial nations in various states of political and cultural transition, is reminiscence of Conrad's in its genuinely global reach (England, Africa, the West Indies, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent)" (Shaffer, 2006, p. 26). All the reminiscent of colonial interference in the Third World countries does not prevent Naipaul from writing from the perspective of the center. The periphery has always been victimized by the doctrines imposed on them by the colonial worldview. "While Naipaul, whose clipped deeply ironic prose demonstrates a clear

affinity to Conrad's was often admired for his laconic wit… notably by Edward Said, for reaffirming stereotypes of the 'Third World' and for perhaps unconsciously suggesting that times were better under colonialism" (Israel, 2006, p. 83). Naipaul's characters are the noticeable product of their environment in the Third World. They cannot become or do anything other than what their surroundings enable them to produce. They are able to shape their culture under the influence of colonial impositions or restrictions.

CHAPTER TWO: RELOCATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN *MIGUEL STREET*

2.1. *Miguel Street*: Relocation of Cultural Identity through Hybridity and

Mimicry

Miguel Street is not Chaguanas. …Instead it is a cross-section of what Naipaul calls elsewhere the 'picaroon society', a society in which the sense of community is held in precarious balance with each individual's assertion of merely selfish impulses and desires. (Swinden, 1984, p. 213)

Miguel Street is one of Naipaul's first completed literary works comprised of seventeen different stories and different characters living on one street in the Port of Spain. All through its plot structure, each one of his characters is in a search for an identity that was spoiled, impeded, or hybridized by the interfering cultures of the dominant colonizing countries. Much peculiar to underdeveloped Third World countries and their indigenous peoples, the whole street endeavors to maintain the culture of male-dominated ideal family life while Naipaul deconstructs this ideology by reversing the situation of male characters within the society. Naipaul, in his attempt to create equally shared values in Miguel Street, has the intention to infiltrate a new understanding of familial life much adopted by the Western cultures. "Its seventeen episodic sketches of characters and events associated with a composite fictional Trinidadian street community are loosely held together by Naipaul's boy-narrator who, by the end of the volume, leaves for study abroad" (Mustafa, 1995, p. 34). Most of the events throughout the plot structure are somehow related to "such themes as the way impoverished, hopeless lives and chaotic mixing of cultures result in fantasy, brutality, violence, and corruption" (King, 2003, p. 23) which is transparent in almost every chapter. As for autobiographical background, the narrator in the novel highly resembles Naipaul; however, he states that the main character was "more in tune with the life of the street than I had been" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 9). That is to say, the narrator to the novel lived in harmony with the complexities and difficulties of Miguel Street that were the result of mixed identities, imposed cultural values, and numerous external interventions.

Alongside all the cultural observations and discussions, one literary critic steps forward in his theories in dealing with the cultural process and progress of the colonized through a critical canon. Homi K. Bhabha has been among the top critics with his relevant fixations and observations about the cultural and identity transformation of the colonized subjects of Third World countries. Bhabha asserts that "cultural diversity is epistemological object—culture as an object of empirical knowledge," whereas cultural difference is the process of the enunciation of culture as "knowledgeable, authoritative, and adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification" (1994, p. 34). As Bhabha accentuates, culture and cultural identity is based on being knowledgeable about the culture and experiences and exposition to that culture. He also expresses that "the concept of cultural difference focuses on the problems of the ambivalence of cultural authority: the attempt to dominate in the name of cultural supremacy which is itself produced in the name of differentiation" (p. 34). In this sense, what is obvious for the dominant culture—the culture that the colonizer imposed—is that the new cultural practices have been imposed on the colonized efficiently. It is, of course, not merely associated with the institutional power of the colonizer but has a connection with the ideological supremacy of the West over the colonized in the acculturation process.

In this context, V. S. Naipaul produced many literary works which deal with all the characteristics of colonial and postcolonial ideologies. In this chapter, the first of three novels to be tackled is *Miguel Street* which reveals to us the progressive cultural transformation of the East through the glossy cultural presentations imposed by the West. In a collection of related stories, Naipaul tells the story of Bogart in a multiracial and multicultural setting, Port of Spain. The street can be considered as a prototype of cosmic representation of other colonial settings as Naipaul represents them and also presents the complexities of the colonized through daily experiences of his characters.

Cultural identity and its components play a crucial role in *Miguel Street* as Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* portrays. All cultural values are interrupted by the interference of colonial powers that accelerate the progress of the acculturation process

on behalf of the colonizer. To do so, the education system needed to be translated into that of the West. It was the best means of establishing an atmosphere in which the knowledge-power relationship—as Foucault emphasized on the vitality of the connection between knowledge and power—emerges as a binary designing and managing the colonial process. Of course, education, also referred to as "knowledge," indeed has a suppressive functionality over the process because who has the knowledge has the power. "Like Naipaul, the narrator wins a scholarship to study in England and leaves the street and his family. … That young narrator leaves, carrying within him the Miguel Street that has formed him but that he must leave" (Rigik, 1995, pp. 53-59). One of the ideological apparatuses that colonial ideology imposed on people in Third World countries was education, which was a valid excuse to displace indigenous people. It has, of course, remained a highly influential way of subjugating people in the colonized countries in social and cultural sense. Leaving behind what embodied an individual was the fashion during the colonial process. In *Miguel Street*, "The year before his mother died, Elias sat for the Cambridge Senior School Certificate. … Errol said, Everything Elias write not remaining here, you know. Every word that boy write going to England" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 13). Educational institutions were an inseparable part of imperial dissemination because the colonizer has always been conscious about the importance of knowledge to complete their mission in the colonized regions. Naipaul draws readers' attention to the reality of educational institutions and indigenous people's efforts to be accepted into those schools either on the colonized lands or in the Metropolitan. Provision of proper educational institutions is of crucial importance in cultural transformation and cultural dissemination for the West. Along with this cultural translation, the cultural identity of the black populations experiences a sort of ambivalence in the face of state apparatuses that impose such disciplines particular to the Western ideology.

Cultural identity is a "matter of becoming as well as being. It belongs to the future as much as to the past" (Woodward, 1997, p. 52). Therefore, culture and cultural identity are susceptible to repressive or suppressive norms that are not inherent in any

culture. If cultural identity is "becoming" rather than "being," then it is unavoidable for Third World nations to keep from being exposed to that kind of cultural translation as the Western ideology disseminates all its cultural components such as art, literature, language, religion, and lifestyles. Thus, the colonizer ideology tried to create a "hybrid culture" through its efforts to redesign the colonized nations and subjects with its own cultural materials. Hybridity, as "one of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory, commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural form within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 108). In order to create new forms of transcultural societies, the colonizer, along with its apparatuses, utilized other disintegration processes so as to reshape, separate, and weaken those nations. That is, forcing settler colonies, imposing displacement, exploiting the resources, displacing indigenous people, enslaving them, enforcing brain drain, and creating a rootless class which all together contributed to the cultural displacement of the colonized. The creation of a hybrid culture can be considered as a secure way of adapting, integrating, and finally assimilating the subordinated nation into the metropolitan culture. "Hat looked through the list in the Guardian over and over again, looking for Elias' name, saying, You never know. People always making mistake, especially when it have so much name" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 13). As the quotation demonstrates, people had to get the news from the papers of the colonizer, and Elias' story is not over as he gets the opportunity to study in Cambridge Senior School after taking the exam for the second time. "The boy (Elias) gone and pass the Cambridge Senior School Certificate. Hat whistled. The Cambridge Senior School Certificate? Titus Hoyt Smiled. That self. He get a third grade. His name is going to be in the papers tomorrow" (p. 13). But that is not to Elias' benefit because he wishes to come second among those who passed the exam to secure his identity within the culturally changing society. For his third and last attempt, "A few years later I sat the Cambridge Senior School Examination myself, and Mr. Cambridge gave me a second grade. I applied for a job in the customs and it did not cost me much to get it" (p. 15). Mr. Cambridge is the

representative of colonizing cultural identity and also a cultural barrier in front of the colonized without which they cannot get a proper job in the Third World countries.

> This meditation by the great Guyanese writer Wilson Harris on the void of misgiving I in the textuality of colonial history reveals the cultural and historical dimension of that Third Space of enunciation which I have made the precondition for the articulation of cultural difference. He sees it as accompanying the 'assimilation of contraries' and creating that occult instability which presages powerful cultural changes. It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descent into that alien territory may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. (Bhabha, p. 38)

Hybridity or hybrid culture is the emergence of a medium where cross-cultural interaction of values emerges and often the dominant culture employs pressure on the weaker one. In other words, it is an unavoidable mutual process of power relations and also a consequence of a knowledge-power relationship. Hence, the hybrid cultures, as is the case in mimicry, do not necessarily reject all the values of native cultures but adapt themselves to the new one in a constructive way. "There is, however, nothing in the idea of hybridity as such that suggests that mutuality negates the hierarchical nature of imperial process or that it involves the idea of equal exchange" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 109). In a sense, most of the characters in *Miguel Street* are representatives of this hybrid cultural identity as the process is the juxtaposition of different cultures into one pot. In the chapter "Man-Man," "I said automatically, 'Yes, I goes to school.' And I found that without intending it I had imitated Man-man's correct and very English accent … His accent. If you shut your eyes while he spoke, you would believe an Englishman—good-class Englishmen who wasn't particular about was talking to you" (Naipaul, p. 16). Considering that language is an inseparable part of culture, Naipaul puts emphasis on the mimicry of language that paves the way to the formation a hybrid culture by the colonized subjects and "[i]dentities are thus always contradictory, made up out of partial fragments" (Hall, 1996, as cited in Grossberg, 1997, p. 359). Hall's idea about identity is worth taking into consideration in the sense that culture is never a complete or isolated idea but a one consisting of various elements to form this wholeness. Therefore, it is undeniable that culture and identity are dynamic concepts which are due to change over

time. The components of cultural identity such as language, cultural practices, and religious practices are effective in the formation of a hybrid cultural identity. Religious practices along with religious institutions and the imposition of these belief systems on the colonized resulted in the embodiment of a hybrid religious system that lacked a sound basis.

> Man-man announced that he was a messiah. …. Is about Man-man. He say he going to be crucified one of these days. … That day, early in the morning, before the shops opened and trolley-buses began running in Ariapita Avenue, the big crowd assemble at the corner of Miguel Street. There were lots of men dressed in black and even more women dressed in white. They were singing hymns. There were also about twenty policemen, but they were not singing hymns. (Naipaul, 2002, p. 18)

As a result of different social developments and the arrival of people from different cultural backgrounds on the island, it was the dominant culture that forced its own religious belief over the mixed indigenous subjects. Rahim and Lalla underline that "the present constitution of the Caribbean region is the result of merging of many cultures. Historical migrations of peoples brought with them their languages, religion, folk practices and lifestyles, which merged with already present indigenous ones" (Rahim & Lalla, 2009, p. 78). Throughout the colonial period, there was cultural domination by European settlers, starting with the arrival of the Spanish and continuing with the invasion of the Caribbean islands by the British Empire, during which the colonized lands and indigenous public had been subjected to significant cultural adaptations and integration. "The incalculable colonized subject—half acquiescent, half oppositional, always untrustworthy—produces an unresolvable problem of cultural difference for the very address of colonial cultural identity" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 33). The indigenous people were skeptical of the cultural assertiveness of the colonizer but were not able to prevent or decline it wholly, and so they have developed a hybrid cultural identity.

Naipaul depicts the issue of formation of hybrid cultures as a consequence of migration from different parts of the Third World countries. This unbalanced mixture of identity led to social tensions and interfered with the development of sustainable relations between family members as well as among the people of newly formed locations such as Miguel Street, which can be considered a microcosm of colonized

lands. Having been gathered from different cultures of uncivilized Third World countries, most of the black population had difficulty in adapting to their new vicinities which identified with the cultural and social impositions of the Western ideology.

> Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablets of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (p. 2)

Cultural hybridity, according to Bhabha, builds on the formation of intercultural societies as an unavoidable consequence of historical transformation. The mixture of different cultural applications from different cultural backgrounds and the interaction between these cultural engagements are the source of hybrid cultural formation. Along with all these historical and social transformations, multicultural societies are exposed to the resultant unrest originating from this hybrid culture. "And once Hat said, 'Every day the Big Foot father, the policeman, giving Big Foot blows. Like medicine. Three times a day after meals. And hear Big Foot talk afterwards.' He used to say, 'When I get big and have children, I go beat them, beat them'" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 25). Domestic violence and social unrest were the result of imposed cultural assets of the colonizers' mindset that has impacted the lives of people in those societies. Big Foot is a vengeful character who "compensates for childhood humiliations by acting like a dangerous bully; he wins boxing matches until he is defeated by a supposed, but fake, RAF champion and begins crying in the boxing ring" (King, 2003, p. 30). Big Foot, although protective of his own community, is a victim of the hybrid cultural re-formation and appears to be reacting to the consequences of the imposed culture and its crevices within his own society. "They constantly seek to escape from their condition by creating fantasies of themselves. In a society which denied itself heroes, the characters of Miguel Street become Bogarts of the film world with which they are fascinated" (Mahabbir, 2008, p. 16). In their production of this fantasy world, most Third World subjects produced a kind of makeshift cultural identity to maintain their existence in or out of their homelands. This is what Bhabha refers to as a "third space" which is a secure zone for the subjugated people.

Having power and being powerful is a by-product of Western cultural identity and ideology that have a pronounced impact especially on the male characters in Miguel Street. In each chapter, the male characters show off by trying to look powerful; however, intentionally or unwillingly, these power-relations are turned upside down by Naipaul in order to deconstruct the social order in Third World communities. "An Englishman came to Trinidad one day and papers interviewed him. The man said he was a boxer and a champion of the Royal Force. Next morning his picture appeared" (p. 27). This ignited a debate on who will appear in front of that man to fight fearlessly. Almost the whole "Trinidad answered. Big Foot will fight this man" (p. 27). Yet it is Big Foot who loses the fight and the RAF champion turns out to be a man who has nothing to do with the RAF and is not known as a champion. It was a massive blow on Big Foot's reputation, so he leaves the island in despair. His close friend's last words about the event are considerably meaningful in the sense that events on the island do not occur in a normal flow. "Hat said, 'Well, what you expect in a place like this?'" (p. 27) Big Foot is victimized by the colonizer's ideology, and it was Naipaul's attempt to prove once more that the white race is more powerful and superior to Third World people.

Miguel Street is a novel which features different characters throughout different stories in connection with the "discriminatory effect of discourse of cultural colonialism, for instance, do not simply refer to a 'person', or to a dialect power struggle between self and Other, or to a discrimination between mother culture and alien culture" (Ashcroft et. al., 2000, p. 34). *Miguel Street* presents its characters to be in search of their identities, being stuck between the mother and alien cultures. This hybrid representation via characters and through the events puts each character in an unexpected situation as the alien culture and its resultant identity pave the way for, at first sight, a secure milieu for them. However, "[h]ybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the pure and original identity of the authority)" (p. 34). In the story of *The Pyrotechnicist*, Miguel Street is presented as follows: "We who lived there saw our street

as a world, where everybody was quite different from everybody else. Man-man was mad; George was stupid; Big-Foot was a bully; Hat was an adventurer; Popo was a philosopher; Morgan was a comedian" (p. 29). All the characters are introduced with their eccentric character traits connected to being a production of discriminatory identities, which is the corruptive enforcement of hybrid cultural identity of authority; namely, the colonizing ideology.

Hybrid identities are not stable, as Mcleod stresses upon writing that "[h]ybrid identities are never total and complete in themselves, like orderly pathways built from crazy-paving. Instead they remain perpetually in motion, pursuing errant and unpredictable routes, open to change and reinscription" (2000, p. 219). The patriarchal familial structure, in that sense, was also overturned by Naipaul in his presentation of female characters, namely Mrs. Morgan, depicting her attitudes toward her husband who cheats on her with another woman living on the street. Contrary to the patriarchal structure of Third World nations, Mr. Morgan was chased away from his house by Mrs. Morgan upon an instance of his infidelity. "It was all a bit mysterious—the shout, the woman disappearing, the dark house. Then we heard Mrs. Morgan shouting, 'Teresa Blake, Teresa Blake, what you doing with my man?' It was a cry of great pain" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 32). Mrs. Morgan is reacting against her husband, does not show any tolerance toward him, nor does she forgive him, as she defies the social norms and her original cultural doctrines which require women to submit to patriarchal domination.

> Then the front door flung open, we saw. Mrs Morgan was holding up Morgan by his waist. He was practically naked, and he looked so thin, he was like a boy with an old man's face. He wasn't looking at us, but at Mrs. Morgan's face, and he was squirming in her grasp, trying to get away. But Mrs. Morgan was a strong woman. (p. 32)

In his book *Beginning Postcolonialism*, Mcleod states, "*Locations of Culture* addresses those who live 'border lives' on the margins of different nations, in-between contrary homelands. … Borders are important thresholds, full of contradiction and ambivalence" (2000, p. 217). Mrs. Morgan represents this hybrid in-betweenness that is contrary to her homeland's cultural values in which women must assume a submissive role and have a passive presence within the patriarchal family. Therefore, the formation of hybrid

cultural identity on behalf of women causes change in cultural identity and a shift in the paradigm of women's role within this new social structure. This new social formation rejects the supremacy of men and subordination of women within their communities. Accordingly, Naipaul presents such characters as Mrs. Morgan by deconstructing the understanding of women as victims and men as victimizers in Third World cultures.

Educational institutions are effective means of the acculturation process, a very influential medium to infiltrate such cultural components as language, literature, lifestyles, and religious practices in order to speed up the hybridization of the indigenous people. "Education, either state or missionary, primary or secondary was a massive cannon in the artillery of Empire" (Ashcroft. et. al., 2002, p. 425). Education was used as an influential tool for indigenous people as they were eager to receive a sophisticated education at colonial institutions. In the chapter "Titus Hoyt," Naipaul depicts a character who has a strict connection to the colonial education system and was also keen on teaching all he learned and experienced to the young people on Miguel Street. "His interest in teaching didn't die. We often see him going about with big books. These books were about teaching. Titus Hoyt used to say that teaching, 'Is a science, man. The trouble with Trinidad is that the teachers don't have this science of teaching" (2002, pp. 37-8). Titus Hoyt claims that it is the lack of qualified educators that causes Trinidad to suffer. He is of the opinion that education is of crucial importance for the welfare of Trinidadians, which is why he is interested in educating the young population on the island. "How many of you know about Fort George? Not one of you here know about the place. But it is history, man, your history, and you must learn about things like that. You must remember that the boys and girls of today are the men and women of tomorrow" (p. 38). In each of his attempts, convincing young people to learn something about their past appears to be the way for them to have active roles in the future of their country. Naipaul, via his character Hoyt, highlights the significance of education in those backward societies and demonstrates an ambivalent attitude for his own stance against the colonizer. Education plays an important role in the colonizing process because it is

one of the objectives of the colonizing ideology to impose its worldview by means of utilizing educational institutions.

> This *domination by consent*[1] is achieved through what is taught to the colonized, how it is taught, and subsequent emplacement of the educated subject as a part of the continuing imperial apparatus – a knowledge of English literature, for instance, was required for entry into the civil service and the legal professions. Education is thus a consequent power of another kind of territory—it is the foundation of colonialist power and consolidates this power through legal and administrative apparatuses. (Ashcroft et.al. 1995, p. 425)

Colonial domination worked efficiently through the educational institutions in the sense that it was one of the powerful means of subordinating the culture of indigenous people. Through this method, the colonizer ideology demonstrated its supremacy through its education along with its components such as language, colonial texts, and religious practices in an attempt to reshape the original culture of the underdeveloped citizens of the colonized lands. "Colonial education in the English Caribbean was designed for, and continued to be promulgated in the service of, colonialist control" (Tiffin, 2001, p. 44). Colonial supremacy put the colonized subordinates under pressure via its cultural domination, and this supremacy was the controlling mechanism on behalf of the colonizing ideology. An escape from this subordination came not only from receiving a good education but also by accepting some prominent cultural values of the West. "It wasn't long after that Titus Hoyt got his Inter Arts degree and set up a school of his own. He had a big sign placed in his garden: TITUS HOYT. I.A. (London External) Passed in the Cambridge School Certificate Guaranteed" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 38). Titus Hoyt stood for the idea of education and established his own school in connection with the colonial doctrines. Education in this sense "establishes the locally English or British as normative through critical claims to 'universality' of the values embodied in English literary texts, and it represents the colonized to themselves as inherently inferior beings—'wild', 'barbarous', 'uncivilized'" (Ashcroft et. al., 1995, p. 427). Therefore, indigenous self-realization was triggered by the presence of the colonial education

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[1] A term coined by Antonio Gramci

systems within the local cultures. Moreover, it was the domain of education of all kinds to create a hybrid culture that was prevalent in Third World nations.

In tandem with political, cultural, and social developments and changes in the hybridized Third World countries, the concept of family and the role of women were represented and re-presented by the colonizing mindset. Along with all types of cultural colonialism, the concept of female and the position of women on the colonized lands were reconstructed and re-presented through distinct roles provided to women by the Western ideology in uncivilized countries. "As biological reproducers of ethnic collectivities, women are encouraged by the state to believe that it is their duty to produce children to replenish the number of those 'rightfully' belong to the nation for reasons of ethnicity" (Mcleod, 2000, p. 117). In *Miguel Street*, Naipaul presents the role of women in connection with this frame of mentality yet in contrast to the conventions of colonized nations. Established on the patriarchal familial understanding, the Third World family structure tends to reject polygamy of women while normalizing plural marriage of men in the society. In the chapter "The Maternal Instinct," Naipaul introduces Laura as a contradictory female character who has nothing to do with societal gender prototype of the colonized mentality. "I suppose Laura holds a world record. Laura had eight children. There is nothing surprising in that. The eight children had seven fathers" (2000, p. 40). Laura contributes to the creation of a hybrid understanding of male-female balance within the society in the sense of deconstructing the restrictions and taboos set by the patriarchal understanding.

Women played an important role in the dissemination of cultural identity and education of their children within the frame of spreading a nation's culture. In patriarchal communities, it was women's responsibility to take good care of the children and give them sufficient education for the good of society. "As transmitters of culture, women are deemed to be the primary educators of children and responsible for introducing them to the heritage and traditions of the nation's culture. Women's role as reproducers is at once biological and cultural" (Mcleod, 2000, p. 117). Contrary to the previous

understanding of women's position in the society as wives or housewives and caretakers or mothers, women played a much more central role during the colonial and postcolonial periods. However, this time, women felt a bigger burden on their shoulders as they undertook more responsibilities than ever before because they took an active role both inside and outside their houses. Laura is typical of this representation, as she appears to be a teacher at school and a mother of eight children and is expecting to give birth to the ninth child soon. The role she was given seems to disrupt her maternal feelings in the sense of her attitudes towards her children.

> Now compare Laura, the mother of eight, with Mary the Chinese, also the mother of eight, doesn't seem fair. Because Mary took good care of her children and never spoke harshly to them. But Mary, mark you, had a husband who owned a shop, and Mary could afford to be polite and nice to her children, after stuffing them full of chop-suey and chow-fan, and things with names like that. But who could Laura look to for money to keep her children? (Naipaul, 2002, p. 40)

In her struggle to look after her eight children, Laura faces more hardships when compared to the traditional women in her community. Womanhood presented through Laura creates a complicated understanding of women symbolically, having the demanding role of being a mother and working outside the house, which supplies the society with the hybrid mindset that both roles are not possible for the biologically weaker gender. The intentional presentation of two oppositional women characters, namely Laura and Mary, demonstrates the hybrid and ambivalent attitude of the colonizing ideology which has the intention of confining females within the boundaries of the conventional familial lifestyle. This hybrid creation of women by the colonizing ideology does not liberate women from the traditions of the patriarchal family structure of Third World countries, as is observable in the society of Miguel Street through the relationship between Laura and her husband Nathaniel, who maintains the norms of patriarchy within the family. Although Laura is first introduced as a working woman, she is oppressed and is subjected to domestic violence, which is considered normal in backward communities. Nathaniel expresses his ideas of women by performing a calypso, a traditional folk song of Trinidad which men sing while they work. "Every now and then just knock them down / Every now and then just throw them down / Black up their eye and bruise up their knee / And then they love you eternally" (p. 41). As a

typical representative of patriarchal society, Nathaniel expresses a vision of the Third World viewpoint through this local song and is also an ardent supporter of using violence against women in society.

2.2. *Miguel Street*: Relocating Cultural Identity through Mimicry

"We must find an entirely new way of being alive" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 36).

Mimicry, another term coined by Homi Bhabha in postcolonial cultural discourse, "emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 85). As colonial culture along with its complimentary items were imposed on the indigenous people of colonized lands, its consequences such as mimicry and ambivalence were unavoidable for the migrant people. Being originally slave families, most of the local families in Trinidad experienced turbulent lifestyles and chaotic familial structure. "Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (p. 86). Homi Bhabha draws the attention to the situation of mimicry and mimic character in Third World communities. That is, mimicry does not necessarily guarantee the being and becoming like the "self," as mimicry does not go beyond being an imitation on behalf of the indigenous people.

In the first chapter, when his character Bogart was introduced to the reader, the narrator explained how he got the name "Bogart," explaining, "It was something of a mystery why he was called Bogart; but I suspect that it was Hat who gave him the name. I don't know if you remember the year the film *Casablanca* was made. That was the year when Bogart's fame spread like fire through Port of Spain and hundreds of young men began adopting the hardboiled Bagortian attitude" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 1). The imperial dissemination and acculturation process gained impetus from the 1950s onwards through a new phase of neocolonialism during which cultural imperialism has been underway in a different manner instead of direct military actions of the metropolitan. This time, colonialism turned its direction from military activities to economic, global, and cultural influence on Third World nations and citizens. The media has been an influential tool for imposing the Western ideology, culture, language, and way of life over subordinated people of colonized countries. The narrator in *Miguel Street* explains the impact of TV programs on people and shows how they become

subjects of "mimicry." This term was first coined by Bhabha and is often used as "the practice, act or art of imitation, often for the purpose of ridicule" (Wolfreys et. al., 2002, p. 66). The character is under the influence of the movie *Casablanca* and Bogart's character image was so effective that the mimicry of his attitudes became the fashion among the youth in Port of Spain. The imitation Bogart has is not limited to imitating the character in the movie. He has more than that "he disappeared again. … when he returned, he had grown a little bit fatter but had become a little more aggressive. His accent was now pure American. To complete the imitation, he began being expansive towards children" (3). What spoils the authority of this mimic character is the changing fashion of his behavior which has nothing to do with his own cultural norms. This very imitative attitude appears to be ironic and also contrasting in its occurrence because it never reaches a total integrity for the reason that "[t]he desire to emerge as 'authentic' through mimicry—through a process of writing and repetition—in the final irony of partial representation" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 88). The partiality refers to the mimicry—the improbable act—that will never surpass a repetition to become a complete action.

In the following chapter "B. Wordsworth," Naipaul creates another interesting character who is isolated in his nature and makes a perfect friendship with the boy who narrates the story. Considering his love of and numerous references from nature, the poet might be the representative of romantic poet William Wordsworth with his pastoral depiction of country life, and like the real Wordsworth himself, B. Wordsworth succeeds in depicting a relationship between nature and social life. "He shook his head sadly. He said that's what I do, I just watch ants for days. Have you ever watched ants? And scorpions, and centipedes, and congorees. Have you watched those? … I said, what you does do, mister? He got up and said, I am a poet" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 20). As the story progresses, a paradoxical situation appears surrounding B. Wordsworth when he claims to be the brother of William Wordsworth. He himself is the "Black Wordsworth" different from the real Wordsworth he names as "White Wordsworth". With his character Black Wordsworth, Naipaul's unique talent emerges once more in his portrayal of a mimic character who is in search of an identity in the colonized society of

Miguel Street. B. Wordsworth's poetry never comes to fruition since he is the mimicry of William Wordsworth and never existed as a poet in the society. His confession and also the single line of his poem "The past is deep" (p. 22) is clearly indicative that B. Wordsworth has a mysterious past and lives with all components of this mysterious history.

> He said, 'When I finished this story, I want you to promise that you will go away and never come back to see me. Do you promise? I nodded.

> He said, 'Good. Well, listen. The story I told you about the boy poet and the girl poet, do you remember that? That wasn't true. It was something I made up. All this talk about and the greatest poem in the world, that wasn't true, either. Isn't that the funniest thing you have heard? (p. 23)

Naipaul's creation of a mimic character of William Wordsworth demonstrates a literal condition of the nation's colonial past, a nation upon which all sorts of cultural fragments were forced by the colonizer. B. Wordsworth's imaginary poet and poetry never go beyond his imitative nature. Therefore, he never proves to be a real poet but just imitating the "White Wordsworth" in his racial unconscious that the white have the knowledge and thus have the power. Mimicry is a reality that becomes commonplace among the indigenous indentured workers in the West Indies and provides a secure environment for them to adapt to Western lifestyles. "Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a different or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). On the one hand, it supplies the local people with a new set of cultural values and practices. On the other hand, it creates an unfavorable atmosphere for the colonizing ideology in the sense of knowledge and power. The colonizing ideology was aware of this transformative process of imitation, as this was their priority to impose their civilized, superior, and ideal cultural assets within the minds of Third World peoples.

Most of the people on Miguel Street are observant of the lifestyles of other people, and this intensified surveillance as the primary foundation of mimicry for the local people. The surveillance was not of the sort that was deterrent against the people of Western origin or those who assimilated themselves into that culture. Varied ways of

lifestyles accumulated into one pot of Western cultural identity which had been presented as elevated and superior to the indentured worker families. "And Man-man, looking at me solemnly, said in a mocking way, 'So you goes to school, eh?' I said automatically, 'Yes, I goes to school.' And I found that without intending it I had imitated Man-man's correct and very English accent" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 16). The narrator is a mimic character who makes observations in his society and imitates what is good for his well-being in the society. "That again was mysterious about Man-man. His accent, if you shut your eyes while he spoke, you would believe an Englishman—a good-class Englishman who wasn't particular about grammar—was talking to you" (p. 16). Man-man is a member of indigenous culture, yet he is a sophisticated figure with different abilities and also mimics the language of the colonizer. "The effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing. For in 'normalizing' the colonial state or subject, the dream of post-enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty and produces another knowledge of its norms" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). As Bhabha points out, mimic characters are vital either in a negative or positive way to the formation of a new kind of mixed cultural identity.

Both sides showed a kind of distancing from their cultural values in their attempt to set a mimic and hybrid culture. According to Bhabha, mimic cultural identity is considered a threat to Western cultural components while it serves to open new horizons for indigenous people. "Naipaul's sentiment against the imitativeness of Trinidad society is thus somewhat misleading, for its hardly unique in its susceptibility to American movies, songs, drinks and gadgets" (Goodheart, 1987, p. 182). Trinidadian society attempted to lead a good life by imitating the American way of life, which was idealized within the society and presented as an elevated lifestyle by the Westerners living as colonies on the island. "Mrs. Christiani, or Mrs. Hereira, was in short. She was reading the paper in an easy chair in the garden. Through the open doors of the house I saw a uniformed servant laying the table for lunch. There was a black car, a new, big cai, in the garden" (52). There was a big gap between the lifestyles of local aristocrats and indigenous people sharing the same environment. The narrator accounts different

characters with their different ways of living—sometimes critical of some of them—yet admires some enviously. "They are figures of lack; they seem to cry out for help, encouragement, training, and protection. They try to legitimize themselves within their Britain-centered society by taking on names and occupational titles, and some of them achieve passing legitimacy" (Eastley, 2008, p. 53).

Mimicry—in its literal meaning—is very important in the formation of new cultural identities for the locals of Caribbean society. This formation varies from one individual to another in its essence due to the wide range of cultural assets imposed on them. Some formations grant lifestyles and language, some are in search of new cultural values, and some are in an effort to reach comfortable lifestyles. When taking all these incentives into consideration, mimicry can be considered a sense of security in terms of acquiring and maintaining a cozy life in these socially and culturally corrupted societies. "To be sure, mimicry does not exhaust the possibilities of advanced societies. There is a creative element as well. On the other hand, mimicry is the principal, if not the exclusive, capacity of underdeveloped societies, trying to become modern" (Goodheart, 1987, p. 182). As it is stressed in the quotation, mimicry guarantees modernity for the enslaved and exploited nations and through this mimetic act, those leading an uncivilized and backward life consider it as a brilliant opportunity and an escape from their discreditable past. "Hat used to say, 'Bolo, I bet you forgot all of us when you win the money. You leaving Miguel Street, man, and buying a big house in St Clair.eh?' Bolo said, No, I don't want to stay in Trinidad. I think I go to the States" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 63). Bolo is another mimic character whose mimicry caused him to be alienated from his cultural identity and distanced him from his own country and people. His idea of leaving Trinidad and moving to the United States demonstrates his changing ideology and his intention of reaching what is ideal in his community.

The concept of the "American Dream" still has a dominant effect on the black population, as the United States of America "possesses its centrality and power in the world economy" (Goodheart, 1987, p. 183). As of the early 20th century, most black

people from the West Indies had this dream of migrating either to the States or the Metropolitan in their ardent search for good social, political, and economic status in civilized countries. This motivation among the natives led to their uneasiness and caused them to turn their back to their cultural background and assets. "Bolo said, 'Trinidad people! Trinidad People' I don't know why Hitler don't come here and bomb all the sons of bitches, it have on this island. He bombing the wrong people, you know" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 65). Bolo's hatred toward the people of his own country can be taken into consideration as a consequence of imposed hybrid culture and its resultant mimicry that was very much influential on the black population to admire the colonizing cultural identity.

The invasion of Trinidad by America accelerated the process of cultural dissemination that was highly influential in creating mimic local elites. This colonial domination was achieved through the formation of a local elite, "a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern—a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (Macaulay, 1967, p. 729). This Englishness in tastes, ideas, ethics, and wit—a valid excuse to turn towards the West—could be observable in every walk of society, which ranged from local elites to the common man in the street. Naipaul as a son of indentured slave family who were "imported" from India supports the idea that " a colonial is not just any oppressed or exploited member of what is frequently called the 'Third World.' Rather, to be a 'colonial' implies that the psychological loss of identity which is the result of oppression has occurred within a context of spatial displacement' (Angrosino, 1975, p. 2). Edward is an ardent mimic character in Miguel Street. He endeavored to integrate into the colonizer's culture as a result of his discontent with his own cultural background:

> Edward surrendered completely to the Americans. He began wearing clothes in the American style, he began chewing gum, and he tried talk with an American accent. We didn't much of him except on Sundays, and he made us feel small and inferior. He grew fussy about his dress, and he began wearing a gold chain around his neck. He began wearing straps around his wrist, after the fashion of tennis-players. These straps were just becoming fashionable among smart young men in Port of Spain. (Naipaul, 2002, p. 68)

63

The extract from *Miguel Street* about Edward shows us the level of mimicry it reached in time. In his realistic presentation of his character, Naipaul makes us readers aware of the socially and culturally mimetic society of Miguel Street. Edward deepens his mimicry one step further by assimilating himself into American culture in tandem with his acceptance of variations of the ideally elevated culture of the colonizing mentality. Naipaul centers the presentation of his characters around the cultural corruption of his society by exposing weaknesses in relation with the alienation of his own community to their cultural identity. "Edward hitches up his tight American-style trousers and makes a face like an American film actor. He said, 'You know all the answers, don't you? This girl is different. Sure I fall in love maybe once may be twice before, but this kid's different" (p. 70). As one of the most striking representations of mimicry throughout the novel, Edward fell in love with a white woman and married her as his most obvious attempt to be estranged from his own community so as to complete the process of being quite American. In time, Edward became highly alienated and completely turned his back on his background when he decided to leave one of his best friends, Hat. The mimicry he had been experiencing for a long time turned out to be a sort of distancing himself from his cultural environment. "Edward moved, but he didn't move very far. He remained on our side of *Miguel Street*. He said, 'Is a good thing. I was getting tired of the cow smell'" (p. 71). Edward's harsh reaction to his local lifestyle is a vivid example of his mimic attitudes and ambivalent stance. His interracial marriage does not last long; however, cultural decadence leads to new ways of lifestyles along with the processes of hybridity and mimicry. As Bhabha asserts in his *The Location of Culture*:

> The metonymic strategy produces the signifier of colonial mimicry as the effect of hybridity—at once a mode of appropriation and resistance, from the disciplined to the desiring. As the discriminated object, the metonym of presence becomes the support of an authoritarian voyeurism, all the better to exhibit the eye of power. Then, as discrimination turns into the assertion of the hybrid, the insignia of authority becomes a mask, a mockery. (1994, p. 120)

As a matter of existence, despite the colonial desire to eradicate the local cultures of indigenous people, most residents who had gathered together from different parts of the world tried in their effort to survive in such a hybrid culture. As Bhabha asserts in the extract, under the authoritarian voyeurism the segregated object of the colonized moved

from his disciplined cultural identity to a desired hybrid culture through mimic lifestyles. "The indigenous population of the islands was largely exterminated within 100 years of European occupation; multi-racial, multi-ethnic conglomeration of people currently characteristic of the islands is the result of a series of labor migrations for over 300 years—black slaves, Indian, Chinese, indentured laborers and so on" (Angrosino, 1975, p. 2). As it is clear from the quotation above, adding to the list the adventure seekers from European countries and many Americans on the island, what becomes a clear-cut reality is the formation of this hybrid cultural identity represented by quite a few characters in *Miguel Street* and presented to us by the narrator in the novel.

The narrator of the novel left the island after he received a scholarship from Oxford, "putting off his life behind him, an area of darkness" (Simpson, 1984, p. 575). It was called as an area of darkness due to the fact that a great number of originally migrant people suffered much during the colonial and then imperial era in the sense of cultural transformation and its resultant undesirable conditions. "I told Hat I was going away. He said, 'What for? Laboring?' I said, 'The government give me a scholarship to study drugs" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 83). The narrator appears to be joyful to leave the island on a scholarship to study in a metropolitan setting—and appears to be pleased with what he is putting behind—an area of darkness as is the case in *The Heart of Darkness*—set in Congo during the brutal practices of colonial era. "This is what gives Naipaul's fiction its compelling power. He is always putting darkness behind him. As he has made his escape from disorder, first through his education, then through writing, in his novels and stories people struggle to escape" (Simpson, 1984, pp. 575-576). His escape did not guarantee him the secure premise within that alienated society as a result of culturally hybrid and behaviorally mimetic society. Therefore, like the unnamed boy narrator in *Miguel Street* (1959), Naipaul was able to leave Trinidad through the escape route offered by a metropolitan education. Yet the island society and, more specifically, his Hindu origins had left an indelible mark on him. (Thieme, 1987, p. 1354). Naipaul's depiction of this traumatic arrival in *The Enigma of Arrival*, one of his late novels published in 1987, demonstrates that his Trinidadian past clashes with that of his so-

65

called Britishness. That is why, the dilemma Naipaul experiences as of his first arrival in England is commonplace in almost all his writings.

The hesitant and ambivalent attitude the narrator exhibits the very moment he is about to leave the island indicates that he is not mature enough in this imposed lifestyle in the sense of integration or assimilation. "We got to Piarco in good time, and at this stage I began wishing I had never got the scholarship. The airport lounge frightened me. Fat Americans were drinking strange drinks at the bar. American women, wearing haughty sun-glasses, raised their voices whenever they smoke. They all looked too rich, too comfortable" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 84). Although he had been living in that hybrid culture for quite a long time, he does not feel ready for a metropolitan setting, which contradicts his adamant last-minute walk toward the plane to Britain. "I left them all and walked briskly towards the aeroplane, not looking back, looking at my shadow before me" (p. 84). What he left behind is the dark side of his life—so-called the area of his cultural darkness—that was created by the purposeful intervention and imposition of the colonizer. It was this escape, the narrator thought of, so as to attain his goals with this unique opportunity.

Related to the motto of Hall's definition of cultural identity "what we really are" or "what we have become" is the matter of fact of this chapter. Combining Hall's ideas with that of Homi Bhabha's redefinition of cultural issues forms the basis of this part. As identity is a production that is neither fixed nor an inactive process, it is due to change in time with all sorts of social, cultural, political, and philosophical developments in a specific society. Along with Hall's definition of culture and identity, the issue of cultural identity has been mingled with Bhabha's "hybridity" and "mimicry," which expose the infrastructure for corruption and decadence against colonized communities. In his effort to highlight the issue of identity, Naipaul as a mimic man, gives his narrator the opportunity to observe this change on the island—a microcosm of colonized nations— in terms of cultural identity through his masterful creation of a hybrid culture and mimic characters. However, as his body of work attests, he would continue "to go back, writing

and rewriting about it" (Rigik, 1995, p. 54). Almost all of his characters go through a kind of change as a result of hybrid identity imposed by the colonizer and become mimic characters in time to consolidate their position in this artificially produced cultural identity. In his most welcomed novel, *The Enigma of Arrival*, he transparently shows his biased attitude toward the center and the periphery. "I had taken to England all the rawness of my colonial's nerves, and those nerves had more or less remained…" (Naipaul, 1998, p. 95). He moved to the Metropolitan with all his exasperation he had been fed his root society. Edward Bough illustrates that Naipaul's "'[n]erves' connotes a certain anxiety of self, an existential dread of the violation and reduction of self" (2011, pp. 3-19).

CHAPTER THREE

We who came after could not deny Trinidad. The house we lived was distinctive, but not more distinctive than many. It was easy to accept that we lived on an island where there were all sorts of people and all sorts of houses. Doubtless they too had their own things. We ate certain food, performed certain ceremonies and had certain taboos; we expected others to have their own. We did not wish to share theirs; we did not expect them to share ours. They were what they were; we were what we were. We were never instructed in this. To our condition as Indians in a multi-racial society we gave no thought. … Race was never discussed; but at an early age I understood that Muslims were somewhat more different than others. They were not to be trusted; (V.S. Naipaul—*An Area of Darkness*)

3.1. Identity Crisis Related to Unhomeliness, Ambivalent Dislocation, and Sense of Belonging in *Half a Life*

Along with his harsh criticism of India and all the weaknesses and shortcomings the colonized nations have encountered as an unavoidable consequence of colonial activities and imperial ambitions of Western countries, Naipaul is both critical and supportive of the colonizing ideology "for the horrors of slavery and for the problems it left its former colonies, while praising it for bringing peace and modern thought to areas of the world that remained medieval and debilitated by continual local wars and destructive non-western invasions" (King, 2003, p. 4). As a prominent postcolonial writer, Naipaul maintains a search for identity in varied ways and is filled with the excitement of dislocation and a sort of exile to attain his unpreventable wish for a concrete identity. Attempting to create a new type of writing, he blended his Caribbean experiences with his own travels to Third World countries, writing on his experiences in culturally and socially corrupted backward societies.

Naipaul observes the colonial period from a wider perspective in the sense that he does not primarily put all the blame for slavery and imperialism on the Western ideology, he also voices how much African and Muslim countries are responsible for the crimes they brought to the colonized countries. That is why Naipaul did not react to the colonial ideology in the same way most colonized subjects did, since they considered Western colonizers as the source of their backwardness. Naipaul himself is of the idea that "[i]mperialism can even be desirable if it brings order, peace, security and

knowledge and raises people to a larger, more tolerant view of the world beyond their pretty local conflicts and limited vision" (King, 2003, p. 16). Naipaul's ambivalent attitude toward his own society and the Western colonizing ideology is a prominent characteristic of his writings. This ambivalent vision of his made Naipaul a controversial literary figure of the postcolonial period. His experiences in Trinidad and his ambivalent attitude caused Naipaul to push him "to distance himself from the West Indies. Most of his novels and travel writing are devoted to minute dissections of the cultural paralysis (recalling Joyce) and the hypocrisies (recalling Conrad) of once-colonized nations" (Boehmer, 2005, p. 168). Although he was not born in a metropolitan setting, he succeeded in being one of the great writers of British literature after moving to England in 1955, though he did not settle there permanently, as he was an ardent traveler to collect materials for his literary works. "Naipaul is perhaps the clearest example of the changing cultural identity of Britain, of English, and of literature in English" (Carter & Mcrae, 1997, p. 529). He wrote a great many novels, from *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) to *Magic Seeds* (2004), whose many basic themes touched upon problems of culture, identity, mimicry, and hybridity, and so on and so forth. The last two of his novel writing include *Half a Life* (2001) and *Magic Seeds* (2004), sequential novels that tell the story of Willie Chandran, his self-dislocation, and ambivalent attitudes in his search for an identity, moving from one continent to another. His physical and psychological displacement from one place to another result in the feeling unhomeliness which Bhabha explains as follows:

> To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. … In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. (1994, p. 9)

In accordance with what Bhabha identifies about unhomeliness, throughout this chapter, the main point of my focus will be on the sense of heterogeneous ambivalence and dislocation of the main character, that is, a sort of self-exile and estrangement connected to multi-dislocation, a typical colonized young man Willie's search for an identity and his struggles to find a home for himself. This search first appears as a sequential

Bildungsroman. The focal point of both novels does not merely concentrate on the protagonist's survey from his childhood to maturity, but the main point of the plot structure imposes a sort of identity crisis accompanied by a variety of cultural issues and conflicts. As he criticizes in his *A Flag on the Island* that "I cannot understand why these people should persist in this admiration for the cow, which has always seemed to me a filthy animal, far filthier than pig, which they abhor" (1988, p. 28). Naipaul experiences a strong sense of dislocation related to his social and familial background in the West Indies. His sense of dislocation is visible as being an immigrant in the bohemian literary circles of London, then during his search for a new identity in an unnamed African community. *Half a Life*—the title to the novel—is also a symbolic title in its representation of the incomplete life of Willie Chandran in his search for his ideal cultural identity that had always been shadowed by the cultural values of the Western ideology. *Half a Life* is, moreover, a fragmented life story of the main character, who is also an authentic representation of Naipaul himself. Most readers criticized Naipaul's sympathy for the Western ideology, and most critics were similarly critical of him for being an ardent supporter of the colonizing mindset. One of those who criticized Naipaul was Edward Said, who defended the opinion that Naipaul "carries with him a kind of half-stated but finally unexamined reverence for the colonial order. That attitude has it that the old days were better, when Europe ruled the coloureds and allowed them few silly pretensions about purity, independence, and new ways" (Rath, 2001, p. 167). Naipaul's ambivalent stance towards both the colonizer and the colonized—despite many difficulties he encountered in England—seems to have provided him a secure position to write about both sides—namely, the West and the Third World countries.

Naipaul appeared as an ambiguous figure in English literature in the sense that he has contributed much to the progress of West Indian texts as a prolific author who experienced not only the colonized way of life but also the colonizer's mindset. As "[a] British-educated West Indian, Naipaul has tried to understand and document the difficulties of other cultures through his difficulties at understanding his own multiethnic background" (Barnouw, 2003, p. 1). As Barnouw stated, Naipaul forces his protagonist

Willie to move from one place to another in his efforts to portray and reflect the panorama of societies in Third World countries. Like Naipaul himself, Willie is in chase of his identity as he moves from one location to another, trying to find his self who was a multiethnic member of Trinidad. The dislocation of Willie Chandran is a sort of self-exile in his wish to discover his true self by staying in-between his original cultural background while enjoying the imposed cultural norms of the colonizer.

3.2. Unhomeliness in *Half a Life*: Identity Crisis Related to Multi-Dislocation

A new phase of world order that followed the colonial period was the era of decolonization, when most of the colonized countries gained their independences partly or completely as a result of power shifts between the settlers and the colonized nations. "Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder" (Fanon, 1963, p. 36). Out of this disorder emerged a chaotic atmosphere in most of the colonized nations in tandem with the local disturbances, civil disobediences, and social unrest in terms of cultural and national identities. Along with all these socially turbulent occurrences, there appeared a sort of displacement and dislocation within those nations willingly or unwillingly with the encouragement of colonizing settlers.

In the first part of this chapter, how unhomeliness leads to an identity crisis in *Half a Life* will be dealt with in the person of Willie, who represents a prototype character between two poles—the colonizer and the colonized. *Unhomeliness* is a term appropriated into postcolonialism by Homi Bhabha. This originally "German word *unheimlich* is obviously the opposite of *heimlich***,** *heimlich,* meaning 'familiar,' 'native,' 'belonging to home'; and we are tempted to conclude that what is 'uncanny' is frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar" (Rivkin & Ryan, 1998, p. 154). *Unheimlich* was appropriated by Freud into psychoanalysis as it caused uncanny feelings related to the sense of belonging and unfamiliarity of place or things to be encountered. When India and other colonies gained their independences, immigration was a consequent fate of the Third World subjects owing to poverty and their possibility to become wealthy in developing overseas countries. Poverty was commonplace in most parts of the colonized lands, and migration was not restricted to the metropolitan world, but spread to other parts of the world such as Commonwealth countries, the United States, the Middle East, and Australia.

It is basically hybridity that creates a variety of identities as a result of migration of Third World citizens to other countries, and their mobility is the motivator of

dislocation, which is the primary reason behind their hesitant sense of belonging related not only to their own cultures and nations but also to the difficult process they go through in adapting elsewhere. Willie's persistent quest for an identity in the postcolonial world is the most prominent feature of *Half a Life*, which depicts a vivid picture of diasporic existence in almost every colonized subject who takes a journey. Naipaul himself is a character in exile in search of his own cultural identity and self while questioning his dislocation, estrangement, and rootlessness. *Unhomeliness* arises as a term for interrogating and investigating uncanny feelings behind immigrant lifestyles, and Willie's attempts along with his mobility from one country to another starts with his questioning of self-identity. Born into an unstable colonized country, a sort of estrangement to his familial background and his sympathy for the colonizer's mindset compelled him to experience a solitary life in different countries where the colonized diaspora communities always remain with their desperation, futility, and failure in relation to their pursuit for home and identity.

> The negating activity is, indeed, the intervention of the 'beyond' that establishes a boundary: a bridge, where 'presencing' begins because it captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world—the unhomeliness—that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 9)

In that sense, Willie's estrangement starts with his early realization of realities about his self and his social, cultural, and religious assets of colonial Indian society. "Willie Chandran asked his father one day, 'Why is my middle name Somerset?' The boys at school have just found out, and they are mocking me" (Naipaul, 2001, p. 3). A hybrid name being comprised of the name of a British author and his Indian name, drifts Willie into an irrevocable journey toward a search for his "half life," first in his own country, then in the Metropolitan, and then in an unnamed African country. Willie is, of course, not satisfied with the whole story his father tells him about how he was named after a famous British author, and his father's devotion to the Brahmin caste system and his marriage with a woman from a low caste—namely a backward Indian community. His father gives a detailed account of how he encountered Somerset and how he was strongly connected to the doctrines of Mahatma's calling for the boycott of the universities in

India. Willie's father surrenders to Mahatma's call for a boycott and "I decided to follow the call, I did more. In the front yard I made a little bonfire of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and Shelly and Keats, and the professor's notes, and went home to wait for the storm to beat about my head" (pp. 10-11). His father is a member of the Mahatma organization and protests the colonial education system which was very influential in India.

Colonial education has always been a crucial step toward creating hybrid subjects and to impose Western doctrines and cultural values through literature. Willie's father asserts that "Shakespeare was better, but I didn't know what to make of Shelly and Keats and Wordsworth. When I read those poets, I wanted to say 'But this is just a pack of lies. No one feels like that'" (p. 10). Mr. Chandran displays a complete rejection of his family roots, not continuing his prestigious job at a government office. He also joins the Mahatma movement to protest the education system at universities and even breaks all the rules his caste system imposed on him by marrying a woman from a lower—or backward—caste. In his decision to marry a girl who is the daughter of a prestigious school principal, he turns his back to his own family background. "My decision was simple. It was to turn my back on our ancestry, the foolish, foreign-ruled starveling priests my grandfather had told me about, to turn my back on all my father's foolish hopes of the collage principal to have me marry his daughter" (p. 12). All the story Mr. Chandran tells about his background is somehow related to the traditional Indian lifestyle mixed with the colonizer's imposed cultural, social, and political aspects on the colonized subjects.

His decision to put a distance between himself and his family background resulting from his marriage to someone from the lower caste spoiled Willie's love for his own family as well. "I actually had someone in mind. There was a girl at the university. I didn't know her. I had spoken to her. I had merely noticed her. She was small and coarse-featured, almost tribal in appearance, noticeably black, with two big top teeth that showed very white" (p. 12). In order to make social hierarchy continue, marriages between the members of different castes are not very common in India as is

the case for marriages across different religious sectarian groups. Those who have this kind of marriages between religious sects and classes are considered to be rebels who revolt against the conventional lifestyle and rules set in Indian culture. However, Mr. Chandran turns a blind eye to the normative traditions of his caste system and marries a woman from a lower caste, and this type of "inter-caste" marriage leads him to a chaotic life. "She would have belonged to a backward caste. The maharaja gave a certain number of scholarships to 'the backwards,' as they were called" (p. 12). The progress of friendship between the two drifts Mr. Chandran into trouble, an entirely different life away from the requirements of his own caste, and accepts to marry the girl with the fear of a notorious firebrand that was her uncle. "She said, 'Somebody has told my uncle.' … I said, 'Who is this uncle?' 'He is with the Labourer Union. A firebrand.'" (p. 17). Upon learning that she was a niece to a firebrand, Mr. Chandran decides to lead a life with her in fear of the firebrand uncle, acknowledging the realities that would spoil all his life from now on.

> A few short months before I had been an ordinary, idle young man at the university, the son of a courtier, living in my father's Grade C official house, thinking about the great men of our country and yearning to be great myself, without seeing any way, in the smallness of our life, of embarking on that career greatness, capable only of listening to film songs, yielding to the emotion they called up, and then enfeebled shameful private vice (about which I intend to say no more, since such things are universal), and generally feeling oppressed by the nothingness of our world and servility of our life. Now in almost every particular my life had altered. (p. 17)

Mr. Chandran's father reacted against this marriage because he is of the idea that Mr. Chandran spoiled all their prestigious status in the society. "He said at last, 'You've blackened all our faces. And now we'll have to face the anger of the school principal. You've dishonored his daughter, since in everybody's eyes you are as good as married to her'" (p. 24). What is clear from the remarks of Willie's grandfather is that Mr. Chandran drifts them into social and cultural trouble in their vicinity because the caste systems have had strong rules that prohibit inter-caste marriages.

Willie's estrangement is strongly connected to his father's turbulent lifestyle and his uprooting from the caste system, which is considered a rebellion in the deep-rooted Indian cultural system. Willie was born into a sort of uprooted family—uprooted from

social norms and cultural values—which leads Willie into a "half life," and the story his father tells him widens the psychological gap in Willie's mind. "All my anxiety, when little Willie was born, was to see how much of the backward could be read in his features" (p. 33). Mr. Chandran is well aware that his son was born into a backward caste with a low social status. He acknowledges that his marriage with a woman from a lower caste puts his son's life in danger in his own community. "A little later, as he started to grow up, I would look at him without saying anything and feel myself close to tears, I would think, 'Little Willie, little Willie, what I have done to you? Why I have forced taint on you?'" (p. 33) The taint—as his father confesses—plays a crucial role in Willie's cultural and religious identity as well as the search for his own self-identity.

Willie Chandran makes up his own mind because he felt betrayed by his father and his caste and responds back accordingly. The moment his dad finishes his background story, Willie's estrangement toward his family grows bigger and bigger and says, "What is there for me in what you have said? You offer me nothing" (p. 35). He comes to a realization that neither his familial background nor the culture he has been raised in will be able to serve a sound shelter for him when considering his caste and race. Colonial hegemony, on the one hand, forms social, racial, and cultural barriers and, on the other hand, does not provide protection for Willie, which is the prominent motive behind his self-exile. Willie himself has always been regretful about his life and family in the low-caste community. During early days at mission school, he has been inclined to turn his back to his family as the school is for backwards "who would not have been accepted at the local school for people of caste" (p. 36). That is, there is a huge barrier between the castes. This situation appears to lead to severe discrimination between the peoples of different castes.

> But gradually as he grew up he understood more about mission school and its position in the state. He understood more about the pupils in the school. He understood mission school was to be branded, and he began to look at his mother from more and more of a distance. The more successful he becomes at school—and he was better than his fellows—the greater distance grew. (p. 38)

Willie's awareness to the goings-on around him causes him to turn his back to his family and society, yet he turns his face to the West, which he considers to be a salvation from all the sufferings he is exposed to in his own community. His decision to change his location is for him to be dissociated with his suffering of his past, of his familial background, and of his social and cultural deficiencies. His sense of dislocation and exile in his wish to find a novel identity in the metropolitan world motivates Willie to go after his dreams and comes forth as a seemingly valid excuse to break off his ancestral roots. Willie's motivation to separate from his homeland, find a secure location for his future, and erase his past originated from his wish not to find employment, not to become an ardent member of his colonial diaspora, or his quest for a good fortune, but his priority to start a new life in a socially, culturally, and politically developed country. "The feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives that Homi Bhabha coined as *unhomeliness* (Tyson, 2006, p. 421). Unhomeliness does not necessarily mean that one does have a shelter to reside but a sort of identity problem that drifts any immigrant into a certain psychological process. It is a process between what is known and what is unknown, a situation leading to a sense of belonging nowhere. Along with this complicated yet determined state of mind, Willie leaves his country upon a scholarship provided for him by the British government at a very prestigious university in London.

> And that was how, when he was twenty, Willie Chandran, the mission school student who had not completed his education, with no idea of what he wanted to do, except to get away from what he knew, and yet with very little idea of what lay outside what he knew, only with the fantasies of the Hollywood films of the thirties and forties that he had seen at the mission school, went to London. (p. 49)

Naipaul highlights that Willie is not a mature character about his decision to be right or wrong, yet what he is determined to do is to get away from the knowledge he has picked so far in his own country. Willie's escape from India and his knowledge about a foreign country are comprised of the virtual realities he has seen in Hollywood movies which were imposed on him at mission school, and he is not mature enough to discern between

reality and illusion without experiencing them personally. Willie considers his journey to London as an escape from his unfortunate past and an unprecedented opportunity to gain a kind of freedom away from the inferiority of being a colonized subject in a colonized country like India. "To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 9). This psychological phenomenon of feeling unhomely which Willie experiences throughout his travels across the continents follows him like a shadow and his time in London does not serve as an escape from his own reality of being an inferior individual even in developed countries such as England. In his well-known book *Beginning Postcolonialism*, John Mcleod explains the concept of home as follows:

> Let us probe deeper the ways in which 'home' is imagined in diaspora communities. The concept of 'home' often performs an important function in our lives. It can act as a valuable means of orientation by giving us a sense of our place in the world. It tells us where we originated from and where we belong. As an idea it stands for shelter, stability, security and comfort (although actual experiences of home may well fail to deliver these promise). To be 'at home' is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves. (p. 210)

The description of "home" by McLeod is visited and revisited by Willie along with his own personal identity in almost all the settings in which he takes his journey with the expectation of finding a secure place. As an indigenous colonized subject, Willie has had scanty information about London and almost no experience of a foreign country. His quest for a stable and secure home disappoints him in completely alien surroundings—not only alien in its literal sense but socially and culturally unknown to him. Of course, Willie's first impression of the city is very important in that the sense of belonging he experiences there would greatly influence his life. "He knew that London was a great city. His idea of a great city was of a fairyland of splendor and dazzle, and when he got to London and began walking about its streets, he felt let down" (Naipaul, 2001, p.50). Willie's new life in London is a matter of his adaptation to his new surroundings regardless of his previous life. He is able to hide his true identity and his past, which he considers embarrassing, and to start a new way of life that fits the requirements of the Western ideology. His existence in London is also a matter of

survival and self-justification in pursuit of a new identity, which seems deeply paradoxical to being accepted or rejected as an immigrant of a Third World country. As McLeod accentuates that "[i]t tells us where we originated from and where we belong" (2000, p. 210). From the very moment following Willie's arrival, he is still under the influence of his dissatisfaction with the past and of his new life which is a great motivation for his presence in London. As he studies at mission school, he learns about Speaker's Corner in London, but what he has been taught is in conflict with what he has discovered.

> The only two places he knew about in the city were Buckingham Palace and Speaker's Corner. He was disappointed by Buckingham Palace. He thought that the maharaja's palace in his own state was grander, more like a palace. … His disappointment turned to something like shame— at himself, for his gullibility—when he went to Speaker's Corner. … He didn't expect to see an idle scatter of people around half a dozen talkers, with big buses and cars rolling indifferently by all the time. Some of the talkers had very religious ideas, and Willie, remembering his own home life, thought that the families of these men might have glad to get them out of the house in the afternoon. (Naipaul, 2001, p. 50)

Willie's initial disappointment with the places that he knew before his arrival was the impetus for his comparisons of places and people around to those of his own state. As an expatriate from a Third World country in London, Willie, on the one hand, tries to get rid of his past, yet on the other hand, he finds himself comparing or contrasting his new environment in Metropolitan London with that of his Third World surroundings. His prejudices about a Western country create an ambiguous sense of belonging, a sort of estrangement and a feeling of unhomeliness that can be observed throughout his experiences in and out of England. Willie has always witnessed the superiority of the colonizer, saw their civilized aspects in movies, and learned different things from them at mission schools. That is why his prejudices and expectations conflict with what he observes along London streets and result in his disappointment. Willie's feeling of estrangement and meaninglessness of his environment is a usual consequence of his emergence as psychologically unhomed individual in this socially and culturally alien society.

As a postcolonial writer Naipaul depicts his character in line with his own experiences and perspective that "has been shaped by the humiliation of his youth; it is also influenced by his consciousness of being Indian and the humiliations India and Indians suffered" (King, 2003, p. 16). Willie's humiliation originates out of two main reasons: being a colonized young man from a lower caste and being a solitary member of Indian diaspora in a culturally and racially different country. Between the two extreme poles of psychological existence, Willie's efforts to create a new self in his college environment serve to produce a new identity and help him to forget about his background, which he considers extremely embarrassing. In his attempts to write stories, he became acquainted with people and different editors in literary circles, and his wish to write about his experiences grew more and more. Although he left his home country with the intention of forgetting about his past, he could not break all his ties owing to his ambivalent feelings—feeling unhomed and being part of Indian diaspora—about where he starts a new life. "The next day Willie wrote a story about the editor. He set it in the quarter-real Indian town he used in his writing, he fitted the editor of the holy man he had written about in some of his stories" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 95). As the quote indicates, Willie is still under the influence of his own country and uses it as the setting of his story. His main character, whom he associates with the editor, is most probably his own father. "Up to this point, the holy man had been seen the outside: idle and sinister, living off the unhappy waiting like a spider in his hermitage" (p. 95). His definition of the holy man fits well with the life of his father who was trapped between his own religious life, Mahatma's doctrines, and his unhappy marriage. Stuck between a postcolonial and colonial sense of the world, Willie is an eccentric character who has difficulty getting away from his colonial past and adapting himself into Western society with his postcolonial mentality.

When Willie is about to finish with his book, which Roger recommended him to write, there breaks out a race riot against the blacks in London and causes a disturbance for him because black people are considered as a menace for the native white population in London. This event triggered the sense of unhomeliness in Willie, and events grew

bigger in the streets full of angry mobs protesting black presence there. "Because that weekend the race riots began in Notting Hill" (p. 102). During the events, hostility against non-Western black population causes the death of some of them and this racial tension leads African and Indian people to feel unhomed. This feeling of unhomeliness takes over Willie just like the scary feeling of Maharaja's gang in India. "He felt the newspapers were about him. After this he stayed in the collage and didn't go out. This kind of hiding was not new to him. It was what they used to do at home, when there was a serious religious or caste trouble" (p. 103) in which many people were killed or uprooted as a consequence of ethnic and religious rage between the different castes. Willie's character development is in-between his homely colonial past—which had never existed in his home due to his self-estrangement toward his own family and society—and his postcolonial presence that is an unborn condition in terms of culture and identity in his present residence—London. Owing to the racial riots and killings in Notting Hill, Willie's sense of unhomeliness revisits him once more before he completes his process of adapting to the social, cultural, and psychological medium of his new surroundings. His efforts to find his own identity and to discover his sense of belonging are hindered by the riots taking place in some parts of England. "I don't know where I am going. I am just letting the days by. I don't like the place that's waiting for me at home. For the last two and a half years I have lived like a free man" (p. 110). Willie associates his new surroundings with his freedom from his past and hometown, which he considers as problematic, and a large part of his life experience that he wants to forget. Normally, home is associated with something positive and acceptable; however, Willie's sense of home and belonging somehow has been disturbed by his experiences and destroyed by the idealization of the colonizer's cultural values and way of life.

As unhomeliness is the opposite of feeling secure and results in uncanny feelings, experiencing such thoughts makes Willie an unstable individual in his search for a home that seems to be far in the distance due to the social and political unrest in tandem with the racial tension in the country. In a sense, Willie's peaceful progress in England has been destroyed, and he has started to lose the comfort of his existence in a totally alien

Western capital that he had always regarded as a promising place throughout his turbulent life in India. His sense of exile is mixed with his feeling of an escape from the past, which Willie clarifies as such: "I can't go back to the other thing. I don't like the idea of marrying someone like Sarojini, that's what will happen if I go home. If I go home I will have to fight the battles my mother's uncle fought" (p. 110). What Willie emphasizes here is his sense of not belonging to his home country—a psychological posture that drifts him into literally creating his sense of unhomeliness, yet setting off a new journey to overcome this issue and create a new identity completely different from his previous one. "If I get my teaching diploma and decide to stay here and teach it will be a kind of hiding away. It wouldn't be nice teaching in a place like Notting Hill. That's the kind of place they would send me … It would be worse than being home" (p. 110). In his metaphorical displacement or exile, as is the case for Naipaul, Willie feels himself a part of literary bohemian circles—an intellectual environment where he is a would-be member. The situation Willie experiences in England is something different; that is, although he is not in exile or an expatriate, his pretension to being so originates from his wish to distance himself from what he has experienced in India. "While exiles are people—often writers and intellectuals—who are granted individual definition, one conventionally speaks of communities of exiles cemented with obsession with home, their memories, their grievances, and their idealism" (Nixon, 1992, p. 22). Willie has the intention of being or feeling as an individual in exile who has obsessions with his background and unfavorable memories stemming from his own social and cultural background. His effort to develop a sort of belonging is spoiled by the social reactions of the white population in England, and his unsatisfactory initiatives to be a writer in the intellectual circles in his literary environment has also been hindered by the riots in Notting Hill.

Willie's uneasiness in the West can be taken into consideration as a motivation in his search for a secure place and find out his immature cultural, national, and personal identity. Upon Percy's departure, one of his best friends, as a consequence of racial riots and killing that Percy regarded as a menace, "Willie thought, 'Humiliation like this

awaits me here. I must follow Percy. I must leave" (Naipaul, 2001, p. 114). He regards his existence as a humiliation as a member of the black population and plans to leave the country in that his sense of unhomeliness revisits him once more. "Willie could only go back to India, and he didn't want that. All that he had now was an idea—and was like a belief in magic—that one day something would happen, an illumination would come to him, and he would be taken by a set of events to the place he would go" (p. 114). The extract from the novel indicates that Willie has lost his confidence of living there and his uncanny feelings of unhomeliness encourage him to leave and find a more secure place out of Britain. The meaning of exile, according to Bhabha, is the "scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the notions of others, becomes a time of gathering" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 291). These gatherings are the results of social, cultural, and political developments in colonized lands yet do not necessarily supply all Third World subjects with what they await from this displacement. "Gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refugees, gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gathering in the ghettos or cafes of the city centers; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's language" (p. 291). Bhabha associates all types of gathering of expatriates with an uncompleted process of presence in a foreign land, and Willie is a prominent prototype who has experienced all that Bhabha suggests for colonized or displaced Third World subjects.

This sense of displacement or experiencing the feeling of being in exile contributes to the uncanny feeling of unhomeliness not particular to the sense felt outside the home or hometown. However, as is the case for Willie, one is supposed to go through a challenging period of feeling unhomely even in his own country. It totally depends upon the psychological process which an individual goes through or which has been imposed upon him. Willie never takes the option of returning to India, as he has fled with unbearable memories and the situation is not so different from what Naipaul himself experienced. "Even if Naipaul's departure from Trinidad was uncoerced, he feels very intensely that returning to his natal land has not been an option and that this possibility has effectively curbed his freedom" (Nixon, 1992, p. 23). The option Naipaul

takes is also the one Willie takes during his presence in England not only because of ideal colonial cultural identity but also his willingness to stay away from his colonized backward community. His mixed identity is shaped by a variety of experiences such as being a student at a college, his motivation and efforts to be writer, his being a black immigrant in England that all blended with his background story, and his notion of not being accepted within his new surroundings there.

When Willie is alone and desperate in a foreign country, he receives a letter from Ana, a Portuguese African girl who has read one of Willie's stories and felt a need to write and meet him. "I feel I had write to you because in your stories for the first time I find moments that are like moments in my own life, though the background and materials so different" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 116). Although Willie knows nothing in detail about Ana's background and has his own hesitations to meet her, not wanting to let her down, he accepts to meet her and "[h]e was entranced by the girl and over the next few weeks learned to love everything about her: her voice, her accent, her hesitation over certain English words, her beautiful skin" (p. 118). Willie's unconditional acceptance of Ana leads them to develop a love affair, and he becomes willing to learn more about Africa and her life there. Willie's enthusiastic curiosity about Africa and African way of life could be associated with his own colonial past. He finds himself much closer to that way of life so as to adapt to living there without having much of the difficulty that he has experienced in England. "He encouraged Ana to talk about her country. He tried to visualize the country on the eastern coast of Africa, with the great emptiness as its back" (p. 119). Willie is well aware of the fact about Africa as a colonial continent, and he can visualize it without knowing much about its history except traces of colonialism and the backwardness of its people. Most colonial countries share a common fate of colonial past and the concepts of being civilized and developed are somehow away from those lands even today, and Willie is able to differentiate between illusion and reality in his visualization of this unnamed African country.

Willie makes up his mind about going to Africa, and when he tells Ana about his idea, her hesitation indicates that Willie might have difficulty in adapting to a vastly different way of life in another colonized country. However, Willie himself is sure that his existence in England will be much more challenging, and it would be hard to survive in such a socially and politically disturbed place. His sense of belonging encourages him to go to Africa and set out for a new journey to find another place as a home. Just like Naipaul—as a son of a migrant family in Trinidad, which they had always considered as a place of opportunities yet never went beyond an illusionary place in terms of chances—Willie himself has always been let down by the opportunities England has provided for him and immigrant minorities. Therefore, he decides on a new route for Africa. "When they next met he said, 'Ana, I would like to go with you to Africa.' … She said nothing. A week or so later he said, 'You remember what I said about going to Africa?' Her face clouded. He said, 'You've read my stories. You know I've nowhere else to go. And I don't want to lose you'" (pp. 122-123). Willie's determination originates from his uneasiness in England where he has been exposed to discrimination, isolation, and alienation, yet Ana's hesitation is mainly based upon the challenging lifestyle which she thinks Willie will have difficulty integrating into. With these questions and hesitations in mind, Willie and Ana leave from Southampton, and Willie finds himself having complicated feelings and thoughts, as he has much to ponder over: his book, his English and a new language he will have to learn, his new destination, and so on. This time, he is taking a journey opposite to the one he took three years ago when he was travelling to England for his education at Oxford. Willie himself knows well that despite all unfavorable conditions he has experienced in England, again it was England that provided him with the freedom of his college education and ability to write books.

3.3. Ambivalent Dislocation and the Sense of Belonging in *Half A Life*

As a psychological sensation, ambivalence is an in-between feeling of desiring and rejecting the same thing and was "adapted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha, it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 10). It covers a vast range of components from cultural values of all types to social and political developments either in Third World countries or the Western ideology. The relationship is considered as ambivalent, as the Third World subjects are not completely against the colonizing mindset. Although colonized subjects are resistant to colonizing ideology, this resistance shows itself in a fluctuating manner—which is regarded as an ambivalent attitude toward the colonizer.

> Most importantly in Bhabha's theory, however, ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizer and colonized. Ambivalence is therefore an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer. The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values – that is, 'mimic' the colonizer. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance. In this respect, it is not necessarily disempowering for the colonial subject; but rather can be seen to be *ambi-valent* or 'two-powered'. (p. 10)

As Bhabha accentuates in his explanation of ambivalence, it is a notion or an attitude adopted by the colonized against the colonizing mindset in an attempt to determine a stance toward the colonizer. The colonized subjects are aware that all doctrines imposed by the colonizer are not for the good of the colonized because they have always had the feeling of being both nurtured and exploited by the Western colonizers. This ambivalent attitude gave rise to the emergence of a fluctuating sense of accepting or rejecting the colonizer's way of forcing cultural and social notions onto Third World subjects. Thus, their double-conscious mind or double vision poses a threat to the existence of the colonizer in those countries and provided the colonizer with an unsettled presence in colonized lands and in Western colonizer countries alike.

Having been inspired by this atmosphere, Naipaul emerges in the literary scene as an ambivalent postcolonial author who never denies the blessings of colonizing values and, to some extent, the problems they caused in the colonized lands. In most of his

86

works, Naipaul attempts to demonstrate the backwardness and uncivilized sides of those countries which were caused by the exercises of the colonizers, but he contradicts his advocacy of the colonizing ideology by trying to show it as ideal. However, he claims that most colonized countries are far from being developed, as the subjects developed mimic attitudes by distancing themselves from their core cultural values which are essential to maintain a coherent existence in the world. "His fiction deals primarily with the facts of confrontation between the third and first worlds in the colonial and post-colonial situations from the 1950s onwards. The situation is defined as a realisation of inferiority and backwardness and a desire for equality and modernity" (Kamra, 1990, p. 39). That is why Naipaul's writing has always been under the influence of having two different visions, one stuck between his background and one escaping from his past to find solace in the Western world.

In *Half a Life*, Naipaul's portrayal of an ambivalent protagonist is in some ways related to his own consciousness about the existing colonial and postcolonial dilemmas that have affected Third World citizens over the last two centuries. Willie's ambivalence stems from his dilemmas about his own cultural roots and his unsatisfied expectations from England, which he had always dreamed in an ideal way. Although he was really prejudiced about his own past and his country, he was in-between criticizing his cultural values and praising Western values. Upon writing his first story in England, he was given a harsh feedback that made him upset, as he was viciously criticized for not telling the truth in his story. "What is interesting to me as a lawyer is that you don't want to write about real things. I've spent a fair amount of time listening to devious characters, and I feel about these stories that the writer has secrets. He is hiding" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 79). Willie is of the opinion that his dilemmas reflected in his writing will not provide him with a secure premise on the literary scene so long as he does not write about things clearly and honestly. His ambivalence is the consequence of being in two cultures, one being his native country and the other his mimic culture, both of which he does not want to be alienated from.

Having used postmodern elements, the author deconstructs the plot structure in the middle by ending his fiction with Willie's return to Berlin after he was discharged from the hospital in Africa. Owing to this deconstructive technique by Derrida, Naipaul narrates the events in a reversed narration back through his eighteen years in Africa. Having been uprooted from his home and cultural identity and suffered from his cultural displacement, Willie's fixed double vision forces him to return back to his westernized lifestyle, which he has always taken as a safe haven. Although his first uncanny impression causes him to feel uncomfortable immediately after his arrival in Africa, he has been able to stay there for about two decades. "Willie thought, 'I don't know where I am. I don't think I can pick my way back. I don't ever want this view to become familiar. I must not unpack. I must never behave as though I am staying.' He stayed for eighteen years" (p. 126). The sense of belonging that Willie has been haunted by is regarded as his source of uneasiness and contributes to his feeling unhomed, and this peculiar lifestyle makes him psychologically and culturally displaced in his concurrent journey.

Naipaul masterfully presents an analysis of the colonialist and postcolonialist dilemmas in the attitudes of his protagonist Willie in his self-migration from his own country to England and finally to an African country. At the very beginning of the novel, he leaves India to go to London and the narrator tells a story to justify his leaving and to explain his motivation for searching for a new identity. As is the case for most Third World citizens, Willie's willingness to pursue a new identity drifts him from one place to another. Willie is a representative of subjugated colonized subjects who think that their expectations about true identity will be met by the Western ideology. It is a misleading conception that the independence of any individual is somehow interrelated to his physical presence in the Metropolitan by accepting the cultural values of the colonizer as his own assets. A set of social, cultural, and political events leading Willie to leave India and to go to London cause him to demonstrate ambivalent attitudes about his dislocation. "And this was the story Willie Chandran's father began to tell. It took a long time. The story changed as Willie grew up. Things were added, and by the time

Willie left India to go to England this was the story he had heard" (p. 3). It is where Willie's aimless and restless life journey begins with the hope to benefit from his middle name Somerset, and the writer with the same name, whom Willie is looking for, never appears to help him as he had helped his father in the past. Even when the protagonist shows up in London, hoping to find the help and guidance from William Somerset Maugham, Willie suffers from lack of support from the writer.

Willie feels he belongs neither to his Indian root nor to the metropolitan country because of the colonial destruction in his past. With his efforts to break away with his ancestral roots to take a new step for his search of a new cultural identity, Willie himself grows out of an ambivalent displacement as he develops a character in-between the two: the colonized and subjugated world of India and the colonizing Britain.

> …When I put the light on I saw he was crying. I asked him why. He said. 'I just feel that everything in the world is so sad. And it is all that we have. I don't know what to do.' I didn't know what to say to him. It's something he gets from your side.. I tried to comfort him. I told him that everything would be all right, and he would go to Canada. He said he didn't want to go to Canada. He didn't want to be a missionary. He didn't even want to go back to the school. (p. 46)

Through his narrator, Naipaul propounds that Willie is someone willing to distance himself from his own cultural roots by rejecting the missionary education he is taking in India. Willie is reluctant to be a missionary and casts away his father's religious background. That is the main reason why he reacts against the idea of going to Canada and becoming a missionary. As he is preoccupied with what he has inherited from his own family and culture, Willie's ardent quest for a new identity should be taken into consideration in terms of what Stuart Hall highlights in *Culture and Diaspora*: "Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning" (Hall, 1990, p. 226). In close relation to what Hall clarifies about culture and cultural identity, Willie's psychological journey to Canada was not related to his cultural essence but a new positioning as he finds out realities about his past "but when Willie saw the picture he felt ashamed for himself. He felt the fathers had been fooling him all the years" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 46). All that Willie learns about his cultural background causes

him to drift into a new psychological breakdown which causes him to develop a personality away from his own roots, cultural norms, and aims. Willie abandons the idea of going to Canada—a colonial country—as a missionary, since he knows that he will be under the influence of his own cultural values blended with those of the colonizer's ideology. His own effort is to lead a life independent from his root culture and subjugated identity. "All he really wanted was to go to Canada and get away from here. Until he saw the picture he didn't know what missionary work was" (p. 47). The narrator is trying to tell us about Willie in his state of mind and his psychological perspective which is strongly connected with his obsessed ancestral memories he is in a great effort to get rid of. The way to fade all his memories of the past and his salvation lies in his physical but not psychological migration to England.

Mr. Chandran comes to a realization about Willie's situation, as he leads a restless life about his own authentic cultural assets. In this regard, Willie psychologically turns toward the superior culture on the path of establishing his own identity. His sense of belonging develops toward his existence in the dominant culture—the culture of the colonizer.

> His father saw him one day asleep face down, a closed copy of a school edition of *The Vicar of Wakefield* beside him, his feet crossed, the red soles much lighter than the rest of him. There was such unhappiness and such energy there that he was overwhelmed with pity. He thought, "I used to think that you were me and I was worried at what I had done to you. But now I know that you are not me. What is in your head is not yours. You are somebody else, somebody I don't know, and I worry for you because you are launched on a journey I know nothing of." (p. 47)

Willie's feeling of estrangement to his own culture is clarified by the narrator in the sense that he has been exposed to the feeling of having a double identity. The first one is his own cultural identity and the second one is the identity that he totally wants to adapt himself to. The journey Mr. Chandran realizes is Willie's journey into his wish to quest for a new identity. "What is in your mind is not yours" means that Mr. Chandran's determination over his son's double vision or ambivalent attitude is much more visible than ever. He sees Willie's ambivalent manner toward his own ancestral culture as predominated over by the culture of colonizer. Most probably "unhappiness" and "pity"

are related to his authentic culture and "energy" is related to his feeling toward the dominant culture.

Without having a sound decision in his mind, Willie abandons all his past memories and goes to England. His ambivalent dislocation and the sense of belonging try to complete his psychological journey with the intention of overcoming his ambivalence about where he belongs to. Willie, just like Naipaul himself, never escapes from his double vision and feeling of being stuck between two opposing feelings: the rejection of the backward and subjugated culture of his Third World country and his desirous surrender to the dominant culture and the Metropolitan. His stance between the two countries stems from his ambivalent sense of belonging neither to the periphery nor to the center. "Will Chandran, the mission-school student who had not completed his education, with no idea of what to do, except to get away from what he knew, and yet with very little idea of what lay outside what he knew, … went to London" (p. 49). It is obvious from the quotation that Willie is not determined about what he is doing, yet what is clear is his wish to get away from his roots and "with the fantasies of the Hollywood film of thirties and forties that he had seen at the mission school" (p. 49) he left his past behind to start a new life in London. His restlessness lies in the fact of his imagination of the dominant culture and its impressive impact of being superior and civilized. Although ambivalent, Willie's decision to move from his own country to the Metropolitan with his expectation of setting up a cozy place in all senses is truly influential over his ambivalent dislocation.

> He went by ship. And everything about the journey so frightened him—the size of his own country, the crowds in the port, the number of ships in the harbor, the confidence of the people on the ship—that he found himself unwilling to speak, at first out of pure worry, and then, when he discovered that silence brought him strength, out of policy. So he looked without trying to see and heard without listening. (p. 49)

The protagonist's journey from India to England, his impressions in the port of his country, and his very first observations in the city lead him to be filled with more ambivalent ideas. Willie's rootless and unhomeless attitude appears when he decides to leave India, and at the port of his country, he has already turned his back to his own

country and its people. His reluctance to interact with people around the port and on the ship does not make any sense for him. Willie, on the one hand, tries to praise what he observes in his country but remains indifferent to his observations in his attempt to erase or refresh his memory for his new home and new life in England. His focus shifts from India and Indian people to Western people and their way of life. Willie seems to believe that his double vision or ambivalent manner will disappear by rejecting his cultural practices of all sorts, his people, and even his colonized self. The mere reality about the colonized lands and subjugated people of those lands has been their misperceptions about what they look at and what they see about the colonizing cultures. The misperception in Willie grows and leads him to develop a sense of superiority as a resident in the Metropolitan surroundings and a new sense of home as a safe haven for himself.

Willie's disappointment about the colonial realities of the past grows bigger as he learns new things about his so-called new home—a headquarter of imperial and colonial ideology. "Willie knew nothing about the invasion. The invasion had apparently been caused by the nationalization of the Suez Canal, and Willie knew nothing about that either" (p. 51). His ignorance about the colonial past makes him neglect the realities of colonial Third World countries and curtails his glorifying ideas about the colonizing Western ideology. Naipaul depicts the panorama of ignorance of subjugated people, as they have been exposed to artificial facts and have put behind the barriers of the colonial practices. What have been projected to them at schools, in churches, and even in streets are not the reflection of the realities and intentions of the Western mindset. Rather, those were the misleading conceptions about the colonizer, an insidious method to impose their ideology in their effort to convert the natives from their local and traditional way of life. "So, just as on the ship Willie was able to watch without seeing and hear without listening, Willie at home for many years read newspapers without taking the news" (p. 52). Willie's realization with the facts of the past fluctuates in his mind and matches up with his disappointment with what he witnesses in Metropolitan London.

> He began to read about the Egyptian crisis in the newspaper, but he didn't understand what he read. He knew little about the background, and newspaper stories were like serials; it was necessary to know what had gone before. So he began to read about Egypt in the college library, and he floundered. … Willie thought he was swimming in ignorance, had lived without a knowledge of time. He remembered one of the things his mother's uncle used to say: that the backwards had been shut out for so long from the society that they knew nothing of India, nothing of the other religions, nothing even of the religion of the people of caste. (p. 53)

Wherever Willie takes his journey, his ambivalence is an inseparable part of him. Although he is in the opposite directions with his past, Willie's search for a new home contradicts the historical facts of his country. His ideal civilized self wants to turn back to his traditional and backward side in his mind; however, this historical and cultural ambivalence follows him wherever he takes his escape. His sense of ambivalent identity and his conception of belonging somewhere are threatened by his past.

> Willie was living in the collage as in daze. The learning he was being given was like the food he was eating, without savor. The two were inseparable in his mind. And just as he ate pleasure, so, with a kind of blindness, he did what the lecturers and tutors asked him of, read the books and articles and did the essays. He was unanchored, with no idea of what lay ahead. He still had no idea of historical time or even of distance. When he had seen Buckingham Palace, he had thought that the kings and queens were impostors, and the country a sham, and he continued to live within that idea of make-believe. (p. 56)

Willie's dual vision or his ambivalent manner drifts him into such uneasiness in his new surroundings. There seems to appear a sort of contradiction between what he expected in India and what he found out about his dream land—namely, the Metropolitan. That is the reason why Willie feels "unanchored" and is not sure about "what lay ahead." The picture of the ideal Buckingham Palace and its residents seem to lose their importance in Willie's mind due to his double vision and ambivalent ideas. As Willie "continues to live within that idea of make-believe," which originates from his consciousness about historical facts, about the colonial past, and ongoing postcolonial periods.

Within the context of unhomeliness or the sense of belonging, colonial subjects relied heavily on their double perception of and their in-betweenness in two opposing cultures: the dominated culture and the dominant one. As the dominant culture has precedence over the culture of Third World countries, most subjugated people, willingly or not, have been exposed to a kind of displacement as Tyson comes to a conclusion, referring to the term "unhomeliness".

> This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives, is referred to by Bhabha and others as unhomeliness. (2006, p. 420)

This sort of trauma of cultural displacement could be attributed to Willie's traumatic feelings about his colonial past, his root culture, and his ambivalent perceptions and sensations toward the Eurocentric ideology. Through his mimic and hybrid lifestyle, he attempts to find a secure home for himself in his unhomeliness and displaced new life in London. Along with his new surroundings which do not provide him with the feeling of being home, Willie is willing to experience new things which were strictly limited by his mixed-caste status in India. Apart from historical facts about the Metropolitan, he is willing to find out about sexuality and sexual intercourse with June, the girlfriend of one of his best friends. "June, letting his head rest on her arm, said 'A friend of mine says it happens with Indians. It's because of the arranged marriages. They don't feel they have to try hard. My father said his father used to tell him. 'Satisfy the women first. Then think of yourself'" (Naipaul, 2002, p. 61). Willie is trying to adapt himself to the metropolitan lifestyle and knows that this way of life is considerably different from the life he experienced in his own homeland. Due to strict practices and traditions, Willie is far from the social lifestyles of Londoners, yet he is willing to live that way because he considers the Metropolitan as his new home. He believes that adapting to his new home and social life requires him to experience such things as learning about sexuality. In his meeting with his best friend Percy, Willie asks, "How did you learn about sexuality, Percy?" (p. 67). And Percy answers back:

> "You have to start small. We all started small. Practicing on the little girls. Don't look so shocked, little Willie. I am sure you don't know everything that was happening in your extended family. Your trouble, Willie, is that you are so neat. People look at you and don't see you.
>
> "You are neater than me. Always in a suit and a nice shirt.
>
> "I make women nervous. They are frightened of me. That's the way for you, Willie. Sex is a brutal business. You have to be brutal." (pp. 67-68)

Percy knows that those coming from Third World countries and those who have extended families know nothing about sexuality, as their caste system or traditional

lifestyles do not allow them to learn such things until marriage. As June told Willie, "it is because of the arranged marriages" subjugated subjects cannot learn anything about sexuality owing to their restricted dating and mating process before their marriage. Of course, Willie knows everything about his cultural and traditional caste system and the way of life many backward people like himself experience in those countries. Willie comes to a realization that sexuality is an inseparable part of social life and a basic human instinct to adapt to and socialize in the community of the Western center.

> "Have you ever read Hemingway? You should have read the early stories. There is one called 'The Killers'. It's only a few pages, almost all dialogue. Two men come at night to an empty cheap café. They take it over and wait for the old crook they have been hired to kill. That's all. Hollywood made a big film out of it, but the story is better. I know you wrote these stories at school. But you are pleased with them. What is interesting to me as a lawyer is that you don't want to write about real things. I've spent a fair amount of time listening to devious characters, and I feel about these stories that the writer has secrets. He is hiding". (p. 79)

At one of his first meeting with Roger—the publisher—Roger's impression about the stories Willie had written is that Willie is still under the influence of his mission school days and "he is hiding." As an ambivalent individual, he cannot get rid of his colonial identity or cannot write about his feelings about the colonial past, his country, and the culture he had been living in. His colonial psychology disrupts his pro-Western ideology and the feeling of in-betweenness prevents Willie from writing about his real feelings concerning Metropolitan London and the way of life he encounters there. It is because of his double consciousness—his sense of belonging to either his backward country or to the civilized metropolitan life in London. Willie's first encounter with London city and the people living there was really disappointing for him, as his dreams and expectations were far higher than what he discovered there. He never feels he is at home. Everything he encounters seems to take time for him to get used to and his sense of belonging is influenced by his ambivalent attitudes.

> "The stories came quickly to him. He wrote six stories in a week. *High Sierra* gave him three stories and he saw three or four more in it. He changed the movie character from story to story, so that original Cagney or Bogart character became two or three different people. The stories were all in the same vague setting, the setting 'Sacrifice'. And as he wrote, the vague setting

began to define itself, began to have markers: a palace with domes and turrets, a secretariat with lines of blank windows on three floors, a mysterious army cantonment…" *(p. 81)*

Willie's writing career is accompanied by his sense of unhomeliness as he continues to write new stories one after another. His stories take place in a vague setting that reflects Willie's feeling of ambivalent attitudes and his unhomely sensations that has taken over him since his first arrival in the Metropolitan. "He began to understand—and this was something they had had to write essays about at the college—how Shakespeare had done it, with his borrowed settings and borrowed stories, never with direct tales from his own life or the life around him" (p. 82). This way of writing that borrows settings and stories gives Willie a feeling of solace in his efforts to distance himself from his own culturally spoilt background. Willie's dual attitude toward his background and his ideal depiction of the Metropolitan culture remains problematic throughout the plot structure of *Half a Life*. With this respect, Willie endeavors to create a more proper medium not only for himself but for his literary productions.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Road not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

ROBERT FROST

4.1. Third Space and Discovery of Self-identity in *Magic Seeds*

The chapter starts with a quotation from Robert Frost's poem *The Road Not Taken. Magic Seeds* begins on the same note. Willie, who has just come back from an eighteen-year-long journey in Africa and is in Berlin with his sister Sarojini, is currently faced with a challenge of having to choose the next "road" in his life. He must choose a journey. This may come as a surprise to the reader, but it should not. Life as one may understand it is sometimes a physical or mental journey. For Willie it must be both because his sense of alienation and detachment grows increasingly stronger by the day, and thus it is extremely difficult for him to stay in one place. With some encouragement from his sister, he decides to go to India. The question is, what kind of road is India to Willie?

Having migrated from India to the Caribbean, Willie's father is the first cause of his son's alienation and thus his misappropriation. The onset of this is seen in his naming of Willie, as Willie Somerset Chandran, Somerset being a way of paying homage to his former friend Somerset Maugham, who had visited him in his temple. His middle name gives him a split identity, and as a child, he considers himself half Indian half English.

The English side of him overpowers the Indian side, which makes him mimic and emulate the behavior of the English people. However, the reality remains that he is an Indian who has neither English ancestry nor has been to England and has spent his entire life running away from and hiding his identity. However, he has become aware of this growing sense of detachment and confesses it to his sister Sarojini in the first parts of the novel. "I was always on the outside. I still am. What could I do here in Berlin?" Sarojini, on the other hand, seems to understand the trait and its origin. She relates it to something which was so similar during slavery. If one is born of slave parents, they automatically become slaves. In the same light, since Willie's father has been a colonized man, the aspect of "colonized" becomes Willie's "caste." "It's the colonial caste psychosis. You inherited it from your father." (Naipaul, 2002, p. 6) This psychosis results in a continued sense of alienation that makes Willie forever remain on the move and in a continuous search for his true self. He has heard about the misfortunes of the poor people living in India and, with a lot of encouragement from the sister, is persuaded to join a guerrilla struggle, albeit unskilled and disinterested. Notwithstanding the naivety and ignorance with which he approaches the struggle, for Willie, it is another road that is important if he must find his identity. Like Frost, this is the road less taken because it is only in rare circumstances that individuals who have left the orient go back. It ought to be viewed as a sort of reverse psychology, whereby he has encouraged himself to do something he does not desire, hoping that it will yield a positive effect. Thus, by taking a road less travelled by many immigrants, Willie hopes to achieve his desire because after all, the one that everyone desires yielded next to nothing for him.

As the third sequel in a trilogy, *Magic Seeds* is a continuation of the physical and mental journey by Willie that starts in the Caribbean in *Miguel Street*, then in Africa in *Half a Life*, and then back to India. In *Half a Life*, Willie Chandra's search for his other self culminates into a split and a doubling of the self. His cultural experience of both the orient and the occident do not merge but continue to create split subjectivities in the person of Willie. When he escapes his stifling marriage and goes back to Berlin, he is further faced with a disconcerted sense of unbelonging which makes him question his

previous way of living and how he has benefited from life so far. The plot and events in *Magic Seeds* are not only a continuation of his quest for his identity (at least at the beginning of the novel), but also a means to an understanding that the time has come for him to live a different life. However, for a man who has come into contact with so many different worlds, the sum total of his being has to encompass all these experiences. In order for these experiences to meet at a point that will not cause any confusion for the individual, they must come together in a "third space." Thus, the act of joining the guerrilla struggle in India plays yet another role of attaining new cultural experience or rather learn again what had been wiped out of his memory by years of continuous exposure to foreign culture, which will help him to negotiate his identity challenges.

In Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, he touches upon the struggle that individuals, especially those who have encountered the experiences of colonialism or neocolonialism, go through in the process of self-identification. He argues that individuals usually tend to seek out new experiences intentionally or unintentionally, but they also maintain their attachment to their past experiences. This explains Willie's desire to go back to his roots in India, to regain awareness of these past experiences because "the beyond is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past" (Bhabha 1995, p. 1). The result of such struggles is a creation of the "in-between spaces," spaces through which an individual ought to navigate, which give rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. He further argues that "[t]hese in-between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood-singular or communal that initiate new signs of collaboration" (ibid). Naipaul perhaps writes with the awareness of this aspect of cultural identity, as well as with the knowledge of the dynamic nature of culture as transient and continuously evolving, a process which results into a mixture of practices and norms. Bhabha further touches upon this aspect of the borderline work of culture, where he further discusses the literary or aesthetic works that deal with identity. He posits that:

> "The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with newness that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent of cultural translation.

> Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic president; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent in-between space that innovates and interprets the performance of the present. (p, 7)

Magic Seeds is one such work that deals with exactly what Bhabha discusses above, portraying the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of cultural identity. The novel brings together past and present experiences, not in a coalescent entity but rather in a form that exists side by side for the character Willie, and it is that upon which he is to negotiate his identity or identities. His only resolve, as shall be portrayed in later discussions, is to form a kind of "third space" where all these cultures coupled with his experiences can merge to define him without one acting out as dominant and ripping him apart something that is portrayed in *Half a Life*.

In addition to Bhabha's arguments, Lacan's description of subjectivities postulates that individuals inscribe themselves into their subjectivities through a constant split of these subjectivities. He argues that the subject can never be anything other than the split. It is this split that inadvertently becomes the self or rather a series of selves, which exist due to an individual's constant search for the "real." Willie's journeys can be perceived as a quest for the "real," confirming what Lacan identifies as the "real" which is "whatever is beyond, behind, or beneath phenomenal appearances accessible to the direct experiences of first-person awareness" (Ian, 2014, pp. 232-46). It is like a series of doors which constantly open into one another, and Willie cannot stop himself from opening that next door. In this sequel, Willie's "real" is the guerrilla war, seemingly more tangible because for the first time, he feels he is not going to be an onlooker but one who will actively participate in a struggle which is believably more for himself than for the poor community of India. For the latter, who are looking for better conditions of living and good governance, the struggle might yield. For Willie, whose struggle is more mental than physical, it has to take him into a search for his subject, a return to the "symbolic order" as Lacan suggests, where he is to find the voice of reason that harbors within him. Thus, it is not by coincidence that perhaps the most important part of the novel's setting in *Magic Seeds* is in the forest after Willie has joined the struggle.

The two struggles that Willie faces, the mental and the physical one, or the individual and the social or cultural are parallel with each other. The chapter will illustrate how both aim to partly stamp out Willie's past experiences or change his perception toward life as he has known and lived, yet leave a mark for his future identity formation. Secondly, because *Half a Life* is a prequel to *Magic Seeds*, the chapter will attempt to portray a link between the progressive alienation and thus appropriation that Willie faces while in the Caribbean, Africa, and India. This brings into focus the disillusionment about home and abroad. And finally, the chapter will discuss Willie's settlement into the "third space," whereas questioning his ability to negotiate within it, which continues to rip him apart, causing a failure for his survival in the "third space." The setting in *Magic Seed,* Berlin, the forest, the streets of India, then London, is pivotal to Willie's struggle to achieve an identity or an in-between space. Unlike *Miguel Street* or *Half a Life*, *Magic Seeds* swings the main character from one cultural setting to the next, reviewing and rewinding experiences, giving the character time to contemplate his previous actions and decide on who and what he wants to become. The novel opens with Willie and his sister Sarojini, plotting the next phase in Willie's travels. As part of Willie's series of "others," Sarojini has played her role well by being his voiced conscience. She is the one who manages to spell out right and wrong for Willie and the latter never objects.

Willie's previous quest both in England and Africa are mentioned to bring out the "half a life" that he has lived, and it is about time he changed as the sister suggests. The reader learns through Sarojini that the latter seems to be an aimless struggler which indicates that for the most part, Willie has been trying to find himself, and although he seems to have failed, it may not be the case, as it might be that these diversions that he keeps creating are the only way he is ever going to find his true self. In addition, Lacan asserts that identity can also be found by sustaining desire through a series of detours, thus while Willie might be seen making physical detours by moving from one place to the other, they also ought to be viewed as mental detours, since his physical experience is tantamount to his mental experience. As Willie struggles to find more challenging

ways to live a meaningful life, he as well fulfills his desire for new experiences, which in turn brings on new subjectivities and thus identities that will culminate into one.

4.2. Finding One's Roots: Willie's Quest for Identity in the Indian Root

As mentioned earlier, the setting in the guerrilla forest is very symbolic to the plot of the novel. The nature and characteristics of a forest, thick with plantation but deserted by the lack of human beings, and dark and scary at night are all characteristics that signal what lies ahead for Willie. Like Robert Frost, he ceaselessly questions the road that he has taken and where it will lead him but is also aware that it must be taken. He is aware of the impending danger that lies ahead, but the instruction from his guide, as they walk through the forest, is not to talk or to question anything, which in turn heightens his fear and anxiety. Amidst the silence, Willie has an opportunity to listen not only to the sharp bird cries but also to the questions in his mind. The sounds in the forest, therefore, serve as Freud's swinging pendulum, lulling Willie into sleep and enabling him to travel back in time and find the truth and validity in his actions. He allows himself to feel every emotion, an opportunity to leave in the real world, where human beings experience pain and desire, where one cries if they are in pain and laughs if they are happy.

"That night Willie cried, tears of rage, tears or fear. And in the dawn the cry of the Peacock, after it had drunk from its forest pool, filled him with grief for the whole world" (Naipaul, 2004, p. 50). What stands out in this quotation is the symbolism of the peacock, which in India is one of the most revered birds. Not only is it connected with several myths and legends related to the spiritual realm, but it is also a national symbol which among many things represents the qualities of protectiveness and watchfulness. But the question one poses here is why Willie's feelings of sorrow and grief are intensified by the realization that the peacock is nearby. We can conclude that since the peacock is a national symbol, it is possible that the cries represent discomfort about being in the presence of one who almost denounced his nationality in favor of the foreigners. The peacock also stands to warn Willie that he is being watched and even heard and should, therefore, not attempt to misbehave while in his motherland. To

Willie, all these signals are new chambers of experience, and as he confesses to himself, he must go through them.

Willie's first encounter with his roots portrays something disturbing about his character. He seems not to have developed since the last time he was in the country or in the Caribbean as a child. "He had left India with very little money, the gift from his father and was going back with very little money, the gift from his sister" (MS 28). For all the time and years he has spent abroad, an Oxford graduate at that, he has not a penny of his own, which inadvertently defies the logic of the Windrush generation, that is to say, better living and good job opportunities. His sense of register for the difference in terms of place and people of Berlin and those of India only dawns on him while at the airport heading home, again showing that he has not kept himself abreast of what has been happening back home. His ambivalence is heightened by the realization that India (and Indians) is no longer a far-off place he dreams about, but one where he is going to spend a reasonable amount of time assumedly fighting in a guerrilla struggle.

> "India for him begun in Frankfurt, in the little pen where passengers for India were assembled—*among his own* (emphasis mine). He studied the Indian passengers there… more fearfully than he had studied the Tamils and other Indians in Berlin…But detail by detail, the India he was observing, in the airport pen, and then in the aircraft, the terrible India of Indian family life—the soft physiques, the way of eating, the ways of speech the idea of the father, the idea of the mother, the crinkled, much used plastic shop bags—this India begun to assault him, begun to remind him of things he thought he had forgotten and put aside, things which his idea of his mission had obliterated; and the distance he felt from his fellow passengers diminished." (MS. 29)

Willie's main challenge is to recognize his own country from which he is alienated. He has illusions of it, but the reality strikes him hard. The reality of poverty in the streets and the unchanged way of talking of the local Indians all bring literary defamiliarized memories to him. He wishes to go back a few hours so he can rethink the whole situation in a hope that he can imagine it before seeing it. Moreover, his most apparent battle of "seeing" which shall be discussed in the next section becomes so burdensome that he must constantly remind himself about the conscious action of seeing.

The teak forest in India might be the most looming symbolism in the plot of *Magic Seeds*, which serves as an inlet into the nature of the psychological burden that

Willie's mind undergoes. The journey ought to be understood both as a literal journey back to his roots as an Indian man and as a symbolic journey into his subconscious. In deconstructing both journeys, the psychological one becomes more apparent to this discussion. Forests are characterized by a sense of the unknown represented by their darkness, the gothic silence, and the distinctive but unfathomable bird cries. In Carl Jung's analysis about the mirroring of fictional forests in literary works, he argues that forests are "essentially culturally elaborated representation of the contents of the deepest recesses of the human psyche" (Walker, 2002, p. 4). The journey into the forest is for the reader an insight into Willie's psyche and the choices he has made and is yet to make, which are guided by his experience at this point. For Willie, the forest is another chamber of experience, but it is one that is bigger and helps him to recall all previous experiences, thus gathering them into a big one. He often questions his decision to be in a guerrilla struggle albeit is also aware of his duty to himself, one of facing life and understanding his true self. One can surmise that this journey into self-discovery yields to a greater extent because after being to the forest, he learns how to maneuver in the dark, how the looming silence can be louder than the spoken word, allowing him to communicate with his subconscious. In general, the forest offers not the physical attributes of darkness and silence, but rather the more intricate capability for one to go into a subconscious journey toward self-discovery. Thus, the forest environment gives him an opportunity to contemplate about the past, the present, and the future. His constant reference of the psychic chamber he and his comrades find themselves in is a cause for him to probe the real circumstances of his and their choice, which are totally different from one another.

> …he wondered what weakness or failure had caused them in midlife to leave the outer world and to enter this strange chamber… He could only try to read the faces and physiques: the too-full, sensual mouth, in some speaking of some kind of sexual persuasion, the hard mean eyes in others, the bruised—seeming eyes of yet others that spoke of hard or abused childhoods and tormented adult lives. That was as far as he could read. Among these people seeking in various ways to revenge themselves on the world, he was among strangers. (Naipaul, 2004, p. 53)

This discovery does not make Willie waiver in his mission as a "guerrilla fighter," as he cannot dare to show his true resolve, because the actual guerrilla fighters would take him

to be a deserter. Deep down he is aware that he is in the wrong place; however, as earlier argued, this is a journey into self-discovery, one he must abide by. He thinks to himself

> "Kandapali was right. If I was concerned with making a resolution for the defeated, and the insulted, if like Kandapali I would cry easily at the thought of peoples unrevenged sorrows, over the centuries, these are not the men I would want with me. I would go to the poor themselves."
> (p. 54)

From the above, one understands that Willie must create his own guerrilla forest, one where he can be himself, and fight his own inner psychological battles because one can fight for others if he has done fighting for himself. His journey back to his roots, the place of his birth India, is a return to his symbolic order in Lacanian terms. This is where he will find his big "Other" and, by so doing, discover who he is. Therefore, the forest is significantly to be perceived as one analogous to Willie's mind. Willie does not go to the forest but to his mind, the forest in this case acts as a frame, a passage through which he will enter and gain access to his mind.

4.3. A Way of Seeing: Perception versus Idealism in the Sense of Third-Space Identity

In the previous section, we encounter Willie as a man who has made a choice to look but not see for most of his life, which explains the distance, detachment, and alienation he feels at the start of the novel. He becomes conscious of this shortcoming, and thus he is acutely aware of how estranged he has become and is determined to change this aspect of his life. His way of seeing things, as a man who lived in England or Berlin, has changed his view toward life. He is, however, aware that he must choose between "looking" and "seeing," and his choice is now to see and perceive with unmitigated attention. It is not that there were no poor Indians in England or Berlin, he had chosen to be and think like those who were better off and, as a result, manages to escape the gruesome reality that was right before his eyes. He has detached himself from this way of looking at things until the time he is in India. It seems apparent that he needs to constantly remind himself of his cause and the reason as to why he is in the country; otherwise, he might not go through with the mission.

When he is in Africa, Willie lives through and sees a guerrilla war, not one but several, and thinks of joining the cause as Sarojini interrogates, because at the time, he still does not consider it a reasonable to fight any battles that do not directly affect him. In *Magic Seeds*, he feels lost, a man who has had no reason or cause to live, one who cannot identify himself with anyone or anything, thus feeling justified to join the struggle despite the challenges of being so alienated from the cause itself. He constantly reminds himself about the necessity to be able to "see," to attain a new vision or become conscious of what he sees. "I am seeing what am seeing because I made myself another person. I cannot make myself that old person again. But I must go back to that old way of seeing. Otherwise my cause is lost before I have begun" (Naipaul, 2004, p. 53). In this quotation, Willie seems to be congratulating himself upon being able to be realistic once again, to see things in black and white because he cannot go back to the self-destructive "old ways of seeing," the way of the disillusioned Indian boy walking the

streets of Berlin and thinking he is one of them. As a man who has just regained his sight, Willie's India offers to him a completely strange experience due to the unfamiliar sight that greets him, and it is hard for him to fathom that he is entwined with this sight.

Regaining sight is not only a literal understanding by far, but also a connotative one and thus might be exemplified using one of Lacan's registers, the symbolic order. What Willie saw in the past can be taken to be symbols that presented themselves in the form of the "real." However, because the real itself is an unstable structure, it keeps on changing and evolving into other forms that in the end cease to hold interest and meaning for him. Willie's sense of alienation is thus heightened by the desire to "see" and perhaps experience the "real." In Easthope's discussion of Bhabha, Lacan, and Derrida on the topic of hybridity and identity, he touches upon how the former diverts from the Cartesian ego, by inviting one to live in a "state of pure hybridity. Bhabha's undermining of the essentialist subject invites the critic to 'privilege difference" (Easthope, 1998). Thus, when Willie questions his way of seeing, he is inviting himself and the reader to question the utopian understanding of the orient and the occident as two different places endowed with different cultures, which ought to be approached differently and apparently a new way of perceiving his surroundings. At the airport in Frankfurt and in India, he is bewildered by the sight of things he thought he had seen and was familiar with, but he realizes he had merely forgotten to see the way he should see. His universalized (one he acquires) as well as a blurred vision of the world disintegrates at the sight of the two airports. However, what is unique about his way of seeing now is that he sees with foresight, his vision is clearer, and he is now cognizant of his surroundings.

> "…Twenty years ago, I wouldn't have seen what am seeing now. I am seeing what I see because I have made myself another person. I cannot make myself that old person again. But I must go back to that old way of seeing. Otherwise my cause is lost before I have begun." Willie urges himself not to be blinded and even fooled with the world of abundance, a world of equal opportunities, but an illusionary world that promised him so much and gave him nothing in the end. He could not have seen that twenty years ago because then, the binaries that have been drawn between him as an Indian man and the Other—the colonial power are so enabling that he is blinded towards the cultural difference that these two places pose." (p. 30)

The metaphor of seeing thus alludes to an attempt to be able to understand and register aspects of life in a more "realistic" manner. However, as mentioned earlier, this indeed is a misrecognition of a symbol that has posed itself in the form of the real, and very soon Willie starts to regret his decision and lose interest in the whole guerrilla fight idea. As one who is resisting subjectivity for a hybrid, his understanding of the world has to be in a constant shift. He ponders the extent of boredom he has felt since his arrival in India (the very place he wanted to be), the boredom at the hotel while being alone in his dust filled room, the eleven long hours of no sound and no questions at night in the teak forest all now seem meaningless because having actually approached this reality, he realizes it was a mirage. In his own voice, Willie recollects, "I have never known these terrible nights of boredom. I suppose it is in kind of training, a kind of asceticism, but for what I am not sure. I must look upon it as another Chamber of experience. I must give no sign to these people that I am not absolutely with them." This again points to the fact that he is a changed man who is able to decipher his surroundings and thus is aware that being among fighters means that he is a fighter too. His fight has begun, a fight for the understanding of split identities. That is why he is quick to recognize that what he is experiencing is a chamber of experience.

The chamber that Willie alludes to here is connotative of a chamber in the house. The reader can imagine perhaps an English-style mansion, with many hard-to-perceive chambers. These are the different chambers or stores of experiences which are and will be necessary if he must achieve his final subjective self. Our literal understanding of a chamber is one with walls and even a door that locks out or locks in. This means that Willie's challenge also involves his ability to unlock these chambers such that his experiences can interact with one another and merge at some point in his life. However, there might be a possibility of the inability to unlock the chambers, and as such the experiences become locked up forever, thus continuing to work as a separatist models upon which his subjectivities thrive but in split categories.

The process of self-discovery necessitates a search through different avenues, a revisiting of known and unknown places. One of those places for Willie is the books he has read and studies in the past. A previously accomplished writer, Willie's readership is challenged the first time he attempts to read books from his past. Moreover, his choice is very systematic, as he avoids such works that show other people's lives, portraying what is false, which is exactly what he is attempting to escape.

> "These books had been printed in the 1920's and the paper, from that earlier time of stringency was cheap and grey; perhaps some student or teacher had brought these textbooks from England or Berlin. Willie had liked mathematics at school. He had liked logic, the charm of solutions; and it occurred to him now that these were the books he would need in the forest. They would keep his mind alive; they would not repeat; they would move from lesson to lesson, stage to stage, they would offer no disturbing pictures of men and women in played-out too-simple societies." (p. 32)

The notion of reading while at war centers on the character's search for knowledge as he heads into the forest, the latter being analogous to his mind. It would seem superfluous for one to think about Willie's choice of weaponry that he regards as necessary in the forest amid a guerrilla struggle. In *Half a Life,* we learn that Willie was an accredited composer and writer which all require him to be a good reader. However, if his choice of books necessary for his survival in the forest include logic and other mathematical problems, then it would be right to surmise that he has not yet made a choice to read, to learn, or rediscover lost knowledge. This judgement springs from the fact that he has chosen books that will not portray human stories reminding him of life itself, but such books as ones that will cause further distraction and alienation from the real world. He is still a man torn between the choice of the real and the abstract, but both are in constant transition, replacing each other all the time.

The result is that he fails to read these books while still in the hotel, even before he sets out to go to the forest. He fails his own task or test that he has set himself; the books become useless to him then and he realizes they will not be of any good, especially in the forest, for while they serve to show that there seems to be no escape for Willie and that the time has come for him to confront his demons, they might also give him away as a man of books, one who has simply come to distract himself away from his

troubled life, whose struggle is neither with the rest of the guerrilla fighters nor for the people of India but for himself. This failure to seek refuge in his books brings on another challenge and exposes his utter alienation further. He is laid bare to the reader as one who is merely drifting in life even though he has to face the world without any pretenses. "This failure, so simple, so quick, so comprehensive, before he had got started, filled him with gloom, made it hard for him to stay in the little room with the blotched walls, and even harder for him to go out into the warm, buzzing city. The books had given him a kind of pride, a kind of protection. Now he was naked" (p. 33).

The struggle of gaining and regaining knowledge involves a deliberate decision to learn anew or develop a sense of understanding and ability to separate fact and fiction. Willie has for the most part thought of the India and Africa (places that are categorized as the orient) as inferior and beneath him. Having been to these places, his idea changes as he is being adopted by Joseph on their first encounter, both of them pursuers of a common goal. "Primitive they say, but I think that's where the Africans have an edge on us. They know who they are. We don't" (p. 38). The onset of Willie's insight into correct information are snippets and clues of what Joseph relays to him. As an Indian student who is bed-ridden and struggling to commute to and from the university, living in a ramshackle apartment, he knows that the world Willie assumes to be knowing is quite different from what he is going to see in India and different from that which he saw in Africa. In one of the discussions he holds with Joseph, he states, "I always had sympathy for Africans, but I saw from the outside. I never really found out about them. Most of the time I saw Africa through the eyes of the colonists. They were the people I lived with and then suddenly that life ended, Africa was all around us and we all had to run" (p. 38).

Once Willie can perceive these two different worlds, then he can allow himself to be exposed to different identities as shall be discussed later. Joseph has the role of preparing him for exactly this journey first of resigning to the situation and then taking away every lesson it has to offer. "We are in one of the saddest places in the world here.

111

Twenty times sadder than what you saw in Africa. In Africa, the colonial past would have been there for to see. Here you can't begin to understand the past, and when you get to know it, you wish you didn't" (p. 39). And indeed, in later chapters in the novel, we see Willie regretting having come to the forest, confessing to his sister that this was not his war and he should never have pretended to understand the causes of the fighters that had made a choice to go the forest.

The experience of the forest and India exposes Willie's weakness as a character, he is disgruntled by the dirt, the stench, the lack of food, and proper shelter. It exposes the stereotypical thinking that Willie had of Africa because if he thought Africa was bad, now he is faced with something that is incomparable to what he sees in India.

> 'soon he knew when he found himself in the forest or countryside this bazar would appear an impossible luxury. There would be other foods, other austerities: he would be ready for them when they came. He was already in his own mind a kind of ascetic, almost a seeker. He had never known anything like it—Africa in the bad days had been the opposite of this, had been suffering alone—and it made him lightheaded. (p. 42)

Much of what transpires then in the forest is a revelation of Willie's transformation. He is not accustomed to his oscillating feelings, sometimes of admiration, or of hatred. In general sense, he is not accustomed to the shifting personalities that he seems to be experiencing.

Moreover, our perceptions that spring to our heads are created as a result of stereotypical thinking that in turn lead to a grandiose idea we hold for places or things that may in actual sense be false. For instance, the perception that Willie had of England or Africa is different from his actual encounter of these places. "It seems more exciting than it was. Words can give wrong ideas. The names of places can give wrong ideas. They have too many grand associations. When you are in the place itself, London, Africa, everything can seem ordinary" (p. 60). This statement coincides with Willie's disillusionment about the guerrilla struggle with his ideas about what India is. However, it also points to the idea that life is a vicious circle, and in Willie's own words, he has been dealt a bad hand. The long letter he writes to Sarojini, when he finally can muster

up the courage to do so, explains his inner turmoil about his decision that has further pushed him away from himself to the point of feeling lost.

> "Dear Sarojini, I don't have to tell you that I came into this thing with the purest of hearts and to do what with the teachings and the prompting of my own mind had begun to seem to me to be bright. But now I must tell you I feel I am lost. I don't know what cause I am serving, and why I am doing what I do. Right now I am working in a sugar factory, carting wet bagasse from ten at night to three in the morning for twelve rupees a day. What this has to do with the cause of revolution I cannot see. I see only that I have put myself in other people's hands. I did that once before, you will remember, when I went to Africa. I intended never to do it again, but I find now that I have. I am with a senior man of the movement here. I am not easy with him, and I don't think he is easy with me. I have run away from the room we share to write this letter."

Among the most revealing things about the character's sense of isolation and alienation is the letter that he writes to his sister, narrating his journey to the forest and the kind of people he meets. At this point, Willie understands he is among people who he thinks are fighting a war that he did not want to fight. He is on the wrong side of the coin to be precise. As a person looking to identify himself with a certain group of people who will help him find a sense of belonging, he has once again hit a dead end. However, this time around, he has nowhere to hide, because for Willie, India is home, no matter which part it is, no matter whether it stinks or is dirty and unhealthy. He can still fathom the idea of home, even as every sense in him tells him he is not with the right people. In addition, having reached the forest, he is aware that he can do but one thing, stick around to the very end, because he is sure just as he explains to his sister that any slight mistake might lead to his death. It is the same disillusionment he sees in Keso, a guerrilla fighter (but now a deserter) that drives him into becoming what he is. As a university student, he idealizes about the poor, thinking he understands their cause, but the time he spends in the forest does little to convince him of his cause. His attempt at spreading his philosophy, which is to kill the landlord and make the peasant happy, does not yield results as many of the peasants would not lift a finger against their landlords. According to the peasant "to kill the landlord, would be like killing the goose that laid the golden egg." Thus, many of the characters encountered in the forest who are part of the revolutionary struggle are part of a large group that is trying to find their footing, to find their identity and mediate a certain sense of belonging even if it is to a guerrilla group.

An outstanding characteristic about the fighters is that almost all of them were previously university students who have been exposed to the Western imperial machines and are trying to rid themselves of the foreign civilization that has been inculcated in them. They prefer to live among the poor and survive on rice grains on the grounds and be among those they can identify with. However, their disillusioned selves still stand out to the villagers who, according to Willie, do not think much of them.

> "But probably we are like that to the villagers. Probably without knowing it we've all become a little mad or unbalanced… it's always easy to see the other man's strangeness…we can see the madness of the villagers who want us to kill people for them [but] we can't see our own strangeness. Though I have begun to feel my own." (p. 130)

This exposes the cultural identity difference between these two groups of people. Willie, Bhoj Narayan, Keso, and many other educated fighters who have been exposed to Western forms of education experience a sort of diasporic identity (Hall, 1996) which clashes with their already formed identities as Indians. However, because the process of finding a middle ground is not easy and may not be immediate, the individuals must transit slowly to negotiate their identities. These fighters might be merely caricatures of would-be guerrilla fighters whose desired paths have led them into the forest, though their duties in the forest are not undeviating. In later parts of the novel after Willie and Einstein have surrendered to the police, it is amazing how the former assumes this act will automatically secure his amnesty. It is clear he does not understand the differences between revolutionary fighters and the police or state rule. As a matter of fact, and to his utter disappointment, he is suspected and later charged with a crime he did not commit. This mistake by the police creates further alienation, for at the beginning he feels he has been a participant in the struggle, but even the actual and only brutal killing he commits goes unnoticed. He regrets; thus, "how unfair it is. Most of my time in the movement, in fact nearly all my time, was spent in idleness. I was horribly bored most of the time. I was going to tell Sarojini… how blameless my life as a revolutionary had been, and how idleness had driven me to surrender." Willie's clock seems to have returned to midnight, he is back at the beginning and reminds the reader how disillusioned he was in thinking that war could save him. As a person working against the state in a

114

revolutionary struggle, he has still come out with little or no blame whatsoever but rather has taken a fall for other people. His consolation is in the fact that the superintendent has quite another idea of his life and has grouped him among the most active guerrilla fighters. "However, all these fighters essentially (although unintentionally) disavow the colonial pinning of the authority that has been imposed on them and find different avenues through which to negotiate their identities. The [forest] is liminal space, in-between the designation of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower—a temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities." (Bhabha, 1994, p. 5)

Willie's encounter with these fighters brings him to the realization that he is tired of being evasive and is willing and perhaps ready to face one part of his subjectivity however gruesome, although lacking the ability to settle in its definitive polarities. Even when he contemplates running back to his father's homestead at the time when he has just joined the struggle, the thought of it seems to be more unpleasant than staying with the guerrillas in particular with Bhoj Narayan, his personal guide. Moreover, he has found a friend and companion in the latter, with whom they turn out to be laborer picking bagasse on a sugar plantain which the latter refers to as "honest labor." This statement is loaded for Willie, and he cannot stop to wonder why Bhoj Narayan says it at that time. As readers, we understand that for someone who has not earned his keep for a long time, (may be not once in his life time) it presents Willie with the same difficult option, that of staying and facing the hard facts of life, of facing one of his many selfhoods and not hiding from reality. His idea of the escape is further pushed from his mind with the waiter's uniform which has been cleaned when they go to eat with Bhoj Narayan in their usual restaurant. It signifies new beginnings and changes to old things as well as illustrates that one can change his old ways and become exactly that person he or she aspires to be. "The waiter's clean and white uniform was a sign. That idea of changing a hundred marks into rupees and making my way back to the ashram was a bad idea. It

is cowardly. It is against all my knowledge of the world. I must never think of it again" (Naipaul, 2004, p. 72).

Willie's state of mind goes through a shift, from someone who thinks he is fighting the wrong battle to one who thinks this is exactly where he should be. The news of his father's illness is a realization that he can no longer excuse himself and perhaps later on hold his father or his sister responsible for his misfortunes in life. At the time when they receive no news from the courier who is supposed to give them more money, whereafter Bhoj Narayan assumes there must be calamity in the camp, Willie is the first to propose that they should help their comrades. "You are right. We should start thinking of making our way back to the camp. If there has been a calamity, they will need us all the more."

This is yet another turning point in the plot like many where Willie starts to feel more duty bound as a guerrilla fighter and less as a masquerading university student. Although nothing has really happened to show that Willie's identity is changing and starting to shape up, yet we see that his mindset is changing. He starts to take the lead now and goes on to suggest decisive ideas related to the war and the guerrilla struggle. Most important is the fact that he notices that he has started to have feelings, feelings he has not felt before in his entire life, feelings of friendship and companionship. "I have never had this feeling for any man. It is wonderful and enriching, this feeling of friendship. I have waited forty years for it. This business is working out." There are several ways through which Willie's feelings and sense of fulfilment at this precise moment could be interpreted. Firstly, that having worked so closely with someone amidst disconcerting and unhealthy environments, he feels he has someone supporting him and ready not to let him fall. Secondly, the fact that Willie finds a man who is more or less like him, a man who just like Willie is in struggle for which he knows no cause, or plot, or end, a man who is passing for Willie's guide but is as green as the former himself, makes him realize he is looking at himself. It can suffice to say that Willie meets his other and is comforted by this realization that Bhoj Narayan is more or less like him.

4.4. Willie's Third Space and His Coming into Being

This section discusses how Willie overcomes his allusions and disillusions, which is necessary in the process of trying to identify himself and those around him. In all of Willie's journeys, his challenge of losing track of his life always comes out at the fore, especially when he is faced with a difficult situation. His method of keeping track has always been to count all the beds where he has slept since the time of his birth. The beds not only signify the places he has been to but they are each a "separate chamber of experience and sensibility, each one a violation with which he in the end would live as though it was a complete world" (Naipaul, 2004, p. 59). However, as things get tougher on Willie, as the tension and stress mount due to him being in the forest at a time when he has lost his companion Bhoj Narayan and the hope of receiving letters from Sarojini has dwindled, the habit of counting beds to relieve his anxiety also diminishes and becomes "undifferentiated," thus ceasing to hold any meaning for him. On one of the days when he was in the forest, "he felt his memory slipping, like time now, and with that slipping of memory the point of the mental exercise disappeared." This act which was originally for the purpose of keeping his memory alert had become too strenuous because it ceased to hold any meaning as there proved less and less beds to count in the forest. "He gave it up; it was like shedding a piece of himself." (p. 107) He lets go of one of his habits which have defined his character, meaning that apart of him has also gone. This part will have been replaced by a whole new experience, a new habit and later an alternative identity. Later in the novel, after he seems to have lost all his friends and has been assigned a new camp and leaders, he becomes laden with thought and anxiety, and however desperately he tries, he cannot resort to old habits to alleviate his apprehension.

> He remembered the time when it consoled him, gave him a hold on things, to count the beds he had slept in. Such a hold was no longer possible for him. He wished now passionately only to save himself, to get in touch with himself again, to get away to the upper air. But he didn't know where he was. His only consolation – and he wasn't sure how much of a consolation it was— was that, amid all the strangers whose characters he didn't want to read, whom (out of his great fatigue and disorientation now) he wished to keep as mysteries—his only consolation was that at two-weekly meetings of the section he continued to see Einstein. (p. 39)

117

As mention earlier, Willie's only chance at survival is through those that he befriends, because the men and comrades in the struggle seem to complete his already polarized identity. Because the counting of beds is a sort of solace, it would suffice to note that Willie's split self is becoming more evident as he spends more time in the forest. The acknowledgement of it is tantamount to a sense of maturity for Willie, and it is this aspect that will enable him to survive future identity predicaments. He has become aware that he as a person has a variety of chambers of experience and is moreover split into different subjectivities. Notwithstanding these facts, Willie is conscious of these changes and is affected by them, affected by the inability to maintain one track of thought or being stack into one for reasonable amounts of time. When he first sees Bhoj Narayan, his dislike of him is apparent. This also applies to Ramachandra, his new commandant after the latter has been arrested, and the same pattern follows for Keso. He loses vision of these differences and starts to consequently like all these men. It is not surprising, therefore, that these men are replaced by Einstein as soon as they are out of the picture, and when he finally goes back to London, they are all replaced by Roger.

Aside from the ambivalence that underlies his relationship with his comrades and later friends, his dislike and later respect, his failure to control his feelings, yet seeming to make efforts to consolidate them into a definitive identity serves to signal the polarization of character that haunts him as an individual. He thinks that the more he tries to understand these men and the situation he finds himself in, the more he loses touch with himself, yet on the other hand, he gains ground in terms fighting for his true identity. Whereas such feelings may seem to make him feel that his grip on reality is loosening, his ineffable view towards life, coupled with the decision to become a guerrilla fighter, become more distant even to him; he feels he is not in charge of his life. This is due to the fact that he had deluded himself about the struggle, and what he experiences is a reawakening to his reality and the reality of those around him who seem to be in the same albeit not foregrounded predicament. It is a form of reality which at the same time will remain distant because of the diverged nature of his identity that shall forever shift to suit the circumstance in which he finds himself. At the time he leaves

Africa in *Half a Life*, he does so because he feels he is living another person's life. "Perhaps men can live more planned lives where they are more masters of their destiny. Perhaps it is like that in the simplified world outside" (p. 113). But Willie is not alone in his failure to be the master of his destiny. His commander and friend Ramachandra tells him how in a bid to impress his professor ends up embarrassing himself by offering dinner hosted by a stranger. To his embarrassment, his professor confesses that his background as a child was like his. The villager that Willie kills in cold blood is as a result of him wanting to impress his commander and not wanting to be seen as a weakling, a guerrilla fighter who is incapable of pulling a trigger on an unwavering villager. Therefore, to prove that he is a man of caliber, he pulls the trigger only for this act to go unnoticed.

Both Willie and Ramachandra's way of living is filled with misconceptions and disillusions which they will need to rectify if they are to move forward in such a dynamic society that they find themselves in. Their experiences with "The London of the Books" (in the case of Ramachandra) and the physical one for Willie also portrays that what they had previously imagined was not the same compared to what they see or hear about. Ramachandra is told by his teacher about having missed half of his life because of not reading "The Three Musketeers,' but to his dismay and after fighting tooth and nail to get himself a copy of the book, he realizes that there is nothing to the book, he realizes that his teacher probably says it because "his teacher had said the same thing to him." This sort of mimicry and imitation is what has come down to everyone by default and leads to misunderstanding and misappropriation for people like Willie, Bhoj Narayan, Ramachandra, and all the other guerrilla fighters. However, beside his being a lousy guerrilla fighter, Willie seems to have gone to the battle with pure instinct rather than with skill, (a fact he too is aware of and does not deny), thus it takes the revolutionists just a couple of days to conclude this fact.

> "The point about a good courier is that he is has to look OK everywhere. He must never stand out. And you do that very well Willie. Have you ever watched a street? I have, watching for policemen in disguise, and it does not take long to spot the people in a street who don't belong. Even trained people. They can't help it. They give themselves away in twenty ways. But for some

reason Willie looks at home everywhere. Even in the bagasse yard he looked at home." To this statement Willie replies, "It's the thing I have worked at all my life: not being at home anywhere, but looking at home." (p. 74)

From the above quotations, one ought to surmise that Willie is well aware of his unhomeliness, and it should have sunk in him by the time he goes to India. After all, he is able to fit in even in the most unusual situations like that of the bagasse yard and later on of being a messenger for the guerrillas. The issue being probed here is why Willie still feels alienated, yet in his whole life, he has worked toward his ability not to stand out even where he is a stranger. The answer, as perhaps hypothesized earlier, lies in his ability and willingness to come to terms with a sort of third space, an in-between space from which to negotiate all the different cultural experiences that he has encountered over time and has immersed throughout his entire life. It is this third space that will help him come to terms with the differing structures of his characters such that he neither surprises himself nor does he surprise those around him by what might appear as inappropriate behavior. And as Einstein points it out to him after their failed attempt to kidnap the minister (a gesture to acknowledge solidarity with Kandapali), "all plans should have that little room for flexibility—*just like all identities (emphasis mine)*." In Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, he explains that, "though unrepresentable in itself, [third space] constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure the meaning and the symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (1994, p. 55). This is why for Willie, the symbols that define him have no fixity and are not definitive, and thus he needs to negotiate them accordingly from time to time. In addition, he has to come to terms with this fact so as to rid himself of the feeling of alienation that has forever come to define his character. Throughout *Miguel Street* and *Half a Life*, he is on the search for this third or in-between space. The search has come to nothing because he previously does not acknowledge this need. At this moment in the plot of *Magic Seeds*, we cannot say that he has achieved it but can rely on the fact that he finally realizes that he has no definitive self and that he has to continuously navigate through different character traits to be able to live as one Willie. The importance of this sort of plot is that it enables Willie

120

to relive his past through the experiences that he has while in the forest, and as a courier for the guerrilla fighters, he remembers much of how uselessly he has lived his life. Later after he learns about Joseph's betrayal, he is the least surprised by the news but rather approaches it with the view that in the past few years that he has spent in the forest, he has "gotten used to the fluidity, so to speak, of human personality as it adapted to new circumstances" (Naipaul, 2004, p. 154). Indeed, having come to this conclusion by himself, it demonstrates how his identity is starting to take shape.

It would be sufficient to note that the struggle on a whole is a sort of breeding ground for Willie's inner character. Besides finding his other self in his companion Bhoj Narayan, he also becomes aware of his feelings and his purpose in the struggle. His distrust of his friend acts as a checkpoint for the uncompromising nature of the guerrilla fighters and he becomes continuously aware that he cannot let any of them down or give them away to the police. His character has thus matured into one that can make informed decisions and navigate through life well knowing what the stakes are. Although he is sad that Raja, the scooter man, is killed after making his intention known for wanting to desert the struggle, he does not show his feelings or even make a comment. However, he is taken aback by this act of one of his best and lifetime companions, and he too is forced to ponder about his would-be course of action were he to find himself in the same predicament.

> "I do not think I would willingly betray Bhoj Narayan to anyone. I do not think there is any point. I haven't worked out why I feel there is no point. I could say various things about justice and people on the other side. But it would not be true. The fact is I have arrived at a new way of feeling. And it is amazing that it should have happened just after fourteen or fifteen months of this strange life. The first night in the camp in the teak forest, I was disturbed by the faces of the new recruits. Later I was disturbed by the faces at the meetings in the safe houses. I feel I understand them all now." (p. 89)

Willie's sense of maturity does not only manifest in his thought but also in his improved manner of taking precaution, especially with the "poste restante" one of his most frequented places where he goes to post to or receive a letter from his sister. He interprets his sense of precaution as a feeling of foreboding and perhaps a curse that has been brought on because of a bad death (that of Raja the scooter man). However, the reader

121

can surmise that the one who came with no clue about the guerrilla warfare is better at the game than those he found with years of experience. Willie's identity[ies] is beginning to take shape, starting with the ability to understand that when you are in a war, factors are never constant. One day you are chasing your enemy, the next, it is your enemy at your heels. It is not surprising that at the point when he is supposed to be picked up by the police that have lain low at the poste restante waiting to catch him, miss him and instead mistakenly take his companion Bhoj Narayan who is obliged to receive the letter on Willie's behalf. The new Willie is able to sniff danger from a distance and is smart enough to save himself first; he seems to have mastered the rule of war—survival for the fittest.

Later in the novel, Einstein echoes the same sentiment of an individual's ability to be flexible to situation when Willie is on the police list for having murdered a village landlord. "That's the way the world is. People are now on this side, now on that. You didn't like me when you first saw me. I didn't like you when I first saw you. The world is like that. …From now on, just remember this: You have done nothing. Things happened around you. Other people did things. But you did nothing. That is what you must remember for the rest of your life" (p. 143). This is perhaps one of the strongest signals for Willie to learn and adapt to the varying shifts in his subjectivities. As a fighter, he was ruthless and capable of killing, but these culpable crimes as advised by his friends should not define him. He must learn to shift with changing times, learn to kill but not become a killer by disabling his ability to remember the act itself. In fact, his commander tells him the memory would last only six months, and perhaps the same way he forgot and found strenuous the habit of counting beds. This too would be a mirage, not a memory that he would or should hold onto for long.

The other crucial turning point in the plot of *Magic Seeds* is the killing of the villager that Willie involves himself in. Although he contemplates escape, he does not seem totally willing to go through with it. He seems to have gone on a journey of self-rebuke for having lived the life he had lived in London, Africa, and Berlin. He appears

to be bent on castigating himself as seen from the choice of the prison cell that he makes after he is taken into custody, as though in a bid to enter another chamber of experience. In the same vein, however, he has to train his mind to succumb to his new life, a life that has become like "[a] yoga consciously practiced until the conditions of each new difficult mode of life became familiar, became life itself" (p. 149). These feelings are confirmed by his confession to his sister in a letter about how he currently perceives his actions since joining the struggle.

> "That war was not yours or mine and it had nothing to do with the village people we said we were fighting for. We talked about their oppression, but we were exploiting them all the time. Our ideas and words were more important than their lives and their ambitious for themselves—and it continues even here, where the talkers have favoured treatment and the poor are treated as the poor always are." (p. 161)

Whatever future changes society and discourse may approach, Lacan in contrast would endeavor to return us to an anti-Utopian conclusion. It can never finally come right, neither in a communist future which promises the rendering of objective realization as free choice nor in a world in which the Cartesian ego has vanished into wall-to-wall hybridity. "No one will ever elude that constitutive either/or between Being and Meaning in which the real and the rational necessarily exclude each other. Choose being and you fall into non-meaning; choose Meaning and you get it but only because your is eclipsed by its disappearance into the field of the signifier" (Easthope, 1998, pp. 145-151).

4.5. Prison as a Shaping Force for Willie's Identity

This section concludes the analysis of Willie's effort at attaining an in-between third space arena in which to navigate his many identities that he has immersed himself in over the years. At the start of the novel, he is a lost man, looking for places to go and seemingly open to suggestions because for some reason this is the kind of life he has lived, a life of indecisiveness, in his own words, "a drifter," of acting without a purpose and later living with regret. His idea, or his sister's idea for him, to join the struggle in India, designed to save the poor, is so he can find meaning and purpose in life and finally do something for which he can claim to have lived life for. As already discussed, the choice he makes is rather ironic for a man of his character, a choice which requires character and resilience. Even though it is seen that at the beginning he continuously nurtures thoughts of escape, he cannot dare to run away from his last chance at saving his drifting self. For even one with many identities needs to understand this very fact and learn how to be Indian when the time for being Indian comes, as well as shift to being British when the time requires it.

While at the airport once again in London, after being released from prison, he attempts to see the variance between the airport lounges for immigrants from all over the world and British nationals, which obviously poses a marked difference. This is an unwillful attempt to break down his resolve after his "educational" years in prison. Therefore, before he reaches a point of no return in such thoughts, he immediately cautions himself not to relive these moments. This is a road he has taken, and he has come back to the starting point as if in a vicious circle that is trying to remind him of his past. "I must let that part of me die. I must lose that vanity. I must understand that big countries grow or shrink according to the play of internal forces that are beyond the control of any one man. I must try now to be only myself. If such a thing is possible" (Naipaul, 2004, p. 170). Thus, the new circle for Willie begins, exactly where it has all started by going to the airport and then to India. The circle actually dates as far back as Africa, but in this analysis, the choice to date it at the airport in Frankfurt is because this

is the time Willie makes and sees that stark comparisons between Frankfurt and the airport in India. He sees the difference between the German passengers and the Indian passengers and begins to caution himself about that way of perceiving things. At the airport in London, he is very aware of his surroundings and understands that it is not his place to feel pity whatsoever, and moreover, he gets the sense that he cannot control or even join a war to affect changes of any sort. Later after they have arrived at Roger's house near the *London Bean Stalk*, he reveals to him that he had begun to understand that he was no longer in jail, "…and some other person, not absolutely myself, begun to crawl out as it were, from hiding." He further adds, "I don't know whether I will be able to live with this new person. I am not sure I can get rid of him. I feel he will always be there, waiting for me."

He is aware of the challenge that the struggle poses to identity, thus later toward the end of the novel, he questions the way he has lived and the things he has done to identify himself with. He questions why he has never had a room of his own, which is a direct inference to Virginia Wolf's *A Room of My Own* (1929). "I have never slept in a room of my own. Never here in London. Never in Africa. I lived in somebody else's house always and slept in somebody else's bed. In the forest of course there [are] no beds and the jail [is] the jail" (Naipaul, 2004, p. 177).

Additionally, Roger's explanation helps him to understand that it is useless to let life surprise one, in a way echoing what his comrades had always told him about being able to adjust easily even in difficult situations. Instead, it should be that one lets the happenings of life fall on him or her with the least astonishment; this way, a life of regret and self-reproach can be avoided. Thus, Roger refuses his breakup with Perdita to define him, or overtly affect him. He determines for his life to go on undeterred by the fact of his cheating wife.

The years that Willie spends in the forest and later the months in prison can all be categorized as some form of prison, the first a self-inflicted one and the second an actual one after being accused of committing crimes against humanity while in the

revolutionary struggle. Neither places offer much freedom, but rather an opportunity to revisit one's mind and search for the lost self. Therefore, when Willie is arrested, he continues the same path of self-discovery while in his many prison cells that he resides in. This is emphasized by the fact that the same prison harbors his comrades, who have also been charged with similar crimes but have also betrayed him to the guards as one who might have participated in the actual crimes and was never an innocent onlooker. After all these experiences, he becomes a changed man, one who understands why people behave the way they do and does not live in regret due to his actions. The things he previously struggled to do now came to him easily, and the most important of these was the act of reading. He was always afraid of reading because it painted unrealistic pictures, but after the prison, he becomes able to separate the two worlds and the two functions of reading and living. The former is more passive and less realistic, and the latter very active and non-fictional. This is how he describes his feelings when he starts to read, albeit he is afraid that his old self would resurface at this act:

> …he begun to read. And then very quickly he was drawn in; he shed his nerves. He ceased to be aware of the room and city in which he read; he ceased to be aware of reading. He felt himself transported, as if eight years before, when he was writing. He felt he could re-enter even the sequence of the days, see again the streets and weather and newspapers, of not having a true grasp even of the map of the world. (p. 180)

It can be surmised that it is this first act of reading after the years of war and prison that gives a clue about his ability to navigate his new identity or identities. He manages to read without breaking out and without a shred of doubt or foreboding that always characterized his previous attempts. During this time, he feels he can re-enter even the sequence of days that he lived in London or Berlin without remorse. "He entered that time of innocence or ignorance, of not having a true grasp of the map of the world." He feels exhilarated that from time to time throughout his reading and in the same space and temporal setting, he is able to "come to himself from time to time and then go back to his book and re-enter that other life, living again the sequence of weeks and months, anxiety always below everything…" (p. 124). This serves to portray Willie's gained ability to negotiate different cultural identities without being anxious, moving in and out

of varying situations within the same time scope. It is not surprising that even when Roger asks him to join him dressed in his bathrobe for a drink, a practice commonly done by the "banker" who is also a friend of Roger's—Willie is aware that he is playing another man's role, being and acting another person's character and thus in that moment assuming another identity—he does not waver but follows Roger's request. Therefore, he begins to celebrate this new identity shifts, understanding that the world is bigger than he is, especially when he sees the multicultural present-day London in the context of the novel. "Now I can only celebrate what I am, or what I have become" (p. 188). However, as noted earlier, all these changes do not last long, the individual keeps shifting, and thus it is yet again not surprising that he starts to feel bored even while making love to Perdita: "it was habit alone—not need, not excitement that made him take Perdita up to his little room" (p. 190), in the same light, the excitement of Roger's house also soon wears off.

It would have been logical to comment on the unease that Willie feels when he visits the banker's grand house with Roger. It is better to do so now because this sequence of analysis has taken the shape of Willie's evolvement from the time when he does not realize that he is endowed with different facets of identities. The time this fact becomes apparent to him, notwithstanding too that even when he is aware, he is still going to be going in and out of the different identity shifts according to place and time. And as expected, he senses the overwhelming power of the banker's house and immediately starts to feel he is in the wrong place, something which shows that he has not fully settled into his third space, a space that would prevent friction between his old self and his new self, one that would teach him to switch between these selves abruptly and not feel the least anxious and do the best he can in every circumstance, as Roger puts it.

However, much of these thoughts run unimpeded due to the fact that Willie can now differentiate between his preconceived ideas of identity and places, and what he later understands to be the true nature of mankind and the places that he sees. While

driving through London with Roger to his new vocation, "architect," he is able to distinguish the London he knew as a young man, as a person newly come to England and the one he sees at the moment. He manages to identify the fantasies that he felt and thought of London and its people and compares it to how a man might feel about a woman he has met.

> Driving through North London was a double revelation. It did away with the fantasy Willie had had for more than thirty years…and perhaps it was right for the fantasy to be erased, since June herself, as Roger had said, would by now have been much battered (in every sense) by the years, was almost certainly fat and boastful (counting her lovers) changed in other ways too, adapting whatever ancient genteel perfume-counter yearnings she might have had to some new plebeian television pattern. It was more than right for the fantasy to go. And it was For Willie a relief, enabling him to shed the humiliation connected with the fantasy, to put it in its place. (Naipaul, 2004, p. 214)

This shows that the passing of time can never leave us the same; it changes and alters our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. Therefore, for Willie, this realization is quite important, as it will reinforce the fact that he is a changed man. His perspective has changed, and he has settled into an in-between space, which is neither this nor that, and is ready to live comfortably. However, as this may be the case, he still has a lot to discover about himself and those around him. As mentioned earlier, he has recently joined a new profession and attends some lectures to gain grounding in the field. He realizes that what he is learning demystifies what is around him and regrets that he took so long to realize that he ought to have changed his perception toward life. "It is terrible and heart breaking that this way of seeing and understanding has come to me so late" (p. 220). His regret springs from the fact that he is much older now and thinks that a man in his fifties has less time to change so much in his life than one of forty or even thirty. "…I have a sense now hat when I was in Africa, for all those eighteen years, when I was in my prime of life, I hardly knew where I was. And that time in the forest was as dark and confusing as it was at the time. I was so condemning of other people on the course. How vain and foolish. I am no different from them" (p. 220).

The analysis of Willie's ascending to some sort of third space can thus be taken to be a long back-and-forth journey, but one which is unavoidable because of the very

nature of the instability of what the in-between space has to offer. The last part of the plot of the novel portrays Willie attending a wedding of a West African diplomat who has known exactly how to live in this space that the former had to go all the way to Africa, and then India and spent the better half of his life having to decide on it. Willie himself beats himself up about it, which shows that one who makes the decision about the transient course of life is better than another who thinks that life is a straight course. Marcus, who decides early in life not to avoid the multicultural society that he finds himself in, works to establish one multicultural family himself. His five half white children who are all of different nationalities are a clear example of this boldness much early in life. He sets out to have a white grandchild, and indeed much later in life, he achieves it and names her Lyndhurst, born of a pure aristocrat lady. As a result, the dark and the fair stream to the wedding to marry off the two cultures which will forever seal the pact and pave way for that in-between space that many will come to crave for as more and more cultures get mixed and identities become decentralized. In a final moment, the protagonist Willie concludes that it is wrong to have one idealized view of the world.

CONCLUSION

Naipaul's writing career began not long after he arrived in Britain. In most of his fictional and non-fictional writings, he has been able to express a variety of difficulties about the subjugated people living in the periphery. His books touch upon varied themes and demonstrates primarily social and cultural differences between the center and the periphery. Thus, it is true to say that what Naipaul writes about helped him create a space that shaped his worldview and identity. Naipaul's father, Seepersad Naipaul, was also a writer in Trinidad. Naipaul had come to discover his father's abilities in writing. He himself was inspired by his father's writing but was prejudiced "that Seepersad's talents had not been recognized because of his race and class" (Krishnan, 2020, p. 12). His reversed yet continuous travels from the center to the periphery convinces most critics and readers alike that the homeland Naipaul escaped from was the main focus of his travelogues, fictional and non-fictional prose. "Naipaul may have sworn as a schoolboy to leave Trinidad, for him a place without vitality or hope or even history, as soon as he could, but even after long years of stay in England, he does not claim in any way to feel at home there" (Trivedi, 2008, p. 25). In his four-decade literary career, he produced eighteen fictional and non-fictional novels, stories, and essays. Naipaul also won three prestigious awards including the Booker Prize, the Bennett Award, and the Nobel Prize.

Naipaul's main focal point includes homelessness, isolated people, the search for identity of all sorts, and the sense of exile and displacement throughout the colonial period. Naipaul was of the idea that all sorts of sufferings Third World subjugated people have been exposed to during the imperial dissemination of the West were related not to unhomeliness but to the results of human condition. He considers this condition as a fate of their cultural, religious, and political insistence. Most of his postcolonial fiction and non-fiction depicts his estrangement and his notions about the sense of not belonging to a certain home. On behalf of the imperial ideology, Naipaul's portrayal of the periphery has always been very obvious, as he has observed colonial countries from the perspective of the center. His destitution of his own culture and home and his feeling of not belonging to western culture caused him to create a security zone called the third space.

"Repelled from home and propelled to new world, a migrant, standing in between home and away, involves into a constant psychic fight. The sense of longing and belonging always haunts his memory. Such mental dilemma gives rise to tension and unrest" (Giri, 2019, pp.184-190). His in-between attitude casts a pessimistic shadow on his novels, and that is the reason why he has been accused of being a "spokesman for imperialism."[2]

As Ashcroft (2001) clarifies "[p]ost-colonial theory developed in response to the flourishing literatures written by colonized people in colonial language" (p.7). Colonial language, of course, has a long history back in the West Indies as a part of cultural dissemination under the guise of providing education at a civilized level, especially for land owners to provide them a kind of superiority over the slaves and indentured workers alike. Language has always been a powerful instrument as a part of the imperial education system in the West Indies and "is designed and put into for action for the service of colonialist control" (Tiffin, 2001, p. 44). As Tiffin puts forward, language is highly influential in religious activities, education, literary fashion, and culture directed and designed by the colonial mindset. As a result of military intervention and social and political displacement and enslavement of indigenous people in the Indian and African subcontinents, the West Indies became the center for cosmopolitanism. This demographic variety demonstrates itself in the literature produced in Trinidad. Welsh clarifies that "an Indo-Caribbean voice is more overt and more significant in Trinidadian literature is also in part a historically determined difference" (2001, p. 72). This difference was the result of all sorts of movements in the colonial sense. The West Indies was the center for sugar plantation, and many of the slaves as indentured workers were brought to the Caribbean Islands during the 19th century.

When the abolition of slavery started to be implemented in all countries under the rule of British Empire, it had a great impact on West Indian society in terms of social, political, and cultural order. Of course, education became the primary concern as a

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[2] Singh, H.B. (1969). V.S. Naiapul: A Spokesman for Neocolonialism. Literature and Ideology.

universal target by eliminating conservative religious assets but adopting more secular disciplines with a motivated "belief in the superiority of British civilization, of English Culture, and in acceptance of English methods of administration and subservience to English imperialism" (Turner, 1997, pp. 63-64). As Turner claims, the way the Empire imposed education on the colonized countries was mainly based upon elevating the superiority of the enforced civilization, hegemony of texts written in the English language, and supremacy of British values and traditions. Thus, with this new way of decorated education system, British ideology intended to replace the Third World local education system with that of their own modern system.

The decades after World War II "was the era of a very short-lived West Indian federation and also that of the so-called West Indian Literary Renaissance, a literature of exile produced largely in Britain rather than the Caribbean" (Welsh, 2001, p. 69). This type of literary fashion then was developed and appropriated by many migrant writers who were, in some way, displaced from their own home countries. Then, with the publication of Said's *Orientalism*, postcolonial or exile writing gained momentum predominantly in the English language. "The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience" (Said, 2000, p. 194). Most exiled writers, as Said clarifies, broke the chains that surrounded and restricted them in their own homelands. Despite the cultural corruption they had come face to face, most writers succeeded in resounding in the literary circles both in the Empire and all around the world.

The Caribbean Islands were the first colonized lands that became the center of education for highly recognized universities like Oxford and Cambridge. Most so-called exiled scholars of the Third World countries gained scholarship from these colleges and were sent to Britain to get a better education. Although the first scholarship winners were of white colonies "the island scholars," as Campbell accentuates, "were under no

obligation to return to Trinidad after completion of their studies, … they could easily take up careers outside the island" (1996, p. 26). This seemingly unique opportunity for the subjugated scholars became highly popular among college students especially during the colonial period. Like many other postcolonial writers, Naipaul is one of dozens of writers who left his colonized country and migrated to England as a result of winning a prestigious scholarship from Oxford University in the early 1950s.

According to Said, exile is a condition of terminal loss, "an unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home," which involves "the crippling sorrow of estrangement" (2000, p. 173). Naipaul's sense of exile, in other words his intentional disengagement and estrangement from his own roots, is highly influential on his harsh criticism of his own society. Naipaul claims that "the English language is mine but tradition is not"; however, his claim does not find echoes in his writings about the colonized countries. Moreover, he degrades traditional lifestyles of the people in Third World countries. Among his first novels, namely *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958), *Miguel Street* (1959), *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961), and *The Middle Passage* (1962), Naipaul appeared as a moderate writer in his criticism of the subjugated people. For him, except MP (1962), all his first four novels dealt with the lifestyles of Indian people in the West Indies. His prudent attitude toward his own people never satisfied his critics in the sense that he criticized his own people. Therefore, Naipaul has been under attack for being the enemy of his own culture, being ashamed of his cultural heritage, and looking from the perspective of the center. While some postcolonial writers like Selvon and Lamming remained critical on the side of the Third World nations and people against colonial ideology, Naipaul stood on the other side, being critical of the cultural, political, and social inadequacies of underdeveloped colonial nations.

Naipaul's more critical non-fictional novels—*An Area of Darkness* and *India: A Wounded Civilization*—are clearly critical of the traditional lifestyles of Indian civilization. Throughout these two novels, he goes over political and social turmoil

between castes and tribes. The very foundation of such a chaotic atmosphere results from, as Naipaul portrays, lack of education, inadequate development, and lack of harmony with the blessings of colonialist mindset. Unlike many other postcolonial writers, Naipaul accepts the center as a place where he can enjoy having a privileged life, neglecting all the unfavorable instability and racial hatred toward the subjugated people. However, all his expectations failed to materialize because his escape, or exile, was a total disappointment. His disappointment stemmed not only from his unexpected failure in his very first trials of writing but also from his disapproval by the Third World people and critics alike. Naipaul always remained as a direct novelist in his fiction and non-fiction. He appeared as a realist observer of his own society, remained indifferent to some extent, to the problems and oppression caused by the colonial ideology. Chances are, the people of Third World countries expected Naipaul to draw a much more romanticized picture of the social, political, and cultural realities.

"Like many isolated people, they were wrapped up in themselves and not too interested in the world outside"[3]. Naipaul warns his people that their salvation lies in their turn to the cultural roots, historical realities, and individual efforts for the betterment for themselves and their countries alike. All the social realities he reflects directly in his writing makes Naipaul a unique figure when compared to his Third World counterparts. His direct depiction of the West Indies and being away from the fantastic elements for his own people and background form the basis of his writing style.

In tandem with Stuart Hall's definition of cultural identity and Bhabha's location of culture with his definition of all related terms such as *mimicry*, *hybridity*, *unhomeliness*, *sense of belonging*, and *the third space*, Naipaul strives hard to establish a visible and concrete sense of home and is always in pursuit of finding his true self. Hall's definition of cultural identity is worth taking into consideration once more. His first suggestion is defined by the collective, shared culture, which derives from a shared history and shared ancestry and provide people with "stable, unchanging and continuous

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[3] Naipaul, V.S. (1979) *A Bend In The River*. Alfred A Knoph Publishing

frames of reference and meaning. ...that is 'oneness,' underlying all the other, more superficial differences is ...the essence of 'Caribbeanness' of the black experience." Hall thinks this identity is what a Caribbean has to discover and bring to light (Hall, 1990, p. 223). These stable, unchanging, and continuous frames of reference and meaning constituted the backbone of the Third World cultural identity, which has been difficult to eradicate for colonial and imperial powers. In this sense, many of colonially corrupted societies resist against much of cultural, religious, and political enforcement imposed by the Western ideology. As Naipaul depicts in many of his fictional and non-fictional works, Third World societies thus subjugated people develop quasi-Western identities mixed with their frame culture. That is the reason why Naipaul's characters, particularly in MS, demonstrate hybrid and mimic attitudes. By developing such mixed identities, black people in the West Indies adopt white cultural practices in their effort to benefit from the privileges of Western culture. Those privileges range from education to a variety of opportunities Western ideology offers.

Cultural identity in its second sense is both the matter of "becoming" and of "being," for it is a concurrent interaction between the future and the past. Hall's recognition of cultural identities dates back to historical occurrences of continuous transformation. All these cultural developments cannot be wholly separated from the historical facts of the past. The past shapes the present, but the present cannot act independently from the past. That is to say "identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and positioned ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (Hall, 1990:225). Thus, colonial and imperial activities and decades-long neocolonial efforts by the center have had a massive impact on the reformation of cultural identity in the periphery.

Naipaul, in the three novels that were dealt with throughout this study, remains ambivalent in his criticism of Caribbean people in *MS*, Willie's ardent quest for his identity in the Metropolitan, Africa, Europe and back in the Third World country in *HL* and *MS*. Naipaul does not let himself free from the cultural values of the past. He never accepts the modernization efforts of subjugated people, as he accuses them of being

mimic and hybrid. He also accuses them of being the victim of their cultural background. As in most of his writings, whether they continue their cultural past or black people wear their white masks over their black skins, as Fanon claims, Naipaul has always condemned his people as primitive, backwards, and uncivilized. His own so-called salvation from his own cultural roots has never bestowed him his expectation of peace and calm wherever he has been to—not only in the colonized countries but also in the West. He has stayed as an outsider both in the Metropolitan and in the Third World countries. His aloof stance to his own cultural background has drifted Naipaul from one place to another with the motivation of finding a secure "third space" that Bhabha (1994) clarifies as "these in-between spaces that provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation" (pp. 1-2). Naipaul insists that all efforts indigenous people have made to escape from the deep-rooted realities of their past and cultural assets end up with the disillusionment they experience whatsoever journey they take in or out of their countries.

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Within this canonical framework by Naipaul, the question of cultural identity remains as a crucial issue in his three novels which have been dealt with from the perspective of identity in this study. In return for the primary yet innocent presentation of cultural values of colonizing ideology, a new cultural process was established in third

world nations. Such widely accepted norms led to substitution of local cultures with values of western world. Mottos related to all kinds of civilizing activities by colonizing nations started to gain acceptance by local people in colonized lands. The initial reactions were considerably positive in almost all fields of life. Colonialist cultural institutions were considerably influential on people living in Miguel Street. In all its seventeen sketches and with attitudes of almost all characters, Miguel Street acts like a stage where colonizer's cultural values dominate local cultures. Throughout its plot structure, Miguel Street is a stereotypical presentation of hybrid cultures and mimic characters who go between the root cultural norms and imposed western cultural values.

What if this ambivalent formation of cultural identity on behalf of the colonized is not accepted in its totalization? To suggest a sound solution to this question related to translation of cultural identity is not that challenging considering hybrid and mimic lifestyles of residents in Miguel Street. Owing to the western interference, cultural identity and translation of cultural norms and traditional values are detected as corrupted in the microcosmic depiction of third world nations in *MS*. The unnamed narrator observes the street as different lifestyles appear as they occur on a daily basis. Within the behavioural reflection of almost all characters, the traditional lifestyles of local inhabitants were, one way or another, under the impact of colonial acculturation. The disillusionment of characters derives not only from the imposition of western cultural norms but also their ambivalent feeling of being in-between the root culture and western values. *MS* represents to its reader not a brave new world culturally elevated and socially improved due to the introduction of new western culture. However, the characters inside different sketches experience mixture of the cultures which cause a kind of shift in their identity. From the beginning of the collection of seventeen stories, we witness that residents of the street struggle to adapt and to change within an imposed culture. However, through this struggle to maintain the desires which bring them a new position within this microcosmic colonial society that they are trying to survive in, they enjoy a kind of intimacy towards the original culture which invades their minds and souls. They are under the influence of disability to distinguish between the values of rooted and

imposed cultures. As a result, out of two intermingled cultures emerge a new identity that justifies the concept of hybridity which is the result of a mixture of two different cultures, morals and values.

As the identities are 'the narratives of the past', the characters in *MS* inevitably develop a cultural identity that intermingles the rooted values with the introduced colonial cultural norms. In this atmosphere, the inevitable result is the emergence of a new culture. Miguel Street is depicted as a hybrid social formation through which all lifestyles are presented from a mimic perspective. So long as the colonial power and knowledge act like dominant elements within this formation, hybrid cultures and mimic characters are the expected consequence of colonial process. As the imitative act or art of authentic cultural norms, mimicry appears as an instrument to ridicule any colonial society ironically. That is the reason why those who live in Miguel Street never transcend their own limits to wholly integrate into a fixed culture.

Written in sequence, *HAL* and *MS* are two novels whose main character Willie Chandran goes through challenging times in an effort to discover his true self. What is in the core of these two novels? Does Willie's efforts to establish a fixed identity come to a conclusion? To start with, Willie experiences an identity crisis owing to his multi-dislocation and his questioning of his familial background. As the title to the novel suggests Willie starts his journey to discover a new identity that is not completed not only in *HAL* but also in *MS*. The situation in *Miguel Street* is the same for the unnamed narrator like Willie, both of whom got a scholarship to study in England. So to say, educational activities are a crucial part of the colonial process in the sense to educate Third World people in terms of culture, to teach them the language and kindly force them to migrate to the Empire for further education. Willie is one typical member of such colonized society in which he is in a constant search for his self-identity. Through his efforts to discover his true self, Willie misses some crucial realities about his own past and the harsh realities he encounters in England. In others words, his new surrounding never meets his expectations in the way he establishes a new life, graduate from a prestigious university and become a famous writer like Somerset Maugham. His

disillusionment about his new environment, the disappointment he experiences at the college, his exposition to a typical racial discrimination altogether contributed to Willie's uneasiness in England.

Willie's sense of unhomeliness develops from the moment he leaves his home country. His efforts to shape his future in a foreign culture does not alleviate his turbulent feelings about his sense of belonging. In *HAL* Willie Chandran's search for an ideal home does not provide him a complete life unified with his expectations of finding home, an overall identity and a concrete sense of belonging. His sympathy towards the Western culture and his acceptance of Western world as a comfortable zone do not come true as he dreams before he leaves his Third World life in India. Is it possible for Third World citizens to avoid from this ideally presented Western culture? The manipulation of cultural values and presentation of the West as a civilized location to maintain an ideal life has always been influential on subjugated people. With the influence of this understanding, it triggered a kind of desire to migrate the Empire. In order to justify this physical and psychological migration, most immigrants prefer rejecting their rooted culture or remain indifferent to their traditional norms. Considering the traditional caste system, Willie's rigid estrangement originates from his reaction to the deep-rooted Indian caste system. *Half a Life* as a fiction which draws on Naipaul's lifelong narratives of unhomely feelings and quest for identity poses another variation by displaying autobiographical materials (Levy, 2005, p. 217). When he comes to a realization with such values of his familial background and rigid doctrines of the caste system, Willie develops a sense of estrangement towards his own culture and identity. This estrangement drifts Willie from one place to another by evoking the sense of exile which results in his multi-dislocation.

With his fluctuated feelings of belonging and highly developed sense of homelessness, Willie's ambivalent dislocation drifts him from the Empire to the Portuguese African colony and then back to Berlin. None of these places gives him the sense of home or terminates his loss of the feeling of belonging. His sense belonging is disturbed by the presence of Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis in England. His

decision of leaving England with an African girl in order to find more secure home ends up with his disillusionment and humiliation as a result of guerrilla war in an unnamed Portuguese colony in Africa. Willie's disillusionment and humiliation originate from his sense of the rooted Third World traditional lifestyles, the turmoil and instability caused by the guerrilla wars and his loss of the sense of belonging. All these related instruments contribute Willie to develop his sense of unhomeliness.

The fragmented identity issue deteriorates yet comes to a conclusion in *Magic Seeds* as Willie's perpetual journeys follow one another. His quest for a secure third space in his motherland drifts him into more complicated situation with his motivation to discover an in-between space. Upon his sister's suggestion Willie goes to Indian dark forests to join a guerrilla war with an incentive to find his true identity. His latest journey is shaped in a rare circumstance in that his preference of the road to overcome his disillusionment is the one which is less taken by an individual who left the orient. Through his negotiation with his identity challenges, his act of joining guerrilla war in his motherland has a great importance to attain new cultural experience or to learn what has been wiped out of his memory as a result of his exposure to foreign cultural values. Willie considers this guerrilla war as his 'real' out of many disillusionment because for the first time he is not going to be an onlooker but an active participant of the guerrilla war.

Willie's efforts to revisit his past experiences show his attachment to his past and his desire to go back to his roots in India. His journey ought not to be taken as a literal journey back to his motherland but should be taken as psychological one into his subconscious. His successive journeys from Berlin to Indian teak forests then back to London play an important role in his identity formation, however they are not necessarily influential to overcome his disillusionment. Although he has illusions of his own country, his disillusionment starts at the Frankfurt airport when he meets Indian people. What strikes him hard is his recollection of the realities about his own country: poverty of local people, the way they talk and the way they behave. His decision to join the

guerrilla war can be explained with his psychological struggle to come up against the life in India and to discover his true self.

Willie's vicious circle with what he experiences in Africa and then back in India reveals that he is on the wrong side of the coin. Nothing can alleviate his disillusionment because all his experiences in the guerrilla war are not more than a waste of time toward finding his true self. It is true to say that the third space Willie is running after is changing as the events take place in the course of the plot. In the teak forest and later in prison, both these places do not give him the freedom he needs but provide the chance to visit his own mind in order to find out lost Willie. All his efforts during the guerrilla war and then his days in prison and finally his return back to London demonstrate the instability what the in-between space has to offer.

In conclusion, the question of cultural identity is one of the main concerns of postcolonial societies and this concern has been transparently dealt with by Naipaul in his novels. Third World nations and citizens have been under the impact of cultural corruption caused by occidental cultural impositions that result in the formation of hybrid and mimic characters and lifestyles. Along with such lifestyles, emergence of third space and its appropriation by subjugated people of the Third World is inevitable.

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