



Manifestations of Colonization in V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*

مظاهر الاستعمار في رواية نايبول " الدمى "

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Authorization

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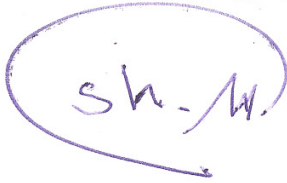
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

My Parents

&

My beloved family

Table of Contents

	Subject	Page
	Thesis title	
	Authorization	ii
	Thesis committee decision	iii
	Acknowledgments	iv
	Dedication	v
	Table of contents	vi
	English abstract	viii
	Arabic abstract	ix
Chapter One	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the study	1
1.2	The Mimic Men	11
1.3	Naipaul & Fiction	14
1.4	V.S. Naipaul's Biography	15
1.5	V.S. Naipaul and Nobel prize	18
1.6	Statement of the problem	22
1.7	Objectives of the study	23
1.8	Questions of the study	23
1.9	Significance of the study	23
1.10	Limitations of the study	24
1.11	Definition of operational terms	24
Chapter Two	Review of related literature	26
2.1	Theoretical framework	26

Table of Contents

	Subject	Page
2.2	Review of empirical studies	34
2.3	Distinguishing features of the present study in comparison with the previous studies	39
Chapter Three	Methods and procedures	41
Chapter Four	Discussion of the Study	43
4.1	Manifestation of colonization	43
4.2	The Effects of Colonization	58
4.3	Naipaul's View of Colonialism	66
Chapter Five	Conclusion	70
	References	75

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Abstract

This study presents V.S Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* as a post-colonial novel that depicts the effects of colonialism on colonized people. Through an autobiographical and confessional style, the narrator of the novel clarifies the influence of colonialism on his identity and how it impacts the social, political, and psychological aspects of the people of a small Caribbean island. The study attempts to highlight the manifestations related to the impact of colonization on self-identity and psychological confusion. It also handles the characters as men of mimicry and highlighted the reasons behind such an attitude. However, the study comprises five chapters. The first is an introduction covering the significance of this novel as a major work in post-colonial literature. Chapter Two tackles the review of literature written about this novel and its writer. The third chapter presents the procedures and methods followed in this study. Chapter four is the main argument where the themes, characterization and judgments of the author are analyzed. The final chapter, the conclusion, is a brief account of the points raised in the study.

Key words: post colonial literature ; *The mimic men* ; colonizer and colonized ;Trinidad ;V.S Naipaul .

مظاهر الاستعمار في رواية نايبول " الدمى "

إعداد : شيماء محمد محمود

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ملخص الدراسة باللغة العربية

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز رواية الكاتب الإنجليزي، في اس نايبول، "الدمى" كرواية تستعرض مرحلة ما بعد الاستعمار وتأثيراتها على الشعوب المستعمرة. فمن خلال أسلوب السيرة الذاتية الإعترافية يوضح الراوي لهذه الرواية تأثير الاستعمار على هويته والتبعات الإجتماعية والسياسية والنفسية التي لحقت به وبمجتمعه. وتحاول هذه الدراسة أن تبرز الدلالات التي وردت في الرواية والمرتبطة بتأثير الاستعمار على الهوية وتسببها بالاضطراب السيكولوجي لشخصيات القصة. وتناولت الدراسة أيضاً شخصيات القصة كشخصيات مقلدة لمستعمرها وبحثت في أسباب ذلك من خلال القصة نفسها. وخلصت الباحثة إلى أن "في اس نايبول" يحاول أن يؤكد على أن الشعوب المُستعمرة قد عانت وبشكل كبير جراء الاستعمار ذلك أنها أصبحت تعيش ازدواجية ثقافتين ونظامي حياة. وتضم هذه الدراسة خمسة فصول، يغطي الفصل الأول منها مقدمة هذه الدراسة ونبذة عن أهمية هذه الرواية كأحد أهم أعمال أدب مرحلة ما بعد الاستعمار. ويتتبع الفصل الثاني الأدب النظري الذي تناول هذه الرواية وكاتبها. ويقدم الفصل الثالث أساليب البحث المتبعة من قبل الباحثة لإجراء هذه الدراسة. ويتناول الفصل الرابع التحليل الكامل للموضوعات، والشخصيات والأحكام التي أطلقها الكاتب في هذه الرواية. وأخيراً، يقدم الفصل الخامس ملخصاً للنتائج التي توصلت إليها الباحثة من خلال القضايا التي أثّرت في هذه الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الادب بعد الاحتلال ، رواية الدمى ، الاستعمار والشعوب المستعمرة ، ترينيداد، نايبول.

Chapter One

Introduction

1-1 Background of the Study:

The literary writings of the post-colonial period reproduce an important stage of the life of the colonized communities. These writings present vivid and sometimes shocking images of the social, economic and political status of these communities. Many of the writers of the third world countries were creative and successful in focusing on the individuals of these communities. Fictional characters are built on real characters that were influenced directly and deeply by the impacts of colonialism. They adopted ideologies and hybrid cultures which were alien to their social and moral backgrounds. Their attitudes to the alien culture and practices of the colonizers are marked either by full identification of the new culture or rejecting it altogether. The stereotyped perfect images presented by the colonizers remain the prevailing and dominant images on whole ways of thinking of these communities. Indeed Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1967) celebrates this side of the colonial experience.

Salman Rushdie's works reveal the concerns about national identity in post-colonial societies and this was obvious in his novel *Midnight's Children* (1980). Rushdie claims to have his roots in the Indian oral narrative tradition. In Rushdie's novel, the protagonist was born at midnight on

August 15, 1947 at the time when India became an independent nation, which certainly indicates the political and cultural sides of his fiction.

When the actual colonization was over, the colonized countries could not wipe out the bad effects of this colonization on their economic, moral, social and above all cultural life. The scenes of social chaos, ideological confusion, political subordination, and corruption of these communities are simply a result of these stereotyped images.

The post-colonial writings are characterized by the fact that these writers sought to represent the daily life realities of the colonized communities such as poverty, tyranny, corruption, chaos, restriction, political views clash, and educational decline. These writings provide a sort of historical documents as well as literary works because the writers of these works are mostly of the colonized communities who have a first-hand experience of this life. They were so accurate in depicting the social status to the extent that these works can be seen as a kind of autobiography of some of them. To this type of writings Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* belongs. It gives the impression that there is a kind of interrelation between the fictional and the real. Thus it is natural that he comes across the inquiry raised by one of his scholars about this particular novel. In an interview held with Naipaul in 1981, he was asked, "To what extent can the narrator in the novel (*The Mimic Men*) be similar to speak for you?" His response was clear, "No, no, no. That isn't me." (Cited in Dooley, 2006, 184) The

reason behind raising such a question is the fact that there is no clear differentiation between the author and character. They handled the psychological status of their characters who experienced ideological duality, estrangement, confusion, and moral conflict.

No wonder critics whose career is more clearly identified with post-colonialism refer to the same evolution in literary appreciation. Barthes (2009) quotes Angus Calder in a farewell editorial: "The canon is dead: long lives the canon!" (p.25). He then proceeds to mention Achebe, Soyinka, Naipaul, Desai, Narayan, Walcott and Brathwaite concentrating on what he called the non-white Commonwealth as essential names in the field of the new literatures in English.

Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1989) state that in a broad sense, post-colonial literature is writing which has been "affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (p.2). In a situation like India's, this includes novels, poetry, and drama which were written both during and after the British Raj or "Reign," which came to a formal conclusion with Indian Independence in August 1947. Although writing from India and other previously colonized countries such as Nigeria, Jamaica, Pakistan, and Singapore has distinctive features, post-colonial literature shares some significant concerns "Reclaiming spaces and places, Asserting cultural integrity, Revising history" and characteristics

“resistant descriptions, appropriation of the colonizers’ language, Reworking colonial art-forms” (p. 26).

Rai (2005) uses the term Post-Colonial to cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day.

Post-colonialism marks the end of colonialism by giving the indigenous people the necessary authority and political and cultural freedom to take their place and gain independence by overcoming political and cultural imperialism. (p.10)

Salih (1969) comments that in the works of Post-Colonial writers such as Salman Rushdie, Derek Walcott, Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong, and Naipaul, one sees an attempt to resist and reinterpret the ideological roots of imperialist writings, and the way of representing the others. One such work is Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* that was published in 1969. Salih's novel is outstanding, not only for the usage of the journey into the unknown, the search for identity – that can be spotted in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, but also for its efforts to resist from the perspective of the colonized other. In the process, Salih's work relies on the fictive territory and the imagined worlds of Conrad's Africa, and substitutes a Post-Colonial retelling. Naipaul (1981) states:

To be colonial was to know a kind of security; it was to inhabit a fixed world. And I suppose in my fantasy I had seen myself coming to England to some purely literary

region, where untrammelled by the accident of history or background, I could make a romantic career for myself as a writer. But in the new world I felt that ground move below me. The new Politics, the curious reliance of men on institutions they were yet working to undermine, the simplicity of beliefs and the hideous simplicity of actions, the corruption of causes, half-made societies that seemed doomed to remain half made: these were the things that began to preoccupy me. (p. 5)

In another context, Walcott (1974) almost anticipates what Naipaul will explore in his *The Mimic Men* when he states that:

Perhaps powerless leaves the Third world, the ex-colonial world, no alternative but to imitate those systems offered to or forced on it by the major powers. Most Third World politicians are trapped in the concept of a world proposed by those who rule it. (p.78)

In a serious attempt to define that status, many of the images that depict personal experiences become an example of the general situation that influences the colonized communities. It is also noticed that most of the writers of this period are emigrant writers who, as a result of the chaotic social and political circumstances, are forced to migrate to those countries which were one day their colonizers. They moved to these countries looking for a chance to express themselves freely. They were looking for the freedom that they wouldn't find in their home countries. So they embarked on telling stories and portraying images out of their memories, illustrating the post-colonial situation.

One of the prominent features of the post-colonial period is that it is full of ideological confusion scenes on both community and individual levels. The impact of colonization was not positive at all. The colonizers left the peoples of these communities in disorder as they were forced out of these countries after violent revolutions against them. The ensuing political and legal vacuum gave way to all types of conflict and disorder. In turn, it caused a kind of negligence for the social, cultural, and educational aspects of these communities.

The various ideological parties clashed in the field of public life to push themselves forward and they were divided into three main parties. There are the ones who were satisfied and convinced with the colonizers' culture as a substitute for the local culture. They were supported by the colonizers in all respects. On the other hand, there were the ones who resisted the colonizers' culture through counter ideologies, such as leftists and rightists. They were resisted severely by the colonizers as they threaten their interests. Finally, there were the conservatives who tried hard to maintain the cultural heritage of these countries. The colonizers exploited this group to achieve their goals through a hollow form of culture that does not serve the essence of it. In conclusion, the reality the colonizers offer is not perfect because they created a group of deformities that affected the colonized communities' life severely. Unable to determine whether to return to the original culture that was not practiced for a long time or to go forward with the colonizers' culture, these communities were highly

confused to distinguish between what is part of their original culture and what comes to them from outside resources. Naipaul's novel, which will be explored in detail in the following chapters, reflects some aspects of these arguments. The narrator of *The Mimic Men* (1967), Ralph Singh, illuminates these contradictory judgments related to the colonial experience:

The colonial politician is an easy object of satire. I wish to avoid satire; I will leave out the stories of illiteracy and social innocence. Not that I wish to present him as grander as or less flawed than he is. It is that his situation satirizes itself, turns satire inside out, takes satire to a point where it touches pathos, if not tragedy. (pp. 208-9)

One of the biggest images of confusion depicted in these writings is the confusion related to the question of liberty, democracy, religion, women, politics, and economy. The colonials worked hard to merge the original concepts of these communities with theirs without giving any attention to the cultural privacy and diversity of the colonized communities.

The colonials replaced many of these communities' concepts with similar ones with variations that serve their existence in these countries or even later. The seemingly bright side of the colonial experience on the colonized helped highly in creating a state of confusion and disturbance that the colonized communities believed that they are away from civilization and the right path of advancement. As a result, these communities accepted the colonizers' experiences including all the concepts and ideologies as they are and mostly without modifications. They accepted the Western political

systems, economic systems, and even the educational systems. This, in turn, led to social, ideological, and cultural modifications that made these communities mimic their colonizers and subordinate to them in all respects of life. Schwarz & Ray (2004) state that the inevitable outcomes of this unequal encounter between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized led to what has been called “metaphysical alienation” which is a feature of Naipaul’s work:

Like the absurd and displaced people of Albert Camus and Saul Bellow and other modern writers, Naipaul’s characters live life at different levels of identity. The vulgarity, brutality, sordidness, and irrationality of the modern world create a stereotyped man, a picture of impersonality. (p.57)

Identity confusion can be marked as another type of confusion that these colonized communities suffered from. As a result of the imperial countries’ domination, the colonized communities are no longer able to identify themselves properly. These communities were almost identified with their colonizers rather than their own identity. More than one serious study in the colonizer – colonized relationship can only show the negative aspects of this bad experience. Thus one can come across views which emphasize this very serious problem according to Schwarz & Ray (2005):

No single event that occurs or institutional practice that is implemented is without effects across all the domains of institutional practice [...] the eradication of its structures of feeling, the subjection of the colonized

culture of the population of the colonizer's notion of legality, citizenship, and the displacement of indigenous forms of religion, labor, patriarchy and rule by those of colonized modernity. (p. 378)

Consequently, this led to creating another type of identity confusion related to belonging. It left the colonized people puzzled to whom they belong; do they belong to their own social and cultural heritage? Or do they belong to a new identity that was formed and shaped by the colonizers to support their existence in these communities' life? This split identity and failure to choose the right way is one of the cultural problems raised in *The Mimic Men*.

The way out of such a dilemma can be either by uprooting themselves from their original culture and moving away as far as possible to merge and combine with the colonizers' civilization. Some believe that liberating themselves from all the indigenous culture chains and restraints may help them move ahead to be creative and productive and position themselves among other communities and countries of the world. However, some others believe that adhering to the original culture and sustaining it is the best choice they may take.

To complicate the situation the colonizer often aimed at replacing the native languages of these communities by his foreign language and making it as the official language. This deepened the estrangement situation and immensely influencing the ordinary individuals of these communities, a

point that Naipaul's novel highlights deeply. As these communities are economically controlled by their colonizers, the privileged jobs and positions are almost given to those who master the colonizer's language and methods of communication. So the colonized individuals pushed forward to learn and master the colonizer's language at the expense of their original language. As a result, the Anglophone and Francophone phenomena appeared and emerged in these communities. Many of the artworks in the post-colonial stage of these communities are almost written in the languages of the colonizers rather than the native languages of these communities. This shows the deep impact of the colonizer on the local culture and in turn on the identity of the individuals of these communities.

Given all these factors, it is not surprising to come across the phenomena of mimics. They are those men who are confused and unable to decide or identify themselves with one side of the two conflicting sides. They want to be part of their community but they act like the colonizers. The influence of colonization is immense on them that they cannot hide their admiration of the colonizer's civilization and culture and disdain of their own. Believing that they can have better life, they take everything the colonizer offers as it is without any change or modification. These men and women have been the focus of many writers as they reflect a curious situation that needs analysis and discussion.

1.2 The Mimic Men

The Mimic Men is one of the remarkable post-colonial novels written by the Caribbean writer V. S Naipaul. It handles the situation of confusion that affected the community of Isabella, an imaginary island in the Caribbean Sea. It handles all the topics of identity problems, social chaos, ideological confusion, political subordination, and corruption. It can be considered as a successful example of the post-colonial novels as it drew the attention of the critics and was able to win the Nobel Prize for its significant treatment of the above-mentioned topics. Divided into three major parts, the novel discusses the life of an ex-colonial politician Ralph Singh. Following the stream of consciousness style narration, it narrates the events of Singh's life experiences as memories. He exhibits his life as a series of misfortunes starting from his present stage, going back to his childhood and his life as a young man. Through a successful first person omniscient narration, Singh tells the readers all the thoughts and feelings of the other characters in the story. He shows his full awareness of what was happening around him although he was so confused and not able to take proper decisions. Thus, one can say that Singh is a reliable narrator, despite his weaknesses and moodiness.

The story begins with Ralph Ranjit Kripal Singh, or Ralph Singh as he named himself later, sitting in his hotel room in London and evaluating his past life. He started with his first time coming to London and how he

lived in a boarding-house owned by a British landlord named Mr. Shylock. While he was there he developed a kind of relationship with the Maltese housekeeper who took care of Mr. Shylock's building. She was another colonized woman who moved to live with many other Maltese people in London. Although Singh had an affair with that woman he looked at her like many other women he met in public houses. She tried to show her love to him and move with their relation to another level, but Singh refused to develop it. He was a womanizer who got affairs with many ladies among which Stella Stockwell, Sandra who became his wife later. He kept moving from one suburb to another looking for his identity and a person to establish his life with. In this regard, his situation reminds the reader of the famous race novel, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952). Perhaps the first name of the main character is not by chance, since it brings associations of that character and his aimless wanderings and loss in New York.

Sandra proposed marriage to Singh and he accepted her proposal hastily. Later, they moved to live in Isabella. It was another decision he did not take. On Isabella, his hometown, he felt that deep estrangement. It took him time to get used to life in there again. What helped him to stay for a while there is his group of old friends like Brown and Champ Deschampsneufs. They were also that group of people who spent some time in western countries like America and Britain, so their acts were also influenced by the colonizers. Singh started some business in Isabella, and then he was convinced by his friend Brown to try politics. Although he was

not keen with politics, he went through that experience. He was not that strong politician and was treated as an immature person.

In the second part of the novel, Singh goes back to his childhood and early life. He considered it to be the source of all confusion he has. Through a deep description for all the relationships he had in Isabella as a child and boy, he sets the scenes of his early life time. He was a child for a poor father who was married to a woman descending from a rich family. He despised his father's family as he was ashamed of being poor. However, he was so proud of his mother's family who were very rich. His father was a school teacher who was in conflict with his wife's family. He considered them to be the source of corruption on the Island. So he criticized them all the time. Singh did not look at his father as a model as he was poor, so he spent most of his time with his mother's family. He looked at Cecil as a model and followed him most of the time. His look to Nana and Sally was full of admiration and respect. Then he went through his ancestors' history, which he depicted as part of a legend rather than a reality. Although he was trying in some occasions to identify himself with that history, he still looked at it as something that is no longer valid for life.

Richness, material benefits, and a keen sense of alienation from his family background, especially his father's side – are some of the fundamental aspects of his character – it has to be stressed that his attitude

is not individualistic or subjective. Rather, it is typical of his people, the mimic men.

1-3 V.S. Naipaul and Fiction

Deodat (1975) suggest that Naipaul's works can be better appreciated when read through their creative context. They must be read away from their original setting. The resulting economic, psychological and social situations of over three hundred years of oppression must be fully taken in consideration by the readers of Naipaul's fiction. The validity of the statement mentioned above can be seen through the universal appeal of Naipaul's fiction which goes beyond the regional Caribbean world.

The Mimic Men is Naipaul's most thoughtful work that portrays and recreates the fragmented history of his homeland in Trinidad. Naipaul confesses that:

At first I looked for this release in humor, but as the horizon of my writing expanded I sought to reconstruct my disintegrated society, to impose order on the world, to seek patterns, to tell myself, this is what happens when people are strong; this is what happens when people are weak. I had to find that degree of intellectual comfort, or I would have gone mad. (p.59)

The British Council (2011) clarifies that Naipaul's fictional and non-fictional writings trace a self-conscious symptomatic response to the need to discover an appropriate literary form to frame a psychic and symbolic sense of homelessness. In his writings he tried to find a way of inhabiting an

inherited language and 'tradition' which only estranged him. Since he was young and even before leaving from Trinidad in 1950 to study English at Oxford as the 'scholarship' boy, Naipaul had a dream of becoming a 'writer'. But as he admits in a brilliant 1964 essay '*Jasmine*' it was difficult, "whatever the blinkered power of colonial fantasy, to extricate oneself from the predetermined plot of an Imperial history, to let his memory, rather than his pretension, speak" (p.7). In this regard, Naipaul is similar to the long line of expatriate writers who talked about the vital role of memory. Glaring examples are Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation of a Memory* (1951), Ernest Hemingway's *A Movable Feast* (1964) and Edward Said's *Out of Place* (1991).

1-4 V. S. Naipaul's Biography

Herdeck (1979) introduces Naipaul as Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born in Trinidad, the eldest son of a second-generation Indian. Naipaul's estrangement from his native society (Trinidad) was keen even before he was able to examine the terrible sides of his life. He confesses that when he was eleven years old that he decided to leave his homeland within years, Deodat (1975) quotes Naipaul:

I wrote a vow on the endpaper of my Kennedy's revised Latin primer to leave (Trinidad) within five years. I left after six. The facts of his subsequent life read like the successful escape story of one of his protagonists. After earning a scholarship in Trinidad, he attended Oxford University where he read English. (p.32)

Herdeck (1979) mentions that Naipaul worked briefly for the BBC as a writer and editor for the 'Caribbean Voices' program. However, Deodat (1975) says that on his graduation, he married an English girl and started writing novels at the age of twenty-three. Since then, he has published nine works of fiction (six of which have received literary awards) and five works of non-fiction. He continues to write and live in England and, at the age of forty-six, is a recognized artist throughout the English-speaking world.

Mohan (2004) states that much of Naipaul's writing issues from his personal experience of being a displaced member of a minority race and religion in Trinidad. However, his dual heritage places him in a position that makes it possible for him to render a detached account of his subjective experiences. Being an Indian by ancestry, Trinidadian by birth and English by intellectual training and residence, Naipaul is indeed a man with a broader perspective.

His first three books are comic portraits of Trinidadian society. *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) won the *Mail on Sunday*/John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1958 and was adapted as a film with a screenplay by Caryl Phillips in 2001. *Miguel Street* (1959). His acclaimed novel *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961), is based on his father's life in Trinidad. Herdeck (1979) states that *Mr Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963) was the first novel to be written by Naipaul in England and won the Hawthornden Prize. Subsequent novels developed more political themes and he began to

write about colonial and post-colonial societies in the process of decolonization. These novels include *The Mimic Men* (1967), winner of the 1968 WH Smith Literary Award. *In a Free State* (1971), won the Booker Prize for Fiction, *Guerrillas* (1975) and *A Bend in the River* (1979), set in Africa. *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) is a personal account of his life in England. *A Way in the World* (1994) is a narrative that combines fiction and non-fiction in a historical portrait of the Caribbean. In 2001, he had his *Half a Life* been published shortly after the *Adventures of Indian Willie Chandran*.

V. S. Naipaul is also the author of a number of works of non-fiction including three books about India: *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990), and three books about Muslim world, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (1981) and *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions* (1998). He has written about the Caribbean in *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies - British, French and Dutch in the West Indies and South America* (1962) and *The Loss of El Dorado: A History* (1969). He also has published two books that include several essays related to colonialism, *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles* (1972) and *The Return of Eva Peron* (1980). In 2002 *The Writer and the World: Essays*, was published, however, *Literary Occasions* was published in (2004) which is a further collection of essays. His newest book is *A Writer's People: Ways of Looking and Feeling* (2007). In 1989, V. S. Naipaul was granted

knighthood. Moreover, he was awarded the David Cohen British Literature Prize by the Arts Council of England in 1993 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001. The British council records (2011) states that he holds honorary doctorates from Cambridge University and Columbia University in New York, and honorary degrees from the universities of Cambridge, London and Oxford. He lives in Wiltshire, England.

Naipaul is a writer of brilliant techniques which he employed in his fiction, particularly his post-colonial texts. His many travels in different parts of the world are colored by his colonial past as Korte (2011) suggests:

If travel is of special pertinence to Britain's former colonies, the travel is of special pertinence to Britain's former colonies, the travel writing produced in these parts of the world has been practically ignored by scholars until recently with the prominent exception of V.S. Naipaul. (p.301)

1-5 V. S. Naipaul and Nobel Prize

The Nobel Prize in Literature 2001 was awarded to V. S. Naipaul "for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories" (The Nobel Foundation, 2001). This is an unmistakable recognition of his literary achievement and seriousness in handling his themes and issues. Naipaul's writing is characterized by a gloomy tragic and dark touch which makes the readers focus on every single moment in his novels. He focuses on the

tragedy in his novels which is a natural outcome of a colonized country.

There are many sad and painful scenes, Hedi (2011) observes:

Beating is a recurring item in Naipaul's fiction. Characters either beat or are beaten. What is interesting is that beating as a social phenomenon can tell us much about the society and its habits. Beating becomes as ceremony, a ritual conducted appropriate moments for appropriate purposes. In this ritual there is an equilibrium between the protagonists. Those who beat do not find any resistance from those who are beaten as they are usually withered women or children. (p. 15)

This quotation shows the extent of suffering his characters have to bear in their painful lives. Again one can easily conclude that the experience Naipaul represents is not simply a subjective experience. Rather it embodies the sufferings and frustrations of a whole generation of people who have to bear those painful experiences. Naipaul sums up his impression of life in Trinidad as Prasad (2003) comments as simply that of "a rubbish heap" (p.72) which he sought all his life to fictionalize and represent to all types of readers from east and west.

Weiss (1992) believes that V.S. Naipaul has written about others while writing about himself. The experience of exile has been the key to this link between self and others and this has enabled him to treat his own alienation and dislocations as an instance and representation of the changes and search for identity of colonial and post-colonial people. The exile experience can be considered as one of the foundations of his narratives.

The exile is both liberation from a terrible environment and a place of alienation. Weiss elaborates that the exile finds its centre through this sharing of both origins and ends; it is through dislocations that he reaches this self-realization.

The family relations and the background of being of an Indian and colonial society and colonial society helped in the development of Naipaul's restless life. His exile has been started by his grandfather's voyage of exile from India to Trinidad. Naipaul (1990) reflects on this inheritance in India: *A Million Mutinies Now*: "my ancestors had left as indentured servants for the sugar estates of Guyana and Trinidad. I had carried in my bones that idea of abjectness and defeat and shame", (p. 51).

The New York Times (2001) observes that Naipaul, the leading Caribbean novelist, is a master of English prose style who is known for his studies of alienation -- an individual's sense of being on the outside of society.

The publication of his collected short fiction gives readers a chance to trace the transition of this Nobel Prize-winning author from being just a storyteller to a famous figure. His painful experiences, continuous sense of exile and alienation and multiple cultural effects have all contributed to his present weighty position as a remarkable writer.

As a man, Naipaul is a private man, who prefers to live in the country in order to have the solitude for thinking and writing. It is in this calm countryside that he has enough time and peace of mind to relive his childhood and maturity experiences. Pryce-Jones (2001) comments that melancholy grips him at the spectacle of "the steady grinding down of the old world" as he puts it, and he might complain to an interviewer that he is living in a "plebeian culture that celebrates itself" (p.2). Noble Prize records (2001) further show that his personal story is moving; his achievement extraordinary.

Vasanthasena & Baghyalaksmi (2012) regard Naipul's presentation of social reality, as an understanding to the relationship between the individual and society, the particular and the universal, past and present, at different levels of consciousness. His novels show the corrupt society built upon the humiliating and frightening details of colonialism.

Drozdiak (1978) believes that the human destiny is felt in Naipaul's works and is reflected largely in the primitive vitality of his art. Naipaul's characters represent a world not moved by love but dominated by greed, conflict and futility. As a satirical artist, he aims to provide a kind of dark comedy laughter that may provide a sort of relief and mitigation of a very painful reality. Naipaul observes, "My world is more confused than that of the other writers; I've had to fit in as part of the background" (p.26). This will be exhibited in *The Mimic Men* in the following chapters.

Ray (2002) states that it is easy to recognize the miseries and sufferings faced by Naipaul's protagonists have correspondences with the experiences of people all over the world who live in an alien land dominated by a colonized society. Their experience is different from the sufferings and thwarted desires imposed by a powerful Fate or Providence which one finds in Hardy's novels. Rather, Naipaul's works show the natural process of a man's life, which is the fusion of both happiness and sorrow. Literary critic Manjit Inder Singh (2014) has drawn attention to the fact that:

None of the [Novelist's] figures are allowed authenticity or a place in the landscape he inhabits. Indeed, Naipaul sees a necessarily fleeting and absurd wish in them to cross barriers erected by the limitations of colonized culture that in the end can only lead to a falsity of purpose, supplemented or aggravated by a consciousness of unimportance. (p. 189)

1-6 Statement of the Problem

The Mimic Men is one of the outstanding novels that explore the different dimensions and manifestations of post-colonial literature. The present study seeks to illuminate this particular side of the novel as part of a broad theme in contemporary creative writing and critical theory.

1-7 Objectives of the Study

The current study aims to investigate the following points:

- 1- Emphasizing the manifestations of colonization in V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*.
- 2- Studying the effect of colonization on the concept of identity as represented in *The Mimic Men*.

1-8 Questions of the Study

The research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the manifestations of colonization in V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*?
2. What are the effects of colonization on identity as represented in *The Mimic Men*?

1-9 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in identifying the effect of colonization on the colonized country, and how V. S. Naipaul created novels that deal with serious issues related to man's position in the community and the misuse or abuse of power. Due to its importance, *The Mimic Men* was translated into Arabic and many arguments and reviews have been written about it. As such, the present attempt is important in that it reconsiders the novel and its

writer through post-colonial perspective. It may fill a gap in existing literature in this part of the world.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The limitation of this study is attributed to the nature of the methodology and the study sample:

- **Time:** The time of the study will be limited to the time of publishing *The Mimic Men* (1967) till now.
- **Place:** The place of the study will be limited to V. S. Naipaul's life in India and England.
- **Sample selected:** The sample will be confined to one novel which is *The Mimic Men*.

The study will exclusively concentrate on the psychological and literary sides of the work in question.

1.11 Definition of Operational Terms

Below are the major terms which will be dominant throughout the argument in this research:

- A. Post-colonial literature:** It can be defined as a written literature that appeared after the end of the colonial rule. The focus is laid on the effects of the colonizing power. Colonial writing also comes in many shapes and forms; it covers a long time span, from the 16th to 20th

centuries, and colonial writers are certainly not uniform in their depiction or opinion of empire (O'Reilly, 2001).

The Mimic Men: A profound novel of cultural displacement that presents a newly independent country in the Caribbean, the island of Isabella. The novel focuses on the view that colonial experience has caused the colonized people to perceive themselves as inferior to the colonizer. Hence all types of corruption, malpractices and misconduct.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

This chapter consists of two sections; the first section deals with theoretical framework and the second section previews the main studies that addressed V.S Naipaul, novel *The Mimic Men* and colonization.

2.1 Theoretical Framework:

Horvath (1972) defines Colonialism as “a form of intergroup domination in which settlers in significant number migrate permanently to the colony from the colonizing power” (p.50). He continues to explain that along with colonialism happens what he names ‘intergroup domination’ where the colonizers dominate the colonized society. As he considers much of the history of the capitalist world-economy, he finds it as a history of colonialism, consisting of recurrent attempts to create a subordinate society to control other countries politically and economically.

Such a definition attempts to outline the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized which is based on mistrust and misconception. For this reason many writers and intellectuals went further to explain this relationship and its consequences. Dehdari (2013) describes those intellectuals as the ones who refused to keep silent and conform to what is dictated by the colonizers. Accordingly, they established what is known now as cultural studies. Post-colonialism is part of this field of study. It

emerged in the second half of the twentieth century to handle theories and practices of the post-colonial literature.

Bhabha (1994) states that:

Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of —minorities within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic —normality□ to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples. They formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the —rationalizations□ of modernity. (p.3)

Likewise Sheoran (2014) finds that:

Post-colonialism is an interdisciplinary movement that attempts to reform the prospects of those colonized countries. While its point of exodus was to examine the lost identities and languages else it turned out to be a rich and multilateral interdisciplinary area under which one can investigate into many concepts and issues with new approaches and views. For example, the perception of nationalism, race, identity, language, and marginality are all being explored into, each time deciphering new things through post-colonial academic studies. (p.1)

Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2003) maintain that post-colonial theory involves the topics that shed light on immigrated, enslaved, suppressed,

resisting societies in addition to issues of representation, difference, race, gender, and place. It also includes interactions with the major cultural disciplines of history, philosophy and linguistics of the colonizers. They go further to explain that “none of these is ‘essentially’ post-colonial, but together they form the complex fabric of the post-colonialism” (p.2).

They add that post-colonialism is similar to any other field, as it covers different topics. So it could be about the ‘historical fact’ of European colonialism and the diverse social and cultural effects to which these phenomenon gave rise. They believe that colonization is a term that should be reconsidered due to the multiple implications associated with it.

Resistance is one of the characteristics of post-colonial writings and thought that rarely appears in Naipaul’s works as Cudjoe (1998) suggests. However, Naipaul seeks to support the colonial values in his narrative art as a result of his sympathy for the colonial cause. Still, Cudjoe believes "the work of V. S. Naipaul is inscribed indelibly with colonial and post-colonial reality" (p.5).

Medrea (2013) indicates that V.S. Naipaul’s works are full of post-colonialism and post-modernity scenes which provide a diversity of scenes pertaining to the actions, attitudes and discourses of those people who have found themselves caught between two opposing cultures – the colonizer and the colonized.

Boehmer (2005) believes that Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* can be more appropriately characterized as post-colonial in its attempt to show the difficult situations resulting. Since his arrival in Britain all his effort has been to stay as far as possible from the West Indies. His works, however, are rarely set in Britain. Most of his novels and travel writings are dedicated to reducing divisions of the cultural splits and the double standards of a colonized nation.

Williams & Chrisman (1993) find Naipaul's denial of the cultural and historical development of the colonized Africans in his novel *A Bend in the River* as an example of a wider denial of their existence as a whole nation. This can be understood as the product of the colonizer's efforts to suppress the cultural life of the Africans, by either ignoring it, or creating a situation of alienation for some intellectuals by conforming them, like Indar, and even Naipaul himself. Naipaul's admiration of the colonizer's mode of living and thinking makes him degrade his original cultural values. According to Fanon (1963), Naipaul is in a state of evolution and confusion:

If we wanted to trace in the works of native writers the different phases which characterize this evolution we would find spread out before us a panorama on three levels. In the first phase, the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power. His writings correspond point by point with those of his opposite numbers in the mother country. His inspiration is European ... In the second phase we find the native is

disturbed; he decides to remember what he is ... Past happenings will be brought up out of the depths of his memory; old legends will be reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism ... Finally in the third phase ... the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people ... he turns himself into an awakener of the people. (pp.178-179)

In *The Mimic Men*, readers can definitely realize these three phases, mainly in the three-part division that Naipaul had set his novel to. Singh, in the first part was trying to identify himself completely with the British culture and learn about the life system of the colonizers. However, in the second part he gets back to his childhood and origins, the past that needs clarification to understand the present happenings and how it is related to the way things go. Then, readers find Singh undergo a change in the third part to reach new decisive resolutions that make him a new man. No doubt such evolution in Singh's character follows the dialectical process; thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Huttunen (2002) comments that *The Mimic Men* exemplifies a change in the Naipaul's writings to introduce a more self-reflexive form of writing compared to his earlier and more satirical works. As it is his first novel written outside Trinidad, he fills it with details related to his real life. Thus, Naipaul used the first person narrator style, and constructed the novel with a high level of complexity following continuous comparisons of separate times, events and places.

Mustafa (1995) analyzes the self-reflexivity of Singh in his rearrangement of past events as the "gains the formal status of a trope; a carefully constructed paradigm of an empirically determined state of mind" (p.101). She refers here to the idea of remote self-reflexive. Singh keeps a space between his past and present. This can be felt through the examination of his own past deeds.

Thieme (1987) traces this change in Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* and its striking power to present situations of frustration, discontent and loss of identity as a result of the colonial experience:

Narrative Transcending of Order and Disorder corresponding to a shift from Dickens to Conrad, in the sense that *The Mimic Men* represents a more self-reflexive and contemplative writing, a kind of probing of the Conradian darkness's of the mind as opposed to the more satirical and caricature-like creations of e.g. *A House for Mr. Biswas* (p.71).

Hall (1996) views the question of identity under the colonial pressures. There is always something wrong with the identities of such people who seem to be oscillating between the past and present, attraction and revulsion:

Identities are constructed within representation: they arise from the narrativization of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectiveness, even if the belongingness, the suturing into the story through which identities arise is, partly, in the imaginary ... and therefore,

always, partly constructed in fantasy, or at least within a fantasmatic field. (p.4)

In such a narration that is used for self-definition categorized by Hall earlier, the aspects of real and unreal often intertwine with each other.

White (1987) compares real and imaginary events as representations of historiography and fiction. He believes that there is a connection between the personal and the public definitions of identity construction, and the imaginary and real presentations of narrative style. He states that:

The real or historical aspect of a narrative (e.g. a novel) can be seen as representing the discourses coming to the subject from the outside (the social pole). The imaginary aspect can be seen as representing the subjects own contribution to the construction of identity (the subjective pole). In this way, narrative is revealed to be a particularly effective system of discursive meaning production by which individuals can be taught to live a distinctively relation to their real conditions of that is to say, an unreal but meaningful relation to the social formations in which they are indentured to live out their lives and realize their destinies as social subjects. (p.55)

Traboulay (1998) has conducted a study under the title *V.S. Naipaul on Tradition and Modernity in the Third World*. This study examines the works of ex-colonialized novelist V.S. Naipaul on the state of the post-colonial world. It contracts of the values of Western civilization against the barbarism of the Third World. It also shows certain views on the inhumane ways of modernization in the Third World in Naipaul's works. This study has addressed questions related to the modernity in the third world. One of

the questions raised is the following “What is the Third World?” (p.55) Political sociologists and economists offer definitions and statistics as Naipaul sees. In contrast, Naipaul gives vivid images and stories about people who live there. Literature and reportage, done in the style of Naipaul is no less valuable mode for understanding the Third World than other regions or countries.

Greenberg (2000) has conducted a study under the title *Anger and the Alchemy of Literary Method in V.S. Naipaul's Political Fiction: The Case of The Mimic Men*. This study analyzes the political fiction ‘The Case of *The Mimic Men*, by V.S. Naipaul. Theoretically, the study shows that V. S. Naipaul's fiction and nonfiction since the 1960s have reflected an unenthusiastic view of Post-Colonial nationalism and nation building. It has been uneasy for Naipaul to accept the idea that the African and Caribbean societies could rise by themselves to be able to govern their economic and political situation independently. He has also opposed political views and finds that there is a need for cultural disconnection with the European World. Moreover, the study shows that Naipaul, however, is probably the most honored living author in the British literary world.

2.2 Review of Empirical Studies :

Eid (2000) investigated the ways in which Naipaul's novel *A Bend in the River* (1979) can be considered a neo-colonial response to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in that it re-draws the map of the journey taken by Conrad's heroes. *A Bend in the River* will be looked at as a neo-colonialist novel that aspires to respond to El-Tayib Salih's (Sudan) *Season of Migration to the North* (1969). The study shows Naipaul's implication that political and social disorder is “the unavoidable product of contemporary liberation movements, and that Africans, and by effect the whole "Third World" have no place in the world” (p.3). Neo-colonialism plays an extremely important role in creating “an ideological justification for its irresponsibility for such diseases. This is a fact that Naipaul's Salim cannot cope with, and, therefore, ignores it.” (p.13)

Johnsrud (2006) exploring the two experiences of coming from the colonial margin to the imperial centre. The colonial background of the main characters greatly influences their experience in England as seen through their characteristic reactions and attitudes. One can easily notice that the novels written by ex-colonial writers concentrate on London as the site of action. However, these two writers choose the countryside which has a different environment. V. S. Naipaul and David Dabydeen come from Trinidad and Guyana, and they are both of the same Indian roots. The Caribbean post-colonial condition differs from for example the Indian or the

African because of the populations' relatively recent relationship with the land they lived in. Both of these novels were written by two of the prominent Caribbean writers offering a rich investigation of the enduring influence of colonialism on people's everyday lives.

Halloran (2007) presented a literary critique of the novel *The Mimic Men*, by V. S. Naipaul, analyzing his depiction of the political and social elements of cultural identity within the Third World. Naipaul's hostile views against controversial distinctions between the First and Third Worlds are cited along with the balance of personal psychology and group politics manifested through the characters of the story. V.S Naipaul “keeps on rewriting of the self, the past and history and focuses on the fragmentary, the partiality of knowledge and the obscurity of the present as felt in contemporary experience.” (p.33) according to Halloran Naipaul's narratives reflect deep feelings of despair and melancholy accompanying the migrant position in the present age of all types of migrations and technology. His commitment to a “politics of difference” (p.12) is a key point in tackling Naipaul's fiction and its presentation of the colonial experience.

Medrea (2011) explored identity patterns in writings that belong to Post-Colonial literatures and highlights the split identities that inherently appear within the Post-Colonial discourse. The split consciousness of post-Colonial writers such as Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul and Kazuo

Ishiguro, places them between different types of cultures and mentalities. In fact, the idea of identity under such circumstances is a recurrent topic in the studies about cultural and post-colonial discourses.

Kalpakli (2011) has conducted a study under the title *The Impact Of Colonialism Upon The Indigenous and The English Women Characters in The Mimic Men*. The study shows that the existence of the binary oppositions and the colonial tendencies in patriarchal cultures pave the way for the exploitation of women. In patriarchal societies, not only men oppress women, but also women oppress women. To exemplify, generally the study shows that the white woman takes the role of a master and the black woman takes the role of a servant. Thus, patriarchal colonial tendencies implement the seeds of hatred within the same sex and therefore sisterhood among the women becomes impossible.

Black (2011) has conducted a study under the title *Aesthetics and Identity: V.S. Naipaul and the Post-colonial Picturesque*. Naipaul's characters often represent these landscapes in language that recalls the eighteenth-century philosophies of the sublime and the beautiful. Post-colonial picturesque in *The Mimic Men* (1967), *A Bend in the River* (1979), and *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) reflects the evolution of post-colonial discourse in Naipaul's work. In all these different novels one can easily notice the developments and shifts in characters' consciousness as they live

the postcolonial experience and its hybrid culture and the moral and psychological effects.

Aajoul (2012) explored and described India and its social, political, and religious conditions after independence. Naipaul, as a colonial writer, sees India and colonies through a satirical lens. He thinks that Indian people suffer from many social dilemmas and complexities which lead them to try to imitate the western civilizations. Humiliation, poverty, and colonialism in third world states are main themes in this work. *An Area of Darkness*, a travelogue book, comes as a perception of India during its Post-Colonial era. The study shows that Naipaul's identity and his negative view of Islam and Gandhi as a symbol of civilization are quite evident.

Doncu (2012) has written a study under the title *Cultural Landscapes and Post-colonial Revisionism: V. S. Naipaul's African Fiction*. The study deals with the major concern in V. S. Naipaul's fiction which is man's relationship with nature and the cultural construction of this relation. In his African novels (*In a Free State* and *A Bend in the River*) Naipaul engages critically with a discourse about nature that has its origins in the Romantic period. Nature as wilderness appears in Naipaul's prose as bush, a source of both superhuman beauty and cruelty and fear. The bush, as an image of nature that remains unaffected by man and his work, is understood as unfamiliar and damaging, and as threatening to civilized life. Naipaul's conception of the relation between the human and the natural can be

understood only through his history and his position as a colonial and post-colonial writer.

Singh (2013) explored the representation of post-colonial identity in V. S. Naipaul's three works *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *A Bend in the River* and *An Enigma of Arrival*. Post-Colonial Diasporic authors and their works have been mentioned in the paper to carry out further research on the theme of Post-Colonial identity. The study discusses three novels, and the main protagonists try to claim their place in the world that is full of challenges in their real life. As a result, the setting of these novels creates a cultural confrontation that complicates their life journey more and more. Thus, the inevitable outcome is that they are forced to live in unfriendly surroundings.

Ali & Gopal (2013) discussed some of the prominent themes in Naipaul's fiction. Naipaul's works are set in many places and explore many themes, but he is best known for his detailed depictions of Trinidad, where he was born and reared. The emphasis of these two scholars centers on the main argument about Naipaul being an autobiographical writer. As a man living in diaspora, it is not surprising to find relive and recapture his painful experiences in Trinidad. It is a literature that leaves a great space for the role of the memory.

Singh (2014) has conducted a study under the title *A Post-colonial Study of V.S. Naipaul's Half a Life* with sheds illuminating light on V. S. Naipaul's novel *Half a Life*. In 2001, Naipaul published *Half a Life* in

which he highlights the issue of the dispossessed and the characteristics of the permanent exile. In this novel, Naipaul still feels like a stranger, and it is quite obvious through the title chosen. *Half a Life* is a masterpiece and can be regarded as the climax of Naipaul's career of more than four decades because the novel includes almost all of Naipaul's thematic concerns. It discusses the colonial and post-colonial worlds, especially the problems of man's loss, isolation, and alienation. This masterpiece stresses Willie Somerset Chandran's search for self-development and self-knowledge. Naipaul skillfully sheds light on Willie Somerset Chandran's colonial quandary, his unease and displacement in this novel.

2.3 Distinguishing Features of the Present Study in comparison with the Previous Studies

After reading and examining previous studies related to the subject of this study, the researcher finds that the most important characteristics which distinguish this study from the other previous studies can be stated as follows:

Some of the previous studies such as concentrated on exploring identity patterns in writings that belong to Post-Colonial literatures and highlight the split identities accompanying Post-Colonial intercultural writings.

This study shed light on the Post-colonial aspects in V. S. Naipaul in *The Mimic Men*, by showing the thematic and technical aspects of the novel. The influence of the colonial experience on the reactions, attitudes and conduct of the characters in *The Mimic Men* is a central issue in the present study. Besides, the technical and stylistic points where relevant will be highlighted.

This study contributes to enhancing researchers' knowledge about the methodology that should be followed. Moreover, it helps the researcher get a better look to Post-Colonial literature and the manifestations of colonization in V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* as well as his other novels.

Chapter Three

Methods and Procedures

This chapter presents the methodology and the procedures followed in this study. It describes the techniques and strategies followed to answer the questions of the study and achieve objectives.

To answer the first question of the study, “What are the Manifestations of Colonization in V. S. Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men*?” the researcher conducted a thematic analysis of *The Mimic Men*. The researcher analysed the text to find the manifestations that make this novel a post-colonial fiction. For this reason, the researcher sorted all the manifestations that reflect the post-colonial themes and topics. The researcher analyzed the whole chapters of the novel to find how Naipaul exhibited the aspects of colonialism in the proposed community of Ralph Singh. The researcher attempted to find the links between the manifestations she analyzed and the elements of a post-colonialism literature.

To answer the second question of the study, “What are the effects of colonization on identity as represented in *The Mimic Men*?” the researcher analyzed the characters of the story and exhibited the degree of colonialism impact on them. The researcher depended highly on decoding the novel text to support his views in relation to post-colonial influence. By means of analysis and comparison the researcher sorted all the related quotes and

manifestations that help to better understand the way Naipaul stated his argument. Moreover, the researcher exhibited Naipaul's view about colonialism to support her argument.

The researcher analyzed all the written works she was able to access related to V.S Naipaul and post-colonial literature. This helped much to have the complete perspective related to colonialism influence on the colonial people and reach the proposed goals.

Furthermore, the researcher set all the conclusions that reached in a separate chapter to summaries her findings in light of the thematic analysis she conducted. As will be shown in the following chapter, the study concentrates on the textual aspects of Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* in order to clarify the thematic and structural lines of the novel.

Chapter Four

Discussion of the Study

In this chapter, the researcher explored the motifs and topics that are manifested in Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men*. In addition, the researcher analyzed the characters and their attitudes. Finally, there will be a discussion for the author's own view of the characters and their relationship to their colonizers.

4.1 Manifestation of Colonization

V.S Naipaul, in *The Mimic Men*, expresses his discontent towards colonization and its chaotic impact on the psychological, social and political aspects of the individuals of the colonized countries. Through the character of a former expatriated politician who tried to examine his interests and character as an independent personality, Naipaul emphasizes the role of colonization in creating a case of psychological confusion and social conflict, "A more than autobiographical work, the exposition of the malaise of our times pointed and illuminated by personal experience and that knowledge of the possible which can come only from a closeness to power." (p.6)

In his memories of those painful experiences, Singh lives in two places; the recalled Isabella and its colonized world and London as the

symbol of the colonizing power. Thus he thinks of the dislocation, alienation, and confusion as a result of the process of colonization:

But even as I tried to put words to what I felt, I knew that my own journey, scarcely begun, had ended in the shipwreck which all my life I had sought to avoid. A somber beginning. It could not be otherwise. These are not the political memories which, at times during my political life, I saw myself composedly writing in the evening of my days. (p.6).

Ralph Singh portrays the political system in his post colonized country, Isabella, as a chaotic system that affects the people's casual life. "The career of the colonial politician is short and ends brutally. We lack order...There are no universities or City houses to refresh us and absorb us after the heat of battle." (p.6) This is a direct confession that the colonial experience has left terrible effects on the colonized people present and past. Because of this situation he resorts to outsider power or system to protect him from the tyranny of the political system of his home land. He suggests that there is nothing that could protect him in his homeland. His presence in London is evidence that his own people fail to provide the essential aspects of life. Thus "flight" becomes the only choice before Singh: "For those who lose, and nearly everyone in the end loses, there is only one course: flight. Flight to the greater disorder, the final emptiness: London and the home Counties."(p.7)

The Mimic Men seeks to see and judge the colonial experience on people's attitudes, reactions and understanding of things around them. In other words, this novel has its action centered on the past, the life in Isabella and how its rhythm has been drastically affected. Thus the collective tone of the following paragraph "we" is fully emphasized:

We were a haphazard, disordered and mixed society. It was a group to whom the island was a setting; its activities and interests were no more than they seemed. There were no complicating loyalties or depths; for everyone the past had been cut away.
(p.57)

The last sentence in the quotation above is very expressive and typically the state of rootlessness which characterizes the attitude of the colonized people in Isabella. They have nothing to hide and their actions are marked by superficiality: "In that fortnight we got to know as much about the group as there was to know." (p.57)

The deep feeling of inferiority as a result of being colonized increased their sense of alienation and displacement. The British colonial education and culture were presented as a substitute or at least arrival for the original Aryan education, culture, traditions and even religion. They were introduced as new systems of discipline, success, and achievement. As a result they dominated these people's lives to the extent that the colonized started to identify themselves with the colonizers rather than with their original culture. "The great city, centre of the world, in which, fleeing

disorder, I had hoped to find the beginning of order.” (p.17) Singh’s repeated phrase ‘the great city’ shows his fascination with London more than his homeland Isabella. It reflects his standpoint as a really colonized character unable to judge this experience of colonization properly. This cultural domination is certainly a key point in this novel and its striking title of imitating others literally. However, not able to digest the colonizers’ culture, tradition, and religion, they were not able to associate themselves with the colonizers rightly. For example his social group were proud of their American background more than their Isabellan origin; “On Isabella they were linked less by their background and professional standing than by their expatriate and fantastically cosmopolitan wives or girlfriends. Americans, singly and in pairs, were an added element.” (p.57) We also find that this attitude of mimicry overwhelming others like Sally, Cecil’s elder sister who finds her pleasure in “reading American magazines for the fashions, which she discussed with these girls.” (p.99) Another example is Nana, the rich bottler on the island, travelling “to America to buy a pipe” (p.92).

In this novel, it is apparent that Naipaul sheds light on Neocolonialism and its different manifestations on people’s understanding of power and freedom. For the ex-colonized people, independence becomes a dictionary term that is used in public speeches and private talks rather than an experience they practice in their daily life. “The public speaker was

only another version of the absurd schoolboy cricketer, self-consciousness suppressed, the audience ignored, at the nets of Isabella Imperial.” (p.123)

In Isabella, the richest are the ‘Coca Cola’ bottlers; Nana and his family who take pride in the material benefits of trading with the Coca-Cola. It is interesting to note that their experience of this foreign drink is only superficial, “Cecil was Bella Bella and Coca-Cola. He didn’t like anyone to forget it and he didn’t like to forget it himself. He had all the facts and figures about Coca-Cola sales.” (p.91) They made the syrup as a national drink and visiting the plant by school children an educational experience; “My grandfather had put it to the education authorities that such tours of modern industrial plant were educational; and in spite of the passionate but unimportant opposition of my father the authorities agreed” (p.90).

The discrepancy is that Coca-Cola is an imported product that is controlled by its American manufacturers, “to prevent the Coca-Cola secret formula from perishing for all time in a single ghastly accident, the American directors never travelled together, even in an elevator.” (p.91) This shows the mimicry act that controls the economy of the island, the economy that is based on consumption rather than production. Singh, as a child, noticed his grandfather, Nana, and his hypocrisy and selfishness when he uttered the word “My people” (p.105) he “had expected more passion and more pain” from him mainly that he was a person who showed

pride of his Indian origin. He remembers: “But the Indian actors in his back veranda were on a level with the religious pictures: together they were an act of piety towards his past, a reverencing of the land of his ancestors.” (p.106)

Moreover, the English Lord Stockwell, as a landlord of the biggest sugar cane fields on the Island, plays a major role in controlling the economic situation on the island. He doesn't care for the work conditions of the poor native workers. This is clearly portrayed in his commentary on the scene of the poor “people everywhere semi-naked, working barefooted in the mud which discoloured their bodies and faces and their working rags” (p.105) working in the sugar cane fields of Stockwell. As he wonders “Why can't they give them leggings?” (p.106) Nana responds with a cruel answer “Leggings cost money” (p.106). For him ‘his people’, as he described them, are not more than an expression he uses for publicity.

Similarly, freedom and self-autonomy are both associated with the colonizer even after independence. In an attempt of taking over the sugar cane factories the government of the island was paralyzed and not able to implement that single decision which will lead to the improvement of the island's economy. The politicians, represented by Singh, were avoided by Lord Stockwell and one of the ministers and looked at as children, “You can take back to your people any message you like” (p.224). This proposes that the people of Isabella are not free and they only have a kind of false

independence. The American, British, and Canadian banks dominate the financial scene; “though it was also my good fortune to deal with an American bank anxious to establish itself on the island. I don’t imagine any of the older British or Canadian banks would have been so accommodating.” (p.62)

Describing the impact of colonialism on the whole population of the island, Singh succeeds in portraying the chaotic political and economic situation that prevailed soon after the independence. The political situation was not stable, the social life was disturbed and confused, the economic situation was declining, “The pace of colonial events is quick, the turnover of leaders rapid...and I know that the people who supplanted me are themselves about to be supplanted.” (p.6) Thus the people were confused as regards to their real identity and life the people of the island do not know whom they want to identify themselves with, their original culture or the colonizers’.

Attempting to liberate himself from the effects of his colonizers, Singh failed in practice. Although he was proud of his Aryan and Asiatic culture and traditions, his fascination of the colonizer’s culture kept him away from his real identity. His obsession with his colonizers makes him unable to choose the right way. In London he finds himself at ease and in full harmony. In other words, the experience of colonization is in his bones. Thus he finds it difficult to return to his homeland, Isabella; “I know that

return to my island and to my political life is impossible.” (p.6) Therefore, he supports the people who knew what colonialism is over a long period of time that was enough to strip them of their real identity, culture, history and religion. “But now I no longer know what I was...” (p.26).

The sense of inferiority prevalent throughout the novel is another topic handled in this novel; it is the dominant factor of his attitudes and reactions. He states that “to be born on an island like Isabella, an obscure New World transplantation, second-hand and barbarous, was to be born to disorder” (p.127). This is evidence of his pride and superiority toward his country’s people and objects. When he returns to his homeland, his reaction is that of frustration, “This tainted island is not for me. I decided years ago that this landscape was not mine. Let us move on. Let us stay on the ship and be taken somewhere else” (p.53). It is this unusual detachment from his homeland and sexual acts and practices that drive Edward Said to call him “immoral” (Wang-Ling Wee, 2003, 188) The material sides of his experience deepen his sense of inferiority and his preferences. Thus he did not feel proud of his father, “My father was a school teacher and poor. I never saw his family and naturally suspected the worst.” (p.89), he tried to associate himself with Cecil and his mother’s family rather than his father. The reason is of course material and beneficial:

I preferred to lay claim to my mother’s family. They were among the richest in the island and belonged to that small group known as ‘Isabella millionaires’. It gave me a great

pleasure at school to have Cecil... Cecil was a tyrant; he offered and withdrew his patronage whimsically. But I never wavered in my claim. (p.89)

Singh's great admiration of London's housing and urban life is such that he wishes to reconstruct his hometown on its system:

From room to room I moved, from district to district, going ever farther out of the heart of the city. Those houses! That impression of temporary, fragile redness, of habitations set superficially on trampled fields! Those Shops! Those newsagents! Quickly each area was exhausted. (p.30)

Although his town worked and gained success he attributed all that to his "good fortune" (p.62) rather than to his ability to succeed. It is noticed that his sense of subordination is typical in that the majority of his people in Isabella have this weakness and lack of self-confidence.

One of the reasons that may cause this state of subordination and alienation is that Singh himself is from an ethnic group, Indian, living in a remote place. This case of remoteness makes him away from his origins;

I was a Singh. And I would dream that all over the Central Asian plains the horsemen looked for their leader. Then a wise man came to them and said, 'You are looking in the wrong place. The true leader of you lies far away, shipwrecked on an island the like of which you cannot visualize.' Beaches and coconut trees, mountains and snow; I set the pictures next to one another. (p.105)

As an alien, Singh chooses the image of being "shipwrecked" to express his sense of loneliness and inability to belong. This dislocation is a factor

behind his passive attitude to the colonizing culture and its practices. This search is psychological and mental. It takes the form of a journey within “Alienated from his ancestral roots, he seeks psychological defenses in status, power and sex. He is moving from one place to another in search of meaning” (Ray, 2002, 157) It is the situation that Homi Bhabha (1994) described as the pedagogical and performative. The pedagogical is represented by the Western culture and ideology that is presented as a substitution to the colonized original culture and ideology. The performative is the situation where individuals of the colonized community experience the new culture and try to merge it within their original culture and ideology. Singh’s attitude, of course, belongs to the pedagogical where his own native culture is fully submerged by the colonizing culture even though the independence has been gained.

Through an autobiography the author shows Singh to be in search of his real identity. It has been rightly described as a “descent into his own psyche, an exploration of his own roots” (Prasand, 2003, 72). Singh is reconsidering his past life explicitly and honestly. It seems that he attributes the cause of his alienated state of mind, views, hardships, and bad feats to his early life; “But childhood was for me a period of incompetence, bewilderment, solitude, and shameful fantasies. It was a period of burdensome secrets” (p.97). The novel delivers some representative situations of the state of confusion as shown in the sentence “taking an apple to the teacher” (p.97). The narrative directly clarifies this uncommon

and imaginary situation by stating that people know very well that “they had no apple trees on Isabella” (p.97). Surely this comes through the enforced imperial educational system he experienced in Isabella. By defining the sources of confusion he has, he might define his real identity.

In London at the age of forty, Singh narrates the moments when he achieved his status away from his own country and people. It appears that he divides his life into three phases: while in London, before London and after London.

The first part of *The Mimic Men* portrays Singh as a scholarship student who arrived in London from the previously colonized Isabella Island. It also goes through his alienated return to Isabella married to an English lady and how he tried to move his new experiences to his homeland:

I linger now on this moment of arrival more than I did at the time. This return so soon to a landscape which I thought I had out of my life for good was a failure and a humiliation. Yet this, together with all my unease, I buried away. (p.52)

The mixture of various sensations and recollections is evident in this quotation. The striking impression they give is that of failure and frustration. The reason lies in the clash of opposite views and perceptions and the protagonist’s failure to bring them together.

The second part depicts his gloomy childhood which has been marked earlier as the period before London. As a typical case of one from the colonized country, the feeling that keeps haunting Singh's mind is suppression and grief, "On Isabella when I was a child it was a disgrace to be poor" (p.101), and the "deep, silent shame" (p.101). The richness-poverty case occupied his mind as his father was poor and of a family of idlers and failures, while his mother was a daughter of a rich bottler of coca cola on Isabella.

Because he couldn't bring himself to life in Isabella, he determined to change his name Ranjit Kripal Singh into Ralph Singh, "this secret name is my real name but it ought not be used in public" (p.100). This shows the deep psychological and social impact of colonialism on him. He is ready to sacrifice his cultural and social identity for the sake of getting money and prestige. The educational system that has been imposed by the colonizers increases Singh's cultural alienation. It makes him feel that self-realization cannot be achieved on the island; he has to look for it somewhere else; the colonizers' country. This was his start as a mimic man, a man who copies and believes that the colonizer has the right solution for all his life problems.

The third part is about the present. It is after London phase. He goes into the deep details of his eventful life. He tells his readers about his difficult times on the island and the great times as well. However, in this

part he goes over his economic and political activities. He was trying to find his real identity through these activities. He admits that he had no certain gift, profession, or skill to master any certain activity. However, his construction work was inspired by having a residential area similar to those of Britain. His political activities were not his own rather they were suggested by his friend Browne; however he was not that skillful politician. Clearly he has nothing original in his character. Nor does he maintain any national side in his actions.

The confessions Singh makes about how he was confused and displaced while being in London need a lot of courage from a politician to go through openly. He was not able to identify what he wanted or to decide what he would become. He was fascinated with the London that apparently looked systematic. Describing the city well-built constructions, he was trying to establish himself as an independent person, a goal he was not able to achieve. Instead, he started imitating others mainly Mr. Shylock because of his appearances, not because of his personality or kindness:

I thought Mr. Shylock looked distinguished, like a lawyer or businessman or politician. He had the habit of stroking the lobe of his ear and inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copied it.
(p.3)

In contrast to the Shakespearean Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, the present one is admired and mimicked. Singh finds it easy to mimic Mr. Shylock as if his mindset is used to mimicry. He does not need to think of

it. Consequently, we find him mimicking and guided by all others easily. While trying not to tie himself with a real relationship with Lieni as a kind of self-independence, he was guided by her to play the role of the 'dandy character'. While he was just flattering with Sandra as a pretty girl he met, he found himself responding to her demand and married to her on the spot. Back to his island, it was Browne, his socialist friend, who encouraged him to be a politician. All these situations show the extent to which he was just mimicking others, and mainly those of the colonial background.

One of Naipaul's critics gives the following explanation of the misconduct of Singh and his companions. They are all in search of providing the "difference that they try to use to re-invent themselves as a new class in opposition to an old world from which they feel they have escaped." (Mustafa, 1995, 105).

The quest of identity that Singh started is one of the major topics that can be traced in post-colonial literature. Naipaul was able to create a narration that combines what is real with what is imaginative. In other words, he has a mixture of the romantic past and the harsh present. In between, Singh lost his identity. He doesn't know what to identify himself with; the Aryan traditions and culture that he only knows about through books and the old ladies stories, or the western culture, namely the British culture, that influences his daily life greatly as a colonial. In Singh's own words, the problem is put as follows: "We pretend to be real, to be learning,

to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new.” (146)

4.2 The Effect of Colonization

Leaving aside the themes of this novel which have been highlighted in the first section of this chapter, the way the characters are drawn goes in line with the same argument about colonizer-colonized duality. The characters, both major and minor, serve and deepen the central question of colonization and its various manifestations. Ralph Singh stands as the central character of *The Mimic Men*. In fact, the whole novel is about him as a colonized man who comes across major emotional, social, cultural and political challenges. As a first person narrator of the novel he provides an autobiography for his eventful life:

These are not the political memoirs which, at times during my political life, I saw myself composedly writing in the evening of my days. A more than autobiographical work, the exposition of the malaise of our times pointed and illuminated by personal experience and that knowledge of the possible which can come only from a closeness to power. (p.6)

As this novel shows, Singh is brave enough to describe experiences frankly and honestly. He did not try to present himself as a hero. In fact, he described himself as an unfortunate colonial who is a womanizer who addicted to sexual relations more than passion and intimacy.

His position as a politician proved to him that “it was more than a dream of order” (p.37), but his failure as a politician shows the great distance between his dreams and bitter reality. Isabella needs a more

competent and practical politician than Singh. His conclusion , “I no longer have a political career” (p.6). This conclusion coincides with the humiliation he went through the hands of Lord Stockwell and the British Minister. He understood that ‘politicians are gifted people’ who know how to manipulate things to achieve success:

He who in other days was mean, intemperate and infirm now reveals unsuspected qualities of generosity, moderation and swift brutality. Power alone proves the politician; it is ingenious to express surprise at an unexpected failure or an unexpected flowering. (p.38)

His late understanding for politics gives the readers the impression of how naive he was; he thought that getting closer to his colonizers, and being educated within a colonial educational system would give him the power and skill to be a strong political figure. But all this proved to be wrong.

He goes deeper in portraying the deep blankness and confusion that he has as a distressed colonized person mainly when he was in London. He no longer can tell the difference between what he feels of and what should be done, “Which is the reality? The mood, or the action in between, resulting from that mood and leading up to it again?”(p.8). He is too weak to take action alone, thus he tries to appear as other people imagine him, “We become what we see ourselves in the eyes of others.” (p.20). His problem is that he thinks of doing things more than he can. Good examples of this are his marriage and political life. All these important events show that this man is a mimic. He mimics his colonizers and his friends as well:

Coming to London, the great city, seeking order seeking the flowering, the extension of myself that ought to have come in a city of such a miraculous light, I had tried to hasten a process which had seemed elusive. I had tried to give myself a personality. It was something I had tried more than once before, and waited for the response in the eyes of others. (p.26)

Not knowing how to identify himself or what or whom to identify himself with, Singh, as he states, finds “Each occasion pressed [him] deeper down into emptiness.” (p.28). Thus the writer presents a man who is aimless and in state of confusion. For this reason, one notices that his actions are based on imitation. He kept looking for superficial relationships with women he never knew before. “It suited [him] better to have a relationship with someone whose language [he] couldn’t speak.” (p.21) All this is indicative of the fact that his relations always centre on his colonizers. He persisted on not tying himself in a serious relationship with Lieni, the Maltese, though he knew her for a long time and she played an important role in his life. On the other hand, he accepted Sandra’s proposal of marriage without thinking, even though she was a mischievous student and of lower English class. His attraction to Sandra was not more than an attraction to the colonizer.

Singh is also emotionally undeveloped, mainly in his early sexual life, he proves to be a cold-hearted, insensitive man, unable to deal with women passionately. He also views emotional and physical intimacy as "violation", as somehow dirty. Singh writes of his early London affairs:

Intimacy: the word holds the horror. I could have stayed forever at a woman's breasts, if they were full and had a hint of a weight that required support. But there was the skin, there was the smell of skin. There were bumps and scratches, there were a dozen little things that could positively enrage me... These scenes in the book-shaped room didn't always end well; they could end in tears, sometimes in anger, a breast grown useless being buttoned up, a door closed on a room that seemed to require instant purification. (p.55)

V.S Naipaul succeeded in depicting the feelings and mindset of a colonized person through Singh's character. He analyzed the factors that lead to such state of dislocation, alienation, and confusion. Of these factors, is perhaps the mental and physical remoteness from the original identity, and the impact of the colonizer as a governing system that enforces its invading principles and systems. Singh is a symbol of the distressed colonial who lost his identity in between two worlds, the colonized and the colonizing. Naipaul emphasizes the psychological, social and political confusion that resulted in the postcolonial era through Singh's words as he says "after each of these journeys I came back more exhausted than before, more oppressed by a feeling of waste and helplessness" (p.42).

Singh is a representation for the Third World communities that take for granted what comes from their colonizers as an ultimate truth or reality. Along his forty years life journey, he was copying the dressing style, the manner and even the class obsession of his former British colonizers:

In London... I chose the character that was easiest and most attractive. I was the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent to scholarship. In fact my income was small... But I let it be known that on my island my family were bottlers of Coca-Cola. (p.25).

What Naipaul makes clear here is that Singh has lost the sense of being himself, he becomes a mimic man. His actions arise not from passion or rationality, but from a desire to reach what the British have achieved; control, dominance, stability, and political power. Singh's character reflects Naipaul's pessimism about the future of ex-colonies like Trinidad and what kind of people who inhabit them.

However, at the age of forty, Singh becomes aware of his past life and conscious of the misfortunes that he has already encountered. It seems that being humiliated by Lord Stockwell and the British Minister was the main incident that pushed him to look back at his life in a different way; "Once a man is stripped of his dignities he is required, not to die or to run away, but to find his level" (p.7). Moreover, his reference to Lord Stockwell's hint about his hair, "you [Singh] will never grow bald, that's for sure" (p.39), is an indication of Singh's political and emotional immaturity. This shows that Singh is reevaluating his past life and how he tries to find what is best to be done. At this moment, Singh sets himself free from his past and could see his future from a better angle.

Moreover, Singh discerns the corruption that overwhelms his social system and public life, that it even colours his experience of every aspect of

public life in Isabella, especially politics. When Singh is a child, his father doesn't return home one day, he and his family later knew that he has become the leader of a small relatively religious, relatively revolutionary group. However, his father's movement was only one of many political movements on the ethnical Isabella characterized by labor strikes and general agitation for improving their situation, "part of the unrest in the colonies...just before the war" (p.127). However his political life proves to him to be useful. He learns that despite the fact that his father's movement is politically ineffective as it is, it still has something to offer; it brings people together, at least, to share their depression and resentment, and it produces friendship. Having doubts that his father's group was responsible for the killing of a prize racehorse, Singh becomes dubious of their ideological principles. Such an act that was "performed by a shipwrecked man on a desert island" (p.142), shows that the political movement is not that good. Singh is horrified at being connected to another component of the corruption he experiences all around him. He takes it as if he were forced to consume "tainted oil" and "raw flesh" (p.142). This line of description emphasizes the moral corruption of the colonized society in Isabella which is based on slavery and tutelage. Such phrases are repeated elsewhere and possible allusions to the morally corrupt nature of a colonial society built on slavery and tutelage of the colonizer.

Sandra, Browne, Cecil, Deschampsneufs and the social set Singh associates himself with are a part of the rest of Isabellan society. Like

Singh, they "all studied abroad and married abroad;" they were "a group to whom the island was a setting" and for whom "the past had been cut away" (p.55). Sandra is an English woman from a low class who failed to maintain her scholarship because of her distraction. Despite the fact that she is angry and unhappy, she is confident enough to ask Singh to marry her. Singh finds a kind of protection when he marries her; "...it seemed to me that to attach myself to her was to acquire that protection which she offered, to share some of her quality of being marked, a quality which once was mine but which I had lost" (p.47). She couldn't find happiness both in her marriage to Singh and her going to Isabella. This was suggested by her escape in Miami and never showing up thereafter. Unlike the others, Sandra represents the colonizer, with whom Singh attempts to associate himself and to find his identity. Despite her limited range of mind, she had a great impact on his choices as she made him marry her and return to Isabella.

Cecil's character can be seen as the most influential character on Singh when he was a child. He tries to associate himself with Cecil as his "mother's brother" (p.89). Cecil is a man who did his best to upgrade his father's business and fight any counter propaganda that may affect Coca-Cola; "say we were related. Cecil was a tyrant, "he offered and withdrew his patronage whimsically" (p.89). Cecil is a self-serving man who is very selfish and utilitarian:

going by launch to a children's picnic on one of the islets near Isabella, he became so enraged by the sight of cases

of Pepsi-Cola, destined for this very picnic, that he threw them all overboard before anyone realized what he was up to. (p.92)

He represents the greedy businessman who is obsessed with his trade more than anything else “he was full of stories about Coca-Cola” (p.91).

Browne, on the other hand, is one of Singh’s early life friends who maintained strong relationship with him. He studied at the same Imperial school of Isabella, and then he became a journalist and a renowned politician. With Singh he founded a political party that failed to achieve its goals of reform and social justice. Browne is another mimic man who associates himself with the colonizers rather than with his Isabellan society. He is influenced by the imperial educational system of Britain, which in turn influences his cultural and ideological perception. Browne and Singh have many points in common, especially in their attitudes toward both the colonizing culture and their own native culture; likewise he faces problems of self-identity and alienation.

Browne attempts to present himself as a political writer, his first attempt in fiction is derivative in its imitation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in which an escaped slave "returns willingly to slavery and death" (p.156). His plans to develop and reform Isabella fail, he "became a prisoner of his role" (p.203).

Consequently, Singh was conscious of creating distance between himself and his school friends in *Isabella*: "So at last, in this matter of relationships at any rate, I began to eliminate and simplify" (112). One of those scenes he eliminated in his life was to avoid the farewell dinner party his school friends prepare for him for "fear of warmth and friendship" (179). Further Singh does not have strong relationships with his family, nor does he develop close or lasting friendships in adulthood. This kind of rejection of all those related to him from *Isabella* resulted from his situation as a mimic man. His fears always guide him into the wrong direction.

4.3 Naipaul's View of Colonialism

There is a real need to justify the presence of this section since all the details that have been given about the characters do reveal Naipaul's views and judgments of the colonial experience and its terrifying effects on the people in question. The following views and perceptions emphasize and highlight the points already raised and show, in one way or another, that *The Mimic Men* is a typical work of the colonial experience and its far-reaching spiritual and psychological effects on the individual. Indeed it enters even the smallest details of individual life. In addition, the presence of Browne with his traits already mentioned helps in deepening the sense of alienation and mimicry in the novel. It indicates that Singh's problem is not individual; rather it is societal and nationwide.

In addition to the themes and characterization, the novel presents situations when the voice of the author becomes clear and identifiable. In such passages, the author gives his judgments and perceptions about the terrible experience of colonization and its effects on people. In *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul (1991) confirms that the “Third World, colonized and imperialized, cannot preserve its traditional values in the modern world, and that the individuals of these communities tend to reject their traditional past and mimic the lives and cultures of their colonial masters.” (p.152) What The final image *The Mimic Men* provides is that the colonized people in Isabella (Trinidad) suffer from so many spiritual and psychological weaknesses because of that terrible experience of colonization. In fact there is nothing bright or hopeful about their situation:

We lack order. Above all, we lack power, and we do not understand that we lack power. We mistake words and the acclamation of words for power; as soon as our bluff is called we are lost. Politics for us are a do-or-die, once-for-all charge. (p.6)

In this respect the author is not different from the colonizers who justify the occupation of other lands, and then offer reasons for Western colonialism.

The presentation of the various themes and issues that an ex-colonized community may experience through Singh’s life as a colonial reflects Naipaul’s rejection of the way that the life of such people becomes. He satirically represents them as mimic men. His rejection is also understood through the confessional technique that he adopts in describing

Singh's unfortunate life events. Singh admits that he had lost his focus in London while trying to identify himself "Those of us who came to it lost some of our solidity; we were trapped into fixed, flat postures" (p.27). Singh's words "we pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World" (p.157), have much to say about Naipaul himself. It needs a lot of courage for a man to describe himself as such. However, Singh is not that brave man; he is the man who keeps running away from his problems and "surrenders the direction of [his] life...to events" (p.53). Singh is a character suffering from so many moral, spiritual and psychological weaknesses that he proves at the end to be a failure. Of course the main reason behind this is the colonial experience which has left its deep scars on Singh and his whole community.

In short, Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, no matter how one views it, is a representative novel of the life of Trinidad as an example of the Third World life with all its negative and dark sides. The admirable advantage of the novel is seen through the great extent of honesty and authenticity in raising very delicate and touchy matters that eventually make Naipaul subject for some critical disapproval such as "corrupt bureaucracy, shoddy solutions, and hypocrisy...recurrent in justice." (Feder, 2001, 45)

Chapter Five

Conclusion

No doubt Naipaul is a novelist who comes from an ex-colonized country, Trinidad, and tries through *The Mimic Men* to reflect the life, history, aspirations, feelings and reactions that any colonized society may go through. The fictional character of Singh is a typical presentation of the real colonized character. Through *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul details the life of ordinary people of a colonized country represented by Singh in an artistic style that allows his readers to feel the double identity, confusion alienation and displacement these people suffer from. In *The Mimic Men*, V.S. Naipaul employs the confessional narrative technique through his main character Singh so that the final outcome is an autobiography rather than a novel. Naipaul is keen to make the reader sympathize with Singh's cause and feel the pain. He deals with the problems that the colonized societies confront in establishing their identity in a chaotic world that is full of challenges facing their culture and history. Naipaul's insistence on determining the identity of the individual is precondition to be able to continue the quest for political identity and solve the rest of colonial problems.

In general, the novel shows the influence of Colonial power on the colonized people and how it turns the majority into mimic men. They

unconsciously copy and act like their colonizers without realizing why they do that. Obviously the real causes of this uncommon phenomenon are unconscious. Indeed they cannot give convincing rationale for their actions except the desire to follow the patterns set by the colonizing power. To achieve his goal, Naipaul through this novel presents the conditions of a newly independent country in the Caribbean. It represents the conditions of colonized men who imitate and reflect colonizers' lifestyle and views. One of the most important points addressed in the previous chapters is the self-reflexivity of Singh in his rearrangement of past events; the whole memoir appearing as a carefully-constructed example of an empirically set state of mind.

It has become clear that Naipaul's vision, in regard to the colonial and postcolonial experiences, stems from his own life: he descends from the ethnical group of Indians living in Trinidad, whose ancestors left India to make money and return home, but they end up staying there. Home is the central space for defining identity and its absence generates the individual's displacement and alienation. Naipaul's homesickness is highly apparent in *The Mimic Men*. It can be sensed in detailing the childhood of Singh which in many occasions is so similar to Naipaul's. His look to that childhood with all of its miseries and difficulties was an attempt of exploration. Through it, he searches for what went wrong with him that made him lead a misfortunate life later on.

Moreover, Naipaul concentrates on major themes related to the problems of the colonized people. As a witness and commentator of the ex-colonies, he shows the inadequacies of such societies. Through *The Mimic Men*, he declares that freedom and liberation are the main concepts that all nations search for. However, getting liberated from the colonizer's military grip does not necessarily mean that they are liberated from their political, economic, and cultural interference. In other words, the novel is concerned with showing the psychological and cultural effects of the colonizers on the colonized people and their preoccupations.

Naipaul addresses the notion of the colonial education and cultural colonization that are presented by the colonizers with their well-established culture and social order. Moreover, the novel explores the imposed imperial culture that challenges the local and genuine cultures of the colonized societies. Seen from this perspective, *The Mimic Men* does show how culture and language are symbols of identity and self-recognition. When the character mimics the colonizers consciously or not, the author indirectly tells the reader that such acts are serious and can be destructive.

The most important character in the novel is awkward but, *The Mimic Men* ends more hopefully because, although Singh has lost hope in society, he has managed to salvage himself. In *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul is primarily interested in the development of Singh's personality as he confronts the difficulties of finding reality to go through a process of evolution that starts

with mimicry and ends up with self-realization. On the other hand, Naipaul uses the character of Singh's father as a reference point through which the author describes the social situation and its complexity.

Through the analysis, the final image of the novel depicts the narrator hiding behind a column, observing, more than interacting with the various issues he faces. He has been moving from one activity to another all his life. He is not able to face his fears and challenges successfully. The awkwardness of Singh's conduct can be explained through his colonial experience and its destructive sides. Singh's alienation and failure to understand what is going on brings to mind Ralph Ellison's protagonist, in *The Invisible Man*, and his awkward situation due to the problem of race in America in the first half of the 20th Century.

Naipaul traces the development of awareness in Singh's character through the course of narration. Singh is not quite sure of himself at the beginning, however, as the process of writing educates him and as he approaches the truth about himself, his attitude gradually changes and he becomes more confident, more modest, and more tolerant. Many of the statements he makes at the beginning of the novel he is ready later to change and reconsider. This means that the novel, apart from its social moral sides, is a work of personal education and learning.

As a whole, Naipaul portrays the men of mimicry as the men of evolution and development. They can change but gradually and slowly.

They need time to assimilate the situation and acquire the ability to balance between their past and present lives. *The Mimic Men* has shown so many sides of Naipaul's own experiences as well those of his people. It is satirical and explanatory, subjective and objective, local and universal. It is these sides of the novel that give the novel its great appeal, popularity and interest.

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