FIGURING NAIPAUL: THE SUBJECT OF THE POSTCOLONIAL WORLD

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
the award of the Degree of Ph.D.

University of Kent at Canterbury

September 1988

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Abstract

Figuring Naipaul deals with two issues: the writings of the Trinidad-born V.S. Naipaul and the problematic of postcolonial self-representation. In the literary world and among the reading public Naipaul has gained prominence and notoriety in the last two decades. But the critical response to his work has been essentially from what I call the 'mainstream' perspective. In my first Chapter (Part I) I attempt to map various critical trajectories that emerged from the mainstream perspective in the context of Naipaul criticism. In order to contest the tacit assumptions of the mainstream discourse and to figure the representation of the postcolonial world in Naipaul's work I elaborate the patterns in which they both repeat and suggest a certain kind of collusion between the underlying assumptions of the two discourses (Naipaul's own and that of the mainstream criticism).

The body of the thesis (Part II), consisting of eight chapters, is largely devoted to a detailed discussion of various ways in which what I call the Naipaul text constructs the postcolonial situation. This discussion elaborates certain recurring ruses and tropes I locate in the Naipaul text. My argument is that the ruses and tropes the text deploys in figuring the *subject* of the postcolonial world are deeply problematical in that they implicate the text in the hegemonic grand narrative of imperialism. The operation of these ruses and the pattern they constitute in the text are discussed in each Chapter of Part II. The ruses that the text depends on are mainly two: narrative deferral and the ruse of the gaze.

The narrative movement of the Naipaul text, as I will show, drawing on the ruses of deferral and the gaze, has no less an aim than that of the project of self-consolidation. That is, these ruses along with tropes of 'centre', 'origin' and 'wholeness' proclaim in Naipaul's writing a certain desire for self-consolidation and self-unification. Between the desire to 'house the subject' and the celebration of a "home" Naipaul's project suspends the subject of the postcolonial world; these aspects are analysed in Chapters Two and Eight of my thesis respectively. But between these two moments, aspects of the text I attempt to unravel, the Naipaul text scapegoats the postcolonial condition. This scapegoating, I will argue, is a necessary condition for the realisation, for Naipaul, of the project of self-consolidation. This operation of the text is figured in the postcolonial dispatches Naipaul constructs. These dispatches, as I read them from Chapters Three to Seven, shape the postcolonial world in the Naipaul text. Each Chapter focuses upon specific works or groups of works by Naipaul. My analysis also engages with various sources the text relies on to prepare its dispatches.

Chapter Nine is basically a critique of Naipaul's conception of 'history'; this critique undertakes to analyse Naipaul's utterances about history in general and his historical narrative, *The Loss of El Dorado*, in specific.

My attempt is to show how various narratives of the Naipaul text represent the subject of the postcolonial world. In the process of unravelling the text I attempt to show how one can dislocate a pattern apparent in a text and celebrated by established opinion. I argue that such dislocations are important for conceiving interventionary critical strategies in the postcolonial situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Dr. Lynn Innes who kindly accepted to supervise my work initially for a term in 1985.

I am grateful to Professor Louis James who supervised my work for one year from the Fall 1986 to Summer 1987. Without Professor James's criticism, suggestions and above all the initial direction he gave me I could not have reached the stage of submitting the thesis at the end of the third year of my work.

I was fortunate to have known Professer Peter Fitzpatrick who showed undiminished interest in my work throughout. I gratefully acknowledge the critical encouragement he has shown towards my work.

It is difficult to fragment what I owe Dr. Bernard Sharratt to record it in an acknowledgement. During the three year period Dr. Sharratt has shown a painstaking and concerned critical attention toward my work. I am especially grateful to Dr. Sharratt for the dialogical care with which he read even the most unreadable versions of the thesis - and encouraged me to continue. Dr. Sharratt supervised my work at various stages and has taught me the importance of learning to *read* the *issues* in the life and world.

During the entire period of my work Shobha has given me company with patience and understanding. I take this opportunity to record my gratitude to her. She has also helped me in typing the thesis.

I thank the Association of Commonwealth Universities for the opportunity they provided me. Without the scholarship I could not have done my work in England. I also wish to thank Kakatiya University, India, for granting me leave for this period.

A number of friends have helped me in shaping my ideas and using the computer. I thank them all especially Nancy Fulton and Alan Bicker for their generous help, and Khawaja Alqama with whom I could rehearse many of my arguments at various stages. I also wish to thank the University of Kent Library staff and the Computing Laboratory staff for their help from time to time, especially Miss Munha Lee who sorted out many of my problems with the computer. Despite such debts, I acknowledge that the argument and the limitations of the thesis remain my own responsibility.

Those who begin by mourning the state of civilisation end up mourning the subjective state of the person mourning the state of the civilisation. Thus everyone is rendered voyeuristic, pornographic, self-destructive. An ethical-spiritual [political] question gets reduced to a moral-religious one.

Kumar Shahni[a]

And so with one thing and another
I found myself in the city of mirrors

[to show] belief and disbelief
faith and badfaith
and the world blown away

the uncertainty
of everything but our earth bound will
within the sunken chamber
of ourselves

Stanley Diamond[b]

OPENING UP

This 'thesis' is an elaboration of multiple narratives. It is appropriate, I think, to figure postcoloniality through multiple narratives rather than in terms of a grand narrative. In this the term 'thesis' remains a paradox for my attempt is not to prove a 'conclusion' through a progressive accumulation of arguments. The multiple narratives are figured in and through the Naipaul text. That is, various narratives of Naipaul and a variety of other narratives Naipaul draws on to *buttress* his text become the 'field' of critical e-laboration.

The 'field' of this thesis is delimited mainly by the material available (on and of Naipaul) in the public domain. The thesis does not seek to 'prove' arguments through 'archival' sources. This reluctance to use the 'archive' is not from a refusal of its importance but to underline the problematic nature of what has acquired the status of being the 'repository of facts', the source of the 'real'. I engage with this argument in dealing with the fact/fiction binarism at various places in this thesis.

In constructing my arguments through multiple narratives I think it is fitting to avoid plotting my critical interests into neat divisions, through a segmentation of concerns. In effect, the thesis does not respect the binary divisions of theory/practice, methodology/analysis. There are neither theoretical nor methodological sections in isolation from critical practice or analysis. This is not to say that the thesis pretends to be free of theoretical presuppositions. The theoretical concerns that animate my analysis are explicitly dispersed across various sections of the thesis. The methodological thread that weaves together my arguments can be summed up in one phrase: repetition with variation. That is, in constructing the multiple narratives, my arguments repeat but at the same time attempt to emphasise a certain difference in each repetition.

In narrativizing my arguments it is necessary for me to operate more or less like a *bricoleur*. It is in this spirit that I draw from various sources of the contemporary critical scene. Nonetheless, I assert that even the *bricoleur*'s operation does not free him/her from a problematizing of his/her own sources; this folding back on the sources is also attempted in the thesis. My conviction is that in working for an interventionary critical discourse which can be an alternative to the mainstream 'critical' discourse it is more rewarding to conceive postcoloniality in terms of multiple narratives.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The Enigma of Arrival (1987)	*EA*
Finding the Centre (1984)	*FC*
Among the Believers (1981)	*AB*
Return of Eva Peron (1980)	*REP*
A Bend in the River (1979)	*BR*
India: A Wounded Civilization (1977)	*IWC*
The Overcrowded Barracoon (1972)	*OCB*
In a Free State (1971)	*IFS*
The Loss of El Dorado (1969)	*LED*
The Mimic Men (1967)	*MM*
An Area of Darkness (1964)	*AD*
The Middle Passage (1962)	*MP*
A House for Mr. Biswas (1961)	*AHB*
Miguel Street (1959)	*MS*
The Mystic Masseur (1957)	*TMM*

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Part I Positions

Chapter One: Mappings

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1) *MIMETIC TRIANGLES AND CIRCULAR PROJECTS*

2) *READING TEXT(S)*

3) *RAIDING THE CENTRE*

4) *NAMING THE ORIGIN*

5) *FINDING THE ENEMY?*

> the task...is to dismantle the metaphysical and rhetorical structures which are at work in [the text], not in order to reject or discard them, but to reinscribe them in another way.
>
> Jaques Derrida

1) *MIMETIC TRIANGLES AND CIRCULAR PROJECTS*

It is more than three decades since V.S. Naipaul began his writing career. He has already gained a secure place in academic criticism and among the reading public of the world. Unlike some other writers of his generation he remains the subject of controversy. Yet both irate denunciations and untiring celebrations of his work appropriate him through 'mainstream' critical understanding. Mainstream criticism, as I will analyse it in this section, approaches the writer with the ideals of 'authenticity' and 'truth' and 'knowledge'. The writer is expected to satisfy these ideals. Mainstream criticism follows a trajectory of analysis in looking for these ideals, that can be designated by the term 'translation'. The critical task, in this trajectory, is perceived to be a 'translation' of an object of analysis into a 'model' used to 'explicate' the object. The model in many cases is either provided by other critical works (on the same object) or by the opinions of the producer of the object (the 'author'). Translation activity, in this regard, involves a mutation in the object but the medium (or model, with its underlying ideals) of translation undergoes no change at all. Critical practice, in other words, that functions on this translation model establishes a hierarchy between the model and the object. To translate is to illuminate in *other words* or to purvey 'meaning'.

My thesis attempts to figure the subject of the postcolonial world through the work of Naipaul. At the same time it is also an attempt to analyse how the subject is constructed in the work. My arguments in this figuration aim to indicate the deeper implications of the critical model referred to earlier and problematize it. Each chapter, in the subsequent parts, engages with the problem of the subject (and) of the world. In this section I will attempt to map the critical responses to Naipaul accumulated so far and the circular projects they revolve.

An unravelling of the 'critical' activity on the work of Naipaul over the last

quarter of a century discloses a programme of translation. This programme can be tracked in three dimensions through the model(s) and messages of various critics. The particular critics chosen here do not enjoy any privilege over others who are left unconsidered. The attempt here is to concentrate on the assumptions on which critical projects multiply. Further, my aim here is to introduce what I wish to call the strategy of double reading which operates throughout my own thesis. The strategy is to read both the critical commentaries and the problematic[1] that governs the commentaries. For this purpose I have preferred to focus on anthologies of critical essays on Naipaul such as *Critical Perspectives On V.S. Naipaul,*[2] and special issues of *Commonwealth* , *Journal of Commonwealth Literature,*, and *Modern Fiction Studies,*[3].

a) *Resolving Criticism*

Many critics of Naipaul, in these various anthologies, seem to conceive their project as the bringing together of various elements of Naipaul's work to explicate it. The norm for such an activity seems to be "ordering". Thus, criticism is then the exemplification of order, and coherence in the work; this is done by equating or resolving the various elements and tensions of the work. The first step towards this ordering emerges when a binarism is introduced, dividing Naipaul's work into "non-fiction" and " fiction ". This binarism is an unexamined assumption that prevails in the work of Naipaul critics. But as all binarisms involve hierarchisation and privileging of one element over the other (such as coloniser/colonised, signifier/signified and linear/synchronic), my contention is that in the critics' project 'non-fiction' is privileged over 'fiction'. This is so in spite of (or precisely because of) the absence of any full length work on Naipaul's non-fictional writings in the last twenty five years[4].

For the nonfiction (including interviews and essays) seems to function as a model for translation in many critical commentaries on Naipaul. That is, even before the

problem of the epistemological status (the validity and viability of the model) of the so called 'nonfiction' is tackled, it is incorporated into the programme. One immediate and inevitable effect of such a 'ruse' is that the entire project becomes circular. That is, in unproblematically accepting the non-fictional utterances and translating the fiction into them, or in "recognising" the nonfictional utterance in the fiction, such critics circularly identify with what is considered to be the authorial 'meaning'. Thus the critical endeavour here involves a recognition, a making clear of the 'truth' that is veiled in the 'fiction', by appealing to nonfictional work that is assumed to be a signifier of self-evidently or transparently available truths.

Thus in the Introduction to the standard anthology of critical essays on Naipaul, *CP*, the critic writes that Naipaul's fiction deals with "the same reality" that is treated "but more directly" in his nonfiction (*CP* p. xv). After unveiling the metaphors that are believed to be authentic representations of "rootless", "unstructured society", "meaningless" and "malevolent" "reality", the same critic proceeds to substantiate his commentary by appealing to the truths from the author's voice: that the author has called Trinidad a "derelict land" in *The Middle Passage*[5] (*CP* p. xvii). Victor Ramraj recognises in Naipaul an ambivalence, a "binary feeling" (his phrase) towards India. This recognition is exemplified first through the nonfictional sources (*An Area of Darkness*, and *India: A Wounded Civilization*[6]) and only subsequently is *A House for Mr. Biswas*[7] analysed to show the fictional manifestation of such "feeling". The circularity of the equation becomes clear when Ramraj abstracts a remark of the author from a nonfictional work (*AD*) (*COM* pp. 62-63) and, 'proving' its 'metaphoric' manifestation in the fiction, proceeds to define the author's attitude: "Naipaul's ambivalent response to the Indian ethos *naturally* [!] determines his presentation of it in his fiction" (*COM* p. 64 emphasis added).

This treatment of 'metaphor' (or fiction) as a detour to the truth which is self-evidently available in the nonfiction emerges in John Thieme's work when he quotes

from *MP* to show how Naipaul has "dramatized" his "view of Trinidad" in *Miguel Street*[8] (*JCL* p. 12). Thieme's work, as will be shown later, although offered in various guises - in existentialist terms and through Naipaul's ethnic provenance - is rooted in circularity. This is apparent when, in attempting to salvage the author (from his denigrated past) Thieme endorses Naipaul's own reading (of that past). Similarly tracing the 'unbroken correspondence' between Naipaul's work and life Bibhu Padhi endorses Naipaul's autobiographical, nonfictional writing as sources for his fictional works. Padhi, for instance, quotes Naipaul's acknowledgement of his father's influence on his writings, paraphrases the quotation and repeats the author's comments by quoting from another interview: that it was against such a background that Naipaul wrote his fiction (*MFS* pp. 456-58). A few pages later in the essay Padhi offers a mysterious formula concerning Naipaul's work. Padhi argues that it is by "easing himself" (Padhi is quoting Naipaul's phrase) into "his problem", which is "an ominous sense of incompletion... that the novelist can responsibly pursue his vocation and, at the same time, *allow his sensibility to shine through his words*, thereby saving himself from extinction" (*MFS* p. 464 emphasis mine). This 'shining sensibility' is not offered as a result of any explicit critical analysis of the work but is an indication of an uncritical acceptance of the alleged transparency of the nonfiction. The formula attempts to resolve a problem at a point where the critical analysis in fact has to start. If 'incompleteness' is the problem then attitudes (produced) towards it and its significance and function in Naipaul's work, have got to be critically examined. But Padhi merely repeats Naipaul's comments and thus resolves the tensions (in Sections I and II of my thesis I will elaborate how this incompleteness creates tensions in the Naipaul text). This is Naipaul's faith, Padhi asserts; this darkness and loss pervade Naipaul's work. But Padhi then concludes with a panegyric remark: "His writings suggest the story of an extraordinarily sensitive and extraordinarily self-conscious man who has chosen to travel through a chaotic, cruel, and yet elusive territory of darkness with the hope that he

might, 'at some future time', triumph over it"! (*MFS* pp. 464-65). The critic as a purveyor of meaning, in a circular project turns his/her task into a programme of identification with the transparent truths of the sovereign author and in effect privileges the speech of an interview or essay over the writing of the 'fiction'.

b) *Criticism as 'Identification'*

Another variation of the translation project conceives criticism as including several kinds of 'identification'. That is, apart from identifying critical commentary with the authorial utterances as privileged signifieds, Naipaul's work is identified with the "reality" of the so-called Third World. That is, the work is treated as expressive or representational of "reality" that is 'out there'. In doing so the critics establish a triangular link formed of the author, the work and "reality". These mimetic triangles, as they function with the norm of representation, especially in the context of the postcolonial scenario, produce predictable responses - ranging from tearjerking sympathies to condescending ethnocentrism. Thus, Robert Hamner, for instance, writes that Naipaul's early novels (*The Mystic Masseur, The Suffrage of Elvira* and *Miguel Street*[9]) represent Trinidad politics and its "urban poverty", whereas *AHB* "captures authentic West Indian life" (*CP* p. xvi). Further, Ralph Singh's experience in *MM* shows a "pattern that is all too familiar in the West Indies: a pattern leading from isolation and frenzy to irrelevance, failure, and inevitable disorder" (*CP* p. xix).

The problematic of representation (the text as expressive or mimetic, and criticism as the recognition of the given), as the governing norm of the project, produces two inevitable effects. Firstly, it demands that the work represent the object ('reality') accurately. Thus, Hamner, elsewhere in the same anthology, argues that "as all fiction is," Naipaul's fictional world too is an "outgrowth of the reality depicted." He finds "considerable realism" and "attention to the mimetic detail" in the novels:

"Realism and verisimilitude are maintained at a high level of accuracy" (*CP* pp. 209,225-26)[10]. For many Naipaul critics looking for detail seems to be a favourite pastime. For Robert Lee, for example, it "is the documentation of this sociological phenomenon", the portrayal of society in Naipaul's nonfictional writings which provides the "basic stuff for his novels." In his argument Lee charts Naipaul's "increasing ability" to portray "the vivid life" and sees this ability as giving his "work cohesion and unity." Further, treating a novel, *MS*, more as "a history of our times" - about "the rise to power of a perhaps representative representative [*sic*] of the people in a newly independent state" - Lee finds some deficiency in the novel. Lee argues that it is precisely the dearth of detail about the society which becomes one of the limitations of this "history" (*CP* pp. 68-72). In a similar vein, Gordon Rohlehr (as I will argue shortly) reads *AHB* as being "true" to Trinidad creole society (*CP* pp. 89-99). Further, *TMM* is seen as presenting the "reality" or "real world" of "Trinidad social and political life". Thus the mimetic triangle is further substantiated with an appeal to the truth of the nonfiction: "It is only when one reads *The Middle Passage* that one realizes how completely Naipaul has accepted anarchy and absurdity as the norms of his society" (*CP* p. 180). The narrative voices of *TMM* and *MP* are identified with the psychobiographical signified - V.S. Naipaul (*CP* p. 181). Maureen Warner after her analysis of *AHB* as a novel representing "cultural clash" and "change", attempts to resolve the text by declaring that Naipaul's vision is "balanced" in describing "the present condition of Trinidad social life" (*CP* p. 102). Karl Miller, in his commentary on *MM* argues that the novel should be read for "the feelings by which it is governed" and not for "its disclaimers." But Miller's own reading is precisely based on an appraisal of the latter as they are mediated through the former. Ralph Singh's claim, Miller argues, that he is no politician should remind one that Naipaul is no politician either. Yet the novel is treated as Naipaul's "most political [in the empirical sense of the term] novel" and the characters are treated as representatives of "twenty countries"

that achieved independence. The 'typicality' of the fictional (metaphor) Isabella is extended, in Miller's argument, further to represent Trinidad, and Guyana. Moreover, this move is further justified by quoting from the nonfiction (truth) *MP*: "I am convinced that his experience of it helped him to write this novel" (*CP* p. 120-21). The 'experience' Miller endorses here is Naipaul's narrativization of Guyana's political problems in his *MP*. (When Naipaul visited Guyana the CIA-backed Burnham was contesting against Cheddi Jagan. Naipaul has nothing to say about this in his narrative.) For Miller this 'nonfictional' account is transparent and the information Naipaul gives has authenticity and truth-value.

Victor Ramraj, before proceeding to offer his analysis of *MM* as a "therapeutic autobiography", charts Naipaul's 'development'of a "proper tone and vision of life". In this he follows Naipaul's own account for he too divides Naipaul's work into "apprentice" work (Naipaul's own label) and the later "mature ones". Following Naipaul's own account of colonial education as insinuating a gap between learning and surroundings ('experience'), Ramraj proceeds to annotate this theme from various novels and circularly refers to Naipaul's own reflections. But in locating the 'gap' Ramraj is only 'recognising' the thematic in compliance with Naipaul's charting of it. What is problematic in the notion that colonial education *originates* a gap is that it appeals to a neatly postulated unity of language and reality (word and meaning) or to language as transparently upholding a fully-made 'reality' which was believed to be subsequently disrupted by an education. Once such a notion of an original plenitude is admitted, as I will show in later sections, the loss of unity is nostalgically and narcissistically longed for. Critical triangles identifying the 'meaning' with the authorial intentions (opinions) remain in complicity with the longing. With a slight variation Ramraj's own reading attempts such an identification when he divides Ralph Singh into two ("the actor" and the "contemplator" - thus charting the narrative as a progressive transformation of the actor into the contemplator) and identifies Naipaul with the

contemplator Ralph Singh. In doing so Ramraj reads the novel mimetically as a representation of events that took place 'earlier' as if the narrative provides a *direct* access to those events: "The latter ['contemplator'], detached from his former life and writing about it with restraint and coolness, is closer to Naipaul" (*CP* pp. 135, 128-35). For John Thieme, Naipaul's opinion on Africa in a fictional presentation (*A Bend in the River*[11]) is "essentially the same" as his statement in an interview, that "Africa has no future" (*COM* p. 76). Elsewhere, Thieme finds Naipaul giving a "complete portrait of Hindu life in colonial Trinidad [which] has been realized through the description of Biswas's experiences" (*JCL* p. 15). Keith Garebian, writing about Naipaul's landscapes, argues that Naipaul's settings are "chiefly small societies which foster narrow outlooks on life..." Here one gets the impression that Garebian is referring to Naipaul's settings as imaginative 'orders'. But on the next page the settings become "the metaphors...[of] the West Indian landscape..." Since metaphor is an 'indirect' truth the truth itself is quoted from *MP* (*JCL* pp. 23-24). Leon Gottfried, arguing against critics who "overlook" Naipaul's merits, claims that Naipaul sees ("rational intellect reflected in the direct gaze") "what is *actually before him*...as it is, and... will report the truth of what he sees" (*MFS* pp. 439, 441 emphasis mine).

I mentioned earlier that the problematic of representation has two inevitable effects. If one is the ethnological norm of 'realism' and detail claiming to represent the 'native' authentically, in line with the ethnological norm, the other could be considered in terms of social polarities or social binaries. In this problematic critical commentary mostly is concerned with a thematic (i.e., content) level and neutralises all tensions in the work into a neat polarity of tradition and modernity. In such a reading the success of the author is believed to be in resolving the tension. Thus, Lee is critical of Naipaul for not "reconciling...two conflicting views of life" in his early novel(s); these two views appear to be the alleged fatalism of the society Naipaul is representing and (opposed to it) the success resulting from a "correctly thought out and energetically executed"

'plan'. The latter, a view characteristic of "Western civilisation" which, according to Lee, is "frankly, bearable state of life." (*CP* pp.74-75). It becomes clear that the earlier ethnological criterion of detail turns into an ethnocentric judgment in this line of argument. Lee goes on to read *AHB* as Biswas's struggle to adopt a "better" view of life. But there are two great obstacles for Biswas, Lee argues: "The first is to conquer the fatalistic, passive attitude bequeathed from his ancestors; the second is to break away from an oppressively traditional society" (*CP* pp. 76-77).

Gordon Rohlehr's analysis reaches conclusions that are similar to Lee's. If Lee saw the progression of Biswas from the alleged fatalistic, authoritative Hindu past to success-oriented individualism, Rohlehr reads this progression as a rebellious movement from 'pre-individualistic' 'slave society' to the individuality of freedom. There is an irony in Rohlehr's argument. In spite of his homology between colonial society and the Hindu past his own conclusions are closer to ethnocentric essentialism. This happens because Rohlehr simply accepts the phenomenon of so-called 'pre-individualism' as he does Camus's concept of rebellion (this concept is taken up at a later point in my argument). Although there is an historical allusion in Rohlehr's use of the notion of 'pre-individualism' ('slave society' or pre-bourgeois) it (taking a cue from Camus) functions mainly as a psychologistic term. The so called 'pre-individualism' should not be interpreted as a defence mechanism alone (as Ralph Ellison seems to do - whom Rohlehr quotes approvingly as an authority), for such a reading remains in compliance with the slave owner's discourse in that it sees the slave owner on his/her own terms and attributes individualism to him/her in essentialist terms. Thus the so called individualism can itself be read as an effect of represssions and displacements. But Rohlehr follows the mimetic triangle in his analysis. His argument is typically drawn from Naipaul's nonfictional assertions - following Camus - that rebellion is impossible in the West Indies (*CP* p. 84). Rohlehr accepts this assertion and then attempts to salvage the Caribbean 'rebel' - Biswas. Rohlehr represents elaborately how Biswas

wages 'an almost-but-not-quite' European rebellion. Biswas's non-European rebellion is that of a comic, grotesque mediocre man (*CP* p. 92).

The terms another critic, Maureen Warner, uses to explicate the theme of social binarism (in *AHB*) are "cultural clash", with "individual assertion" (in the form of Biswas's 'modernity') opposed to the "tradition" of the Tulsis. For Warner formal education - a signifier of modernity in her argument - is an unproblematic source of individual freedom. She sees the 'European' ideals that are taught in the (colonial) school as significant and positive models for Biswas's transformation. The notion of colonial education as essential sources for subject-making, and the effect of privilege accorded (if at all) to the signifiers of such education in the novel, aren't even queried by Warner. In the absence of such an analysis, "literary" criticism celebrating the signifiers of freedom appears to be not far removed from the assertions of 'civilising' missions: "The old is invaded by the new, but not quite..." (*CP* pp. 102, 94-98 the ellipsis is original). So the gap is temporal and eternal at the same time. That is, as with the 'not-quite' European rebellion of Rohlehr's Biswas, for Maureen Warner 'modernizing' ('civilizing') educational ideals do not totally free the society for the 'old' persists; modernity invades but there is still continuity of the old. This gap, this ethnocentric binarism, appears in Michel Lemosse's argument when he offers the idea, following Naipaul, that Asians "have denied themselves a sense and awareness of time, of historical time" (*COM* p. 84). Preferring to focus on this "important dimension" against the "more obvious political picture", (in *BR*), Lemosse extends his idea to include Africa as well. The "unfamiliar dimension" of time, he argues, is signified by the word "African". Without much regard for fictional constructions, Lemosse goes on to conflate Naipaul's representation of Africa with historical Zaire: "[Naipaul's] very explicit statement is that Africa is forever caught in an accelerated seasonal cycle of economic slump and boom, and of destruction and reconstruction." Lemosse finds this 'cyclicality' in the structure of the novel, *BR*. But this does not lead him to analyse the

structure of the novel but apparently encourages him to read it as a mimetic representation of Africa (*COM* p. 92). Although Lemosse says that such a treatment of Africa can be "ideologicaly disputed" he devotes his energies merely to celebrating Naipaul's "uncommon treatment" of "man's time-sense" (*COM* p. 92).

Mimetic conflations always extend their project to universalist, humanist idealism. That is, in the mimetic triangles, any recognition and representation of 'local colour' (of native societies) are celebrated for their avowed universal and humanist allegiances. Apart from "defining or exposing a single society," for instance, Landeg White argues, Naipaul in *AHB* is "dealing with human problems of universal application, drawing on *a mass of local detail to make it credible.*[12] For Madhusudan Rao, *MS*, for instance, not only "represents the instability of the West Indian society ...[but] emerges as a symbol of the tragi-comic situation of man in the new wild environment"[13]. Robert Hamner, reflecting on Naipaul critics, divides them into two camps: one offers "bitter condemnation", the other "highest critical acclaim". Hamner says, without analysis, that it is futile to reconcile these two groups and proceeds to reject the former. Curiously, the rejection itself is substantiated by Naipaul's own remarks from a totally different context (where Naipaul was attacking the orientalist responses to his early fiction)[14]. Naipaul's earlier comments are seen to be eternally valid: "Naipaul's own early assessment...is as accurate for the present as it was when he made his observation" (*CP* p. xxvii). While preferring to take a position of "balanced neutrality", Hamner argues that one should appraise the "esthetic [sic] and humanistic values" of Naipaul's work (*CP* p. xxix). "In the final analysis," Hamner feels, it is not the writer's "political affiliations", the sources of his books, and "the quality of his compassion" that are important but whether or not "the individual works" "stand on their own". But in the next sentence Hamner appeals to Naipaul's opinion to prove his point: "Their chances [that they would stand] are excellent *because Naipaul has a high degree of confidence in his perceptions of the world*" *CP* pp. xxx, xxviii-xxx emphasis mine). For Gordon

Rohlehr, in depicting the 'absurd' drama of Biswas Naipaul was tackling the universal existentialist problems (*CP* p. 92). For Harveen Sachdeva, Naipaul's three early novels "transcend national boundaries and become documents on the condition of life in all developing lands" (*MFS* p. 485). To trace universalist and humanist values in fiction is to inscribe the norms of what is celebrated as the Great Tradition[15] of Western literature. This is precisely what Francis Wyndham's remark attempts to do: "conceived and executed within the great tradition of the humanist novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas* is as subtle and comprehensive an analysis of the colonial structure as anything in imaginative literature" (comment quoted on the cover of the Penguin edition of the novel).

c) *Ethnicism as Criticism (or Criticism as Ethnicism)*

If mimetic triangles are not outside the ethnocentric problematic in spite of (or because of) their vaunted universalism and humanism, the third component of any 'translation' project openly searches for 'exotic' elements in the work. In this variety the critic delves into the author's ethnic provenance to forge a master key that would, for the critic, open up all the knotted issues of the text. In the case of Naipaul this master key is mostly made up circularly - based on the author's reflections on his background (through 'truths' of the nonfiction and 'metaphor' of fiction). Thus forged, the master key, or the transcendental signifier (transcendental because the signifiers aren't opened to analysis and decoding) in Naipaul's case is - the "Hindu self". Reviewing Naipaul's *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*, in 1963, V.S. Pritchett, for instance, identifies Mr. Stone's disbelief in creation and construction as Naipaul's attitudes. Further he traces these attitudes to Naipaul's Hindu background as if this transposition from fictional to "real" background would provide the master key: "His mistrust of the continuous constructing will may be something he gets from his Hindu

upbringing." Although this metonymy of "Hindu self" disqualifies Naipaul from becoming an "Englishman", and although "the colonial sadness [of Naipaul] is not ours", Pritchett argues, Naipaul's "imagination," his "interest in the climacteric" enable him to make "an effective entree...into *our* part of the world." (*CP* p. 110 emphasis mine). So it looks as if it is only after the ethnic and historical aspects are discarded that the postcolonial gains an access to 'our' world. Yet the work needs be explained *through* the discarded elements - 'Hindu self' and 'colonial sadness'. David Overmond, for instance, culls from Naipaul's nonfiction the alleged attitudes of Indian passivity, acceptance of suffering, and absence of history, to comment on their metaphorisation in the stories of Ganesh (*MS*) and Biswas. Further, Overmond argues, an "image" of the old Indian Naipaul saw in Surinam (*MP*), "dying inch by inch in the sunlight and occasionally retiring into a structure like a chicken coop, provides a metaphorical expression for the West Indies" (*CP* p. 167). In an almost similar argument Philip Langran circularly devises his key of superstitious Hinduism (*COM* p. 38). In the early novels, Langran argues, Naipaul used the twin evils of "Hindu belief and practice" as "a source of comic irony" whereas the later novels like *AHB* show "the growing seriousness of his work in general" (*COM* p. 44). This seriousness is, according to Langran, figured in Naipaul's treatment of "superstition as a powerful enemy of individuality" (*COM* p. 49).

John Thieme is one critic who develops the ethnicist argument considerably. However, Thieme's argument is circular. He appeals to Naipaul's reading of R.K. Narayan's novels in *IWC* as religious fables, to account for Naipaul's own novels: "both [*AHB* and *MM*] are very much Hindu fables" (*MFS* p. 505). Thieme starts by paraphrasing from *AD* and *IWC* Naipaul's ideas of *karma* as "mental apathy" and inaction. Thieme argues that whether Naipaul's reading of *karma* is "correct is a moot point". For his discussion "it is enough to note the psychological state as he sees it, which encourages a quietistic acceptance that is the enemy of social progress" (*MFS* p.

506-07). In his explication of this metaphorised truth in *AHB* Thieme argues that Biswas's "alternation between periods of dependence on and rebellion against the Tulsis makes the novel as much a Hindu fable as *Mr. Sampath*, and, like Sampath, Biswas is caught up between *two opposed ways of life*" (*MFS* p. 508 emphasis added). As with the mimetic triangle, Thieme's own reading plots these allegedly opposed ways of life in terms of "Western individualism" and Hinduism. Yet, Thieme argues, *AHB* is not a frontal attack on Hinduism but a "delicate balance" between "an elegiac lament for the now irrevocably lost pastoral Hindu world of the opening [of the novel] and a satirical critique of the order of the Hindu way of life" (*MFS* p. 508). Thieme does not bother himself to ask whether such an order existed at all and when it was lost (if it existed). He moves on the lines Naipaul sets forth. The limitation of such a reading, as with the ethnicist project in general, is that it does not interrogate what is offered here as "the Hindu ideal" (I will pursue this argument in Section II of my thesis); it accepts Naipaul's inscribings of the "Hindu". Even if Thieme does not bother himself with *karma* his acceptance of it as a literary theme cannot be accepted unproblematically (my own argument elaborates this later.) To search for ethnic signifiers is to accept Naipaul's ways of reading, and thereby to treat Naipaul himself as an authentic *informant* about other cultures (Hindu and Caribbean).

The circularity of Thieme's argument returns when, after paraphrasing Naipaul's reading of *karma* and explicating its metaphorisation in the fiction, Thieme goes on to see it in Naipaul himself by quoting from an interview with Naipaul. Naipaul's comment that irony comes "out of a sense of acceptance", Thieme argues, appears "to be a form of fatalism that has affinities with the detachment of Narayan and [with the] literary manifestation of the psychology induced by karma" (*MFS* p. 509). There are two main problems with this reading: 1) it treats constructions of ethnic signifiers as transparent or expressive signs of reality; 2) it also seeks an identification of these signifiers with the psychobiographical signified - that is, with V.S. Naipaul. Thus it

turns out that, in Thieme's argument, Naipaul has a "love hate relationship" with Hinduism: "in *A House for Mr. Biswas* he had not yet come to terms with the psychological consequences of his Hindu past and remained at least partially enmeshed in an unconscious acceptance of karma" (*MFS* p. 509). Thieme goes on to quote from the biographical sources as arranged by other authorities on Naipaul - Landeg White and Anthony Boxhill - to show the itinerary of the Hindu self through the Hindu life-cycle (I will later discuss this theme in connection with Ralph Singh's 'Aryan' life).

Elsewhere, in equating what he terms the "outsider-insider dichotomy [which] informs the whole work", Thieme draws on the ethnicist signifier: "the quietism which lies at the heart of the Hindu psyche [?!] and prevents it from engaging with any real degree of commitment in activities which could bring about social amelioration"![16] This "quietism", Thieme argues, is an "important determinant of his authorial stance" in *MP*. This model of ethnicist criticism appears early in his writings on Naipaul but there it is presented under the guise of existentialist terminology. In 1975 Thieme argued that Naipaul's entire ouevre is bound up with the theme of "the conflict between determinism and existentialism." Naipaul's originality here is seen to be his treatment of this theme in the "framework of colonial experience." The ethnocentrism of this Camus-like argument is clearly stated when Thieme writes 'The *essence of colonial mentality* is the abnegation of freedom of choice"! (*JCL* p. 13 emphasis mine). Here too Thieme's commentary becomes circular when he says that Biswas, in his fantasies "is forced to regress into the "total kind of security" [Naipaul's phrase] of the colonial mentality" (*JCL* p. 15).

In his celebratory essay on Naipaul Eugene Goodheart writes in the idiom of ethnicist criticism when he remarks "what he [Naipaul] discovered in India was his own Hindu soul [?]... who is it that speaks in *In a Free State*...but the voice of Hindu consciousness"[17]. But ethnocentricism is never far in Goodheart's ethnicist argument. For Goodheart, "Western progressive language" represents "hope" whereas the "Hindu

consciousness" repudiates "human creative power." Thus Goodheart goes on to give a discourse on Naipaul's soul: "Naipaul's Hindu soul never wanting or achieving the mystic state [?!], manifests itself in the agnostic form of fatigue and hopelessness or in a kind of 'unseeing' melancholic lyricism": "the exalted pessimism of truth." However, for Goodheart, Naipaul's "intelligence and imagination" are "Western" (ibid. pp. 54-56). But Leon Gottfried's commentary is even more eloquent in this regard. Commenting on Naipaul's *AB*, Gottfried writes that Naipaul is the most suitable person to write about the Islamic revival: for, "Though Asian in his race and background, Naipaul's mind was formed by the rational, skeptical thought of the West, and he is wholly committed to that tradition." Speaking for many people Gottfried writes: "Naipaul is like a second self - liberal minded, curious, uncommitted, with a deep sense of history and a rational belief in cause and effect." After Naipaul, Gottfried says, "*we*...[have] little need for refraction of our own lenses." After the earlier panegyrical portrayal the identification of the "we" with this ideal Naipaul does not come as a surprise. What offends Naipaul, Gottfried continues, would "offend us", what impresses him would attract "us" and what confuses him "would surely confuse us" (*MFS* p. 567).

If rationality is ethnocentrically championed by Leon Gottfried and others this is precisely what Kenneth Ramchand attacks[18]. But the ground from which he argues is not free from ethnocentrism although Ramchand does not specifically offer any standpoint. Ramchand attacks Naipaul for being rationalist. "The intellectual limitations of this belated Newtonianism", Ramchand argues, "are clear enough...to dismiss religious faith and metaphysical speculation on logical grounds is not all that different from abjuring scientific hypothesis and artistic intuition." In drawing this analogy between religious faith and scientific hypothesis or artistic intuition, one feels that he is critiquing the positivist in Naipaul. But something more seems to be involved in Ramchand's argument. As he goes on, his argument reads like a religious tract as he

dismisses what he calls "the sickness of an over-intellecting [sic] writer-participant where intellecting [sic] undermines any capacity for delight or trust, and then divests itself by seeking a corrupt power." But isn't intellectual investigation itself a possible source of intervention and delight? Ramchand does not probe.

Amin Malak's reading of Naipaul's *AB* may be far from Ramchand's assessment of Naipaul but runs on similar lines. Malak argues that Naipaul's examples in *AB* are not true "representative[s] of all muslims." He attempts to point out Naipaul's ignorance of Islam by appealings to teachings of the Koran about 'forgiveness and mercy': that "every verse [of the Koran] opens with the name of God as the 'merciful and compassionate'". What Malak questions is not Naipaul's entire method but his misunderstanding of the faith: "Attributing the human being's failure to his faith reveals a serious limitation in Naipaul's method of reasoning" (*MFS* p. 563) It is difficult for a "nonsympathetic outsider" like Naipaul, Malak's argument goes, to make "fine distinction" between individuals, or "repressive institutions" and the "clear teachings of faith". Further, Malak goes on to write nationalistically: "Muslims may be backward technologically...Yet they are progressively developing a sense of scientific achievement, for whose spirit and dynamism they try to derive inspiration from the golden era of the Islamic civilisation in the days of the Dark Ages of Europe" (*MFS* p. 564). This reverse Orientalist message becomes a prey to Naipaul's attack and it operates with the same problematic in which the Gottfrieds and the Goodhearts celebrate 'Western rationality'. Malak feels that Islam "in its pure sense remains an elusive vision that may be grasped only privately" - and thus attempts to guard his faith by foreclosing investigation. The puzzling aspect of Malak's essay is that, after all, he recommends Naipaul (after quoting Edward Said approvingly) for *AB*'s "entertaining episodes about exotic [ie., Islamic] cultures, lands and peoples"! (*MFS* pp. 565-66).

If for Malak Naipaul is an outsider who cannot grasp Islam, for his Indian counterpart, C.D. Narsimhaiah, Naipaul is not at all a "true Indian". While celebrating

the glories of "Indian culture" Narsimhaiah declares that it would remain like the Hanuman House of *AHB*, "destined to outlast the book!" For how "Indian culture" lasts in Trinidad Narsimhaiah tells us, is through the prayers Naipaul's mother leads and through the local Hindu elite's religious ceremonies[19]. While identifying fictional characters with Naipaul Narsimhaiah says that their attitudes ("making good" for oneself, as Salim says in *BR*) are "un-Indian". Indian ideals like *Dharma*, Narsimhaiah writes after approvingly quoting the authority of "Indian inspired Emerson" on Dharma, can "never adequately [be] translated, because untranslatable, unless things become words and words action" (p. 122). Narsimhaiah remains vituperative in his commentary, for he feels that unlike "the Black writers [who] have kept their soul intact" Naipaul has sold it "lured by success with such relentlessness" (p. 126). C.D. Narsimhaiah's assertions (a cataloguing of national glory) read more like vindictive dismissals of Naipaul than any critical engagement with the text and its effects.

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Mainstream criticism in its three varieties (a) 'Resolving criticism, (b) 'Criticism as Identification', and (c) 'Ethnicism as criticism' appeals to a model of criticism which is known as mimetic or triangular criticism. The mimetic model, that is, invokes or constantly refers to a certain reality, a certain 'non'-textual, so to speak, to validate its claims. Hence the primacy of ideals such as authenticity and truth-value. Moreover, the model appears to insist that the critic introduce (an undisclosed) asymmetry into the writings analoguous to the one - between 'reality' and 'text' - s/he has already assumed. This other asymmetry, as we have seen in this section, is the hierarchization of nonfiction/fiction. That is, a commentary on fiction, in this model, appeals to a 'nonfictional' instance as it would unproblematically have recourse to the referent called 'real world'. However, since this distinction is a categorical one the critic distributes Naipaul's writing into separate 'units' or 'works', under these categories; the 'units' or

'works' then circulate as basic operational items in his/her trajectory of criticism.

However, since the categorisation follows a prioritizing logic the critic tends to assume his/her project to be a sequential arrangement of a specific category of the units ('fiction') through a commentary on them; further s/he tends to ascribe a teleological aim to her/his project of commentary - the 'growth', 'flowering' of the talent (of the writer). In this, the privileged category of nonfiction is adduced to prove the 'truth' of this teleology. Further, this categorical distinction serves another purpose in the critical project I have been constructing: it enables the critic to ascribe to Naipaul the status of an *informant* on the postcolonial world[20]. The ideals of the project - authenticity, truth-value - once again become in effect, the celebrated ends of the project.

But what if one were to question these antinomies and these hierarchizations? What if one were to problematize this privileging separation of fiction/nonfiction and the teleology it implies? The following section engages with these questions in the context of Naipaul's writings.

2) *READING TEXT(S)*

Problematising the binary division of the categories does not entail that we dispense with the basic operational configuration of writing into 'works' or 'units'. For the aim of an alternative kind of reading which I attempt here, is to contest the tacitly assumed values of the hierarchic division. For such a contestation the 'works' or 'units' of Naipaul's writing serve as a useful reference points. In this reading the units are acknowledged but the problematic that governs their distribution into the binary division is interrogated. In this alternative reading, in opposition to the mimetic projects I wish to designate *all* the works of Naipaul as a 'text' and refer to it as the Naipaul text. The main purpose of this designation is to make available for a critical reading all the works of Naipaul irrespective of the category to which they were

confined so far. The problematization of the binary division, has three effects in my reading:

1) It interrogates and displaces the truth value attributed to some of Naipaul's works in the 'translation' project. That is, the hierarchization of 'fiction' and 'nonfiction' and the privileging of one of these binaries - here 'nonfiction' - is dislocated. In their project, as I have argued earlier, fiction serving as a metaphor of, a detour to, truth, becomes parasitical on truth which is believed to be self-evident and transparent, and accessible. In effect, the specificity of the narrativization, the *strategies* through which the world is patterned in the text remains largely untouched. That is, the textuality, the ruses and investments operating the structures of nonfiction are uncritically accepted without any analysis. Thus literary criticism, in this context, appears to be a cognitive project explicating the hidden truths of fictional or metaphorised truths. In effect, my approach in the following sections will be to study the ruses and their implications that operate in the (narrative) structures which emerged in the Naipaul's text distrtibuted over the last thirty years.

2) The problematization of the binarism enables us to indicate that the so called fictional ('literary') and the 'nonfictional' ('historical') are always already crosshatching categories. The generic dichotomization is used to repress the textuality of the privileged category (here 'nonfiction') under the licence that it is already self-explicit; whereas the commentaries on the other category (here 'fiction') indicate the undisclosed presupposition that the category is perennially in need of unveiling, uncovering in order to bring into light what is concealed. But this analytic binarism fails to explain the crosshatchings of these categories for it postulates the category 'nonfiction' (truth) as self-originating which in turn is supposed to give birth to 'fiction' - hence the absence of any need to 'explain' the former. It must also be said that the repressive binarism is also a disavowal of difference in that it only sees the other category as a derivative or parasite of the privileged one. Whereas we will attempt to reinscribe these categories as

modes of objectification ('literature', of the so-called 'imaginative' events and people and 'history' of the so-called 'real' events and people). Such a reinscribing enables us to understand fiction/nonfiction categories as perpetually interanimating, indeed cross-hatching effects - their significations are *produced* through such interaction. Moreover this reformulation of the binaries alerts us to the textuality - modes of representation, figuring, investments and interests - that operates in any objectification irrespective of whether they are 'fictional' or 'nonfictional'. However the recognition of textuality in both the categories is not in order to go forth and discover a sovereign truth lying beneath the textualizations nor to declare all 'history' to be nothing more than 'fiction'. On the contrary it is primarily to displace the ground (and possibility) of production of signification from a self-originating entity (called 'truth') to a more dialogical site of interanimating elements. It is with this interest that I approach the Naipaul text in the following pages.

3) Further, the contestation of antinomies enables me to displace the teleological sequentiality in which Naipaul's writings have been classified. That is, the nineteen 'books' of Naipaul (from 1957-1987) have been treated, in the translation project, as indicators of a gradual organic development of the author. But the boundaries of the text, as I will show, cannot be determined and delimited by the covers of a book or a unit. The text should be confused neither with the number of books nor with the name of the author. For a text "... is no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it"[21]. The text which is not expressive, but a weave of trace-structure, is always already in excess of the book which attempts to delimit the text. For my purposes, Naipaul's entire corpus (1988-1957) is a trace structure which I call the Naipaul text.

The concept of text, moreover, that I am appealing to in my thesis cannot be accommodated into the mimetic project of the three varieties of criticism. For the text signifies something which is in contravention of the teleological and methodological aims of the project. The term text, from *textere*, indicates a weaving, and is an ensemble of intersecting traces; and it belongs to language. It is constructed as various permutations and combinations of linguistic marks in a structure that conditions signification ('meaning'). Even when the scope and range of the combinations of the linguistic marks is limited and predictable, the field of their significations, in effect, is infinite. However, the relation between marks and their significations is neither oppositional nor isomorphic in a text; it could be described by the term 'sliding'. That is, they are in a constant exchange, displacing, substituting and supplementing one another (through, of course, the activity of reading). A text is the field of such an operation, and Naipaul's oeuvre is one such 'text'. However, this sliding could be unending, this exchange meaningless, making any discourse (a signifying construction) impossible, unless the necessary yet paradoxical activity of combining or production of significations takes place. This activity is contradictory because in attempting to control the exchange it puts a closure on the movement of traces, denies the play of elements.

Such a conception of the text is necessary in the context of problematizing the binary divisions. For the mimetic project, as I argued earlier, attempts to draw a filiative link between a text and the writer (or 'reality'). The project tends to seek a "*conformity* of the work to the author"[22] and follows the inscriptions of the writer on the work: "the conscious, voluntary, intentional relationship that the writer institutes in his exchange with the history to which he belongs..."[23]. In this kind of reading the work appears as the Imaginary[24] - a unified, coherent whole, an integrated plenum. The critic enters into the triangular relationship constituted (in this reading) by the work, the author and the critic. And the critic him/herself attempts to suture or coalesce the work (signifier) and its author's opinion (the signified). What results in

this suturing activity is a certain kind of signification called commentary. In this too the critic follows a superfluous vocation. S/he starts with the assumption of the coherency and self-sufficiency of the work but then goes on to illustrate this imagined coherency of the work. In effect, it establishes a hierarchy between the author (privileged) and work; secondly, it reduces the possibility of play (of signifiers) by acknowledging the authorial inscriptions (which tend to serve as signifieds as if free of any textuality).

But we have already suggested the paradoxical nature of the closure (however tentative it may be). In this regard the expression 'play of signifiers' may look 'contradictory'. Yet, as I understand it, the concept of play is not used to denote an aimless, meaningless unanchored melange of signifiers. Play conditions the possibility of other meanings, other readings, but it cannot be a licence for an irresponsible activity for its own sake. Derrida criticises such an irresponsibility (of play for its own sake) as an "obscurantist attitude"[25]. When we say that a text is a play of signifiers we do not mean that it is a conglomeration of unrelated, floating atoms. But at the same time the play here indicates, for me, the heterogeneity of the text and interrogates closures that designate the text as a closed, unified, self-evident plenum. Thus the text is a signifying *structure,* differentially (variedly) combined, riddled with gaps, with intractable origins and ends.

In conceptualising the *text* in this other way, we can question the teleological sequentiality of the *work.* In such conceptualisation the critical activity does not become a superfluous, an unnecessary burdening (of the work). For the critic's activity is, in this model, delimited by commentary and illustration of allegedly prior authorial intentions. Whereas the text, Naipaul's (as I will argue) and any other, is not homogenous with the intentions of either the author or the critic, and self-evidently harmonizing its tensions in the plenitude of its meaning - but fundamentally fissured, riddled with gaps and, as I suggested, is always already cross-hatched by other texts.

Critical activity in this area, then, functions as a supplementing strategy in relation to the text. That is, in the 'textual' model critical activity "supplies a lack in the text and the gaps in the chain of criticism anterior to it"[26]. Critical activity, in effect, is to make space for something which does not already exist in the object. This involves the re-arranging of the patterns one is confronted with, and narrativizing the assumptions of those patterns. In interrogating the closure offered by the critical project following the mimetic model we are seeking other interventionary strategies of reading - strategies which do not revalorize the hierarchies earlier critical projects have maintained. One such strategy which, as I mentioned earlier, I shall offer in the thesis is the strategy of double-reading. The strategy does not aim to exhaust the traces of the text by documenting or following their 'origins' and 'ends' but attempts to read the text critically from a position (which will be justified in the reading), to track the implications of the patterns that constitute it. This is to investigate what interests, investments, ruses and forces are at work in the play of signifiers. In the ensuing analysis, however, I will use the term text in two senses. Firstly, text in the 'general sense' which refers to the various arguments I have been constructing so far. Secondly, text in the more conventional use of the term, to signify a single work or unit of Naipaul's writing. However, these two senses are neither opposites nor mutually exclusive. I wish to maintain the 'specific' also as sharing the same conceptual implications I associate with the text in the general sense. In effect a work is a text but a text cannot be simply reduced to a work. So the text in the narrow sense is only a signifier of work but is not simply reducible to the printed pages bound between two covers.

My contention in this thesis, as I suggested earlier, is that the textuality of Naipaul's writing can be unravelled through an interrogation (not just an illustration) and *reading* of the repetitive patterns that elaborate in his writing. However, given my resistance to the three varieties of criticism and their effects (teleology and

sequentiality, truth and authenticity) I will argue that it is possible to disclose this 'thesis' in any (one) of Naipaul's writings. In effect, I submit that my 'thesis' (given the established signification of the word) is not an attempt to *develop* an idea in a cumulative sequence. Rather the strategy of double-reading necessarily moves through 'by-paths' attempting to map the labyrinthine windings of colonial/imperialist incursions into other worlds.

However, I must add that the two sections, 3 and 4, that follow do not differ from each other on any logic of hierarchy or essence. Section 3 while provisionally accepting Naipaul's utterances about 'centre' attempts to dislocate the term, to unravel the 'contradiction' of the concept (and its accompanying assumptions). Whereas section 4 is an attempt to illustrate the process through which binaries are maintained, and to investigate the violation such a process is in complicity with. This is the very interest that guides my analysis in the later parts of the thesis and enables me to dispense with clear cut demarcations of theoretical/methodological procedures from critical practice. This is not to suggest that I jettison theoretical concerns. On the contrary the 'thesis' attempts to show how undisclosed assumptions underlie the most 'non-theoretical' utterances. In effect, my own theoretical interests are scattered through the various critical analyses I undertake in the 'thesis'. It is in consonance with this schema that I 'invoke' the name of the writer 'V.S. Naipaul' in the thesis. Thus, when I refer to Naipaul in final section (5) of this chapter this is neither in order to ground my argument in authorial intentions nor to seek out the secrets of a psychobiographical (or ethnic) signified. The name is invoked in order to contest the transparency of 'life'. That is, to attempt to show how the 'life' as it appears on a page (or through utterance) is always already an effect of various ruses. The thesis elaborates this argument throughout.

3) *RAIDING THE CENTRE*

V.S. Naipaul's text, elaborated over the last thirty years, could be characterised in terms of the desire for making the 'self' or as a project of 'self' consolidation. In its winding elaboration Naipaul's project is in compliance, like the translation project discussed earlier, with the analytic binarism - prioritizing nonfiction over fiction. Naipaul feels that fiction is 'easy' to write directly on the typewriter, whereas nonfiction is difficult and it has to be first handwritten[27]. This privileging appears in a more substantial way (as will be shown in Chapter Eight) in Naipaul's construction of narratives as sources of knowledge about self-evident truths.

The complicity with the analytic binarism also operates in Naipaul's text in the functioning of the narrativising or investigating subject in the text. (Chapters Five and Six are devoted to the analysis of the operation of the 'investigating subject'). The subject of the text emerges on the basis of the concept of "centre" which is believed to sustain him. This centre functions as an unchallenged ground, as a certainty in the text. Of the many articulations of the concept, which Naipaul recognises, he seems to prefer a certain way of asserting the centre: "finding the centre of one's narrative, the centre of *the truth* of every experience, the philosophical centre of one's belief"[28]. Making an 'inverted reference' to Yeats's "the centre cannot hold", Naipaul seems confident of the certainty of centre when he maintains that "many people" "find the centre and it *does* hold." Although Naipaul writes in *Finding the Centre*[29] that the people he "discovered" in the Ivory Coast were "not unlike myself" in their search "for centre", the centre that the narrative/investigating subject attempts to construct is insistently differentiated from others' quests. That is, the centre which Naipaul's project upholds is opposed to other attempts at "wholeness" and "order" (Naipaul's words) allegedly sanctioned by religion. Thus, in the narrativiztion of the investigating subject, "The ultra-modern dream [Naipaul is here talking about the Ivory Coast but he

summarily refers to Africa] also serves old Africa. It is pharaonic; it has a touch of the antique world...[And the notorious ritual of feeding crocodiles] seems to bring night and the forest close again to the dream of Yamoussoukro" (*FC* p. 91-92). The 'old Africa' and its rituals, in the Naipaul text, signifies a totality which the subject rejects and in opposition to which he defines himself. After a series of encounters in scenarios where "you get a glimpse of African Africa...whatever the accidents of history...", the centre of which is supposed to be ordered upon religion and magical practices, the subject of the narrative declares: "The inner world, the other world [opposed to the 'modernity' of the "upper world"], continued whole. And that was what mattered" (*FC* pp. 92, 186). As against the centre and 'wholeness' allegedly sanctioned by religion, 'magic' and "animistic practices"(*IWC* p. 102) the subject in Naipaul's *text* attempts to find a centre that is believed to be 'secular'. Thus the concept of centre itself operates as a substitute for, a displacement of, another supposed centre. And this 'secular' centre, Naipaul seems to assume, can be found through narrative in writing. ('Writing' in Naipaul is always used in the conventional sense of script on the page, and, further, in the disciplinary sense of art or 'literary' writing). And in Naipaul's narrativization this concept of the centre circulates through various substitutes. (In the following sections if I refer to Naipaul's statements it is not in order to validate, as I said earlier, some biographical truth as such but to track the trope of centre in their various guises in the text for the purposes of dislocating the pattern).

a) *Truth and Writing*

In the Naipaul text this assumed centre is exchanged for or repeated through other tropes of 'centre' such as "truth" and "justice". Believing in the possibility of objective truths in themselves, Naipaul describes writing as an attempt "to make a whole, an integrity," to "find the centre", and it is also an attempt to look "for the truth of your own responses." This discovery of truth is possible , Naipaul goes on to assert,

"If I react truly to a situation, I am reacting to what is true about it; I am discovering the truth about it"[30]. There is already a suggestion in the utterance that the ground of truth is in the 'self'. But there is also an echo of Conrad in the utterance, this longing for truth. Indeed Conrad forms an intertext of Naipaul's project; he is doubly accessible to Naipaul: first, through the filiative bond of paternal inspiration: the very first opening up to Conrad was through his father's reading aloud from a Conrad story when Naipaul was ten years old; and subsequently his own (re)discovery of the ('English') 'book' from Conrad at a later stage. It is the very book which Conrad's Marlow stumbled upon with his utter fascination for the 'work' as he worked his way into the Congo (*CP* pp. 54, 58-59). The Conrad book (within the book) and its message of "honest concern for the right way of going to work", "conscientious rendering of truth in thought and fact", became an authorising presence in Naipaul's own vision of writing (in the conventional sense I suggested earlier) and of history (especially, the postcolonial history as destined to disaster and decay) (*CP* pp. 56, 59). Writing, Naipaul seems to feel, is an unmediated communication of truth. This seems to be the *vision* he insists that the writer shouldn't abandon[31]: "...You begin to write more profoundly; you are thinking less of the way the words lie on the paper, and *more of the meanings,* the timing, the emphasis - not thinking of style or *language at all;* just the effect...to achieve a writing which is perfectly *transparent*" (emphasis of the last word is original and the earlier ones mine. *Tr.* pp. 61-62). That is, the writer becomes a conveyor of pure signifieds, a purveyor of truth, untrammelled even by language. The 'truth' which he aims at in the narrative is also represented as "human discovery for its own sake" (*FC* p. 13). And the mode through which he would gain access to these truths is that of an itinerant inquirer: "a travelling method [which] was intended to be transparent" (*FC* p. 13).

But this will to truth seems to serve another function in the text. It attempts to distinguish writing from political causes and involvement. In effect, literary writing is

prioritised as a source for the justification of rejecting political causes. Supporting the view that the *"man of action has dirty hands - often bloody hands"* Naipaul says, "I do have a great distrust of *causes,* simply because they *are* causes and they have to simplify, to ignore so much. As a man of action one would be continually weakened by harking after the truth, by too-honestly reassessing the situation all the time."(*Tr.* p. 57 emphasis original). To write (the will to truth) is to escape the "corruption of causes" (*CP* p. 59). Although Naipaul certainly feels uneasy about his rejection ("I want to be involved, to be touched by some pervading anger", "I often wish I could have been a doer" {*CP* p. 12, *Tr* p. 57}), he valorises (as I will show) his vocation as a purveyor of sovereign truths, his investment in the figure of the writer, while subordinating causes. Thus, we begin to see that it is through the figure of the writer that the (Naipaul) subject seeks his self-consolidation, and attempts to gain access to his centre. It is this assumption, as I argue, that brings into play in the Naipaul text various figures which in turn bring forth the Naipaul subject. But whether this very *choice* of investing in the figure of writer in opposition to 'causes' is itself free from (an unwitting or witting) political implication is something the Naipaul text does not address itself to. Although Naipaul mentions the problem of "one's position" and also one's "place in the world" it is not possible to conceive the constitutive subject of the Naipaul text, as we will see, outside the binary matrix in which the 'self' is defined, always in opposition to an other.

b) *Justice:*

Like the will to truth, 'justice' is another teleological aim of Naipaul's project of self-consolidation. To write is to seek justice in the world: "I had arrived at the conviction - the conviction that is at the root of so much human anguish and passion, and corrupts so many lives - that there was justice in the world. The wish to be a writer was a development of that" (*FC* p. 45). And like some "religious faith" this "wish to seek at some future time for justice, strengthened" (*FC* p. 45). Justice, in Naipaul's

sense is not some concrete action (even in 'writing') for which one struggles. It is a reaction to the "wicked things" that are written about in the world. And the "act of writing about them was an act of justice"[32]. What specifically these "wicked things" are and what kind of justice Naipaul is struggling for are not explicit in the Naipaul text. But we will examine what kind of justice (and ethics) his mechanism of self-making practises in his elaborate narrativizations of history and postcolonial world.

But the centre to which the Naipaul subject hopes to gain access, the centre which he sees as unified is itself "contradictorily coherent"[33]. The impetus of his narrative centre or narrative with a centred structure is not from within the structure itself. And that which he sees as the centre of his narrative is paradoxically designated as centreless, as 'chaotic' phenomena. And that "chaotic experience" (and impetus) is the encounter (in the case of *FC*) with "the man who had inspired my very first story" - "Bogart" of *MS* (*FC* p. 10). It is this "Venezuelan experience", of meeting Bogart, which functioned as the "centre of the narrative" (*FC* p. 10). And the centre which the Naipaul text asserts is fundamentally based on this paradox - though the Naipaul subject sees his itinerary as a progressive movement towards reaching, consolidating that centre. But to unravel this 'contradiction' of centred structure one need not go 'outside' it (as the three varieties of mimetic criticism attempt to do), to look for the essence of the impetus, as it were, but one can examine the narrative of centred structure itself. That is, one can track and study the function the *ruses* of centre and 'chaos' serve in the *constitution* of the narrative and the subject. The Naipaul text, I will argue, is an effect of these ruses.

c) *Knowledge*

However, it seems, Naipaul is not entirely unaware of the 'contradiction'. He attempts to resolve this 'contradiction' through a programmatic trope called 'knowledge'. That is, through cumulative 'knowledge' and 'truth' about the 'chaotic',

he would be able to make his centre hold. This 'knowledge' and 'truth' are believed to be possible in narrativization: "through my writing, through my effort honestly to respond I have begun to have ideas about the world" (*Tr* p. 57). Thus to write was to know: "So step by step, book by book, though seeking each time only to write another book, *I eased myself into knowledge*" (*FC* p. 33 emphasis added). This attempt at resolution through knowledge is itself a ruse against the anxiety that an absence of centre implies for the Naipaul subject. That is, the lack of the centre seems to be tantamount for the subject to 'extinction' or death and it is to repress these threats of loss which haunt him that the subject involves himself in his journeying for the centre and 'self'-making. It is a resolution, that is, against the anxiety of loss. In Naipaul's case this anxiety itself is overdetermined by his father's fears about such loss. That is, his father's efforts to counter the fear, in Naipaul's narrativization of the account, were also his: "That fear ['of extinction'] became mine as well. It was linked with the idea of the vocation: the fear could be combated only by the exercise of the vocation" (*FC* p. 84). To write is to gain access to truth and knowledge of the centre, to combat the threat of loss: one can see the itinerary project. One sees a quest that paradoxically remains permanently irresoluble, for it is an asymptotic quest: the basis of 'knowledge' here is the binarism of the 'centre' and the 'chaotic', and a resolution of these implies a dissolution of them and the impossibility of 'knowledge'.

Writing (in the narrow sense) is believed to be a sign of defiance against the threat of loss but the very basis of the possibility of writing is predicated on the prevalence of the threat. The double bind cannot be resolved (this argument is further elaborated in my Chapter 8 on *The Enigma of Arrival*). The Imaginary resolution cannot be achieved. The desire of the Naipaul subject as it manifests in the text appears to be to achieve such a resolution through the project of self-making. Writing (art, 'knowledge' and 'truth') are, for Naipaul, invested with such a possible resolution.

d) *Tradition:*

The same quest for the centre repeats in the text in another guise, when Naipaul complains about the absence of tradition. Here too the quest could be seen only to underline the irreconcilability of the 'contradiction' between the centre and its opposite, between fear and desire. One can locate this contradiction in Naipaul's text when he argues that writing is a means of integrating, making whole or ordering the chaotic. But at the same time Naipaul also argues that writing is really possible only in "whole societies", in an "organised" world. If a society is always already a "whole", then on Naipaul's own argument writing is impossible in it, for there is no place for the chaotic in an integrated, ordered world, and writing would be superfluous there. In spite of, or rather because of, Naipaul's complaints about the lack of a literary tradition in the postcolonial world (Trinidad, in this case), it is this very 'lack' that seems to become the constitutive effect of the Naipaul text. His own models, Naipaul writes, "came from whole societies - England, Russia, France" (*CP* p. 50). Added to this is the idea that "landscapes do not start to be real until they have been interpreted by an artist, so until they have been written about, societies appear to be without shape and embarrassing" (*CP* p. 18).

It is not just the romantic aspect of this utterance that is crucial to my argument - an aspect which so totally invests in the inscriptions of the artists as sources for the 'real' and true. Lurking within this attitude is the idea that what is untouched by artistic representation is the chaos of non-identity and in such a context the *tradition* of artistic representation appears to serve as a signifier of identity. But this signifier which distinguishes itself from, by positing, a *lack,* is seen as an unmediated source of signification. However, Naipaul does refer to the fact of "training" which seems to overdetermine his quest for the tradition: "you are trained by your reading and inclination to see the novel as..." about "whole" and "organised" societies (*CP* p. 42). It is this very training, as we will see, which the subject of *The Enigma of Arrival*

considers as creating a fissure between the 'man' and the 'writer'. Nonetheless this recognition does not preclude the subject in the Naipaul text from using his own medium (the tradition of literary representation) as an unmediated source. For opposed and subordinated to the assumptions of this 'medium' are notions about the 'disorder' of the "simple society": "When you look at what you have, your material, and you are aware only of its shallowness, and its disorder, it's very hard to know how to move on from that" (*CP* p. 42). The (hierarchical) dichotomy was further intensified by the literary apprenticeship under his father (who was himself a journalist and the writer of a book of short stories[34]) and the double influence of that literary father - Conrad. Conrad becomes Naipaul's 'father' for it is to him Naipaul turns at a time of his "political panic" (when he felt insecure in London) and it is from him that Naipaul draws his own profoundly pathetic vision of art and history. It is a vision of "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...a vision of the world's half-made societies as places which continuously made and unmade themselves, where there was no goal..." (*CP* p. 59). And Conrad had, for Naipaul, worked out this vision "in the time of great peace", "sixty years before" Naipaul himself began to recognise it. (Certain other overdeterminations of this recognition are taken up in the last section of this Chapter).

e) *Jasmine:*

Naipaul wrote an article in 1964 called "Jasmine". At the end of the article Naipaul recounts a parable-like anecdote which can be said to repeat his assumptions about the language/tradition dichotomy (and his resolution) which the article already opens up. "Jasmine" appears to be another trope of the centre indicating a yearning for fulfilment.

The parable is set in British Guiana which Naipaul visited in 1961. Naipaul "was taken" to see a christian Indian family (Cheddi Jagan?) one late afternoon: "our political attitudes were too opposed [discussed neither in the essay nor the book - *MP*] to make any discussion of the current crisis profitable." Then as the dusk fell they talked about other things and "old days". Suddenly, "from the garden came the scent of a flower. I knew the flower from my childhood; yet I had never found out its name." The hosts tell the name, "we call it jasmine". Naipaul feels amused by the word. He reflects that until now it was "a word in a book, a word to play with, something removed from the dull vegetation I knew." Thus the term already signifies a rift between the sensation (feeling) and the signifying word - Jasmine. Yet the amusement and the delight suggest a sense of loss hinted all through the article. The loss is seen as an effect of the gap between the language and tradition. Yet through a curious sleight of hand, Naipaul's own access to this sovereign tradition is shown, which suggests his moving away from the lack projected on to the 'disordered' world. Earlier in the article he asserts that the "vision [of the tradition] was alien," and "the English language was mine; but the tradition was not" (*CP* pp. 18-19).

The tropes 'tradition' and 'vision' in Naipaul preeminently refer to (English) literary tradition from Chaucer to Angus Wilson. There is a further assumption that this tradition can be defined in monolithic terms and separated from language, the language that embodies it. Thus he would claim access to the language and distinguish it from the 'tradition'. Though there are references to what kinds of works his mechanism of adoption has accepted in Trinidad (Dickens, and not Jane Austen, Maupassant and not Balzac, *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* but not others) there is no account of what the 'tradition' is. Yet it is this very unified homogenised 'tradition' devoid of any discontinuities which serves as a starting point to reflect about the 'absence' of such a 'tradition' in the colony (Trinidad). In spite of such a totalising reference to tradition Naipaul seems to feel that it is possible to separate 'tradition' from

language. That is to refer to the language as an abstraction, as if freed from historico-textual traces affecting the language through *heterogeneity* of traditions. And it is this separation and the writer - figure's access to the language that the parable represents. Yet it is the very denial of the 'tradition' and its 'mythology' - which is said to hallow the object represented - in the context of the 'disordered' society which seems to become the precondition for the origination of the 'mythology' or for naming the object (in the postcolonial world). But the textuality of the parable suggests that this very act of naming through the language does not bring together for Naipaul the word(s) and the things - the 'jasmine' (the signifier) and the flower (the signified). The rift once again turns us to the 'lack' of the 'mythology' and the suggestion of its formation. It is this slide from the 'lack' to an access that the parable celebrates when it refers to the delight of knowing the word. Indeed it is this very project that is repeated elaborately in *EA*.

However, towards the end of the article, just before he recounts his parable he speculates that in the end all the pleasures of literature "will be those of the word" (*CP* p. 22). And indeed the parable sets out to celebrate the *word* 'jasmine' with which the article ends. Thus the real delight is in knowing the language, recognising the word. Yet the ending of the article suggests a loss which was already displaced by the other substitutes: "Jasmine, jasmine. But the word and the flower had been separate in my mind for too long. They did not come together" (*CP* p. 22). It is the word on which Naipaul meditates and it is the discovery of the word that delights him - and that delight already displaces in his narrative (for him) the loss, the fracture. The tropes repeat in the Naipaul text, the theme comes back in *EA*. Here, it is the 'word' and the 'flower' that are the objects of meditation; there it is the 'man' and the 'writer'. And once again it is the language which becomes the means of enacting the allegory in that other narrative also. So the allegory, in "Jasmine", is not really about the flower and the word but about the accession of the writer figure to the language. Yet the parable

already prefigures the melancholy of the later pastoral (*EA*) where the unification is sought but the text seems to bemoan the impossibility of the grandeur that was already lost: the longing of nostalgia. We will come back to this theme later on.

f) *Summary*

'Centre', 'knowledge', 'truth,' 'justice,' 'vision,' and 'tradition': the tropes accumulate. The tropes elaborate a circular text. One can trace this circularity in Naipaul's assumptions that in 'other' worlds (postcolonial societies) about which he narrativizes there was a prior unified order and wholeness which changed into disorder later on[35]. This order and wholeness appear to be, for Naipaul, ones sanctioned by religion and magical beliefs and rituals. Naipaul believes in the possibility of recuperating and imposing such an order only in the narrative. But a substitute order is no longer, Naipaul assumes, believed to be energised by the earlier religious beliefs. It is precisely in such a narrative, of his father's, that Naipaul finds a regulated and ordered life, a fantasy of things "as they were at the beginning": "the ritualized day, fields and huts, the mango tree in the yard, the simple flowers, the lighting of fires in the evening" (*FC* p. 50). This nostalgia for the pastoral as the scene of the ordered and whole recurs in Naipaul's text in various guises such as 'home' and 'origin'. The circularity of the text can be disclosed when one reads 'order' and 'disorder' as only constitutive ruses of the text and not as representations of a self-evident reality.

That is, what Naipaul projects as order and disorder are the necessary yet contradictory assumptions which constitute his text: they are contradictory because, as I suggested earlier, the basis of order is in the (unacknowledged) figuring of the disorder from which the former is distanced and valorized in the Naipaul text. In effect, 'order' and 'disorder' are not something 'out there' as mutually exclusive entities. But the dyadic relationship which his text attempts to establish between "reality" and the narrative makes a different assertion: "...I sought to reconstruct my disintegrated

society, to impose order on the world, to seek patterns" (*Tr* p. 59). This ordering is also seen as an attempt to "control" and gain mastery over the chaotic, the threatening (*Tr* p. 62). The chaos and meaninglessness of the 'half-made' can be grasped, 'controlled' through 'knowledge' and narrativization. But to write about "them", Naipaul feels, it was necessary to encounter the disorder of the other worlds, "to go back": "It was the beginning of self-knowledge" (*FC* p. 47).

The structured centre of Naipaul's text, I have suggested earlier, is contradictorily coherent, for the impetus of this centre is allegedly 'outside' the structure and is itself assigned as chaotic (but one needn't go outside it - if there is any - to {dis}locate it)[36]. Yet like all representationalist projects, Naipaul's too in its dyadic relationship with the so-called 'reality' attempts to represent (and identify with) 'reality'. That is, it assumes reality to be transparently accessible outside the narrative or discursive constructions of it. In effect, the stratagems and textuality of the narrative are largely taken for granted, remain unexamined. It assumes writing to be an unmediated "communication of ideas" (*Tr.* p. 61).

However, there is yet another aspect to Naipaul's text which I mentioned at the beginning of this section (3). It could be called the project of "self"-consolidation. These projects - narrative of centred structure and self-consolidation - are in fact two inter-changing aspects of a single project. My earlier arguments about the centred structure are equally applicable to this project of self-consolidation. The investigating narrative subject of the Naipaul text is constantly in a quest for self-consolidation. And the quest appears to be a desire for a unified 'self' (subject) believed to have once existed but now lost: "I started by thinking that I was a totally whole person" (*CP* p. 50). But the anxiety Naipaul faced later on was not with the very premise of this humanist conceptualisation but merely with the non-availability (or loss) of that totality in the present.

Naipaul seems to believe in the possibility of unifying or consolidating the 'self'

and ordering the world in the narrative. Thus the narrative not only integrates, makes whole the chaotic, enabling a 'control' over the meaningless, but is believed to make possible a unified subject - a 'self' and 'knowledge' about it. However, this integration and consolidation can be achieved only through a repression of the traumatising other who is associated with the chaotic, the dangerous 'half-made' societies that enter the text. That is, the other worlds and subjects are always seen as only objects of representation rather than as constitutive parts of the text. Caught between the desire for a unified self and the threat of the dismembering other, operating with the all-signifying privileged tool of 'tradition' and yet disturbed by the difference of the other signified by a 'lack', Naipaul responds like a humanist with a civilising mission: "They live in a disordered and fast changing world, and they need help in grasping it, understanding it, controlling it, and that is how the writer will serve them" (*Tr.* p. 62). But like all unsuccessful repressions Naipaul's too attracts our attention[37]. This 'failure' can be located in the desire of the subject to achieve an integrated self, what is believed to be an original plenitude, and a "whole society - or a whole world" (*Tr.* p. 58). Such a desire seems to make the 'self' the locus of centre - although, I will argue, the basis of this centre itself is outside the self: it is in the figuring of the other. Thus, Naipaul writes, "and I do believe - especially after writing *Prologue to Autobiography* (in *FC*) - that I would have found equivalent connections with my *past* and my*self* wherever I had gone" (*FC* p. 11 emphasis mine). This desire is in compliance with the three varieties of criticism which also approach the text as the Imaginary, a plenitude of meaning only needing explication (through identification) by a purveyer of meaning - the critic. Later sections of my 'thesis' will unravel the specific avatars of this repetitive project of self-consolidation.

4) *NAMING THE ORIGIN*

The 'play' of what is figured as the 'half-made' societies is, I have suggested, subordinated (to a conception of order) through a repression in the text. The repression is, as I will demonstrate, a disavowal of any constitutive force to whatever threatens in the text. The subordination, however, is itself maintained through splitting[38] certain tropes of the centre. It is as an effect of the splitting that the subject attempts to differentiate and fixate the play of the other on the one hand and neutralise and reductively contain it in the 'literary' discourse on the other. The subject's contradictory responses are introduced towards the very tropes that serve in the text as the signifiers of the presence of order - 'wholeness', 'centre' and 'origin'. However, the paradoxical effect of splitting does not cancel the functioning of the concepts for the two responses towards them "persist side by side without influencing each other"[39].

The 'centre' Naipaul finds, I have suggested earlier, is a substitute for another conception of the centre. The latter is signified in Naipaul's text in the vignettes of his father's narratives, in his lyrical moods about tribal meals and tents in Khagan Valley in Pakistan (*AB* pp. 174-76), in his own meditation on unchanging life in an Egyptian painting at the end of *IFS* (p. 246); his idealistic nostalgic suggestions and assertions about the 'order' of the caste system and of Hindu rituals in *AD* (pp. 31-36); Ralph Singh's fantasies of an ancestral Aryan past in *MM* (pp. 82, 142); and Indar's vision of a peasant life in the *BR* (p. 157). (These scenes will be analysed in later sections - in Chapters Three and Six). These vignettes provide a vision of "things as they were at the beginning" - an account of origination. The wholeness, order and plenitude allegedly prevalent at the beginning are believed to be sanctioned by religion. That original centre and wholeness sanctioned by religion and spirituality are irretrievably *lost*, but the Naipaul subject finds a substitute for them in the narrative. Yet, they are cherished (through yearning for them) in the narrative - with lamentation and anxiety. But when

these very concept-tropes are deployed in assigning a position to the subject of the postcolonial world in the text, their significance is inverted and perverted (cf. Chs. 3, 5, 6, 9). These tropes of origination, that is, are not just prominent in signifying the other worlds but acquire a different, differentiating and fixating implication: the other worlds are seen to be perennially hankering after a lost origin. "We knew", Naipaul writes, "that something which was once whole had been washed away. What was whole was the idea of India" (*AD* pp. 187-88). But even in Trinidad, Naipaul wrote earlier, in spite of deficiencies "In its artefacts India existed whole" (*AD* p. 29). Now this wholeness is a 'concept' peculiar to Indians ("with others a foundation of neurosis") and to preserve it Indians, Naipaul opines, acknowledge and ignore historical facts. This attitude he explains by invoking the master key of the "Hindu self" (*AD* p. 188). But one also comes across precisely this conceptualisation of wholeness in Naipaul's narrativization of the "fantasy" or the "night world" of the slaves in 18th century Trinidad (cf. Ch. Nine), in the Jamaican Rastafari movement (*MP* pp. 237-241; *OCB* pp. 267-275), in the Zaire of Mobutu (*REP* p. 196) and in the more recent representation of West Africans of the Ivory Coast: "Magic and Poison" - "the weapons of despair": "Here in the Ivory Coast they were part of a world that was still whole" (*FC* p. 106). Their inner world "continued whole" (*FC* p. 186). This 'wholeness' of the inner world Naipaul sees in Argentina too. He finds it in the "old equilibrium" of R.K Narayan's novels (*IWC* pp. 18-27). It is there in his figurations of 'India' as an embodiment of "negative principle", that operates in the alleged retreats (into passivity) and dreams of Indians (about continuity) (*AD* pp. 208, 217). These constructions of postcoloniality are analysed in detail in Part II of my thesis.

The Naipaul subject's quest for wholeness, integration and consolidated 'self' in the narrative (art) is cherished and differentiated from their (allegedly) corrupted form, and impure repetition in the postcolonial world. This doubling effect (of splitting) is already present in some of the titles Naipaul gives to his work. *Miguel Street* - a street,

literally, of desire[40] already figures the fissure. The narrative strategy in its construction of the subject brings forth a community that appears to be whole, integrated and one: "the street as a kind of club" (*FC* p. 23). But the strategy deployed in constructing this kindred club, as I will suggest, is essentially that of the reversal of fortunes (the formula of tragedy). *Finding the Centre* which partly reinscribes this thematic of the double centre, if only in more assertive terms, takes up the 'idea' of "luck" - which in other words is the impetus to the centre from 'without' - but domesticates it in the familiar binarism already figured in *MS*. Bogart, the figure through whom Naipaul attempted to forge his 'self' in his earliest attempts at being the writer (*MS*) is part of a community, a group that was integrated but is now (i.e., 1984) seen as "Hindu". In this rewriting in *Finding the Centre* Bogart figures as someone who "was turning to religion, something that he thought was truly his own...It was...a wish...for the consolation of hallowed ways" (*FC* p. 57).

This figuration of the narrative subject or the subject of the narrative as someone hankering after or yearning for a wholeness is the contradictory yet necessary *basis* of the Naipaul text. The title *An Area of Darkness* reasserts this figuration of 'India' as at once an area of darkness from which the investigating subject distantiates himself through an area of light (and the narrative). It is both a threatening object and a desirable thing. And *India: A Wounded Civilization* suggests the figure of 'India' as a *civilisation* (wholeness) that is wounded[41].

The title *The Loss of El Dorado* clearly exemplifies the Rosseauan fantasy and the anxiety (anguish) at the *loss* of a supposedly unified origin. *The Enigma of Arrival*, apart from the title's philosophical echo of the mystery of origination, embodies the anxiety about the contradictory responses to origins and destinations (but the narrative is indeed an attempt to resolve these). And the notorious (title) *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* figures an investigating subject whose mode of consolidation is by distinguishing himself from the "believers" who hanker after those "certainties", those "hallowed ways"

of religion.

Naipaul's own assessment of these titles is curious but in line with the logic we are unravelling here. He considers all his titles as "triumphant suggestions...good luck suggestions" in that they took the project of writing forward[42]. The triumph here obviously refers to Naipaul's own "success" in neutralising and containing the dangerous cathexis in the discourse. This 'triumph' appears also to be, as I suggested earlier, a regaining of integration, the plenitude of the origin, (now) in discourse. But the 'triumph' that is achieved through the activity of splitting the origin and centre is not at all unproblematic.

The figurations of the other do not contradict the earlier lyrical and fantasmatic moods about origination but only underline a splitting activity, a displacement of the tropes. This splitting and displacement, do not make Naipaul interrogate the certitude of the very concept of centre which supposedly holds in the narrative. But the process of splitting, which is also an apparatus with which the 'other' is neutralized and contained, seems to have another effect. It seems to proffer substitute tropes to fixate the 'chaotic' and the half-made. That is, the split signifiers of origination become part of the repertoire of the chaotic.

This asymmetry, this fissure (effect of splitting) is imbricated in the structure of the Naipaul text although so far I've been referring to specific instances such as *FC*. Various specific instances, as later sections unwind my argument, are not any exemplifications of the 'growth' and 'maturity' of an author, a teleological end of a linear sequentiality; they are simply reiterations of the chaotic 'other' and of attempts at repressing it.

But...

5) *FINDING THE ENEMY?*

Who is V.S. Naipaul?

Vidyadhar Surajprasad Naipaul is an author of a score of texts ("books") written in English. He was educated in Trinidad until the age of 18 and, on a scholarship, studied English literature at Oxford from 1950-53. Naipaul worked for BBC radio after his degree at Oxford and reviewed novels regularly for *The New Statesman* from 1957 to 1959. Although *MS* was the first novel he wrote, it was the third to be published, in 1959. His first novel, *The Mystic Masseur* appeared in 1957, followed by other novels and travel writings such as *AHB*(1961), *MP* (1962), *AD* (1964), *The Guerrillas* (1975), *REP* (1980), *AB* (1981), *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), and others. For the last 30 years Naipaul has never appeared to work outside his chosen vocation as a writer. His work is published in England and America.

But that resume of a thirty year career is only a way of indicating the problematic. An East-Indian from the West Indies living in England and travelling to and writing about the once colonised countries: an overdetermined scene of traces. An unfolding of these traces turns us to the double project of the imperialist incursion into other worlds - that of territorial expansion and ideological dissimulation of that as 'civilising mission': "the fracture or discontinity which is covered over by an alien legal system masquerading as law as such, an alien ideology established as the only truth, and a set of human sciences busy establishing the 'native' as self-consolidating Other"[43]. Our pursuit of these traces turns us to history and historiography (as I will attempt to show in a later section). It touches us with the force of displacements that are the determining factors of postcoloniality. A tracing that would enable us to contest, however, the resurging myths of origination such as "Commonwealth history" and "Commonwealth Literature". And there are other sites we might track with the traces. I cannot exhaust the trace structure.

But in reading Naipaul in the scene of this trace structure it is not my intention to absolve the Naipaul text of the *charge* of any desire, treating him as a victim of an all-determining, all-pervading, omnipotent "structure". For I do not believe that the palimpsest structures such as "colonialism" and "imperialism" are fully-made self-sustaining *entities* in themselves. To conceptualise them as such is to misconstrue a text for a self-supporting plenitude. This mythifying disavows the contradictory coherence of these structures, the constitutive determinants of their frame. Yet, I must hasten to add, I am not turning Naipaul (the historical subject) as such into the sole target for an attack. What needs to be articulated here is a "wish *and* an economy" - multiple determinants of a structure and specific investments in those determinants: "In the text being read, a desire not to assign blame to some monolithic near-deliberative 'British' or 'colonial power' [and in our context the psychobiographical figure - Naipaul], and yet not to pretend that to understand is to forgive"[44]. But what traces does one track to make possible such an articulation in the case of Naipaul?

The incursion is dissimulated, I suggested earlier, into a double project of civilising mission. In the context of the Caribbean perhaps the operations of this double project can be tracked from the earliest Spanish inscription - *Repartimiento*, which wrote the native as a savage wanting civilization and religion (I attempt to read the textuality of this writing in a later section.) But for our purposes, in the context of Trinidad, it is necessary to broach the effects of reiterations of the mission in the late 19th century. For, these effects work as multiple determinants on the vision of art and history with which Naipaul operates. The pointer - "19th century" - is important not for any originary reasons. It marks a displacement in the operations of colonial power and discourse. In the context of Trinidad the early 19th century throws up a symptom of this displacement in the rivalry between (plantocratic) Picton and (bureaucratic) Fullarton - a symptom which can be privileged - as I will argue - only at the expense of other aspects (of the displacement) - such as slave and subaltern resistance (which are

dissimulated or rather erased in the banner of humanitarianism - the abolitionists). One specific mode in which the reiteration of the civilising mission manifests in this context can be measured in the modification of the term 'slave' into 'indentured labourer'. It is as a part of these reiterations that the "excellent institutions of learning" of Trinidad, celebrated by the American Marxist sociologist, Ivar Oxaal, should be read[45]. It is not surprising that Oxaal, who only sings the glories of the "meritocracy" of the "civilized" (the "scholarship boys"), only recuperates the message of the "civilising mission" in reasoning about the institutions. Oxaal gives three "fundamental" reasons for the development of the educational institutions in Trinidad: 1) "the sheer necessity" of bringing "some order into the colorful but vexatious *anomie* of Trinidad society"; 2) the prevalence of the missionaries and their proselytizing enterprise; and 3) the "unavoidable seepage of British humanitarianism." Whatever may be Oxaal's undisclosed intentions, his commentary on the "education of young colonials" (mostly biographical information) is largely an uncritical celebration of the *institutions* and their proteges (pp. 56-79).

However, even from Oxaal's archival citations (uncritically read by Oxaal) we can begin to see how colonial power begins to operate through a normalising discourse, through the symbols of English authority. A circular dispatch which Oxaal cites, stresses the importance of religious education and "The English Language - to diffuse a grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilization for the colored populations of the colonies" (p. 187). The circular, dated January 26, 1847, only repeats a text that had already been enounced in the "'interpellative' ambition" of Charles Grant in 1813, and of Macaulay in 1835. It is an ambition to establish "a culturally and linguistically homogeneous"[46] West Indies - what Oxaal termed bringing "order into" the anomie. English Language - a symbol of civilization and a sign of authority[47]. "English language is mine", Naipaul's echo is not far away. The school where Naipaul studied, Queen's Royal College, was founded in

1870 to educate (free of charge) the children of civil servants (Oxaal p. 59). This school, Naipaul tells us, was the only source of 'order', and also the only source of 'history with dates' (*FC* pp. 58-59).

But the civilising mission is a humanist enterprise to the core. For its apparatus moves with the grand aim of subject-making. Humanism here must be understood in the sense of asserting the "unity of man" or "unity of anthropos". This project is declared in the forging of the symbol of the English book (the Bible) and the English writer, for social control[48]. Naipaul's "feeling for lettering ...[his] ambitions connected with the printed word," (*FC* p. 36) are the effects of such an enterprise and such forging. Perhaps no post-colonial can completely be conceived outside that humanist matrix of civilising mission. Yet the modes in which one interrogates the matrix could be varied (hence the need and the possibility of alignments). Naipaul's assertion "the tradition was not [mine]" does not help us for its interrogation (if there is any) does not broach the fundamental assumptions of his own project of writing as self-consolidation. "Beginning a book," Naipaul inscribes his project, "I always felt I was in possession of all the facts about myself; at the end I was always surprised. The book before always turned out to have been written by a man with incomplete knowledge." So the first "book" he wrote was written by "a man at the beginning of knowledge both about himself and the writing career" (*FC* p. 33). Thus writing books remains an asymptotic project. Anxiety about 'incompleteness' and the desire for 'knowledge' act as a source of making-whole: and these are (allegedly) resolved in the narratives. But writing is also a "theological project of absolute knowledge" and a humanist ethic of a unified self[49].

But the desire and anxiety that the project constitute should not be read as peculiar traits of a psychobiographical signified nor should they be privileged as ethnic signifiers providing a master key. Naipaul and Nirad Chaudhuri (in Naipaul's reading) both seem to explicate the effect of civilising-humanist-mission in terms of ethnic (i.e.,

'Indian') inadequacy (in rising up to the mission). For Naipaul, as already suggested, the English intrusion was a "positive" element against the "negative" Hindu/Islamic India. "It was an encounter," for Chaudhuri, Naipaul writes, "which ended in mutual recoil and futility...[it] is an almost personal tragedy." But it was inevitable, Naipaul argues, for "England came less as a political shock than as the source of a New Learning" (*OCB* p. 64). Further, in *AD*, Naipaul argues that it is the continuity of the "negative principle", the "Indiannes" that contributed to the failure to progress in the world. It is not my wish here to contest Naipaul by showing how the early nationalists in India reinscribed the civilising mission politically - for such work has already been done[50]. My wish is to underline the desire that is articulated in such readings of the mission (as Naipaul's and Chaudhuri's). The desire is inscribed in terms of a lamentation, a "tragedy", for the lack of unity, for the aborted "penetration" (Naipaul's term - *OCB* p. 64) and the prevalence of the other. The "resolution" that the early nationalist text sought, I feel, was working within the same matrix of unification.

Yet the *text* that emerges from the spread of civilising mission and its anxieties, is imbricated with an ambivalence. This ambivalence, as I understand it, is an effect of a splitting that functions in positing an object that is at once supposedly unified (origin) and also poses a threat of dismembering. The quest remains asymptotic. It is a measure of "success" of the mission that post-colonials such as Naipaul lament the "tragedy" of the "failure" of the mission. This is also, I suggested earlier, an aspect of ideological victimization.

Caught as he is between the humanism of two 'fathers' -- Conrad and Seepersad Naipaul - Naipaul cannot but produce a text that is deeply ambivalent. The humanism of Conrad operates in Naipaul's vision of history and art. In Conrad the Towson manual inspires Marlow who moves in the wilderness of the Congo; it operates as a symbol of virtue in its proclamation of devotion to work. It is in this very virtue inspired by that very scene in Conrad that Naipaul finds "answers" to his own problems;

he seeks guidance from this scene at a time of his own political dilemmas. Naipaul appears to find his ideal in this "ethic of work" which the narrative (within the narrative - Towson's manual) proclaims. It is this ideal which for Conrad "provides a sense of right conduct and honour achievable only through the acceptance of those 'customary' norms which are the signs of culturally cohesive 'civil' communities"[51]. But that ideal and its 'virtues' are the aims of the civilising mission: to establish "customary practices". It is precisely this ideal ("ethic of work") that Naipaul looks for when he attempts to reinscribe the Hindu concept of *Dharma:* "At its noblest it combines self-fulfilment and truth to the self..." (*IWC* p. 169). He further proceeds to substantiate this reading by referring to Balzac and Proust. Both the European writers, Naipaul writes, "[Balzac] breaking through fatigue...[and Proust] killing himself to write his book", come close to the concept of *Dharma* when they celebrate the "habit of laboriousness" (*IWC* p. 169). But this "nobility" of *Dharma* (like the 'nobility' of writing - tradition) has to be quickly separated from its association with the chaotic, for there it transforms into a "crippling" effect (*IWC* p. *170*). *Dharma* is, after all, another trope in a chain of substitutive signifiers of the centre, and Naipaul's reinscription of it turns it into a signifier of civilising-humanist-mission - "the work ethic." We will return to this ethic of labour later.

The other father (Seepersad) also has a humanist effect[52]. It can be tracked in Naipaul's fantasy of origination derived from his father's pastoral stories. The stories celebrated "Indian village life" "and the Hindu rituals that gave grace and completeness to that life...But to me they gave a beauty (which in a corner of my mind still endures, like a fantasy of home) to the Indian village life I had never known" (*FCR p. 42). These were the "things as they were at the beginning." "I went back to them" Naipaul tells us, "as to memorials of a heroic time I had missed"* (*FC* p. 38). That sense of origin as a glorious and cohesive plenitude is only a reading Naipaul offers us. Yet this reading itself is in line with the project we are tracking. Seepersad's "counsel" for his three year

old son, for instance, is very much like the one Naipaul himself derived from Conrad at the time of his "political panic": "Live up to the estate of man, follow the truth, be kind and gentle and trust God" (*FC* 84). Man's estate that radiates from the Naipaul text is the asymptotic search of humanism - the nostalgia for the origin and the perennial anticipation of completion (knowledge, 'self' and truth.).

Who is V.S. Naipaul?

V.S. Naipaul is also a collection of these various traces.

My own unfolding has already begun, I hope.

Part II Figurations

Section A Fables of the Subject

(Chapters Two to Four)

Chapter Two: Plots of the Subject

1) *HOUSING THE SUBJECT*

2) *THE 'GOOD SOCIETY' AND THE AMBIVALENCE OF SUBJECTIVITY*

If nineteenth century European literature and the canons of the Great Tradition codified on the basis of it represent preeminently one side of (the second phase of) imperialist consolidation - that of the 'civilising' humanistic culture of Europe - how does one begin to assess postcolonial 'self-representations'? How does one begin to articulate postcolonial responses to that tradition and that codification?

In this Section I will attempt to read some of the 'self-representations' in the Naipaul text against these questions. For the purposes of this reading and this thesis I will focus on certain moments and tropes in the narratives Naipaul constructs. My attempt is to examine the way the text figures the (postcolonial) subject in the moments and through the tropes I concentrate on[1]. My arguments in this Section are confined to four such moments in the Naipaul text. They are the 'moments' of *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), "Tell me Who to Kill" (1971) [Ch. Two], *The Mimic Men* (1967) [Ch. Three], and "In a Free State" (1971) [Ch. Four]. It is through these moments and the ruses that operate in them that I hope to narrativize the tensions and resolutions that are imbricated in the Naipaul text. Chapter Two attends to the moments of *AHB* and "Tell me Who to Kill".

1) *HOUSING THE SUBJECT*

(i)

The narrative movement of *AHB* is not discontinuous with the project of self-making that I constructed in Chapter One. The project moves in this narrative through the figure of 'Biswas'. However, the text of *AHB* constructs this project problematically. In the following pages I will attempt to describe the problematic. The narrative strategy deploys two interchangeable tropes which run parallel to and overlap with the project of self-making. The tropes, which are also objects of desire, are the 'house' and the discourse of learning ('knowledge'). However, these tropes are presented as part of 'Biswas's' fantasy. The narrative strategy moves by perpetually figuring and disfiguring the fantasies of house and learning through Biswas. That is, these are persistently desired, anticipated and deferred in the narrative. The narrative is surfeited with allusions to movement and dispersal. Biswas's brothers leave for Fidelity (a village) after their father's death; Dehuti (Biswas's sister) runs away from Pagotes - later to Port of Spain. Bhandat moves out of Pagotes to Port of Spain. The Tulsis are constantly on the move in the second part of the narrative. Mrs. Tulsi shuttles between Arwacas and Port of Spain in the first part and between Port of Spain and Shorthills in the second part of the narrative. Owad leaves Arwacas, Port of Spain and later on goes to England; on his return after a short stay in Port of Spain he leaves for San Fernando. And above all the entire (Indian) community itself is already a displaced group - the casualties of the high-imperialist period and early victims of the international division of labour after the period of slavery.

Although the early displacement and the general dispersals inevitably appear in the narrative, the narrative structure cloaks them by concentrating on the figuration of 'Biswas'. The story of the displacement, in turn, remains only as a tangent in the main

narrative about the Biswas figure. In a way this concentration and marginalisation (of the story of displacement) blurs the distinction between the narrative subject and the subject of the narrative. The desire of the Biswas figure operates as a fantasy which the narrative structure attempts to share with and transfer on to the reader as well (and entrap her/him). The movement of this stratagem of transferral ('Biswas's' own anticipation and deferral of desire and the narrative transferral blurring the gap between the Biswas figure and the reader) is maintained through a contrived tension between the community of the Tulsis and the figure of Biswas. Biswas's life of perpetual postponement moves in spirals after the earlier dispersal of Biswas's family following his father's death which Biswas himself 'causes': Raghu, Biswas's father, fearing his son to be drowned in the pond goes searching in the pond and is in turn drowned (p. 31). Though he finds a place to live at Arwacas he is quickly moved to Pundit Jairam's house for training. But within eight months Biswas is out of Jairam's house. Later on, the link with the Hanuman House, which lasts for nearly thirty years, does not indicate any realisation of the fantasy of housing the subject. At the Chase (village) the house is a borrowed one, and at the Green Vale the house is a throughly defective one. At Port of Spain his house is rented from the Tulsis. The stratagem of transferral seems to imply that these repetitions - failing to house - should not (or cannot?) end and their end would spell the closure of the narrative. Yet the narrative imposes a closure on the text.

The closure is already suggested in the tension that is built up between the Tulsis and Biswas. The Hanuman House, is "an alien white fortress...bulky, impregnable and blank," where Biswas is always presented as troubled and imprisoned (p. 80): "as soon as he was there he wanted to leave " (p. 227). At Hanuman House "nothing would arrest his descent into the void" (p. 237). In opposition to this the text offers us, in the trope of the (desire for) house, the ideology of the "nuclear family", that discursive field which 'interpellates' 'individuals' as subjects[2]. Indeed the specifications about the

house he desires, with all the predictable domestic inscriptions of the space, are saturated by this ideological model, which even the text seems to endorse:

> He had thought deeply about this house, and knew exactly what he wanted. He wanted, in the first place, a real house, made with real materials. ... He wanted wooden walls, all tongue-and-groove. ... He would walk up the concrete steps into a small verandah; through doors with coloured panes into a small drawingroom; from there into a small bedroom, then another small bedroom, then back into the small verandah. The house would stand on tall concrete pillars so that he would get two floors instead of one, and the way would be left open for future development (p. 210).

And when he subsequently attempts to build a house at Shorthills this is precisely the model that comes to his mind: "It had a verandah, two bedrooms and a drawingroom, and stood on tall pillars" (p. 423). Although the house into which Biswas is moved at the end of the diegesis is not strictly according to the model he fantasises, nevertheless the division of the domestic space and the inscriptions that go with it are not wholly incompatible with the ideological model: it's a two-storey house with drawing/diningroom and the kitchen on the ground floor and a "bedroom, a verandah, a bedroom" and a bathroom on the top floor (p. 9). My contention is that the closure that the movement of the narrative structure seems to offer through this model of hous(ing) is not unproblematic. In fact, this closure is already offered us as a settled issue in the Prologue. But it is possible to read the text, as I will attempt below, as a decisive undermining of this initial authoritative utterance of the Prologue. What I am suggesting here is that the text is fissured between the all-knowing and initiating power of the Prologue and the narrative that (ideally) *follows* and continues to develop the promise of the Prologue. In other words the fissure is between the Prologue which is also a retrospective (if succinct) account of a text which would rework (contain and give birth to) the Prologue.

One of the modes through which this disjuncture (between the Prologue and the text) surfaces can be located in the operation of what I called earlier the stratagem of transferral. After the initial displacement and the dispersals, I've suggested earlier, the

repetitive unhousing of the Biswas figure is continued through the ruse of transferral. Thus, the ruse of anticipation and postponement which seems to be at work in this repetitive loss of houses does not enable one to envisage a closure of this movement. This is at work even in Biswas's repeated attempts to build a house. At the village, the Chase, the borrowed house is a precarious shelter: but it was felt to be "temporary and not quite real...Real life was to begin for them soon, and elsewhere. The Chase was a pause, a preparation" (p. 147). The 'real' is constantly anticipated. It is as a part of this structural/thematic move that one can read the resentments of Biswas's wife, Shama, against his adventures in house-making. Throughout the text, almost until the end, she is shown to be sulky at his desire to "paddle his own canoe" (pp. 144-45). At Green Vale where he first attempts to build his house - the house with bedrooms and verandah and a 'bower' - the venture is aborted even before the house takes shape (p. 238). And Shama, totally disapproving of this move, spends most of the time at the Tulsis - deserting Biswas. The fate of this house is already prefigured in the destruction of the doll's house which Biswas buys for his daughter (it was a "daintily furnished" house with a "kitchen...a safe and a sink" p. 216). The doll's house is destroyed by Shama (pp. 218-19). Subsequently Biswas's own house is burnt down even before its completion (p. 301). Although Biswas attempts defiantly to live in the unfinished house with a "drawingroom", it turns out to be only at the cost of his sanity that he achieves this. And in no time he is removed from his 'house' into the Hanuman House. And when the house is burnt down Biswas is seen to feel an "immense relief" (p. 301).

The perpetually anticipated and deferred object of desire, in these repeated scenes, I suggest, is not just an object of pleasure and fulfilment but is also cathected as profoundly dangerous. And this ambivalence already prefigured in the ruse of transferral appears to be the operative element in the subject-formation attempted in the (Naipaul) text. But to continue with my citation and exemplification. In another scene,

at Shorthills the Biswas figure is seen in another of his 'own' houses. He builds it according to his deferred plan of drawingroom, bedrooms and verandah house (p. 423). But even before the house is finished there is resentment from Shama and the children. Shama "did not approve of the move,...and like the children...wished it [the house] not to be completed." The children are shown to feel that the "new house [had] imprisoned them in silence and bush" (p. 424). But soon the narrative, working out the shared fantasy of housing-the-subject, tells us that Biswas "could not simply leave the house in Shorthills. He had to be released from it" (p. 432). The Biswas figure is "released" once again to the Tulsi house. The point that I am arguing here is that the unproblematic closure imposed in the Prologue is refused until almost the end by the ruse of deferral. The end of the movement of the narrative structure appears in the form of housing the subject in the section "The House". This section repeats the closure already introduced in the Prologue.

The location of the closure in "The House" (and its retrospective reworking in the Prologue) needs to be tracked and deciphered. It is in these sections that one observes the narrative structure attempting to put an end to its movement by legitimising (endorsing) what has been problematised by the ruses of anticipation and deferral so far. However, it must be noted that although the text problematizes the figure of the house through a split response to it - as an object of desire and at the same as a threat - it abruptly brings an end to this ambivalence by accommodating the figure of the subject in the 'house' (albeit a defective one). This object with its domestic inscriptions and the ideology of 'nuclear family' is something the narrative structure never interrogates. On the contrary, it is proffered as the closure of the narrative movement. The legitimation of the axiomatics of the ideology of the nuclear family can be clearly seen in the abrupt (narrative) formation of the nuclear family. That is, all of a sudden we see in the two sections the narrative attempting to establish an harmony among the members of Biswas family. Although initially Shama was reluctant to see the new

house (p. 570) later on, when they begin to find out the defects of the house, "Shama did not complain. She only said, 'It look as though we will have to do a few repairs before we move'" (p. 573). And when they move their furniture, their "gatherings of a life time", into the new house, the narrator informs us that (after all the repeated deferrals) they were being "moved for the last time" (p. 576).

Already (in the Prologue) the narrative suggested that the ideal of the nuclear family has taught Shama "a new loyalty, to him [Biswas] and to their children...and to Mr. Biswas this was a triumph almost as big as the acquiring of his own house" (p. 8). In contrast to the problems and resentments of the family which the Biswas figure is shown to suffer from in the text, the Prologue announces that they all had "quickly" "accommodated themselves" to the house: "their eyes ceased to be critical, and the house became simply their house" (p. 12). Through the legitimisation of the closed circle[3] of the nuclear family as the proper model of a closure the narrative movement seems to be impervious to the ideological implications of the model. Thus in endorsing the model as the solution the text seems to accept the (colonial) subject's accession to the codes of individualism insinuated into the colony by the imperialist/colonialist apparatus. That is, it does not seem to see the need to examine the operation of this ideologeme (the nuclear family) in 'interpellating' 'individuals' as subjects. On the contrary the narrative constructs it in terms of 'right' - his claim on the earth: "his own house... his own portion of the earth" (p. 8). This access to the "claim" is regarded as a "stupendous" achievement (p. 8). It would have been worse, the Prologue states, if he had not succeeded in achieving this: "to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one's own portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated" (p. 14). So the quest for the house is also a quest for a beginning, and the ambivalence of the trope the text introduces in its ruse of transferral is ironed out in the closure. The narrative closure may suggest a fulfilment, a realization of the fantasy and in effect encourage a teleological commentary on the

novel. But such readings do not engage the narrative at the textual level. That is, in treating the work as a 'rounded' one, (allegedly) resolving the tensions successfully, they ignore how the ruses that constitute the narrative disrupt such resolutions. However, the closure itself cannot be ignored.

(ii)

The closure is important because through it we can figure the self-representation of the (post)colonial the narrative projects. In order to do this we need to relate the closure to a wider problematic. The closure - the ideologeme of the nuclear family - suggests the theme of 'romance', the lure of self-making. This romance is conceivable in the narrative only through the controlling of ambivalence - through the disavowal of the threatening aspect of the object of desire. But this theme of romance and its mode of operation is patently rooted, as I have suggested earlier, in the subject-making apparatus of 'civilising mission'. That is, the imperialist self-consolidation itself proceeds through the stratagem of repressing the threatening, replacing the ambivalence with unification of the (imperialist) self. Thus in the case of the Biswas figure too the narrative closure attempts to replace the metonymy of the split with metaphor of unity. Moreover, even this prospect of romance, within the framework of the narrative, is accessible only to an upwardly mobile category of people. The narrative appears to be set in the first half of this century covering approximately a fifty-year span. We can see from the accumulated detail of the narrative that by the end of the first world war the Hindu community is already a well established group. Some of the figures that represent this community in the narrative are the Ajodhas, the Taras, the Naths and of course the Tulsis. The Biswas figure is well-connected to this community.

The narrative, in projecting a specific kind of closure, is representing the desire of a specific community as it comes to be articulated within the colonialist/imperialist

matrix. The closure which the narrative adopts may attempt to accommodate Biswas unproblematically but the narrative (which in its two part construction reminds one of the two-storey house of Biswas) in which he is just a figure cannot be conveniently reduced to that closure. In the text the figure remains at variance with the (hegemonic) theme of 'romance'. We will return to this point. But we will continue our pursuit of this colonial desire and see how it finds further expression in the narrative's articulation of another trope - 'learning' ('knowledge').

(iii)

Indeed Biswas is doubly circumscribed by the text: he moves not just within the text (*AHB*) but importantly he is also shown to move with or around other texts within the text. The narrative deploys, as I've suggested earlier, the programmatic trope of 'knowledge' (discourse of learning) which runs parallel to and overlaps with the project of self-making (or housing the subject). Biswas's initiation into this world of learning begins with his chanting of the Lord's Prayer in Hindi from his *King George V Hindi Reader* (p. 46). This presence in the colonies of the English Book, and its "artless technique of translation" and repetition is precisely what Homi Bhabha has analysed as signifying "one of the most artful technologies of colonial power"[4]. But the presence of that power and its signifiers remains only as a tangent in the narrative structure. Although the narrative characterises the subjects taught at school as "unreal" (p. 46) it dissimulates the instruments of 'civilisation', the books as sources of 'knowledge'. The figure of Biswas is surrounded by an eclectic set of intertexts ranging from *Royal Reader, Meditations, Tom Sawyer,* and *Book of Comprehensive Knowledge* to authors such as Shakespeare, Marie Corelli, Dickens, Victor Hugo, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and some writings on Hinduism. These are intertexts in the sense that it is through them that the text (*AHB*) articulates the colonial desire in the figure of Biswas. The narrative

structure invests this figure with the desire of becoming a writer - a maker of figures or signs. As the desire for a house appears to legitimate the ideology of the nuclear family, so the trope of knowledge (and its culmination in the figure of writer) seems to endorse the ideology of individualism. If the narrative structure invests the figure of Biswas with a fantasy, this is best articulated by the intertexts of *Bell's Standard Elocutionist*, with its classic motif of "paddle your own canoe", and the motto of "independence" (individualism) (p. 107). Similarly, Samuel Smiles's *Self Help* functions with its Victorian moralism of hard work and self-advancement, while the "intoxicating worlds" of Hall Caine and Marie Corelli fabricate the romance of the 'reality' that is 'elsewhere' (p. 78). However, the narrative states that there were limitations to Biswas's ambitions unlike those of Samuel Smiles's heroes: for they lived "in countries where ambitions could be pursued and had a meaning" (pp. 78-79). This quasi-narrative explanation is in fact a part of the narrative strategy we are already familiar with: the ruse of transferral, the promise of the 'real' always anticipated and yet deferred. Although the Smilesian fantasy of discovery governs the Biswas figure, at a later point the narrative substitutes for it the fantasy of becoming a writer.

However, like the earlier fantasy for the house the desire to be a writer is also interrupted repeatedly: "he even tried to write...But Mr. Biswas could never devise a story" (p. 183). Nevertheless, the fantasy is maintained through repeated postponements. And the Biswas figure remains perpetually caught up in the texts, "innumerable novels" (p. 183). In fact, at one point, he is literally housed in a room of paper: "newspaper covered the walls from top to bottom. This had obviously been the work of a literate" (p. 206). The Biswas figure apears as if incorporated into the "journalism of his time" (p. 206). In effect, as a journalist at one point he seems to regurgitate in his (imagined) constructions the very material (paper) that had surrounded him earlier (pp. 319-22). However, in working out the trope of knowledge (independence, individualism) the narrative structure introduces a displacement. This

is the cathexis of the colonial desire in the Anand figure through Biswas. That is, the narrative movement, as it operates with the trope of knowledge, shifts the focus of attention from the father figure to the son. This shift, however, is in line with the ruse of transferral. The shift is facilitated through the repeated moves of anticipation and deferral, and projecting Biswas as a despairing figure: "Each realization had been delayed and had come, not as a surprise, but as a statement of a condition long accepted" (p. 494).

However, to locate the shift in the narrative is not to displace the figure of Biswas as the subject of (post)coloniality. For (post)coloniality comes to be signified in the text through the narrativization of the tropes. In effect it is not the question of which 'character' is more representative of (post)coloniality but what are the modes (ruses) that the narrative has recourse to in its self-making project. Thus the narrative movement, conditioned on the ruse of deferral, postpones its closure by relating (through Biswas) the trope of knowledge with 'Anand'. In effect, 'Anand', associated with the trope of learning, appears as a source of Biswas's investment in the narrative.

The trope of learning operates in the text as a privileged signifier of individualism. Unlike other forms of learning, which are incorporated into the narrative - such as Pandit Jairam's and the religious learning of Hari - the trope of knowledge associated with 'romance' remains a cherished ideal in the text. There is, however, an ironic levelling in the narrative by which the world of learning appears to be mocked from time to time. In one such scene, for instance, Biswas kicks at his cherished possession - *Bell's Standard Elocutionist* (p. 137); at another place, an English poem appears to be an object of wrangle (pp. 233-34). In another scene one of the Tulsi children is introduced as a 'writer'. The 'writing' which he practises incessantly, the narrative informs us, is in fact a copying of the text books into note-books. Yet the irony is eventually a strategy of incorporation, a qualified response. It does not really engage with the narrative investment in what is mocked. In other words a 'novelistic response', to use

Bakhtin's phrase, need not imply an interrogation of what one desires. On the contrary, the ironic may serve the purpose of a perpetual deferral of interrogation. In the narrative of *AHB* the ironic serves the purpose of maintaining the fictive tension between the Tulsis and the Biswas figure and in effect the textualization of tropes of learning remains unaffected by the irony. Moreover, the ironic operates only in the context of the Tulsi/Biswas rivalry but, as we will see below, has no place in the case of the Anand/Biswas filiative bond. That is, the site which is preeminently figured through the trope of learning remains outside the matrix of irony. For the trope that figures the site is also the the trope of desire.

Thus all the text books the narrative refers to are by the colonial administrators: "Director of Education," and "Assistant Director of Education." And the narrative gaze does not turn towards these taxonomies, the colonial pedagogy and its subjectifying strategies, but towards the deceits of the Tulsi child who "had impressed his parents" by writing in the note books (p. 463). That is, the strategy of irony operates only to maintain the tension at the narrative level -it moves no further to narrativize the fracture of the wider network. Thus immediately contrasted with the scene of the Tulsi child is the scene of Anand's preparation for "exhibition examination." "Exhibition examination" is precisely the narrative's dissimulation of the ideal of meritocracy in the colonial scenario. Every year, the narrative tells us, twelve of these meritocratic boys are chosen for (free) college education (p. 488). The Anand figure, the reliever and the promise of the narrative movement, is already anointed with this spirit of meritocracy. In contrast to the mockery of learning associated with the Tulsi child the narrative develops the theme about the growth of the meritocratic boy - the Anand figure. However, this account as we can see, does not broach the other side of this self-making - discourse of learning as a (colonial) apparatus of programming (the subject).

> With the exhibition examination less than two months away, Anand lived a life of pure work. Private lessons were given in the morning for

> half an hour before school; private lessons were given in the afternoon for an hour after school; private lessons were given for the whole of Saturday morning. Then in addition to all these private lessons from his class teacher, Anand began to take private lessons from the headmaster, at the headmaster's house, from five to six. He went from school to the Dairies to school again; then he went to the headmaster's, where Savi [Anand's sister] waited for him with sandwiches and lukewarm Ovaltine. Leaving home at seven in the morning, he returned at half past six. He ate. Then he did his school homework; then he prepared for all his private lessons. (p. 463)

The narrative, in this instance as in the earlier case of the ideologeme of home, does not see the very ambition, in the colonial context, as pertaining to a specific category of people. It only refers to the "privation" the participants endure to prove worthy of being the "exhibition boys". In fact, the scene's contrast derives not from any change in the narrative attitude towards this programming process but from the contrived tension between the Biswas figure (and its extension to 'Anand') and the Tulsis. The story of colonial power is never directly present but always remains effective by proxy through the ideology of nuclear family and meritocratic individualism. In the narrative articulation of colonial desire these become the two most crucial signifiers of subjectivity; but the signifiers are abstracted from the wider problematic within which the narrative moves.

The ruse of transferral, as I suggested earlier, which operates in the narrative investment in the Anand figure is only an attempt to procrastinate the closure of the movement. In other words the transferral turns Anand into a carrier of the colonial desire which the narrative articulates through the figure of Biswas: "Change had come over him [Biswas] without his knowing...and his vision of the future became only visions of Anand's future" (p. 494). The perpetually deferred yet anticipated future, as I will attempt to show shortly, is the uncanny which the ambivalent text attempts to circumscribe and control through a closure. However, I am not inferring that the Biswas figure disappears henceforth from the text, replaced by the Anand figure. My suggestion is that the Anand figure, fabricated through Biswas and invested with the desire of knowledge (future, individualism), is only another trope on the page. The

Biswas figure continues to function, for the narrative movement, in postponing the closure, revives him: "Suddenly, quite suddenly, he was revivified" (p. 495). That is, the shift the narrative introduces, as I suggested earlier in making the Anand figure the crucial vehicle of colonial desire, is only another move of transferral to delay the closure. This is also an indication of the continuity of the ambivalence in the text - which in effect suggests the deferral of fulfillment, of self-making. Indeed Biswas is further distanced from his fantasy of becoming a writer and this is shown through his move from journalism to becoming a civil servant in a Welfare Office. However, it must be noted here that in the Naipaul text it is the writer who remains a privileged figure and it is this figure's 'romance' (in the entire text) which is represented as an unshattered one. In contrast the other figures become victims of shattered romances. We will return to this argument at various places in the thesis. Thus what the narrative terms the revival of Biswas is in one way a postponement of closure ('fulfilment') but in another sense it is a premonition of a decisive procrastination of the fulfilment of desire. For the narrative has already transferred the trope of knowledge (the source of self-making) to (or invested in) the Anand figure. [In fact at one point Biswas destroys his incomplete *Escape* stories (stories about how a helpless, poor young man trapped into marriage dreams about untouched young and barren heroines inviting him and his attempts at escape from his trap) pp. 344-45, 453]. Yet, like the desire to house, this desire for knowledge (writing/individualism/escape) remains problematic. Although the narrative closure manages to house the Biswas figure (thus becoming complicitous with the ideology of the nuclear family) its other object of desire - knowledge - remains permanently distanced. The distance becomes irreducible in the Epilogue when the Anand figure 'escapes' with a scholarship to England. Thus the disjunction noted earlier repeats between the text and the following Epilogue. For the reliever son who would rescue and extend the father's relay (desire) is deferred out of the narrative structure. But the reliever leaves behind an effect, which is always feared (hence

deferred): it is the threat of loss. The object of desire as in the case of the earlier trope - the house - is always circumscribed by the ambivalent text: "Living had always been a preparation, a waiting. And so the years had passed; and now there was nothing to wait for" (p. 586). The Anand figure was an extension and yet a part of the narrative desire worked out through the Biswas figure. Anand was like Biswas's heart: "He feared his heart. He feared Anand" (p. 587). This threat of loss recurs after the closure, after the nuclear family is "accommodated" - in the Epilogue. And the narrative structure cannot resolve it - these repeated transferrals and the threats of loss. Yet the closure it chooses (housing and knowledge) shows resolutions only at the cost of becoming complicitous with the ideological implications of the closing tropes.

But what are we to make of these transferrals and threats of loss? What do these repetitive structural ruses (effects) signify in the postcolonial text? And what is the effect of these ruses on the subject the text fabricates?[5] We will now turn to engage with these questions.

(iv)

Many critical responses to the novel, as I suggested earlier, confine their analysis to the closure which the movement of the narrative structure adopts. As a result of their emphasis on the 'romance' aspect of the narrative they tend to either celebrate it as a realisation of the dream or a tragedy with (limited) heroism. Wilson Harris in his critique of the novel rejects it as a suitable model for representing Caribbean 'experience'[6]. But this very dismissal is also based on reducing the novel to the aspect of romance which it certainly operates with. In effect, many critics glorify the novel as admirably conforming to the tenets of the Great Tradition. Yet in confining their various criticisms to a specific aspect of the narrative the various critical responses fail to situate the text within the wider problematic of colonialist/imperialist network within

which the tropes of 'knowledge' and 'home' and the project of self-making are entrenched. If the colonialist/imperialist project of self-consolidation operates through the mechanism of disavowal of the other in order to produce the subject then how does the Naipaul text (in this context *AHB*) figure the subject in relation to the imperialist apparatus?

The text seems to plot the Biswas figure's itinerary of self-making in two stages which in the psychoanalytic fable of the subject are called the Foundling phase and the Oedipal phase[7]. After the initial displacement and dispersals the Biswas figure is constantly on the move, changing houses yet remaining unaccommodated. His early effort was to move away from his "derelict" mother (p. 67). And yet as a Foundling, shifting houses, the figure also feels deprived. He feels that apart from a few houses where he is never missed, and the mud walls of his derelict mother's house, there was nothing for him: "Beyond that, a void. There was nothing to speak of him" (p. 132). Yet he persistently feels that the present was only a temporary situation, that the "Real life was... elsewhere" and the present was only a "preparation". So what is anticipated is not just a "void" but also at the same time a promise, a desirable event or thing (p. 147). But it is precisely this double feeling, of anticipation and deferral, which articulates the ambivalence of the text towards that desired moment the signifiers future/void indicate; and each of the tropes of desire - learning and home - evokes such ambivalence in the subject. In other words the desire seems to be inevitably linked with loss. The anticipation/deferral promised him "nobler purpose" of existence and yet they also threatened him with nothingness (pp. 182-83). Thus within six years in the (ominously named) the Chase Village, where he goes defying the Tulsis and which he treats as only a preparation for the real beginning, the Biswas figure is disturbed by the emptiness of his anticipations; the future appears not only to be a blessing at one time but increasingly it is a crippling curse. It is this other move of the text which disrupts the neat figurations of romance for it does not allow the kind of 'fulfilment' the

romance implies by suggesting the split in the subject.

The Foundling who invests in the future is also shattered by the threats the emptiness of the future wages against him. Thus the ruse of deferral has conflicting messages for the subject: what is anticipated and deferred is at once 'real', 'nobler' and yet dangerous:

> And always the thought, the fear about the future. The future wasn't the next day or the next week or even the next year, times within his comprehension and therefore without dread. The future he feared could not be thought of in terms of time. *It was a blankness, a void like those in dreams,* into which, past tomorrow and the next week and next year, he was falling (p. 190 emphasis mine).

The subject can be fabricated into an individual - the aim of imperialist grand narrative - consolidated into a self only through a repression or disavowal of that threatening 'void', that 'absence' that returns and traumatises the subject otherwise. The deferral then is a thwarting of that incursion of the future/void which torments the Biswas figure. It also, at the level of the narrative movement, enables the continuity of the narrative. But this continuity is not towards any teleological fulfilment. In both the instances - the imperialist 'interpellation' of the subject into individual and the text's (*AHB*) attempts at figuring the subject - what is thwarted and deferred can be signified by what Freud called the Uncanny. The uncanny refers to something that is not 'normal' but dangerous. In the context of imperialist subject-making the 'native' hovering on the borders of animal/human becomes the uncanny other - hence the need for the apparatus of subjectification - 'civilising' mission. The civilising mission is the self-consolidating activity of the imperialist and the programme of domesticating, normalizing the 'native'. In other words the uncanny marks the moment of crisis in the formation of the subject. In the text of *AHB* the repetitive disturbances impinging on the Biswas figure as the threatening intimations of the future/void certainly mark the tension in the consolidation of the subject - making the subject into an individual. These tensions could be said to signify the Oedipal phase in the process of the formation of the subject in the text. But the narrative attempts to resolve these

tensions, almost in line with the narrative of imperialism, through the closure of 'romance'. Thus in the narrative the scene that follows the traumatising moment of the uncanny is fittingly that of an attempt at narcissistic retrieval.

In the moment of trauma the narrative figures Biswas as the Foundling. He is all of a sudden transposed back into memory, recollecting the scene of a lonely boy standing outside a derelict hut at dusk. The "picture remained with" Biswas: "a boy against an earth house that had no reason for being there, under the dark falling sky, a boy who didn't know where the road, and that bus, went" (p. 190). It is the memory of (or an identity with) the abandoned, unaccommodated Foundling who anticipates and "prepares" himself for the 'nobler' life. In the same way in an earlier scene the uncertainty of the present moment (thought about the void/future) returns him to the pastoral idyll: the pleasant scent of the slightly roasted *poui* sticks, the bonfire which his father used to make in the village, "sensations, not pictures, of an evening meal being cooked over a fire that shone on a mud wall and kept out the night, of cool, new, unused mornings, of rain muffled on a thatched roof and warmth below it" (p. 174). The yearnings of the Foundling Biswas repeat in the desire for the house. But this desire is always already conflicting, plural as it figures its object; but to define it as a 'success', exemplified in Biswas's 'gaining' of a house, is to reduce the split in the desire to a narcissistic act of self-unification. It is to read the repetitive disruptions of the uncanny (future/void) as terminable in a progressive consolidation of the self. But such a closure represses or disavows the uncanny: "The future he feared was upon him. He was falling into the void, and that terror, *known only in dreams*, was with him as he lay awake at night..." (p. 227). The uncanny repeats, disturbing the homogenising of the desire. It splits the very tropes that the narrative invests in and which aid the movement of the narrative structure - house of learning. And it leads the Biswas figure onto the verge of madness.

The disturbance repeats through Biswas's dreams. The deferred future/void

appears to be at once both a signifier of death and the trauma of castration - the threat of losing the unity of the self. Thus in order to maintain the unity the deferral seems inevitable. However, the closure which the narrative imposes is possible only through the paradox of disavowal. For disavowal is at once a recognition and denial of the threat to the unity of the body which the subject experiences. Hence the disavowal is also a refusal to acknowledge the recognition of non-unity, death as the conditional possibility of life, the split in the subjectivity. We will come back to this point once again in the Naipaul text. The Naipaul text moves with the mechanism of disavowal and self-making. But this mechanism and the ruses of closure it adopts make it complicitous with the imperialist discourse. We will engage this facet of the Naipaul text in every chapter that follows.

However, the text's mode of containing the split or unifying the split in the figuration of the subject is to project it through the subject onto a multiplicity of selves - the "people". It is the desire to distantiate and separate the dangerous which threatens his integrity. Biswas as a figure of the book blurs away the distinction between "people" he "meets" in his day to day activities and "people" from the books and papers which surround and fabricate him. They all are posed as threatening, disturbing figures: "Was he afraid of real people?... Now he would never more be able to go among people. ...Every man and woman he saw, even at a distance, gave him a twist of panic" (pp. 266-67,269). This kind of multiplication of selves, as Samuel Weber argues, "becomes the splitting of the self, no longer overcoming but rather confirming its non-identity and mortality"[8]. But the narrative movement in *AHB* implies that such a self-presence and identity was evident once in the wholeness of the subject, but is lost only with the threat of the "void" (the uncanny "people"): "I am deceiving you. I am not whole." Only "yesterday", the Biswas figure feels, he was integrated, whole: "Already yesterday, last night, was as remote as childhood. And mixed with his fear was this grief for a happy life never enjoyed and now lost. ... [and he cried] for all his lost

happiness" (pp. 268-69). This figuration of the subject as (once) allegedly unified remains the paradigmatic procedure in Naipaul's representation of postcoloniality. We will see this in its varied repetitions in the subsequent Chapters.

This narcissistic doubling (dividing the self for self-preservation) also repeats in Biswas's dreams. And in the dreams the process of doubling seems to represent the threat of castration through the genital symbols:[9]

> There were crowds everywhere. Two thick black threads were chasing him...the threads lengthened. One thread turned pure white; the black thread became thicker and thicker, purple-black and monstrously long. It was a rubbery black snake...it found the chase funny and said so to the white thread, now also a snake (p. 272).

And he finds that black snakes were hanging from the roof of his house (p. 282). The thematics of castration which the ruses of repetition and transferral (anticipation and deferral of the uncanny) enact in the text are obviously indications of the subject-making programme the text is involved in. However in the text's programme of subject-making the tension between 'romance' and the uncanny is irreducible. What the narrative movement projects as a closure, as I have suggested, has two implications: firstly, postulation of a narcissistic, unified self, and secondly, its complicity with the wider problematic of imperialist subject-making. But the text of *AHB* repetitively and admirably demonstrates the deceptions of the romance of colonial desire. This is so in spite of the narrative closure. At the movement of the narrative level the disruptions of depriving the (alleged) wholeness of the Biswas figure permanently incapacitate him; and this effect is projected tragically in the narrative: "It was the first of many disappointments... he no longer expected to wake up one morning and find himself whole again" (p. 273). But then he is never far away from the fantasy: "Real life, and its especial sweetness, awaited; he was still beginning." The anticipation of the promise which the unthreatening future repeats and makes the tension in the text irreducible (p. 305).

It is this aspect of the fantasy (the desirable future) that the narrative closure, and various critics, exploit. The closure, as I showed earlier, designates the subject's accommodation as an access to a right. The right is also described in the narrative in terms of an originating moment which progressively distinguishes the past from the present. The past becomes the 'myth' or 'pre-history' and the present becomes history 'proper'. The narrative movement attempts to inaugurate such a teleological moment ("beginning", in the 'transitive' sense)[10] through its complicitous closures. The project of housing the subject, with all its ideological implications and complicities, which I attempted to show in earlier sections, is in line with the law of the origin: to make a house is to make a beginning. And this beginning, detaching itself from the chaos of 'prehistory' would order its events coherently; it also implies a continuity. The law implies an attempt to resolve the disjunctions which the text cannot escape: the disjunctions between the unproblematic closure, promising the possibility of housing the subject, and the repetitive structure of transferrals and deferrals which threaten such closure.

Such law can be located in the narrative's assertions about the success of the project (of nuclear family, individualism, and subject-making):

> Soon it seemed to the children that they had never lived anywhere but in the tall square house...*from now* their lives would be *ordered, their memories coherent...* And rapidly the memories of ['prehistory'] Hanuman House, The Chase, Green Vale, Shorthills, the Tulsi house in Port of Spain would become jumbled, blurred; events would be telescoped, many forgotten...So later, and very slowly, in securer times of different stresses, when the memories had lost the power to hurt, with pain or joy, they would fall into place and give back the past (p. 581 emphasis added).

Indeed, it is this very aspect of the law - the postulation of an originary moment - which the Naipaul critics use to accommodate (and appropriate) the Naipaul text of *AHB* into the revisionist Great Tradition of Commonwealth Literature. *AHB* becomes, then, the first work to conceive and "execute" "comprehensively" the "colonial situation"[11]. The text embodies a realization, a fulfilment of colonial desire.

Yet the rift between 'romance' and the uncanny can take a sinister turn in the Naipaul text. Perhaps *AHB* is the only moment in the Naipaul text where the rift is used to problematise colonial desire, and the question of subject making. Although even here there are suggestions about the probable route of the formation of the subject, the text does not take sinister tones in articulating them. However, I am not suggesting that it was only after Naipaul wrote *AHB* that he developed a special technique of constructing the (postcolonial) subject in his writings. My contention is, as I am arguing, that the ruses are already there from the beginning, but their emphasis may vary in certain works. This is inevitably so because the Naipaul text itself is not outside the wider problematic of the imperialist network. However, the specific articulations the text makes in its sinister narrativization of postcoloniality will be discussed in the following sections. We will now turn to the moment of 'Tell me Who to Kill".

2) *'THE GOOD SOCIETY' AND THE AMBIVALENCE OF SUBJECTIVITY*

The claim to be constructing 'the good society' is the ruse or dissimulation through which imperialism legitimises its territorial expansion. The good society is the space in which "appropriate" subjecthood is bestowed upon the 'natives' represented as the Other (of the imperialist - European - self) through the project of a civilising mission. In the Naipaul text the narrative movement of *AHB* underlines an attempt to insert the subject - the Biswas figure - into that good society, made up of supposedly nuclear families and the meritocracy of individualism. But the narrative ruse of deferral interrupts the culmination of such colonial desire, in spite of the closure the narrative imposes on the text. The narrative movement of "Tell Me Who to Kill", a story included in *In a Free State*,[1] repeats a similar scenario where the subject is deprived of any accession to the 'good society'. The narrative investments in the signifiers of the good society are short-circuited as it were, and, unlike the earlier narrative *(AHB)*, "Tell Me" remains caught up in a regressive circularity. In effect, the rift between the romance and the uncanny projects a subject who remains incapacitated.

(i)

"Tell Me" has an apparently incoherent, disjunctive and fragmented but repetitive pattern which seems to verge on the discourse of dementia. Yet there is a significant pattern. One can trace a technique in this otherwise fragmented narrative. The technique which I elaborate shortly can be called the technique of double inscription. The textual movement operates through this technique and narrativizes the events and relationships as varied repetitions of the technique. These varied repetitions are what I

wish to call the 'moves' of the narrative. It is as the effect of these repetitive moves that we perceive the figure of the (unnamed) subject in the narrative. This technique can be grasped and elaborated through all the major moves the narrative makes, and which it artfully suggests in the first four pages of the text. The technique of double inscription is implied in the narrative subject's complaint about his brother, Dayo's marriage: "Just like my brother. He choose a bad morning to get married" (p. 59). Almost in a systematic way, the other events are narrativized, between this primary event and its culmination at the end of the narrative. It is there in (b) the narrator's anxiety about Dayo and the "accident" on the one hand and the relationship it marks between the two (Dayo and the narrative subject) on the other: "I feel fright. ...I know at that moment that the love and the danger I carry all my life burst...My life finish. It spoil, it spoil" (p. 62). It recurs in (c) the narrator's retrospective account of his business: "This is the place. ... The mistake of my life. This is where all my money went. ...In five months it went there."(63). And finally, but crucially, (d) it emphasises the subject's relationship with (and investment in) his uncle, the Stephen figure. The fourth move is crucial because it is through this move that the operative technique makes the earlier moves appear either as effects or as varied repetitions of this move. Yet this organisation of the text into moves is not to indicate or guarantee a linear progression of the narrative from one move to another. The narrative movement remains fragmented[2].

Initially, in the narrative, the signifiers of the 'good society' are associated with the Stephen figure. These signifiers could be indicated by the terms "christian", "white", "pursuit of studies", "ambition", "wealth" and "progressiveness". The subject turns away from his father who for him remains worthless since he lacks any of the attributes the subject desires. Further, for the subject his father turns all (the subject's and his siblings') lives into a joke: "he is happy to leave that side of his life to his younger brother [Stephen]...[and he] is always turning his own life into a story and a

joke, and he turn us his children into a joke too" (p. 65). The subject's "ambition" to be "a big man" like all the others who go away to "further their studies" is not sustained by the family. Yet the family too invests in Stephen's ambition and, as the narrator sees, they boast of their relationship with the Stephen figure in the village. The narrator shares this with the family: "I adore Stephen when I was small" (p. 68). Yet the narrative inscribes the most cherished signifiers of the 'good society' contradictorily. The subject's most desired object - 'education', ambition to be a big man - is also shown as a signifier of shame. (The narrative investment in the Stephen figure is, needless to say, an indication of the subject's desire for Stephen's object of desire). For the ambition appears to be a signifier of lack or absence in the narrative circuit. This lack turns the subject towards viewing the family as a worthless group. It is to protect the family from the shame of worthlessness that the subject wishes to be the head of the family - the big man - and cherishes his desire to be inserted into the changing world: "I feel I see things so much better than the rest of my family...But I feel I become like the head of the family. I get the ambition and the shame for all of them. The ambition is like shame, and shame is like a secret, and it is always hurting" (p. 65). Yet ambition is also an indicator of fulfilment, a completion, and for the subject his access to the 'real' world. Hence the subject's investment in Stephen's ambition.

The paradoxical (or double) inscription of the signifiers of 'the good society' is repeated in the narrative subject's account of the "great" "rich man" - a neighbour of the family. The rich man has a two-storey house in the village. Although once the man was thought to be poor (for the subject), "in my eyes the oil land and the luck and the money and the house make this man great" (p. 66). The image of wealth the subject views makes him "worship this man." Stephen and the rich man become the adorable images in contrast to the shameful group of his own family. But in no time this revered image of the rich man crashes as the subject realizes that "the man...wasn't rich at all." And the two-storey house with its decorations and colours, which "look like something

to eat" earlier, now appears to be "like a tomb", or "like a skeleton". The rich man is shot by someone and the image loses its power on the subject (pp. 66-67).

As with the image of the wealthy man, the narrative "novelistically" represents the image of the big city for the subject. Novelistic representation is that in which social contradictions are resolved for the subject in an imaginary set of relationships which figure the subject as a coherent category and in harmony with his (imaginary) surroundings[3]. And when the subject sees the real city it falls far beneath his imaginary city: "I used to have a vision of a big city. It wasn't like this, not streets like this" (p. 72). For the novelistic image of the city that lured him was built from the cinematic discourse of *Waterloo Bridge* - the photographic illusion disguising the real for the subject[4]. This paradoxical inscription, this disruption of the imaginary by the encroachment of the real, does not, however, induce the subject to move away from the imaginary, to encounter the real. The subject remains increasingly implicated in the imaginary circuit.

The narrative subject's investment in Stephen's ambition, as I mentioned earlier, turns the latter into a venerable model for the subject. This investment is not impaired when the subject finds that Stephen has "let [him] down." In his earlier glorification of the image of Stephen the subject never associates him with a family of his own. He feels cheated when he comes to know that Stephen has a family in the city. With this discovery the subject seems to become aware of rivalry, a group that demands a share (p. 68). Further, Stephen's house, which the subject once thought was a mansion, turns out to be a "poky little old - fashioned wood house in a bad part of the city." And the subject feels ashamed for imagining and "look[ing] on Stephen as a big man" (p. 75). The discovery also in a way crashes the imaginary figure of Stephen who would fulfil a lack - through the signifier of ambition. For the subject grasps that the Stephen figure is also more or less in a shameful situation in that he too invests in his son. The situation appears to suggest a disruption of the Family Romance circuit[5] which the

subject seems to cherish through the imaginary figures. But this is not entirely so in the narrative movement of "Tell Me". The shame of the family and of the unremarkable parents having failed to sustain his investment in other's ambition, coupled with the disruption in the images of Family Romance (the rich man and Stephen), the subject veers towards his younger brother - Dayo; and henceforth he operates as the cathexis of the subject's desire. That is, he begins to invest in ambition which he associates with Dayo. The subject anticipates a fulfilment through the figure of Dayo. And through the discourse of American cinema the narrative has already figured Dayo as a promising star. The subject's bond with Dayo seems to be that of narcissistic identification: "He is so pretty ... small and sick, suffering for me, and so pretty. I feel I could kill anyone who make him suffer. I don't care about myself. I have no life" (p. 61). Life is associated with ambition and the completion of a lack which the narrative subject projects on to Dayo. Yet the access to this life is anticipated but deferred in the narrative: "Ordinary for me, but for my brother it [life] wasn't going to be like that. He was going to break away; he was going to be a professional man; I was going to see to that. For the rich and the professional the world is not ordinary" (pp. 64-65). For the nameless subject the only way in which he can insert himself in a world is through an identification with a figure which he invests with imaginary possibilities. However, the subject's investment itself is simultaneously an indication of rivalry with Stephen's family; it is also paradoxically overdetermined by that family. Stephen's job as a law clerk in the city, the subject's and his family's fantasy about Stephen's life-style in the city, his "christian name as a mark of progressiveness", and the family's attitude towards Stephen's son's "pursuit of studies" all contribute to determine the intensity of the subject's investment in Dayo.

But a double inscription of the signifier of 'ambition' returns in the narrator's account of Stephen's apprehensions about his son: "You begin to feel then that Stephen is more than ambitious for his son, that he is a little frightened too. He is like a man

carrying something that could break and cut him" (p. 70). The cherished image is also figured as something that would dismember. As the subject's fantasy about Stephen's desire overdetermines his own investment in Dayo, his account of Stephen's apprehensions prefigures the threat of his own object of desire to the subject. In effect, the Stephen family simultaneously becomes a mirror image for the subject's fantasy but also a threat to that image. One can see a vacillation in the subject's response toward that family - from secret admiration to an unmitigated hatred. However, what is foreshadowed in the subject's account of Stephen's fears is repeated in his own reflections on his relationship with Dayo: "I am carrying him [Dayo] inside me the way Stephen is carrying his own son, like something that might break and cut" (p. 71). The signifier of ambition also seems to be the *imagos* Lacan refers to, which "represent the elective vectors of aggressive intentions... These are the images of castration ...dismemberment...bursting open of the body..."[6] However, the subject seems to project his aggressivity and hatred on to his surroundings also, for he sees the threat to his object of desire from them. Thus one sees a vacillation in the subject from narcissistic identification to aggressive repulsion[7]. The object of love is internalised, but at the same time what is incorporated is also perceived as a persecuting object. The subject attempts to expunge this persecuting element by projecting it onto the people around him. This takes form of destructive rage against his parents at one point[8]. With his narcissistic investment in Dayo the subject feels a "new feeling in my heart" with which he awaits, at one point, the death of his father and mother and all Stephen's family (once glorious but now only another abject group like his own), so that he could "bury my shame with them. I hate them": "Even today I can hate them, when I should have more cause to hate white people, to hate this cafe and this street and these people who cripple me and spoil my life" (pp. 71-72). The aggressivity is turned towards all who appear to the subject to thwart his access to that deferred future. When the subject suspects that his rivals - the Stephen family - make a mockery of his fantasy, his desire

in Dayo's future, he reacts in a way which reminds one of Ralph Singh (constituted by a similar situation, as will be shown in the next Chapter): "When you find out who your enemy is, you must kill him before he kill you" (pp. 76-77). But it is an intimate enemy encountered by the subject in a mirror relationship, and hence cannot be entirely objectified. Freud and Lacan argue that "the subject transcends the aggressivity" through the Oedipal identification with a paternal figure[9]. But the narrative movement of "Tell Me" cannot be measured entirely in the Oedipal circuit. For the ambition, the signifier of the good society which at once indicated a lack and a possibility of fulfilment, also undermined the paternal order by discarding it as worthless, shameful order. (This is shown more elaborately in my analysis of *The Mimic Men*). The subject seems circumscribed by the vectors of aggressivity and narcissism.

The threats prefigured in the subject's account of Stephen's investment in his son only further seem to strengthen the vectors of ambivalence for the subject. He feels that, after his son's departure to Montreal, Stephen "is like a man expecting bad news, the thing that would break in his hands and cut him" (p. 73). Stephen's mournful attitude appears as a premonition to the subject. But this premonition invokes hatred in the subject. This becomes apparent when the subject comes to know that the object of desire Stephen has cherished so long in his son has ultimately let him down. The subject discovers that "Stephen's son gone foolish in Montreal...The Prince [at one time "He is like the Prince to them" p. 75] is not coming" (p. 78). The discovery perturbs the subject deeply. His hatred towards others turns him murderous: "But I remember my own hate, the hate that make me sick, and I feel I kill all of them" (p. 78). It is the prefiguration of threat, in Stephen's case, which turns the subject anxious and drives him to London, after his brother, to protect his own desire, to cherish his investment.

(ii)

Interestingly most of the narrativization recounting the narrator's life in London is lucid and sequential except at a few moments when there is an overlapping of other themes. The lucidity is blurred only when there is a transition in the narrative from one move to another. This shift in narrativization seems to reflect (in) the subject's ambivalent relation with his brother (the internalised object of love). The subject appears, at one point in London to be moving away from the mirror relationship with Dayo when he begins himself to become rich: "I find my money making me strong. And because the money make me strong I can put up with anything" (p. 85). The new avenue which this (once) imaginary city (itself constructed by the cinematic discourse) has created for the subject seems to break the narcissistic-aggressive vector of the subject, in opening up the possibility of sublimating his own 'ambition'. But this is not really so. For soon we find that the real source of the subject's strength and sustenance is not money but his imaginary relation with Dayo: "if I was frightened of anything it was that my strength wouldn't hold out, that Dayo would finish his studies and leave me alone in the basement, and that the life would end" (p. 85). But, we remember, earlier the subject has associated life with Dayo's "breaking away" from the family order, with ambition and purging the family from shame. And now he realizes that "life" also means a cessation (or mutation) of that imaginary relationship with Dayo, the object which the subject has incorporated in himself. Thus the signifier of ambition (life), as in the case of Biswas figure, appears also to be a sign of death for the subject.

Yet he continues to sustain his investment in the relationship. But like the earlier imaginary figures Dayo too turns out to demolish the narrator's fantasy. When he counts on Dayo's help the latter does not reciprocate. This shocks the subject. But this only strengthens the subject's aggressivity: "I begin to hate the way he talk...once he was the pretty boy... Now you could see the face becoming just a labourer's face" (p.

89). The handsome imaginary figure cherished so far, sustained by the language of American cinema, is set apart from the real person. The subject's attempt to preserve the picture from its contaminated real figure indicates the depressive psychotic tendencies of the subject[10]. Further, what was already foreshadowed in Stephen's case is repeated in the subject's case as well. The subject discerns that Dayo too has gone waste in London, that he was not "pursuing his studies": "And after I watch him leave I feel that I too have nowhere to go, and that the life in London is over" (p. 95).

Once the London fantasy collapses, and when the subject realizes that the imaginary figure is no longer the reliever of the family from shame, the narrative fragmentation of events and accounts returns in the text. The events overlap and they seem to happen in a dream. The subject's business in London collapses as racialist hooligans damage his restaurant. Overlapping this event is the memory fragment about Dayo's playful quarrel with a friend of his. Both the events seem to end in disaster. The narrator's eye is damaged and Dayo accidentally stabs his friend and kills him. The fear the object of desire invoked in the subject and which he deferred so far, engulfs him now. The life he wished to enter, the promise in which he invested so long, is all shattered in a moment. For he recognises the sinister fact that he may not be able to extricate himself from his brother's crime, although initially he spurns Dayo: "He want me to help him... It is the gallows for him. I can't take that for him. I only know that inside me mash up, and that the *love and danger I carry all this time break and cut, and my life finish*" (p. 97 emphasis mine). The object of love is doubly inscribed - it is simultaneously lovable (hence the narcissistic identification and incorporation) but it is also dangerous (hence the aggressivity and the sense of being persecuted). The fantasy and along with it the constant threat to the fantasy seem to go together. The subject cannot seem to move out of the line of this vector. The narrative suggests, in spite of his initial refusal, that the subject takes on the crime and allows Dayo to escape and for this he suffers a three-year imprisonment.

All the signifiers of 'the good society', I am arguing, are doubly inscribed in the narrative. They are not just desirable objects but are also at the same time disruptive images. Another such signifier in the narrative is "marriage". The 'demented' subject is brought to see the marriage of Dayo. This is the last blow the subject receives from the mirror-relationship which he nurtured so long. Further, the fact of Dayo marrying a white and a christian almost destroys the subject - for these metonyms have already become debased (hence shameful) in his fantasy, as they are associated with the Stephen family (the subject calls his aunt "miss shameless christian Short-Dress"). But more than the shameful associations the marriage itself spells the end of the imaginary relationships in which alone the subject seems to function. The world to which he sought access remains deferred for the subject. The subject has no avenue through which he could enter into transaction with that world. And that order in which he could be a "big man", where he could purge the family of its shame and which would complete the lack is yet again conceived in terms of a mirror relationship at the end: "I love them [here there is a slide from the ambitious to the white and even the racist hooligans]. They take my money, they spoil my life, they separate us. But you can't kill them...Once you find out who the enemy is, you can kill him...Tell me who to kill" (pp. 101-02). The enemy cannot be objectified: the subject seems to indicate negatively. Yet the fundamental task of transaction with the world, an order through which the enemy can be encountered, is something beyond the narrative/subject. For the narrative/subject remains fixed in the specular circuit of the mirror phase[11]. And the narrative fragmentations testify to the fragmentary 'experience' of the specular circuit. It is this specular gambit that appears to be the technique operating the moves as repetition with variations. And the subject thus formed appears to be the paradigmatic figure in Naipaul's representation of postcoloniality. It is the figure of an incapacitated being who, failing to move through the imaginary phases, is unable to negotiate with the world. We shall see this figuration and its implications more

elaborately in Naipaul's narrativization of what he calls the "mimic men" or the 'disordered' world.

(iii)

However, even the movement of the *text* of "Tell Me" does not provide any space for a mode of transaction with the world alternative to that which the narrative subject himself envisages. The story, written in 1969-70, is a narrativization of events in the life of a worker in the 1960s. The worker clearly belongs to an upwardly mobile race-specific (Hindu) community in a Caribbean society. This can be seen from the worker's distance from his father who was a plantation worker whereas the narrator is an industrial worker with upwardly moving aspirations. Instead of deductively identifying this Caribbean society as either Trinidad or Guiana we can read it as a *construction* of a race-specific Trinidad working community. This mode of reading enables us to situate the verbal text in the social text, and by counterposing other constructions of the social text, find the possibility of alternative modes of transaction with the world to that which the text proposes.

The narrative subject belongs to a community which was an early victim of the international division of labour. But this community in the Caribbean (especially Trinidad) context operated as a buffer zone in the post-abolition period between the colonial rulers and the recently freed black community. By the turn of the century this buffer zone has become entrenched in the colonial society, mainly due to the colonial land reforms which enabled a powerful landowning class to emerge from this community. By the time of independence (in the case of Trinidad, 1962) the buffer zone had contributed to the development of a strong middle class. The text of "Tell Me" does not specify any constraints on the subject's upward mobility in the social structure. In fact it refers to the possibility of movement ("The world change around me when I

was growing up" p. 65). But it is this very choice of a worker as the narrative subject that seems to operate as a catachresis in the text. The catachresis, here refers to the use of the worker figure in the narrative - the figure is anything but a worker. The tenor of the narrative - repetitive assertions of 'failure' - goes against the vehicle (the worker figure). For the narrative subject does not in any way turn us toward the problems specific to the working community (even the race-specific community). The catachresis is all the more poignant especially when one sees that the text is written and situated in the sixties. For the sixties mark the most critical period in Caribbean working-class history - the crisis exploding into the Black Power Movement of the late sixties. In Trinidad alone between 1960 and 1964 there were 230 strikes in the wake of which the new Industrial Stabilisation Act of 1965 was imposed. The Act was passed to "restrain the [allegedly] destructive and senseless strikes"[12]. Situated within this period of troubles and upheavals the narrative subject does not give even a glimpse of that aspect of the working community. Similarly Naipaul's critique of the Black Power Movement, written (in September 1970) a month before he finished *In a Free State* (October 1970), does not lead him to narrativize the problems of the working community (even in race-specific terms)[13].

Written in the same tenor (almost as a response), "Tell Me" cannot raise the question about the 'enemy' in terms of the working-class community to which the narrative subject ostensibly belongs. The text is in complicity with the narrative subject who is merely caught up in self-cancelling circularity. That is, the subject would invest in a series of images which at various moments, as we have seen in the narrative, appear to fabricate him but in no time the subject systematically demolishes them. This is rather the textual process. It is only on the narrative level that we see the events occurring but the ruse that operates them is that of double inscribing. In effect the subject is caught up in a perennial task of figuring and disfiguring - self-projection and self-cancellation; the circularity of the project is the sinister elaboration of the rift

between romance and the uncanny we tracked in the text of *AHB*. The text's complicity is in endorsing this circularity as the 'experience' of a working-class subject. Like the narrative subject who cannot negotiate with the world the text too cannot transact with the working-class community. Thus the figure of the worker becomes profoundly catachrestic in the text.

However, the subject constructed through the technique of inscription serves in the Naipaul text as a representation of postcoloniality (the world and the subject). This representation, I contend, is only one aspect of the larger project of self-consolidation that I am tracking in the Naipaul text. I will elaborate the operations of this project in subsequent Sections (II and III). But I must register that the narrative movement of "Tell Me" is a construction in a minor key of a project that seems to operate in a profounder way in Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1967). Written between 1964 and 1966 *The Mimic Men* is a narrativization of events in the life of a (post)colonial politician. The narrativization seems to move within the self-cancelling circularity we noted in the text of "Tell Me". Since the effect of the ruses in the moment of *MM* is most complicated in the Naipaul text and as this moment converges on various issues pertinent on a discussion of postcoloniality this text is given more space in my thesis. In the next chapter I attempt an elaborate analysis of the ruses and this analysis moves through a close scrutiny of various elements in the text.

Chapter Three: Mimicry, Paternity and the Production of the (Post)colonial Subject

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1) *INTO THE TEXT*

2) *MANICHEAN MORES*

3) *NAME-OF-THE-FATHER*

4) *CHARMS OF THE ORIGIN*

5) *CORRUPTIONS OF THE SOURCE*

6) *INTO THE WORLD*

As the other side of imperialism - the 'civilising mission' - operates through the formation of discursive fields (institutions, disciplines and their knowledge practices) it can, perhaps, be said to impose the symbolic order in other worlds[1]. The violence of this order can be discerned in its codifications of law, an ideology as the truth, inventions of traditions, and cathecting the 'native' into a self-constructing 'other'. Yet, the other thus 'interpellated' in (and by) the symbolic order is also inscribed as a "masquerading subject" - a mimic man in contrast to the proper self-consolidating subject of Europe. The colonial subject remains, in the colonial production, caught in a dyadic model of ideal-imitation. In effect, the "masquerading subject" is *almost* but not quite like the ideal. It is in this slippage between almost/but not quite that Homi Bhabha sees a scope for interventionary reading of the colonial discourse which would contest the binary model of colonizer/colonized. Bhabha reintroduces mimicry as a sign of double articulation, of paradoxical implications. It signifies on the one hand the domestication of the native into the other, the appropriate subject; but simultaneously it also indicates something in excess of and inappropriate to that inscription. In effect, the "masquerading subject" is only a "partial subject" in the colonial production. But that which exceeds this "partiality", Bhabha argues, turns out to be a menace to the model itself. For that excess, that inappropriateness of mimicry, repeats and threatens the process (and the ideal) of the subjectification itself. The mimic, I feel, like the subaltern[2] is a "liminal" figure who puts in crisis any unified, singular inscription on her/him, slips out of any rigid fixing of him/her to a space.

If mimicry is at once a sign of appropriation and crisis can post-colonial discourse choose to avert the crisis in the name of appropriateness? In other words, can the post-colonial aim at a full-presence of subjectivity in contrast with the partial-subjectivity of colonial production? My contention is that Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*[3] is an allegory of these moves. The motor of the narrative movement is self-making which is repeated in the desire for a narrative and an order. But this desire for appropriateness (self, order,

narrative) is repeatedly interrupted and dislocated in the narrative. The narrative movement continues through a repeated deferral of the objects of desire. In effect, the narrative movement remains caught up in a circularity.

What are the implications of these moves? And could the 'excess' and the 'inappropriateness' of the 'partial-subject' ever be turned into a signifier of identity, of presence?

1) *INTO THE TEXT*

The narrative structure of *MM* is patterned on the ruse of premonition and deferral; and through the ruses the text controls the narrative movement which is constructed as the screening or 'editing' of memories. There are two tropes in the text which are crucial to this process of "editing". A close and critical scrutiny of these tropes is pivotal to track the process of subject formation attempted in the text. Both the tropes - "shipwreck" and "crash" - are in line with the ruses of premonition and deferral in that that they refer to (possible) past or future 'events'. The shipwreck trope, for instance is introduced early in the text but here it does not signify any specific event that had occurred in the present or in the recent past. The trope is the effect of a reevocation of a scene that was conjured up in Ralph Singh's memory twenty years ago. Twenty years ago, living as a boarder "between ... pleasure and its penalty" (p. 5) (between the attic where the landlord occasionally spent a night with a girl and the basement where the single parent Lieni lived with her child) Ralph Singh happens to see the "scene of his [the landlord's] pleasure" (p. 7). The scene remains ingrained in Ralph Singh's memory. What constantly re-evokes that scene in his memory is a crumpled photograph of a young girl he sees in the attic. The abandoned photograph, the fact of the landlord's death, and the scene of pleasure remain in Ralph Singh as traumatic reminders of an "event" - a shipwreck, a violation. The anxiety and trauma

that the event causes in him repeat in such a way that Ralph Singh tends to treat the event as the only "real" one and the twenty year life he lived as a mere "parenthesis" (p. 10). The life of 'action' he led in the twenty years, which is also a response to the "first mood", Ralph Singh feels, is once again "leading [him] up to it" (p. 10). The life of 'action' this retrospective 'editing' sets out to recount ends up by telling us an account which is more in the nature of deferral of action than any performance. If the parenthetical life of action is in fact a deferral then the narrative movement is at once an effect of and a response to the trauma and the anxiety of the primal scene; this original, and the only 'real' event, is feared by the subject as a source of violation. The 'event' repeats in various guises in the text and disturbs the subject[4].

In the same way the "crash" trope is introduced early in the narrative associated with Ralph Singh's student life when he lived as a boarder. There is the premonition of crash when Lieni makes advances towards Ralph Singh: 'The warning signs were so clear...The signs were all there" (pp. 26-28). It is associated with the Mural daughter who shows him her rude paintings. The intimations of crash are linked with his marriage to Sandra (pp. 67-69). Yet one cannot look for a causal link between the 'crash' and the marriage or between the crash and Ralph Singh's return to Isabella (the island where he was born.) The crash, like the shipwreck, does not refer to any particular historical event but signifies a sense of trauma for the subject which the narrative attempts to establish. The traumatic event, however, is doubly inscribed in that it has the intimations of pleasure and of death for the subject. In effect the tropes "shipwreck" and "crash" gain ambivalent implications in the narrative movement.

However, the primal scene, the scene which Ralph Singh retro-spectively evokes, figures him as a voyeur. A voyeur like Ralph Singh is someone who looks at an object (of pleasure) but does not wish to be looked at, whose surreptitious actions and looks indicate the desire in disguise. The ocular relationship that the voyeur establishes between himself and the scene of pleasure is endangered by the approach of or the gaze

of the other. The gaze of the other is paradoxical in that it be-littles and shames the voyeur at once but simultaneously marks the latter's desire for the place of the other. The narrative movement of *MM*, in its project of subject-making, is involved in this process of specularization. That is, in the narrative the Ralph Singh figure computes his 'self' in ocular terms. His very early description of the 'self' in general is significantly in specular terms: "We become what we see of ourselves in the eyes of others" (p. 20). He retro-spectively views his earlier decision to play the dandy in his student life as Lieni's perspective on him (pp. 20-21). Even in the one day affair with Beatrice, a chance acquaintance, Ralph Singh feels it was she who saw a friend in him (p. 23). It is the gaze of the other that seems to bring coherence and unity to the otherwise fragmented, disjointed body of the Ralph Singh figure: "I had tried to give myself a personality... and waited for the response in the eyes of others" (pp. 26-27). The panic that haunts Ralph Singh in London is not that of a lost feeling in the metropolis to which he becomes increasingly detached: it is rather the "panic of ceasing to feel myself as a *whole person.*" (p. 27 emphasis mine).

If the gaze constitutes the certainty and coherence of the self what is it that imperils this relationship and turns the Ralph Singh figure panicky? There is a clue to this panic in Ralph Singh's most carefully preserved secret: the celestial camera. Ralph Singh tells us that he cherished this secret from his earliest period: "It was the secret of being 'marked'" (p. 94). It was a feeling that he was a protected, selected man: "a celestial camera recorded my every movement, impartially, without judgement or pity. I was marked; I was of interest; I would *survive*" (pp. 94-95 emphasis mine). This 'knowledge', as he calls it, has strengthened him in the moments of trouble. Yet this idea of a celestial eye gazing at the subject is his most guarded secret. Not just that: "it remained my most shameful secret" (p. 95).

The celestial gaze, like the gaze in general (in psychoanalytic theory), is paradoxically inscribed. On the one hand, it sustains the Ralph Singh figure and

protects him the way the Foundling in the Family Romance is protected by the idea of celestial parents; on the other hand, the very idea that the gaze tracks every moment of Ralph Singh's life and the prospect of its recording even the moments of his voyeurism is a troubling and shameful affair for the subject. Lacan, discussing the process of specularization in the constitution of the subject, wrote that "A gaze surprises him in the function of voyeur, disturbs him, overwhelms him and reduces him to a feeling of shame"[5]. The gaze not only enables the Ralph Singh figure to recognise his 'personality', his control over his body, but it also is a constant source threatening to dismember him. Ralph Singh is always in the circuit of the paradoxical assurance of the gaze. He "lived in a multi-mirrored, book-shaped room" (p. 5). The anxiety of lacking a unified totality of the self incessantly troubles him. He feels he has become a bundle of unrelated experiences, and the city does not help him give order to them: "How could I fashion order out of all these unrelated adventures and encounters, myself never the same, never even the thread on which these things were hung" (p. 28). After such moments of anxiety, characteristically the Ralph Singh figure sits in his multi-mirrored room "towards the light or towards the mirror" (p. 28).

In both the retro-spective reconstruction of the primal scene and the moments of gaze, to pursue a thread in Lacanian psycho-analysis, what can perhaps be underlined is the indissociable link between desire and the threat of death or dismemberment. The child is believed to encounter the recurring scene and the repeated moments prior to his accession to what Lacan terms the Symbolic (sign-system, chain of signification and language). However, in the paradoxical implications of the scene and the gaze one traces a prefiguration of the Oedipal tensions which the child is supposed to overcome before gaining his access to the Symbolic realm. But the scene and the moment can, perhaps, be located in that stage of the child's growth which Lacan describes as the "mirror-phase". The mirror-phase can be said to enact the drama of specularization which endows the child with a subjecthood. However, the anxiety about the body (self)

as a fragmented (metonymic) and the desire for a unified, ordered entity (metaphor) can also be seen as rooted in the phase of infancy. Yet this transferral between the metaphoric and the metonymic and an absence of a transaction between them is a regressive sign in the development of the subject[6]. There appears to be some kind of regressivity at work in the way the text constitutes the subjectivity of the Ralph Singh figure. This can be seen more clearly in the relationship the text develops between the subject and women through the language of sexuality.

2) *MANICHEAN MORES*

Although the language of sexuality permeates the text the Ralph Singh figure remains incapacitated throughout. This sexual incapacitation of the figure appears in the text in two recurring ways. Firstly, in Ralph Singh's fixation on a certain part of the body of his partners, mostly the breast. The prominence the text gives to the language of sexuality compels us to attend to the implications of the subject's obsessive attachment to certain parts of his 'companions'. The subject, at one moment, reflecting on his student life in London writes that it was impossible for him to conceive his existence away from women or their influence. Within such an existence, he adds: "I could have stayed for ever at a woman's breasts, if they were full and had a hint of a weight that required support" (p. 25). But the subject has a totally ambivalent response toward this metonymically presented woman('s part). The breast is the object which provides him with security and strength, although (ostensibly) he desires the object in need of support. Thus, Sandra's breasts were "with a weight just threatening pendent excess, which *the viewer*, [the voyeur] ... instinctively stretches out a hand to support;" and they would "madden the viewer" (p. 43). And Ralph Singh finds his strength in her - she appears to him as his luck: "She was all that was positive" (p. 45). For Sandra was "always ready to offer me [the breast], as to a child" (p. 70). Sandra is in

fact like that benevolent mother at times, at whose breast the subject finds joy, like the image of the child-god, Krishna which, as I will show later, impresses his action at one place in the narrative. At one point, (just before he goes out with the intention to take part in a race at school) he dreams of himself as a baby suckling at his mother's breast: "What a joy! The breast on my cheek and mouth: a consoling weight, the closeness of soft, smooth flesh...My mother rocked and I had the freedom of her breast" (p. 116). Although he attempts to wean himself away and assert his freedom Ralph Singh fails to take part in the race. Similarly, towards the end of the narrative after the double humiliation (with the Minister and at the Stockwells) Ralph Singh finds the delight and support (the "balm") from Lady Stella which he got from Sandra earlier (pp. 230-31).

But this metonymy - figuring woman - is also a threatening, horrifying image. Thus the beloved Sandra is at the same time a "rapacious" woman; but the subject feels, mixing his responses, it is this "rapaciousness [which] attracted" him (p. 45). The threatening aspect of the metonymy appears in the encounter with the night's "companion" at an unnamed city. Her "large" breasts "cascaded heavily down": "They were enormous, they were grotesque, empty starved sacks." And the "companion" herself was "a figure from hell with a smiling girl's face." He expects a "smothering embrace" from this "monstrous", "rapacious" figure. He "feared being touched" by her (pp. 236-37). In the same way, Wendy (the Deschampsneufs daughter) appears on one occasion a grotesque female. When she joins Ralph Singh's campaign she "became the mother to us all in her brisk young-girl way." But she is the "ugly" mother, the "ugly queen" (pp. 196-97). Although it is with the grotesque companion (the prostitute) that the subject claims to find some kind of fulfilment, the horror he attaches to the flesh (extending from the breast) is present throughout the text. The subject finds it impossible, as it were, to separate what delights him in the flesh from what terrifies him. It is the latter that seems on occasions to force him to abandon even the flesh (breast) associated with security and strength: "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" (p. 25).

The metonymy of woman signifying the qualities of benevolence and threat, psychoanalytic discourse tells us, is the most primordial figure through which the subject incorporates the object (mother) into his/her self. However, the subject is unable at an early stage (between two and five months after birth) to link the part (metonymy) he incorporates to the whole (metaphor) object it represents. Thus what the child assumes as part-objects operate as the split-images of that object. This mode of internalising, Melanie Klein argues, forms the base for all the subsequent tensions the growing child encounters[7]. Ralph Singh's responses, as I have already suggested in the context of the ruse of gaze, are very much enmeshed in this primordial mode of assuming relationships. In other words the text seems to impose this primordiality in figuring the subject. This comes out clearly at the Stockwell party.

The subject meets the Stockwells after his humiliating brief with the minister who dismisses the proposals put forth by the former on the issue of nationalisation in Isabella. Enraged and insulted the subject prepares nimself for the second encounter with the Stockwells who invite him for dinner: "I felt I was bleeding ... I began to secrete bitterness and found that it gave me strength of a sort" (p. 225). But with all his rage of a wounded animal and poisonous creature the subject appears to react the way the Stockwells intended him to. He ends up feeling that the Stockwells were "an unexpected source" from which "Balm came" (p. 225). His mood changes from the moment he enters their house - for he fails to measure the situation, and remains confused. The scene develops in a dream-like atmosphere. In spite of the familiarity of the surroundings the subject feels, the interiors of the house had "wiped out...memories of black mud and red-and-ochre overseers' compounds" which outraged him as a child (p. 225). This initial allusion to the childhood past is further deepened by the image he sees next. He finds an unexpected painting of Krishna (of Hindu mythology)

"wooing a *white* milkmaid" (p. 225). These are the only details of the interiors the text gives us - and they already prefigure the drama that will follow: the charade about the past which Lord Stockwell (and the colonial office) controls and pities; and the theme of the child-*god* (Krishna) and his love-games (signifying pre-genital sexuality) with myriad milkmaids. But the details already draw him into the primordial phase of the child. Thus when he avoids the gaze of the women in the room he feels it was a "reassertion of childhood training" (p. 225). In spite of this setting the Ralph Singh figure - moving as if in a dream - alerts himself against it: "my mood tightened, dangerously, inside me. This time the *enemy was going to be killed, and swiftly*" (p. 226 emphasis mine).

But that is precisely what he fails to do. For in no time the subject - the post-colonial political leader, after the humiliation of his political mission - accedes to the plot in which he is constantly pushed back into his childhood phase. He is asked what books he had read as a child. (The subject remembers one name particularly: *The Aryan People and Their Migrations*. Interestingly, *not* about the Indian migrations as indentured labourers.) The entire conversation which follows in which Lord Stockwell participates only towards the end is centred on children's books - and mostly verging on the sexual themes in the nursery rhymes. At one point, Lady Stockwell condemns the "cult of childhood and the cult of children's books," but, as if with deliberate irony and cunning, goes on to praise Ralph Singh's society as "wiser in encouraging children to become adults 'with all due haste'" (p. 227). (Here neither the text nor the Lady Stockwell appears to distinguish between Indian society in Asia and the Caribbean East-Indian community). The comment is a deliberate insult inflicted on Ralph Singh but the subject does not react to it. On the contrary, he meditates on his "father and my childhood and all those books and rhymes *I had missed*" (p. 228 emphasis added). He laments for the loss of that childhood; curiously, the childhood past for which he longs is visualised and associated with the pastoral period of London. He fantasises

that that past which he has lost would give him "that limpid, direct vision of the world, neither of which had been mine, neither vision, of delight, nor world, of order" (p. 230). (But this delight and vision return in the Naipaul text. For *EA* is a celebration of this pastoral (cf. Ch. Nine). By this time, obviously, Ralph Singh who had come to avenge himself, has completely reactivated that ideal of childhood which was cunningly evoked for him. Although at one point he attempts to retaliate by staring at Lord Stockwell who was throughout "gazing at" the subject. But the stare has no impact on the Lord (p. 228). The subject slides again into the childhood past. His sorrow at the loss of the sublimated order and vision of childhood is in a way a modification of his obsessive fixation with the breast. It is a lamentation and anxiety for that aspect of the part-object which was considered a positive, source of strength[8]. Thus we find the trope of the pastoral as an idealized extension of this object in the text. The repeated moves of the subject, however, regressively situate him in a pregenital sexual phase where the erotic impulses of the subject never seem to consummate. Such regressivity is an indication (even in the case of the adult subject) of the subject's failure to work out or negotiate with the world of relationships that surrounds him.

If regression into pregenitality is one way in which the text indicates the sexual incapacity of the subject, there is another source through which the incapacitated subject is represented in the text. We find this through the feature of impotence and homosexuality apparent in the Ralph Singh figure. The subject, for instance, is said to inhabit a bookshaped house - which appears to be a figuration of female genitals. In fact all his resting places seem to have this implication in the text. The house in which he lives as a child always choked him up with fear: "Ceiling and walls seemed about to cave in on me" (p. 146). And the school, as the island itself, has "feminine" echoes in its name. The school - Isabella Imperial could also be Imperial *Is-a-Bella* (sign of a powerful woman.) This maternal metaphor (Isabella) also serves as the name for the island's rum (pp. 134-35). And the emblem of the house (devised by the headmaster

"fresh from England") he represents in the race remains deeply a sign of shame for the subject. As a result he never shows his running vest on which his mother has embroidered (as if working on "baby clothes") the red emblem of his house: "[I] covered it with my shirt" (pp. 115-117). And although the house, in which he lives with Sandra after his return to Isabella, was "attractive", the subject feels, he had never "succeeded in colonising it. Large areas of it remained *empty*." This reflection comes especially when he ruminates over his failure to consummate. The house becomes a metaphor of barrenness (pp. 70-71). But in a gesture of disavowal (of the deficiency) he decides to build a house to gain mastery over it; and the new house is modelled, as an expression of omnipotence, after an ancient Roman house. But "coldness" seems to be the fate of this house also and only at the time of political campaigning was it filled with a "feminine atmosphere". Only then the house's "interiors I had feared to enter opened up to me" (pp. 195, 194-96). At the centre of the house is a swimming pool to which the subject is very much attached (for when the pool is damaged during the house-warming ceremony, his deep feelings of hurt and violation disturb and humiliate him. pp. 74-75). And it is in such settings - devouring and incapacitating - that the subject's unending love-games end in failure and shame.

The subject appears to have suffered the threat of incapacitation in the very first scene which brings him the forebodings of violation. The photograph of Shylock's mistress with its *creases* (of violation) on the one hand and the "innocent unarresting face [of the girl], untouched" by vice, on the other disturb the subject. For a moment he thinks of "preserving" the photograph, but leaves it behind (perhaps as a tainted image - yet the taint of the image has haunted him since then). But immediately he is preoccupied with thoughts about preserving, saving himself not just from death (with which the photograph is linked - the girl is the dead man's mistress) but perhaps from the violation of the innocence he had seen (as if in a mirror): "I thought: let *it* not happen to me" (p. 7 emphasis added). This he hopes to achieve through the creation of

relics, which would be honoured. At a later phase he recollects that decision while observing "the minute cracks in the leather" of Sandra's abandoned shoes. Once again, as with the creased photograph of the girl the shoe brings to him the thought of preserving them "from further indignity" (p. 189). The subject has already made an attempt to preserve himself from the indignity of those creases and cracks - the violation against which he wished to guard himself like "*prophylactic* against the greater disorder" (p. 180 emphasis mine). His decision is prophylactic indeed - but the scene has already incapacitated him, for he lives with the "disease" since that moment. He can no longer *create* any relics. He lives with women but these communions never consummate. It is there, for instance, in his retro-spective reflection on the short-lived love affair with Beatrice: "I never wanted our *darkness, our auras to mingle*" (p. 25 emphasis mine). And this is described as his "failure, a deficiency". At the source of such deficiency seems to be the horror of the (diseased) flesh that turns him impotent. Consequently there are only two worlds for the subject: "the *alarm* of a world without *end* and a world without *point*, there was no middle way" (p. 61 emphasis mine). Thus the "disease" captures him as a threatening hole or a shaming lack.

At times this lack is articulated through an identification with the (benevolent) 'feminine'. The subject feels that his (incestuous) "partnership" with Sally (Ralph Singh's aunt) is not threatening for him: "that *shared* feeling of self-violation which was for me *security and purity*" (p. 155). The security was due to the "understanding...in which body of *one* flesh joined to body of the *same* flesh, and all external threat was diminished." Purity, because the relationship does not taint either, for Sally's flesh was "almost my own." He further asserts that he "required only the darkness that Sally provided," whereas Beatrice could not (p. 155 emphasis added). But subsequently, his prophylactic fails for Sally goes away to America and the depressed subject reflects that she "went out into the contamination of the wider world and was absorbed in it" (p. 165). On occasions this feeling of corruption and deficiency appears to be the result of

the barrier of language (inability to enter the Symbolic expressed as a failure to communicate with the partners who spoke a type of pidgin). Then the affairs "were a strain...it was like entering an imperfect world, some *grotesque tunnel of love*, where, as in a dream, at a critical moment one is denied the use of arms or legs and longs to cry out" (p. 44 emphasis added).

The text presents all of the subject's partners as sexually overpowering him. Thus Lady Stella straddles him in lovemaking and the subject, appearing as a victim, fails: "the inevitable happened" (p. 232). Women appear as persecutors to the Ralph Singh figure. In the last scene in the hotel while admiring the handiwork of Garbage he sees Lady Stella who has already devoured and shamed him earlier. He attempts to hide himself from her view. But the persecutor is already externalised in the form of Garbage who was "bringing his *two-pronged* knife down on the struggling *cheese*" - the way Stella had tormented him earlier (p. 251 emphasis added). Women, for the subject, are, perhaps, like that "infernal and devouring element" - the sea. An accident in the sea brings back to him his "overwhelming fear of death", and his "sensation of the weakness of the flesh - these poor arms, these poor feet, this vulnerable head..." (p.109). Although the subject claims that he was capable of intercourse he is always presented either as a recipient (things are done to him) or as totally contented with oral sex. Thus when he finds kindness in women he either soars up into his omnipotent fantasies or reactivates his primordial responses (child): "as though I had taken on for all mankind the weight of the tragedy flesh and the body I had just witnessed [the drowning accident at the sea]... this *service at the hands of women*, was fitting" (p.109 emphasis mine).

Apart from his fixation with the breast the subject's fascination for language seems to fulfil his sexual desires. Thus Sandra's biting tongue delights him: "Language is so important" (p. 44); he marvelled at Stella's comments (p. 231). However, the delightful language of Sandra (or any woman) does not seem to enable the Ralph Singh

figure to consummate his sexual desires. They would prepare themselves to "commune" in public but the communion would never consummate. For the subject was always "content, kissing and stroking those feet and legs" of Sandra. Consummation seems impossible - once again for the horror of the flesh haunts the subject. The horror seems to turn the subject sterile and impotent. The subject wonders at one point about the failure of consummation: "But was it something more? Wasn't it that cotton-clad body, with the cleanliness and freshness of the barren, a body without danger or mystery and forbidding for that very reason? A body which was no more than what it was, holding no promise of growth, speaking only of flesh and futility and our own imminent extinction." (p. 71). This may be read as a reference to Sandra's sterility. But in the scene that immediately follows this comment and in the last scene with the prostitute (who treats him as a child) the sterile fulfillment the impotent subject enjoys makes such a comment ineffective. For the "gentleness and *optimism*" he feels after the communion does not result in any promise of growth or consummation (p. 72 emphasis added). This deficiency, this desire for sterile fulfilment appear in the subject's fears about marriage and his running away from the marriage. Minutes after his marriage Ralph Singh runs away from Sandra "in a state of near stupefaction" to a pub and drinks beer "for strength". Marriage makes him "really very frightened" (p. 50). The fear of the body that turns him impotent also work on his anxieties of being the last of the race, last in his line.

However, the horror of the (female) body and his own sexual sterility do not compel him to abandon women. On the contrary he asserts their importance in his life. Yet there appear homosexual tendencies in the subject's activities at times. At the height of his real estate business Ralph Singh refers to his treatment of men: "I handled men as I handled money, by instinct". He would employ a person "only if I took an instant liking to him; and I gave no one a second chance" (p. 59). And in the real-estate business the subject gains a quick success. But he is troubled by the alarm such

success would bring. The threat comes in the form of an ancient tree dynamited on his land. The place where the tree stood once is turned now into a "monstrous wound in the red earth." This brings back to him the dread of violation. He keeps, though, a piece of that tree as a "talisman", as a reminder of the violation (p. 61).

If this failure to transact with the world is, as the psychoanalytic discourse tells us, a constitutive effect of psychotic experience - narrativized in the accounts of regressivity to the pregenital phase, a feeling of lack resulting in identification with the opposite sex and the loss of the paternal metaphor (as I will argue shortly) - the subject appears to disavow any transaction as a further violation of his subjectivity. The text presents repeated disavowals of such possible transaction. At one stage, the subject refuses his father's political/religious involvement in the workers struggle as another sign of violation: "[it] gave me... [a] sensation of rawness and violation" (p. 140). This time the violation brings out in him cannibalistic sensations: "It was as though I was chewing rubbery raw flesh and being made to swallow tainted oil" (p. 132). This feeling of mutilation and cannibalistic feasting even corrupts his two dimensional (cinematic) vision of Isabella - the scenario of *The Black Swan*. And in turn the island is also seen to be a corrupting force. But the sensation has other connotations which we have already noted in other responses of the subject.

The sensation - rawness - returns to him in a more horrifying way, when he learns about the death of the Deschampsneufs race horse: "more strongly than ever the sensation of rawness and violation: rubbery flesh and tainted *holy* oil" (p. 140 emphasis mine). Holy oil - because the horse is killed as a sacrificial offering in an Aryan ritual performed by the subject's father. The sacrifice evokes in him contradictory responses: at once it horrifies and fills him with awe, but it also signifies: "a thing of beauty, speaking of the youth of the world, of *untrodden forests* and *unsullied streams*, of horses and warrior-youths..." (p. 140 emphasis added). He finds that the sacrificial horse was decorated: " the coat had been brushed as though by proud grooms." However, the

"picture" that the ritual evokes in the Ralph Singh figure is symptomatic (of the violation he fears): it is the picture "of a deepening, endless tunnel: into this I felt I was ever descending, when all I wanted was to return to the light" (p. 140). The ritual with its suggestions about communion with the animal at once brings to the subject the horror of flesh and also the dread of himself sinking into a tunnel. It is exactly the same vision - this time in a dream - which captures him after his stopover night with the "companion". He dreams that he was lying down on his belly (like a baby) in a London street or "tunnel through which red underground trains [were] crisscrossing the tracks." Although he finds people willing to help him - Sally, Sandra, his father and Lord Stockwell - he "could not move towards them" (p. 237). However, these were never the relationships which enabled him to transact with the world. On the contrary they always appeared as potential sources of violation to him.

3) *NAME-OF-THE-FATHER*

The scene of pleasure which the Ralph Singh figure surreptitiously looks into possesses him with the dread of death and oblivion. The abandoned photograph of the young girl and the fact of the dead landlord come back to him repeatedly as traumatic memory and urge him to protect himself, make himself immortal. This can be achieved, Ralph Singh feels, by constructing relics of remembrance, by inserting himself into a narrative. In fact this is the textual deferral figuring a plenitude of an order, an imagined whole. This textual desire of deferral in a way parallels Deschampsneufs's taxonomy - 'longvisioned' people - people with their eye on the eternity - Asians (we will return to this taxonomy shortly). The narrative, as a signifying chain, the subject believes, would save him from ignominy and death. The symbolic order, the narrative into which he attempts to enter is introduced to us as the story of his times: "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. 8). This appears to be the story of the so-called decolonization period. But the anticipated and pro-crastinated narrative is more ambitious than the invocation "malaise of our times" implies. For at a later point the Ralph Singh figure extends the project to the story of explorations and the upheavals in the three worlds that followed these explorations (p. 32). In short, it appears to be a text about the imperialist expansion and the disruption it caused. Yet this master text is glimpsed by us only in small patches, brief references as a field to be entered into at a later point. The ruse of narrative deferral presents us with a narrative with gaps, a proxy text in lieu of the master text. The earlier tropes such as "shipwreck" and "crash" and the "wound" in the place of the ancient tree remind of the gaps that the narrative can never fill; these gaps re-evoke the traumas of the past events.

In another scene it is precisely a scene of "violation" that gives the harassed Ralph Singh figure a sense of quiet and solace. After celebrating the housewarming ceremony in his new house Ralph Singh is gripped by rage when his guests go wild in the "breaking-up" ritual. In anger and humiliation he drives himself away to a place which is another scene of wound: ruins of an old slave plantation. The gesture appears to be an attempt to expiate the self-violation, as in the earlier scene where a piece of wood served that purpose (p. 75). But this scene has other important echoes. The subject's angry withdrawal from the party follows the guests violation of the swimming pool of the Roman house. The subject seems to identify himself with that pool (within the maternal metaphor of the house). That act of violation which he always feared almost incapacitates him, and leads him to the scene of another violation - the ruins. But this site also seems to have associations, for the subject, with the slave-stud farm the Deschampsneufs maintained during the colonial times. It was also a "favourite spot for courting couples as well as rapists", and people seeking revenge (p. 76). The gesture of driving to the stud-farm only reinforces the subject's deficiency - and as he says at one

point, "the poisoning feeling of inadequacy and the wish to be alone with that sudden, nameless hurt" (p. 177): the lack he attempts to cover up with the prophylactic. The scene culminates in the subject reflecting upon omnipotent fantasies - identifying himself with Alexander, Aryan ancestors, chieftains and also with a child: the wish to avenge the threatening persecutors and violators (pp. 75-76). These scenes which return and traumatise the Ralph Singh figure are the paradoxical effects of foreclosure. Foreclosure seems to be the effect of a narrative deferral.

The term foreclosure is introduced by Lacan in discussing the psychotic Schreber's case. When the subject, Lacan argues, fails to find himself in his father, that is, when the lineage or heritage is interrupted, the subject turns to his mother: "but the 'place' of the father, the source of his own name, his family identity, and therefore his insertion into the world of human relations, remained empty. It did not disappear"[9]. This usually appears to form an exception to the norm - the norm being the subject's accession to the Symbolic after he successfully resolves the Oedipal tensions[10]. The proxy text creates the atmosphere of the Family Romance, as I suggested earlier, in screening the childhood events of the subject. It was a period, the Ralph Singh figure recounts, of shameful and burdensome secrets. It was not just the secret about the celestial gaze which, as I showed earlier, shamed and sustained him. But there was also another secret. It was associated with his father. The Ralph Singh figure represents his father as an eccentric but humiliated man; added to this was his poverty. Ralph Singh sees his father as a displaced man and this displacement as the sole cause of his loss of glory: "I used to get the feeling that my father had in some storybook way been shipwrecked on the island and that over the years the hope of rescue had altogether faded" (p. 88). With the loss of the imagined glory the subject's own loyalty to his father seems to shift. His attachment to his mother and her family intensifies. And his father's rage and resentment towards his wife's family, Ralph Singh feels, far from lessens "my admiration for them" (pp. 88-89). His father's "slow humiliation" does not

turn him towards his father but rather turns him away from him (p. 89). In his reconstruction of that past Ralph Singh writes "as a boy I did what I could to suppress the connexion" with his father (p. 83). He yearns for a release from this period of "burdensome secrets": "I longed for nothing so much as to walk in the clear air of adulthood and responsibility, where everything was comprehensible and I myself was as open as a book" (p. 90). But as the proxy narrative constructs, this longing for adulthood like that anticipated narrative (the order into which he wishes to be inserted) seems to remain perpetually pro-crastinated.

Even in the "edited" version of the past which the Ralph Singh figure constructs, the desire (to be an adult) is anticipated and either thwarted or disrupted (threatened). There is the "first memory" of going to school with an apple (that cliched signifier of transgression, but also a proverbial gift) for the teacher. But the island had no apples and it must have been an orange - the reality intrudes. And there is the memory of the crown which the English king could wear only for a few seconds. Then a recent dream superimposed on the memory of an arithmetic class. The Ralph Singh figure dreams of being swept away helplessly on the Thames. The only source of rescue is in standing on his own feet and reaching the pillars that suddenly spanned the river. But he finds it impossible to do this, for he realises that "in my dream I felt the impact and knew that I had broken my legs and lost their use forever..." (p. 91). The anecdote about his athletic activity brings out clearly the shame he suffers from the deficiency, the lack, the failure to negotiate with the world and the regressivity. The running shorts he wears attract his sisters (whom the subject refers to as "women"), for the massaged limbs they expose signify the "promise of manhood." But he suspects that for the "women" in spite of his shorts and the athletic activity his "manhood... must have seemed somewhat delayed." He reproaches his sisters when they plan to go to the school with him to see the race (p. 115). The subject fears that their presence might further worsen his already "nervous" confidence. For already at school the reputed beauty of his sisters

would turn *him* into a feminine figure: "It was the tradition among the schoolboys in Isabella, as perhaps elsewhere, that the brothers of beautiful girls were in some way effeminate, and were to be ridiculed on that account." The sisters are, thus, another source of "mortification" for the subject (p. 105). They make his sense of deficiency more and more acute. As a result, the subject eventually does not participate in the race. Another memory flashes the scene of a class test where the subject is asked to write a letter for employment (adult desire); and this ends up as an occasion for another shame for his letter turns out to be childish: "The class dissolves in laughter. It is an absurd letter" (p. 91). Other boys provide the models. Then the Ralph Singh figure wonders: "Who informs them about the ways of the world and school?" (pp. 91-92). Through the narrative deferral the subject attempts to insert himself into the "ways of the world", gain access to an "adulthood". Yet this project remains unfulfilled due to the disruption of the "place" of the parent (the father Singh), the displacement which cost him (in Ralph Singh's narrative) the deprivation of his glory.

Psycho-analytic theory tells us that "The paternal-metaphor establishes the correlation between the family name - necessarily the father's name - and the subject coming into the world. If the father, present or not, fails to occupy the symbolic position assigned to him *by our culture, disaster ensues*"[11] (emphasis added). In our proxy narrative the disruption of the place of the father can be discerned among other sites (mentioned earlier), more crucially, in the absence of the patronymic in the text. That is, the Ralph Singh figure is deprived of a patronymic. But we hear Ralph Singh referring to his grandfather's name as Kripal (which already hints at the loss of the patronymic). Then in the following generation Ralph Singh's father is instigated further to oblige and cathect the place of the other by codifying a new surname - Kripalsingh. This instigation is the direct effect of the colonial power. Ralph Singh's father is one of those "well instructed labourers" whom Charles Grant and Macaulay had envisaged and who is willingly made to participate in the proliferation of the most

"artful technologies" of the colonial power: preaching and translating the Bible in the vernacular. The work he does on the island is romantically described by a young missionary lady. She imagines him to be an angel come to preach from the midst of heaven (pp. 86-88). And this evangelical activity of the new regime (new because the technologies of power -education, preaching - initiated by Grant and Macaulay differed from the earlier Warren Hastings- type of Orientalist learning in India)[12] inscribed an identity on the subject's father: in effect, "My father, for the purposes of official identification, necessary in that new world...ran these names [Kripal and Singh] together to give himself the surname of Kripalsingh" (p. 93). This process of codification, of naming, is very much a disruption of the "place" of the father and a clear instance of epistemic violence. And, in spite of the newly acquired surname, Ralph Singh's father literally remains nameless in the text. The appellation Singh does not denote a patronymic but is a signifier of a caste (warrior caste). However, the caste appellation cannot be confused or conflated with a patronymic and even less so in this context because of the displacement and disruption. (For the disruption is the fracturing of the caste order - if there was any such thing). What ensues from this loss of the patronymic need not be disaster, as the theory claims. And the theory's claim, based on the norm of "our culture", seems ethnocentric for it indicates an unquestioned acceptance of an internal limit of the theory. What could ensue from the disruption or displacement of the patronymic - following the imperialist epistemic violence - is *hybridity*. Let us follow this track.

The subject turning away from the father and his humiliation decides to give himself a new name. The two names, including the codified "patronymic", Ranjit Kripalsingh, on his birth certificate do not stop him from feeling a sense of privation. He attempts to overcome this sense of privation by reinscribing his name through a process of hybridity. That is, he fractures his "family name" - Kripalsingh and inserts between them a mimic signifier - Ralph. The result is a signifier of hybridity further

problematising the tales of patronymic. The hybrid subject turns out to be Ranjit Ralph Kripalsingh - but usually known as Ralph Singh[13]. The subject's model (to have more than two names), however, comes from the longstanding representatives of colonial power in the island: the Deschampsneufs: "[Deschampsneufs] had five apart from his last name, all French, all short , all ordinary, but this conglomeration of the ordinary wonderfully suggested the extraordinary" (p. 93). But the subject attempts to explain this name-change either casually or apologetically. He says that he chose the name Ralph because it had the initial of his real name. This "mitigated the fantasy or deception" - fantasy of being like the Deschampsneufs; and the deception of the name. It is the desire to be in the place of the Deschampsneufs - to be totally identified with that position and a feeling of self-deception in yearning for such identification. But the name remains a burden, "one of my heavy secrets" from his eighth to twelfth year. Yet when the secret is found out and the teacher, noting the discrepancy in the names asks the subject whether he joined the school "incognito", Ralph Singh explains that he was following a Hindu custom in changing the name. Although the teacher accepts his explanation Ralph Singh's father is affronted by the name change and treats it as "a further example of the corrupting influence of Cecil [Ralph Singh's maternal uncle] and my mother's family" (p. 94). But the subject continues to circulate with his fractured "patronymic", under his hybrid name. And during his rise in the real-estate business Ralph Singh names his estate initially as Kripalville. But in no time even this already fractured piece of codified patronymic is disfigured into Crippleville. The narrative, which is the subject's construction, never refers to the earlier name once Crippleville is coined (pp. 58-59).

It must be noted at this point that the text's naming process itself is intriguing. Many of the names that come in contact with the subject have a peculiar relationship to him. Thus Sandra, for instance, is seen as a source of his luck and strength. And her name appears to be a short female form of the omnipotent force with which the subject

identifies himself: Al*exander*. Interestingly, the classical names of European history become a source of gratification for the subject. Thus the dandy-maker, Lieni with whom he enjoys the first *snow* is the Maltese for Helen (pp. 12-13). The partner in the aborted love-affair with whom he could not mingle is named Beatrice. In the same way, the Deschamps*neufs*' name forever keeps them new, and for the subject attractive. Their racehorse carries the name of an African rebel chief (signifying an appropriation echoed in the pamphlet with the name *The Niger is a tributary of the Seine*) - *Tamango*. But the name also echoes - *Domingo* - that site of 18th century slave-rebellion (thus signifying another appropriation). And symptomatically Wendy also stands for a house for children - big enough for children to enter and use in comfort.

However, the names also indicate the benevolent and persecutory aspects of the subject's partners. Thus Lady Stella delights him and her name echoes with Isa*bella*; she is glorious as the star; but she is also the one who reminds him of the violation, the persecutor, and her name echoes the word stallion (and she straddles him always). Although Sally is the benevolent figure initially, the name already indicates the aggressivity - which eventually, for the subject, contaminates her.

Naming is the favourite pastime of the teacher Major Grant (he grants the names). But very much like Grant Ralph Singh too takes up this activity - a childhood pastime for him: "And this is creation indeed!" (p. 204). This, even while asserting his position as an intruder, he expresses his desire to *own* the island (Is-a-bella): "It reinforced that sense of ownership" (pp. 214-215). But in all this naming process the subject is secretive about his own name, does not wish to expose it, hides it like the emblem on his running vest. Thus when Cecil stamps out his name on the beach he refuses to join him to write his own name (p. 112). The naming process in the text also signifies the drama of the subject's lack and his desire to gain mastery and control over the objects in which he invests.

However, the mimicry, and the process of naming in the case of the subject as

suggested in the beginning, endows the figure with a "partial" subjectivity. That is, the signifier inscribes the subject with an element of "appropriateness" in the colonial context. But hybridity like mimicry is a sign of contradictory implications. It could be represented as a sign of the "appropriate" but there is always something which is in excess of this signification. This paradoxical effect is the very condition of its production. That is, the colonial subject (in colonial production) is almost but not quite like the master. That pivotal difference is also the menacing element (if strategically used) of that production of discrimination[14]. The sign of mimicry attempts to articulate the desire to be in two places at once, "to occupy the master's place while keeping his place in the slave's *avenging* anger" (emphasis original)[15]. That is, the subaltern in his strategic liminality moves ground, appears to be caught up in the net of colonial production at one time, but slides away onto the borders the next moment. The liminality of the subaltern, however, should not indicate any disavowal of subject-position but must articulate precisely a strategic use of it and must be vigilant against a dogmatic, essentialist freezing of any particular position. It is for such an articulation of a double position that one looks in the proxy text of the mimic subject. It is the sign of mimicry which makes us look for such a movement. Yet, in spite of the fracture of the patronymic, in spite of the apparent absence of investment in any of the appellations, in spite of the casualness in responding to name-change, there seems to lurk in Ralph Singh's yearning a desire for an unfragmented self, an unruffled order. This yearning is the measure of a frozen position. Let us track it.

4) *CHARMS OF THE ORIGIN*

The narrative deferral signifies, I said earlier, the subject's desire to be inserted into a narrative (symbolic) chain. This desire also finds expression in the narrative figuration of what is described as the ordered landscapes (or the narrator's "vision of

order"). The most important signifier associated with the ordered landscapes in the narrative is: snow. Ralph Singh claims snow is his "element" (p. 6). London promised him this snow at the beginning. Yet snow also stands for, in the narrative, distance and moving away from the island of Isabella in search of "order". The snowy landscapes of London, Spain and the Laurentians tempt him initially with the fantasy of order. But his very first experience of the snow in London was intercepted by the primal scene. While hoping to see the snow on the terrace the subject goes up the stair-case and ends up in the scene of pleasure which sends him back with intimations of threat. If snow signified pleasure and order, a constant threat to his accession to them haunts the Ralph Singh figure. A teacher, for instance, tells him about slopes of the Laurentians where he could ski but immediately adds that disrupting message: "'Mind you don't break your leg, though.'" The proxy text retains this trace of threat in the editing: "the imagined landscape had been fixed in my mind forever. The Laurentians! Beautiful name for slopes of white, *uninhabited snow!* I longed in that *barrenness* to go skiing, even at the risk of breaking my leg. My element, and I feared I would be denied it" (pp. 146, 145-46 emphasis added). But soon we notice that this profound longing for distant landscapes as "ordered" worlds and avenues for adulthood remains unsatisfied once the subject begins to move on these landscapes. We see the ruse of premonition and deferral at work. London turns out to be a city of "greater disorder, the final emptiness" (p. 8). However, the order that the Ralph Singh figure hopes for and which the narrative promises through deferral is not the order of the metropolis: "So quickly had London gone sour on me. The great city, centre of the world, in which, fleeing disorder, I had hoped to find the beginning of order. ... [Where] I waited for the flowering to come to me" (p. 18). We can note that this narrative pro-crastination of the subject's accession to order and adulthood is, in this context (separation of order from metropolis), an indication of the narrative's problematisation of the signifier of metropolis as a source of order. That is, the narrative's denial of the European

metropolis as a space for the subject's flowering is tantamount to the text's refusal to freeze the "partiality" of his subjecthood. This problematisation can also be noted in the scene of housewarming ceremony from which Ralph Singh wildly drives himself away to the site of violation (p. 75). In short, as the product of mimicry and foreclosure the Ralph Singh figure does not *appear* to be at home with his Ralph-hood as it were. Yet I must hasten to add that this situation of in-betweenness or being in two places, intensifies Ralph Singh's anxiety further. And this anxiety is to gain access to an ordered system, to gain a subject-hood with certainty, to reach out for a frozen point.

If snow is a doubly inscribed signifier of pleasure and threat, the symbolic and the danger of losing it, and if this mixed prospect is no longer associated with the snow-capped European metropolis, where can one track its circuit in the text? It looks as if that fractured piece of the "patronymic" - Singh - seems to radiate something for the subject. And what the piece seems to have in store for the subject is a circuit of continuity. Let me elaborate. The desire for order promised by the snow is not fulfilled by any historical landscape, but the narrative deferral seems to turn it into a yearning for a more archaic link with a mythical past. The snow, which he claims as his "element", like the primal scene (desire to be inserted into a symbolic order), evokes in the Ralph Singh figure the fantasy of Aryan ancestors and their imagined snow-capped landscapes. It is in fact these mythical landscapes and the way of life believed to be practised by the ancestors that become in Ralph Singh's fantasy sources of order. The narrative pro-crastination appears to point towards these areas of order. The "order" and "calm" Ralph Singh desires is the one he believes to be present in that mythic, 'classical' past. At one point, for example, after the break with the one-day acquaintance Beatrice, Ralph Singh muses on what would have happened if he had married her: "wouldn't it have been better...if I had gone away with that girl and we had milked our cows among mountains and snow and rolled our cheeses down the

hillside?" (p. 24). (Although he feels at the moment that luck has intervened and broken that link with Beatrice the fantasy is nevertheless cherished.) The imaginary pastoral landscape and order lure the subject. There were, the subject recounts, moments of stillness in his hectic life when he wished to go back in time. He visualises a "picture of the city [London] of other times." And this 'other' time can be anticipated: "sheep, say, in Soho square." It is a glimpse of that past and the desire to be transported into that scene (before the wound) that beginning, which allures the Ralph Singh figure. Although immediately he notes that he was "overwhelmed by the absurdity of the wish and all the loss that it implies" - yet he persists in the wish (p. 81). He is like a child, he feels, to whom the "world is so big and unknown and time so limitless" (p. 81). The desire to be inserted into that world is unceasing yet maintained only through a deferral. And the vision of that world he yearns for is once again that archaic mythical landscape of the ancestors: "I have visions of Central Asian horsemen, among whom I am one, riding below a sky threatening snow to the very end of an *empty world*" (pp. 81-82 emphasis added). This is also a vision of the Aryan ancestors as at the beginning of the birth of a race, the very first people in their line. Hence the association of snow with "uninhabited", "empty" and "barren" landscapes.

It is the fractured (codified) piece of the "patronymic" which evokes in the Ralph Singh figure the desire for archaic myths of Aryan wanderers and the fantasy of being a descendant. He traces his link to those ancestors, chieftains through his warrior caste heritage which the modified "patronymic" - Singh - contains for him. Ralph Singh views his father as once an heir of the imagined glory and refers to him as a chieftain but neither of these designations any longer apply to the father now. But the privation of and disruption in the paternal heritage do not interrupt the subject's own project to find an unviolated order and unified self which he associates with that archaic order. Indeed Ralph Singh remarks at one point, after the narrative has deferred the promise of order and adulthood from the snow-capped metropolis, that snow is no longer his

element: "I no longer dream of ideal landscapes or seek to attach myself to them. All landscapes eventually turn to land, the gold of the imagination to the lead of the reality" (p. 10). Even if Ralph Singh appears to deny the landscapes, the narrative deferral maintains the investment in a symbolic chain, a desire (of the subject) to be inserted into a narrative order. In other words the narrative in constructing the 'desire' of the Ralph Singh figure as a desire for a (signifying) order is already indicating a lack within it which can be completed through, as it were, the other unified order. In fact what seems to happen as the proxy text moves is a shift from the snow-capped mountains as sources of order to an investment in the ancestral ways of life. This turn towards the "Aryan way of life" can be seen in the subject's representation of his father's activities.

At one point in the screening of the proxy text we see Ralph Singh's father running away from the house and leading a worker's movement. Ralph Singh is puzzled by this sudden change in his father. He sees that it is as a religious leader, 'Gurudeva', that his father leads the movement. Although Ralph Singh promises to explain the historical trend of the 'disorder' with which the movement is associated, he ends up representing what he sees as his father's 'religious' gesture as a stage in the Aryan life-cycle. He sees his father's abandoning of the family and the house as renunciation and interprets this to mean that his father had received the idea from a widow with whom he began to live subsequently: "To her he was the man attempting to live the good life as laid down by his Aryan ancestors" (p. 128). Although the Ralph Singh figure sees his father as exploiting the widow with the idea of Aryan life style his own investment in the idea is not disturbed later on: "I always saw method in my father's madness" (p. 128). It is the disruption in the "place" of the father which seems to prevent Ralph Singh from embracing the idea of the Aryan way of life *in line* from his father.

If premonition and deferral are the textual ruses, they move the text by

anticipating for the subject an access to a glorious adulthood of responsibility, a symbolic order and a unified subjecthood. If these are the predicates on which the subject operates the proxy text seems to claim that all the activity of his "parenthetical" life does not really move within the circuit of responsibility at all. That is, none of the actions of the subject in his parenthetical life can make him responsible for them. He was only role-playing. This is reasserted by the narrative emphasis on the primal scene (the scene which anticipates the subject's access to adulthood and responsibility - and at the same time threatens those possibilities) as the only "real" event and all the rest as parenthetical to it. And the ruse of the gaze too catches him at the stage where attribution of responsibility is problematic. The subject feels that all the segments of experience (parenthetical life) in which he is involved do not express his "real" self, his subjectivity. His role-playing took the forms of the dandy student, the coloured husband, politician, celebrant: "in the very midst of power I came upon a centre of stillness within myself, a centre of detachment, which my behaviour in no way revealed..." (p. 39). This moment of "stillness" is cherished through deferral as a solid ground for subjecthood. Whereas the roles that befall him, the subject feels, are like the veils muffling his voice one after the other and preventing him from tearing through the "unreality" of the roles and gaining access to the stillness behind the veils (pp. 72-73). Like the calm or stillness at the centre which Ralph Singh feels at the height of his power, he also experiences "placidity" at the centre of his celebratory mood in which he returns from London. When he is successful in his real-estate business the subject feels the choice (to do business) to be his personal one and appears to be content with it. But soon we notice that even this 'last' "'character'" was something "personal and *ordained*" (emphasis mine). And the "strength" of placidity "existing within a walled, impregnable field" quickly turned the "choice" into a role: "I lived neutrally; activity was real, but it was all on the surface; I felt I would never allow myself to be damaged again" (p. 57). We notice the desperate attempt of the fragmented subject to become a

whole, a unity, and to protect that wholeness. And his retro-spective feeling of his new role:"I did not feel responsible for what had befallen me; I always felt separate from what I did" (p. 61) Even in the retro-spective construction of the parenthetical life the subject wishes only to "lay claim to my achievement." He feels only time has enabled him to do this. And this "achievement" is never defined (p. 61).

Premonition, future and deferral: the governing levers of the proxy text. The present is always a preparation for the postponed future. Ralph Singh almost parodies the circuit of his own making: "We pretend to be real, to be learning, to be preparing our lives 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" (p. 146). Yet the parody is also a lamentation for an absence of a finality, for a stability (a stillness), a certainty. It is the anxiety at the absence of any such "real", "proper" destinations; anxiety for the state of being on the borders which is the condition of the mimic's production. It is the desire to gain access to a frozen point of certitude. Ralph Singh indeed makes such a move to get rid of the anxiety. After the prolonged narrative deferral which promised an adulthood and a symbolic order, and where the subject was constantly protected from the position of responsibility for the events of the parenthetical life, Ralph Singh reaches out to impose as it were a signifying gloss on his past events. This reaching-out could be indicated as a gesture of gaining access to a position, a closure. Reflecting on the events, he feels his abandoning of landscapes as no longer a loss. But in the very next line his investment in the "good life" of ancestors becomes amply evident:"I feel, instead, I have lived through attachment and freed myself from one cycle of events. It gives me joy to find that in so doing I have also fulfilled the fourfold division of life prescribed by our Aryan ancestors. I have been student, householder and man of affairs, recluse" (pp. 250-51). It is not only the apparent contradiction of the comment (with the earlier one where he was shown as only a role-player) that is interesting here but the subject's reversion to a symbolic chain

believed to be paternal (though dissociated from his father.) Ralph Singh's total investment in this order (maintained throughout the text - through the ruse of deferral) is amusing. For such investment exemplifies a faith in the continuity and efficacy of the paternal metaphor even after the epistemic violence. It also shows a belief that the paternal metaphor can be gained intact after the epistemic disruptions and imperialist codifications. Such a conviction arises out of an alibi the text gives to the subject as an "intruder" in the society. For, it is such a conviction (to gain access to a past) that appears to compensate the subject's avoidance of reflecting on his own historical constitution as a post-colonial (Indian) *from* the Caribbean.

5) *CORRUPTIONS OF THE SOURCE*

The scene of pleasure, I said earlier, makes him prey to the threat of oblivion and fear of incapacitation. And the only way, he feels, he could overcome the threat is by constructing an order out of his "disorder" - by leaving behind some relics of signification. By inserting himself in a signifying chain - a narrative - the Ralph Singh figure feels, he will initiate a line of continuity to posterity. He feels such an object, or narrative chain, could be history - something which is more than 'autobiographical' - but constructed from personal 'experience'. In the absence of such a text in the present, it would be worthwhile, he feels, to construct a monumental text. "There is no such thing as history nowadays," the subject reflects, "there are only manifestos and antiquarian research; and on the subject of empire there is only the pamphleteering of churls" (p. 32). So the monumental text would concentrate on the imperialist disruptions and displacements I referred to earlier: "It was my hope to give expression to the restlessness, the deep disorder, which the great explorations, the overthrow in three continents of established social organizations, the unnatural bringing together of peoples who could achieve fulfilment only within the security of their own societies and

the landscapes hymned by their ancestors... has brought about" (p. 32). This is precisely the narrative order, the thematic of imperialism (though the subject never puts it that way), to which he wishes to gain access and which he desires to transmit to posterity. But, as I have been arguing, the ruse of narrative deferral forecloses such a possibility, circumvents that thematic chain through pro-crastination. And in its place what we find is an attempt to repair a "wound" (a gap) by patching it up with an imaginary paternal metaphor. But there can be no order which is not already disrupted by the imperialist violations. Ralph Singh, however, after reaching-out for his ancestral order speculates that he might spend the next ten years constructing that monumental text (p. 251).

What catches our attention about the pro-crastinated narrative is the vision of history it is predicated upon. The master text, Ralph Singh feels, would extend the moments of stillness which he experiences in the period of his 'active' life. Ralph Singh, desiring such an extension comes to the metropolis, but soon dissociates such a possibility from the city and projects onto the narrative which he would construct (pp. 18-19, 26). The metaphor, stillness, has various associations in the proxy text. It signifies for the subject the source of his 'real' self - contained in impregnable walls (p. 57). It also stands for the possibility of a unified, unviolated totality of the self. Secondly, stillness is associated with the imaginary pastoral orders. It is associated with the "calm" and pastoral order of the past, of 'other times' (p. 81). Thirdly, and crucially, the "moments of stillness" are connected with the idea of being either first or last of a race. This idea, related to the earlier associations (totality, and origin), contains the anxiety we already noticed in the primal scene. That is, as the first of the race the anxiety of reaching out for an order haunts him. And as the last of the line the threat of extinction does not leave him. The vision of history (and historian) that Ralph Singh develops is in consonance with these associations of stillness. For the vision of history is also an effect (or an extension of) such moments. In the subject's

vision of history the victim is made totally impotent, and can never be conceived as an agent of his actions: "every action of the victim is deemed to have been done at the command of his tormentor, and where even refusal is useless, for that too can be deemed to have been commanded, and the only end is tears and walking away" (p. 81). (This could also be seen as a self-legitimation of the subject during his "parenthetical life: "myself not as an individual but as a performer.") Then the task of the historian indeed turns out to be an expression of a religious piety, an activity of penance in recording this "shocking vision": "It was the shock of the *first historian's vision*" (p. 81). This vision was already given expression a few pages earlier where the subject suffers the disturbance of the "breaking-up" party. He tries to cry: "They were real tears, but they came from a deeper cause...they are the tears of men in the middle of great achievement, men who are made weary by a sense of futility, who long to be the first men in the world, who long to do penance for the entire race. ...They are the tears of men at the end of their line, who forsee their extinction" (pp. 75-76). More than the vision of history what one grasps in the lamentation is an attempt to become a part of a lineage, a heritage. It is an attempt to be either an heir or progenitor of an order, to establish a continuum. And the vision is that of a homage to a paternal order. If the vision of shock which, the Ralph Singh figure feels, the moment of stillness turned him to, could be pinned down (by him - an act of homage), it "might bring me calm." Yet, the subject reflects, the moment of stillness might die, "but a moment my ideal narrative would extend" (p. 81). The moment of stillness with all its associations already foreshadows the nature of the pro-crastinated text.

The Ralph Singh figure would spend the following ten years writing the monumental text, not in order to critique the effects of the epistemic disruption but merely to experience the "order" and "calm" such an act would imply for him (p. 32). And precisely these notions of calm and order, associations of stillness, come to our mind when we look at the subject's choice of place from where he would write this

monumental narrative: a cocoa estate. The cocoa estate, in spite of its preposterousness, evokes for Ralph Singh the order and calm of pastoral society. The calm of the cocoa estate quickly defers the pompous project invoked just a page earlier. The image of the estate house he conjures up shows the house with "its corrugated roof painted in stripes of faded red and white, the wide, low-eaved verandas hung with cooling ferns, the floors dark and worn and shining" (p. 33). The smell of timber and wax everywhere and the pleasure of varnished wood delighting the eye; the folding screen separating drawing room from dining room. It is in such a house after his morning ride in the valley across the cocoa woods where labourers are at work, after his breakfast (served on his table with white table cloth) - it is in such a place that he would write: "So the days would have passed, literary labour interdigitating with agricultural; and that word agriculture would have acquired its classical associations and lost its harsher island significance" (p. 34). The "classical" agriculture that promises calm and order, as we will see in a later section on Naipaul's pastoral musings (Ch. Nine), is not any historical vision but indicates once again that desire for the imaginary pastoral order[16]. What the proxy text both dissimulates as the "ideal text" and defers, seems to be no more than a desire to reach out to that "stillness" and all that it signifies.

However, stillness also has associations with horror. It shocks the "first historian". But, for the subject, these shocks and horrors can be separated from the other significations of stillness. This desire to separate the horrifying from the pleasant is metonymically expressed in the activity of Garbage (a figure at once combining the elements of persecution and desirability). Garbage's hands alone are shown which systematically separate what is to be eaten from what is to be discarded[17]. Stillness signifies also a humanistic (almost religious) conception of 'self' (or subjecthood) as a unified category or entity (maternal metaphor).

Throughout the text we notice the subject's anxiety over his dismembered self (pp. 26-27). Towards the end of the text the Ralph Singh figure attempts to accomplish an

'extension' of his self which he yearned for so long and which he hoped to achieve in London, without success (p. 18). Ralph Singh, on his way back from London as a politician (after the failure of the talks), spends a night in an unnamed city. He spends the night in a hotel with a prostitute. Ralph Singh feels, while she probes his body, that he was able to reach out to experience the stillness, the unviolated "cell of perception" which he cherished so long. This moment of experience, he feels, "could be extended and extended." It was at once a moment of "horror and solace". But it also makes him feel one with the universe. The subject slips almost into a religious discourse when he describes the moment as an instance of fulfilment enabling him to move from time to timelessness and from body to beyond body and flesh. The subject's anxiety in the text was, we noted, due to his sense of being fragmented. Interestingly in this scene with the prostitute the latter is also represented metonymically as a conglomeration of "instruments" - "nails", "tongue", "lips", "breast" and flesh etc. And the subject's own 'self' is seen as a stack of layers which drop away one by one. But this quickly brings us back to Ralph Singh's earlier reflection that his 'self' - that "cell of perception", that moment of stillness - was muffled by layers of veils. And the prostitute scene appears to be an unveiling of the layers, a reaching-out for the essentialist category of the subject.

The subject's religious discourse in fact aims to indicate a unification of the subject and an extension of that to the universe. It is indeed a religious (humanist) discourse for the Ralph Singh figure labels the experience, in his recounting, as the fulfilment of the 'Highway Code'. Highway Code is exactly the term Lord Stockwell (representative of colonial power) uses to describe the 'religious' activities of Ralph Singh's father. Now the subject simply endorses the term to represent his experience. What is to be observed in this almost paradigmatic activity of naming, is that the subject can have access to the so-called paternal metaphor only in its codified form; and the text is, as I attempted to show earlier, enmeshed in such activity of naming. The

process of imperialist interception is through and through and there can no longer be any paternal metaphor (for the post colonial at least) transparently available. (This is not to say that prior to the imperialist violation such a transparency was possible). The Ralph Singh figure, as I have been arguing, assumes such a transparency in valorizing ancestral order. But such an assumption makes him complicitous with the imperialist endeavours, in circumventing history and in assuming the totality of the ancestral order. This complicity can be seen more clearly at work in two other instances where intercepted history is endorsed as unmediated continuity and disruptive, racialist representation as token of transparency.

Both the events I am referring to occur within the circuit established by the colonial power and discourse. The first one comes in the context of Froude's visit to Isabella. Froude "the imperialist pamphleteer", visits Isabella and runs into problems everywhere. Ralph Singh describes Froude as a "pathologically gloomy man" (p. 77). Froude stays with the Deschampsneufs - the representatives of rival imperial power. He becomes uncontrollable at one point when he comes across a half-naked black and rushes violently towards him. The Deschampsneufs intervene: "The sight of every Negro forest hut drove him to rage at Negro idleness and to pessimistic conclusions about the future of that race; he saw the bush speedily claiming its own again..." (p. 77). Froude's solution for the Negro problem, Ralph Singh writes, was the large-scale importation of "picturesque Asiatics," "the only hope for Isabella." Later on Froude develops bitterness towards the Deschampsneufs and writes about them viciously (pp. 77-78). This, in Ralph Singh's account, is the racialist discourse of the imperialist spokesman. Though the representation of Froude is critical here, just a few pages later we find the subject endorsing almost a similar account when he begins to reflect on his own lineage (through his father, one must add): "To be descended from generations of idlers and failures, an unbroken line of the unimaginative, unenterprising and oppressed, had always seemed to me to be a cause for deep, silent shame."(83). It is to

protect himself from this shame that he associates himself, we have observed, with his mother's family. Ralph Singh seems to accept Froude's racialist representation, for, even when he appears to be critical of Froude he does not examine how disruptively it operates in his own reflections. Throughout the text when he refers to the East Indian community Ralph Singh adds the appellation "picturesque" to the community. And the term is an instance in imperialist naming. The shame he feels (as a member of the community) is in fact an effect of the disruption of the paternal metaphor - but it seems to allure the subject to valorize an archaic ancestral order.

The second event is associated with the thematic of gaze but here it is mediated by a racialist discourse. Deschampsneufs invite Ralph Singh for tea before he leaves for England. During the course of the talk about their aristocratic background and family connections with Stendhal Deschampsneufs (the father) explains his theory of vision. He divides people and societies into three categories based on the efficacy of their gaze. The first type defined as long-visioned people are Chinese and Indians who are "obsessed with the thought of eternity". The second category fixes the Africans as short-visioned who "remained in a state of nature"; for they "can't look ahead, and nothing to look back to." His third type obviously refers to Europeans who are the medium-visioned people and hence "doers, the survivors" (p. 172). Survival is linked with the gaze and the defect or excess of the gaze implies a lack and a threat. Immediately after this talk the subject is humiliated by Deschampsneufs (the father). While leaving the house he attempts to shake hands with Deschampsneufs but the latter deliberately ignores Ralph Singh's hand: "I attempted twice, and when he did give me his hand it was only two fingers" (p. 175). The incident insults and angers him. Ralph Singh chides himself for not reacting to the insult: "Why, recognizing the enemy, did you not kill him swiftly?" (p. 176). The scene of recognition and rivalry might signify the "avenging anger" of the colonial subject I referred to earlier. It may refer to the mimic's condition of being in two places at the same time. But this is not really so with

the Ralph Singh figure. For, in the same breath, reflecting on his reaction to the insult in a self-mortifying mood, Ralph Singh's assessment is very much in complicity with the typological language of the "enemy": "We underestimate [short-visioned] or overestimate [long-visioned] our strength always. We refuse to wound and thereby throw away our hand" (p. 176). But the proxy text shows such complicity even much earlier.

While assessing his political career Ralph Singh gives the impression that he lacked the equipment to understand his situation. But immediately he seems to operate in Deschampsneuf's categories in attributing his political failure to his defect of gaze: "Someone better equipped, someone who had paid more attention to the sources of power and had more of the instincts, would have *survived*" (p. 38 emphasis mine). The Medium-visioned, Deschampsneufs says, are the doers and survivors. Yet when later on Ralph Singh retro-spectively constructs the events of his career, he portrays his group as heroic and well equipped: "We had the resources, in intellect and offers of support, to question the system itself...It takes courage to destroy any system..." (p. 190). But already in an earlier passage the subject represents the colony as a "benevolently administered dependency". And the political life of the colony: "So long as our dependence remained unquestioned our politics were a joke" (p. 190). So the "courage" of new politics of Ralph Singh does not signify any real overthrow either of the system of dependence or of the language of that system but shows a replacement of an older generation of feudal leaders (contractors, merchants and farmers) by a younger generation of elite. And the self-congratulatory attitude of Ralph Singh is precisely for this substitution: "We did not see this shabbiness [other politicians' mode of operation in the past] as a type of order appropriate to our circumstances" (p. 190). But he feels that they (the new elite) "had swept it [the shabbiness] away" (p. 190). And quickly, needless to say, the new elite become part of the pattern of the "system". Reflecting on this once again the Ralph Singh figure falls back on Deschampsneuf's racialist theory of

vision: "It takes courage to destroy, for *confidence in one's ability to survive is required.* About *survival* in those early days I never thought. I never saw it as an issue" (p. 192 emphasis added). Long-visioned people, the "enemy" has said, are obsessed with the thought of eternity. Ralph Singh's apparent resentment at the racialist and imperialist sentiments is ineffective compared to his complicity with these utterances[18]. For as voyeur (the spectator of *The Black Swan*) and the "intruder", the text seems to suggest, the subject is permanently incapacitated by the gaze of the other. He is forever condemned to that pregenital phase incapable of transacting with the world. But such despairing conviction needs to be situated in the world.

6) *INTO THE WORLD*

Perhaps it is possible to celebrate *The Mimic Men* as a brilliant construction of a psychotic 'life', and the text deserves such an appraisal along with those of Schreber's and Rivera's. Perhaps it is possible to praise and go along with its ruses of premonition and deferral as sources of infinite readings. But any such celebration must also situate the text in the historical context of postcoloniality. Otherwise, such celebrations remain in compliance with the text - in that they allow the text to get away with its assertions and messages as much as the text does in the case of the subject.

The text constructs the events in a fictional Caribbean island. While constructing the events of 'independence' and postcolonial phenomena, the text makes an important assertion: that the postcolonial leader is constituted through a violation and a distress. If violation is a reference to the imperialist disruptions in the non-European world the distress appears to be its effect. The message that the text goes on to offer is that the only way the leader's power emerges is through the destruction of the existing (colonial) order; and ultimately, the message seems to be, that the destruction is never supplemented by any creation. The text articulates the assertion and its message in the

language of sexuality. The effect of such language, however, and the representative role (for "twenty countries") the text assigns to the Ralph Singh figure, make one suspect the text's assertions.

The text, almost cynically, deploys the language of sexuality in narrativizing the political movement for 'independence': "It led to that moment of success which, after long endeavour, is so shatteringly brief: a moment that can almost be fixed by the clock, and *recedes and recedes, leaving emptiness, exhaustion,* even distaste: dissatisfaction that nags and nags and at last defines itself as apprehension and unease" (pp. 199,200 emphasis added). But such a success, as we are familiar with the text's use of the language of sexuality ("Understand the language I use" - p. 25), is in fact an expression of a lack, a deficiency: it was a feeling of "the boy or child he was and has never ceased to be" (p. 200). The subject who fails to transact with the world is endorsed as the incapacitated model of the postcolonial leader. Consequently the political success, the 'independence', is nothing more than a sterile consummation, failing to create any "organic link" in human relationships: "the other side had suddenly let go" (p. 200). This conviction is further reflected through apparently inconsistent ideas. The "awareness" of the "weakness" of power as the vision of a helpless child - the pregenital subject on the one hand and his desire to be the omnipotent, heroic figure to master the world and save it - the chieftain or Alexander the Great on the other: "the compassion of the messiah, the man doing penance for the world." (p. 207); yet his model of political leader is Pompey on whom he writes an essay. The inconsistency, however, is only apparent for the distress of the child's vision - sexual impotence - drives the subject to cherish fantasies of omnipotence[19].

The despairing conviction, however, is also the mask the text provides the subject with to invest himself in a unique subjectivity (the core of the self, untouched by the roles he takes on): he surrendered himself to the situations yet had a "deepening...conviction that I had a secret, deeper life" (pp. 205-07). It is through

such secret subjectivity protected by the celestial gaze - the vision that would make him survive - that the Ralph Singh figure attempts to maintain his insularity, his difference from the society and people he (supposedly) represents. One expression of such subjectivity the text articulates can be seen in constituting the subject as an "intruder". But such a narrativization provides a convenient alibi for the subject to ignore the specific history of his own constitution within the historical situation he represents. That is precisely what the text avoids doing[20]. In the place of the analysis of a specific situation in historical terms (postcolonial East-Indian community in the Caribbean) we are given the omnipotent fantasies about an Aryan chieftain. There is, however, a parodic historical account of the island at one moment in the text. This is a cursory account and is given by Ralph Singh's father on a Sunday afternoon. The family drive around the country-side in their newly acquired car and a tourist guide account of various races and their settlements is given (almost chronologically - beginning intriguingly with 'Spaniards') (pp. 121-22). In contrast to this account is the subject's brief 'historical' account about the Aryan ritual of horse sacrifice - *asvamedha* - and it is narrated with a feeling for the ancestors as it were (p. 142). Perhaps one can look for the text's 'quilting buttons'[21], the norm of its narrativization, in this disavowal. The subject feels horrified when he suspects that others would take him as "*one of them*": "I felt threatened. My chieftaincy lay elsewhere"(p. 133 emphasis original). With the alibi of an intruder the subject professes his despairing conviction (his own violation and his fear of his imminent death - being the last of the race)[22]. in the country on the issue of nationalization. But this .

In order to situate the text in the world, to read it as a crosshatching effect of the social text let us now read the text as a narrativization of Trinidad. This move helps us to interrogate the assertions and the message of the text. The novel was written between August 1964 and July 1966 - which in fact coincides with a phase of the Second Five Year Plan of the 'independent' Trinidad (1964-68). Although the text

asserts that the postcolonial leader's power is in the destruction of the older order and Ralph Singh refers in a self-congratulatory mood to the courage they need to destroy the old order - the activities of the postcolonial state (in the text) do not seem even to touch that old order. The subject puts forward a series of alibis to explain the continuity of the old order. Despite the outrage he feels at one point in seeing the contrasting living conditions of the barefooted workers in the mud and those of the overseer's children in their garden, he chooses to ignore them (the workers) as the leader. For "the interest of his country is bound up with that of the estates, and the estates are on his side." The estates control the economy. They would agree on only some modification of taxation. In effect the workers no longer matter. He supports the private sector initiatives - and at the same time gives the impression that the country was almost helplessly in the hands of the private companies. He opposes the nationalisation proposals of the state - which leads to his departure from the country. The country, he feels, lacked "organised capital" and "trade unions". And the "mobs" were "unproductive" because they lacked skills. This despairing conviction of the Ralph Singh figure - the 'critic' of the government from within - does not differ from that of the leader - Browne: "Somebody in London would decide that they want to get this contract or that contract" (p. 203)[23]. And this is what happens when the delegation - led by Ralph Singh - goes to London to discuss the issue of nationalization. The minister dictates the terms and the talks fail. In such a situation corruption and Swiss bank accounts are seen as helpless but inevitable responses (Part Three of the text).

The text's narrativization of the postcolonial society is precise and insightful. But it endorses its insights as 'natural' and inevitable. It is not any productive blindness that seems to produce these insights. They are the measure of the 'order' the text naturalizes. As a result the text's despairing convictions turn the state into an incapacitated entity. It disavows internal possibilities - parties, alliances, organisations and capital formation. It is certainly true that, in the context Naipaul alludes to (as in

any postcolonial situation) the internal and external constraints have a determining effect on the state[24]. But it is difficult to accept his point that the country lacked "organised capital" and "trade unions". Trinidad has defiantly (and not apologetically, as the text appears to show) opted for a capitalist form of development since its 'independence'. The state, as in the context of any postcolonial state in general, has played a crucial role in strengthening the native bourgeoisie by siphoning the surplus income to them. And indeed during the very period in which Naipaul wrote the book, the state was actively gaining control over many public utilities through the shibboleth - nationalisation. However, Ralph Singh's resentment against nationalisation in the text is not inspired by any radical alternative to capitalist development - on the contrary, it is fuelled precisely by his private sector initiatives.

With the advantage of historical hindsight we can argue that through its state capitalist programme Trinidad has not just increased the inequalities in its society (leading to the explosive Black Power Movement by the end of the sixties) but also sustained a powerful capitalist class. This class has consolidated its position during the 50s and after the 'independence'. In the thirty years of its 'independence', in the Trinidad economy there is a "qualitative transformation of commercial capital into productive capital under oligopolistic conditions. This has been obtained with the very explicit support of the state"[25]. The deepening international division of labour continues to make way for monopolistic organisations in territories like Trinidad. The phenomena of postcoloniality constituted by the factors referred to above need a different kind of narrativization than the one Naipaul offers in the text. For the state in the postcolonial situation - however constrained it is - has become an active agent. And the role the (East)Indian community plays in this postcoloniality (in Trinidad) is not an insignificant one at all. By the end of nineteenth century, as a result of the change in the colonial land policy (since 1869 enabling the freed indenture labourers to own the land), Trinidad developed Indian peasant proprietors[26]. And by the end of

1920 this community had "consolidated" its position in the island[27]. Thus, the community was neither, even at the time of the *MM*, incapacitated nor treated itself as an intruder.

It is this role of intruder the text assigns to the subject that contributes to the despairing conviction. In spite of his role as the leader of the East Indian community, the subject (and also the text) disavows the community's crucial place in the society; he feels the extinction of the community to be inevitable. After the prolonged violation of imperialism, the text seems to suggest, the phenomenon of (black) reverse-racism is the unavoidable and permanent fate of societies like Isabella. The subject uses the parable of *The Niger and the Seine*, - a story of a black man who years after assimilation into a French family refuses to marry his (now white) daughter to the heir (now black) of the same French family. Ralph Singh sees this reaction as a further sign of destruction of the (old) order. In such destruction "it was the intruders [the East Indians?], those who stood between the *mutual and complete comprehension of master and slave*, who were to suffer"(p. 214 emphasis added). However, even this reflection on the situation operates within the racialist divisions it appears to resent. For, the "complete comprehension" it attributes to the slave/master relationship maintains them as two monolithic racial categories. Further it treats one hundred and twenty five years of history of the "intruders" as in no way mediating this "comprehension". Even after the long history of indentured labourers (during and after their indentureship) and their crucial role as buffer zone in the society (in participating in the making of a capitalist economic order) the text refers to them as intruders awaiting their imminent extinction. Such reflection is not outside the racialist essentialism it fears in the Africanism of the Caribbean blacks. For it does not question its own bias in naming the 'intruder': "So defiantly, in my mind, I asserted my character as intruder, the picturesque Asiatic born for other landscapes." Hence the blankness of history of the 'intruder' in the text.

It is as a part of such blankness that one must examine the subject's (and the

text's) response to the workers' struggle that Ralph Singh's father leads. The text reduces all struggle to mere distress without distinguishing how one struggle (led by his father) differs from another ('independence' struggle). The Ralph Singh figure assesses the movement retrospectively as an "eccentric lower-class movement, and there were always eccentric movements among the lower classes" (p. 127). He refers to the universities which had worked on these movements and accuses the sociological studies of explaining nothing (although he accepts that they are empirically accurate in describing the rituals of the movements): "They leave the mystery as mystery; they explain nothing" (p. 127). Ralph Singh's own explanation of the movement is that it is a religious response to worldly distress. Yet he also sees it as "an attempt to deny the general shipwreck." Although the movements lack that purpose, the subject feels, "which might have turned them into true revolutions - [they] expressed despair but were at the same time positive." The emotions - like anger - such movements generate, he reflects, bring people together and establish comradeship; further, they alert people to the delusion of order which they had accepted earlier. But after explaining the purposeless positiveness of the movements the subject dissolves these events into abstract universal human urges: "Disorder was drama, and drama was discovered to be a necessary human nutriment" (p. 127). If so, it is from the same 'nutriment' the subject attempts to contract out. However the very presence of a movement of that kind (which his father leads) contradicts the subject's assertion that the society lacked any "trade unions". In fact the workers' movement Ralph Singh's father leads appears to be Naipaul's narrativization of the 1934 workers's struggle in Trinidad estates. In Trinidad working class history, however, the 1934 struggle, (especially in the context of East Indian workers), is considered as a significant event. Drawing on a history of local upsurges from the late 19th century on, this movement is said to mark a turning point in Trinidad working class history: "The upheaval in 1934 gave a boost to the later development of a racially unified working-class movement in Trinidad...This trend [sic]

matured in the working-class solidarity displayed by Indian agricultural workers and black oil workers during the 1937 disturbances, perhaps the most significant and successful event of its kind in the history of labour movement in the colony"[28]. These movements seem to have unsettled the longstanding but ineffective Trinidad Workers Association (established in 1897) and challenged its leader's (Cipriani) constitutional labour politics[29]. It is possible to argue that the pre-war (and also the post-war) working-class movements were neither leaderless nor depressing as the text seems to suggest[30]. This is the sign of the text's refusal to transact with distress.

The Ralph Singh figure looks for explanations for the working class movements, but does not himself probe into their repeated occurrence. The phenomena of working-class movements in the case of the Caribbean, as Marable argues, in general and Trinidad in specific is an index to the imperialist operations in the post-war period. This also indicates the change in global capitalism from plantation-based economy to manufacturing and mining monopoly capitalism in the peripheral societies. (In Trinidad this process began in the 1930s). This transformation itself is based on superexploitation of peripheral societies through an indigenous elite - for the fact of cheap and unorganised labour in these societies is one of the main factors which continues this process. The transformation itself affects the process of urbanisation in these societies by forcing agricultural labourers, peasants to become wage labourers (the story of Dayo's brother in "Tell Me Who to Kill" is a clear example). These workers are on the one hand lured into the fantasies of consumerism through the ideological media (American film) and also become the victims of chronic unemployment that is inseparable from these urban centres[31]. It was such a situation which led to the Black Power mass movement in the late sixties[32]. What needs analysis is the constraints working on the mobilisation of these workers. (Here the text's warning against reverse-racialism is pertinent in the Caribbean context). But this is not to say that the working-class movements are always "eccentric" and do not rise above their distress. In

fact the nationalist consciousness was as Marable argues, already prefigured in those working-class movements: "Many of these [nationalist] parties were formed directly or indirectly out of trade union movements..."[33] The position of the text and the subject such a position constitutes are inextricably linked with this history. And the text's response to that history is expressed through its despairing conviction.

Ralph Singh's narrative deferral, as I have attempted to show, attempting to insert the subject into a proper symbolic order is itself an effect of a foreclosure. The foreclosure is a sign of imperialist incursions into other worlds dissimulated under the discourse of the 'civilising mission', the 'good society'. The disruption or more appropriately the 'epistemic violence' consequent on the incursion primarily displaces the 'paternal order' under the token of 'civilising'. One such disruption in the context of India is the abolition of *sati* (the widow burning, 'sacrifice') in 1829. But this incursion of the law into the other territories is dissimulated under, to recall a sentence which Spivak brilliantly constructed as, "white men are saving brown women from brown men"[34]. The mission moves through codification of laws that legitimise the incursion. But the codification itself, as I showed earlier, is a foreclosure of a sort in the context of the colonial world. But the cathexis of the 'native' as the obliging other is also an imperialist figuration of the other as the 'masquerading subject'.

But the displacement whose effect is the liminal figure of the 'mimic' (and the figure of the subaltern) can no longer be reversed. That is, the subject can no longer look back to an appropriate, unfractured ground of origin. And at the same time the hybridity, the mimicry that results from such foreclosure cannot be stabilized or frozen in order to define the "excess" or "inappropriateness" of the partial subjectivity (almost but not quite) which the sign of mimicry articulates. In other words, the postcolonial subject can no longer stand up as the real 'Caliban'. For that is to work within the matrix imperialism has figured. Although the Ralph Singh figure does not champion the 'Caliban' as such in the text, it is precisely this elision - the elision of the historical

conjuncture that brought forth the 'Caliban' - which appears to indicate his investment in a prefacture order. The 'proxy' narrative in which the text constructs the figure of Ralph Singh can be characterised as containing a decisive lack. This lack is repeated in the figure of Ralph Singh also as an incapacitated person. Through this repetitive lack the text projects the desire (ostensibly associated with the Ralph Singh figure) for an imagined, homogeneous order - the order of the pastoral which is believed to fulfil the lack and unify the subject with what he lacks. The proxy narrative narrativizes that desire through the figure of the fissured subject. The fissure can be seen in the subject's anxiety at being fragmented, dismembered throughout the text and the closure reached-out through the assumed transparency of the paternal order. This fissure, however, remains irreducible. Ralph Singh's proxy text of deferral, thus, remains caught in a circularity of repetition. Naipaul's constitution of (post)coloniality is determined by such deferrals and repetitions and through an exclusion of historical factors affecting such ruses. For the text of *MM* in narrativizing the postcolonial situation in tropes of 'romance' and the void has despairing and sinister implications. But in projecting this vision the text does not seem to be aware of the complicity of the ruses with the ruses of the imperialist apparatus of subject formation. We will engage with these ruses in the subsequent sections and attempt to read the problematic they are in collusion with.

When ruses of deferral and disavowal, with their psychoanalytic implications are used to construct the postcolonial subject and narrativize the events about the postcolonial world Naipaul's text cannot avoid political (and polemical) critical attention. But when the same strategies are used in the construction of the colonialist subject the text can gain paradoxical significance. Such a text at once appears to be (and perhaps can be read as) a politically interested construction of the imperialist subject, in line with such recent constructions as that of Homi Bhabha[35]. But it can also be seen as the narrativization of the anxieties of the "assimilated", the "evolved"

subject of the colonial discourse, thus remaining in complicity with similar constructions by Conrad or Kipling. The next section on subject constitution will attempt to analyse whether the ruses that constitute the subject in the novella "In a Free State" have any radical potential or whether they remain in complicity with imperialist/ colonialist narrativization of the (post)colonial 'native'.

Chapter Four: Postcoloniality and the Critique of Imperialism

Incapacitation (of the subject) is, as I have attempted to show earlier, the constitutive element in Naipaul's construction of postcoloniality. The Naipaul text figures incapacitation of the subject either in the form of a primal loss, a fundamental lack (Mr. Biswas and Ralph Singh) or as an effect of a relationship with a threatening, devouring female (Ralph Singh, Salim, Jimmy Ahmed and Santosh). The text deploys the structural ruses of anticipation and deferral in patterning such 'experience' of postcoloniality. However, Naipaul's figuration of the subject takes yet another form. This is, as in the imperialist discourse, through a cathecting of the 'native' as the other. This mode of subject constitution, by a non-European, at once appears to be a critique of the imperialist discourse. For it can claim to expose imperialist narrativizations by underlining the ruses of such narrativizations. Naipaul's novella, "In a Free State", confronts us with such a problematic. Faced with such a problematic of critique through emphasis, can one read such a critique as a politically interested reading of imperialist discourse? Would such a critique, if one can locate it in Naipaul's text, contradict my earlier reading of the subject constitution in Naipaul's text. This section attempts to clarify these issues.

(3)

The narrative "In a Free State" appears in a book with that title written between 1969 and 1970. The narrative can be said to represent *variously* situated subjects in a (post)colonial society - "in a free state". Thus, in the narrative, we come across at least four variously located categories of people: 1) the 'native' peasants, workers and the army; 2) "chiefs" of postcolonial society (indirectly present); 3) expatriate (imperialist) subjects; and 4) the 'real' representatives of power in the postcolonial situation (anonymous but prominently present). These categories can be said to operate in a hierarchic order - but the narrative appears to problematize the order. This problematization can be discerned in the narrative concentration on the expatriate subjects on the one hand and the mode of narrativizing their 'experience' in (and of) the

(post)colonial situation on the other. What the text appears to problematize could be identified as the issue of power. In other words, the privileged category of expatriate (imperialist) subjects, in the colonial situation, is represented as one of powerless, incapacitated beings. But such a concentration does not appear to be vigilant at the same time towards the way in which the other categories are narrativized in the text. That is, while the text problematizes the question of power in the case of the imperialist subject it does not appear to caution itself against a stereotyping of the 'other' of this imperialist subject.

The ruse that operates in the narrative pattern, constructing the 'experience' of the specific category of subjects I mentioned earlier can be termed the ruse of 'fixation'. The term fixation is used here in two senses: 1) to trace how an object is fixed in the narrative through constant repetition and representation; and 2) in the psychoanalytic sense of *cathecting* a fetish. The notion of fixation can serve an important purpose in our analysis. It can be used to trace the complicity between the categories conventionally described in terms of the narrative perspective or authority and the character system[1]. This can be demonstrated in the narrative's tropological construction of "Africa".

The narrative authority employs in its representation of "Africa" what Edward Said has defined in a similar context as "radical realism". Radical realism, Said argued, defines its object in a *manageable* way in order to *control* it, to construct "knowledge-value" about it. It attempts to "designate, name, point to, fix what he [the orientalist] is talking about or thinking about with a word or phrase, which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality"[2]. The discourse of radical realism while ostensibly dealing with a specific situation employs language in such a way as to generalize about what is understood to be a totality. The narrative authority in "In a Free State" tropically refers to an unnamed segment of the African continent as the "bush villages". The trope is further extended to envelop the entire continent. The capital of this country is "an English-Indian creation in the African wilderness," where "Africa" is represented as a decor. And the capital "owed nothing to African skill; it required none." Then the 'native' is fixed into the "African" who is "flushed out from the bush,

to whom, in the city, with independence, civilization appeared to have been granted complete" (pp. 103-04)[3]. The native practices, customs and beliefs are reduced to a trope: the bush: "At night in every suburb the bush began there, on the highway. Every week men of the forest came to settle in the usurped city. They brought only the skills of the forest; they found no room; and at night they prowled the city's unenclosed spaces. There were many frightening stories" (p. 108). The radical realism of the text records one such story in great detail and this story imprints its effect on the character system in their responses to the object - "Africa(ns)". The narrative tells us that on their journey through a valley the expatriate subjects at one point see two naked natives chalked white from head to toe run across their road all of a sudden. The narrative specifies them with curious detail: that they were "white as the rocks, white as the knotted, scaly lower half of the tall cactus plants, white as the dead branches of trees whose roots were loose in the crumbling soil" (p. 210). The logic of the detail is baffling in its mixing of metaphors, using tropes appropriate to landscape to describe human beings. But the landscape and the way of life of the people are once for all fixed in an atemporal narrative detail. The narrative records the details about peasants working in the fields and their terraced huts on the hills: "It was the immemorial life of the forest. The paths were simple forest paths, leading to nothing else" (p. 205). The narrative authority further reiterates this mode of narrativizing its object ("Africa(ns)") through its character system.

At the level of the narrative movement the text uses one of the classical motifs of encapsulating the 'other': the journey. The entire narrative is in fact an account of the journey of the expatriate subjects from the capital city to the Southern Collectorate. Although the genre conventions insist on the differing relations of the character system it is possible perhaps to trace a structural ruse that defines the set of relations the system allows. The ruse of fixation, as I have suggested earlier, serves two purposes in defining the relationship between the character system and the tropically constructed "Africa(ns)", and the text's narrativization of both these (the system and the object). The relationship that can be discerned between the system and the object is one of vacillation. That is, the character system responds to the object with profound

ambivalence. This vacillation which can also be traced in the narrative authority is of a classical nature in that it seeks an identification with the object as long as the object is cathected in familiar signification; but it is spurned, seen as a threat, something that would endanger the very "agents" of cathexis (expatriates of the character system - Bobby and Linda) as soon as the object is perceived as something other than, or in excess of, the identification. (However, it must be made clear that when I refer to the character system as being the 'agency' of a cathexis I am not trying to conflate or confuse the figure of the text with 'real' life agent. It is only to avoid the catechistic refrain, throughout the thesis, that it is the text's (Naipaul's) figuration that I adopt this method of referring to the figures directly as 'agents').

What is produced through the drama of vacillation, however, does not enable us to say that the set of relationships that emerges is symmetrical, that the narrative authority can be reduced to just another 'character'. But to locate the drama of vacillation is also to trace the complicity between the system and the authority in the moments when they overlap. The overlapping of the narrative authority and the character system sometimes can be said to align together the voices of the character system and the narrative voice. But, indeed, it must be added that the text strives to establish an asymmetry between the two by attempting to distantiate one from the other. As long as the narrative authority and the character system constitute and are in turn constituted by the radical realism such figuration suggests the moments of their overlapping. Thus, when Bobby, for instance, describes "Africa" as the saviour of his life the narrative authority provides an ironic gloss: "As though it was a complete statement, explaining everything; as though he was at once punishing and forgiving all who misunderstood him" (p. 116). What the narrative authority, in seeking distantiation, criticizes here is precisely replicated in the narrative when it constructs "Africa" through epithets such as "African wilderness", "the bush", "African night", "African hue and cry" (pp. 109-110) "African crowd", (p. 121), "forest language" (p. 169); and in descriptive passages such as: "They were a people who lived, vulnerably now, in villages along their ancient straight roads: roads that had spread their power as forest conquerors, until the first explorers came.. " (p. 234). Although

the narrative voice enjoys, as Bakhtin has suggested, a transgradient (extralocal) position with regard to the character system it is possible, perhaps, to locate moments where the narrative loses its transgradient position[4]. In other words, it is possible to specify without attempting to prove deterministically the position of the narrative authority within the text. In the narrative "In a Free State", through the drama of vacillation the text gains double access to the object it narrativizes: the direct one (through which the narrative authority - using the device of radical realism - attempts to gain control of its object) and the telescoped relationship (through the character system). However, how the ruse of fixation operates at the level of the narrative movement can be seen in each of Bobby's 'adventures' and through them the text's response towards the object it cathects.

(ii)

It is possible to see from the relation between the character system and its object that each of Bobby's object-choices in his adventures is not only a fetish but at the same time also a threat. Bobby's first object-choice is another expatriate (worker) from South Africa. In the opening scene of the novella Bobby meets the Zulu in a bar. The Zulu, distinguishing himself from the 'natives' refers to them in a tenor which is identical with that of the narrative authority's: "These people are the most ignorant people in the world...a couple of years ago the natives couldn't even come in here. Now look. It isn't nice. I don't think it is nice" (p. 106). In the Zulu's next sentence it is not difficult to see his desire for an 'identification' with an 'ideal order': "I did pretty well in South Africa. I bought my whisky. I had my women. You'd be surprised" (p. 106). Indeed both the moves of this opening scene - rejection (when perceived as a threatening chaos) and an identification (when perceived as an ideal order) - follow the classical logic of "stereotyping"[5]. The subject following this logic reductively defines its object whether it seeks identification with the object or rejects it . Bobby's own relationship with the Zulu follows the same logic. "Africa was for Bobby", the narrative tells us, "empty

spaces, the safe adventure of long fatiguing drives on open roads" (p. 109). And one of his strategies to woo his love-object is to show his desire for the signifiers of discrimination: the black colour: "'If I come into the world again I want to come with your colour'" (p. 107). Bobby hopes to 'control', manage the relationship with this plea for 'identification'. Another version of this identification is to treat "Africa" as a land of salvation: "'Africa saved my life'...'I feel all this' ["Africa"] 'belongs to me'" (pp. 116-17). "My life is here" (p. 126). And when he assumes he can control the 'object' through such strategy (emphasising the signifiers of discrimination) Bobby becomes aware of his own power: "Bobby's blue eyes went moist and seemed to stare" (p. 107). But the unexpected happens in the scene with the Zulu. The Zulu spits in Bobby's face as the latter makes advances towards the Zulu. Bobby is instantaneously separated from his object. And the later recollection about the Zulu reduces the Zulu to a whore - a recollection tinged with disavowal, anger towards the object (and now the narrative authority attempts to distantiate itself from the character): "He didn't like African whores. A whore in Africa was a boy who wanted more than five shillings..." (p. 110). Identification with "Africa" is desirable only when it can be contained within familiar terms. But this 'familiarity' cannot once for all provide complete mastery over the 'other'. When the other moves beyond the familiar it becomes a threat.

Linda too functions, symptomatically, with the logic of 'othering': "I somehow imagined they would all be living in the jungle... I imagined the compound would be in a little clearing in the forest" (p. 114). Bobby too agrees with this view: "'I never knew a place like Africa existed. I wasn't interested. I suppose, like you, I thought of tribesmen and spears'" (p. 117). But these views of Africa, unlike the narrative authority's, were (the characters imply) in the past. Yet, the change in their views which the conversation apparently suggests is in fact rarely seen in the narrative. "Africa" remains in their articulations a paradoxical object - familiar but also threatening. Like Bobby, Linda too has a fascination for "Africa": "'If I weren't English I think I would like to be a Masai'" (p. 119). After only a couple of pages Linda's fascination for "Africa" is replaced by her fear of it: "They [the "Africans"] are going to swear their oaths

of hate. You know what that means, don't you? You know the filthy things they are going to do? The filth they are going to eat? The blood, the excrement, the dirt" (p. 122). Though Bobby seems to disagree with Linda's fantasies of fright each of his object-choices invokes in him similar anxieties. Throughout the journey Bobby attempts to differ, distance himself from Linda's racialist judgements. But at a different level in Bobby's case too similar anxieties are replicated. Soon after his disagreement with Linda about her frightful fantasies, referring to a group of Africans whom they have seen on their way, Bobby shows signs of panic: "I must say I didn't like the *looks* we got there...For a minute it made me feel we were back in the old days. I would've hated to be here then, wouldn't you?" (p. 123 emphasis mine). The "old days" is probably a reference to the days of colonial struggle. But what's crucial here is the *look* of the native[6]. It is simultaneously a recognition (of the "African) and a disavowal (rejection) of the other. In Bobby's case, as in the colonial scene in general, the look of the other reactivates the 'primal' fears - the threat of loss - encountered already in the scene with the Zulu[7].

Every object of desire towards which the Bobby figure advances is simultaneously a fetish and a signifier of castration. Thus the trope of "Africa(ns)" is both a fascinating object, source of fulfilment, worth possessing, and yet it is also a signifier of incapacitation; it reevokes the primal fears in the subject. The 'other' as the incapacitating force in the narrative appears clearly in the scene at the filling station. In the course of the journey Bobby stops his car at a filling station where the workers attend to him at once. One of the workers - a "small African" - wipes the windscreens using a damaged wiper whose sponge and rubber are wornout. The African, the narrative authority tells us, continues to rub the windscreen with the metal handle which has "left a complicated trail of *deep scratches* on the windows all around the car" (p. 146 emphasis added). Bobby is nonplussed at the way the worker answers back to his questions and is enraged when the worker appears to walk away indifferently. He threatens to hit him but the worker does not attempt to defend himself. Bobby walks back furiously to the car as Linda calls him.

After a few minutes driving Bobby feels remorseful and appears to repent. He 'recognises'

the "African" as belonging to the king's tribe (and the crisis in the country is the consequence of the recent dethronement of the king). He even speculates: "He probably is a Christian. He goes to church every Sunday. He keeps his clothes very clean..." (p. 150). Bobby's repentance, one thinks, is a genuine expression of concern and sympathy for the worker by a man in power. But in fact what Bobby is indulging in here is inscribing the familiar on the new. He is actually projecting his knowledge of his own houseboy (another of Bobby's object-choices) on to the worker - cathecting another subdued, unthreatening native as the object of desire: "Bobby was thinking of his own houseboy, who was *also small and fine-featured* and of the king's tribe: a churchgoer and a reader of devout or educational primers in the second, moneyless half of the month, a drinker in the first half, often tortured by hangovers, light and silent then, with an additional quality of delicacy" (p. 150 emphasis added). This is the classic strategy, as Bhabha has argued, of stereotyping the other. That is, to constitute the "native" always in a known, controlled, "palatable way" to use Fanon's metaphor, in order to fix or inscribe the known on the unknown, to domesticate the threatening. Bobby's remorse is more out of what he considers as a violation to that which is so subdued, controlled, familiar "pathetic" rather than out of any sympathetic engagement with the other: "And now I've destroyed his pathetic little dignity" (p. 150). The "dignity" of the African is conceivable only in terms of the metonymies Bobby projected onto the filling station worker; it is the dignity recognised only by the benevolent subject. Linda, in this scene, attempting to console Bobby comes out with her own matching experience of the houseboys. She suggest that "African" workers lacked "dignity" for they never appear to suffer humiliation for insults they receive: "You expect suicide at least, but in the quarters they are having a high old time" (p. 151).

Linda's overture does not help Bobby to forget the scene - on the contrary the scene gains poignance as it evokes the traumatic fears of Bobby. The "scratches" which the African worker has made on the windscreen transpose Bobby into the memory of deeper and frightening scratches that would haunt him lifelong: "These scratches...I suppose I'll get used to them [as if they are made on his body]. I was bitten by my mother's dog...I still have the marks and, you

know, I am rather pleased to have them". The "scratches" leading to a traumatic experience retain indelibly the dog-bite and the memory of mother in Bobby. But the mother - through the metonym of dog - becomes the castrating figure for Bobby. For, soon after the dog-bite, and leading from that ("I had a recrudescence of my old trouble") his penis was cauterised: "they burnt the skin off the tip of my penis" (p. 152). If the figure of the mother is the incapacitating, crippling force in the beginning the figure of the other ("Africa(ns)") recrudesces this trauma (Linda also is a "maneater" whom Bobby fears and is repulsed by; she becomes at one point the wounding figure in Bobby's dream)[8]. The mechanism of vacillation, thus, posits the other as the fetish - for the other is at once maintained through recognition and disavowed. The shudder of the primal loss, the fear of incapacitation captures the Bobby figure once again in the narrative - and it is once again occasioned by the fetishised other. But before we move on to that scene it is necessary to note that the character system in general functions on that condition of fixation. This can be traced in the scene with the colonel.

The colonel runs a hotel in the country. Bobby and Linda stop at the hotel for the night. The colonel engulfs his guests with his hysteria about the black workers in his hotel. He talks, like Lord Stockwell in *MM*, about the eating habits of various races. And "Africa" in his talk, as in the voice of the narrative authority, is always the mobs, the "Africans". The colonel could be described as a champion of the "civilising mission" - that dissimulating activity of imperialism as making a 'good society' (cf. Ch. Two). His passion is in "training", disciplining the "Africans". He talks about his past glory nostalgically: "I remember how we'd train men for Salonika, India, and places like that...Sometimes we had to strap them to the horses. *Ah-wa-wa!* You'd hear them bawling at the other end of the ground. Some of them would develop rashes an inch thick. But we'd make riders out of them" (p. 179). The colonel's hysteria is in his attempt to make his workers believe in his mission, in the importance of his presence in the society and their "dependence" on him. "You wouldn't believe" the colonel tells his audience about Peter (a worker in the colonel's hotel), "he doesn't even know how to hold a pen in those hands. You wouldn't believe the filth he comes out of. But you like dirt, don't you, Peter?

You like going in to some black hole to eat filth and dance naked. You will steal and lie to do that, won't you?" (p. 181). But lurking beneath the colonel's talk about his glory and power is the very terror that grips Linda and Bobby - the fear of the other, the "Africa(n)". The hysteria about "training" and caring very much, like the discourse of civilising mission (which itself is constituted by such practices and arguments), is a strategy to control, recognise, define and fix the other, do disarm and domesticate him/her. But, however palatable this "African" may be, as Fanon writes, "unfortunately the Negro knocks down the system and breaks the treaties"[9]. And it is this threat that makes the colonel reject, reinscribe his own discourse constantly: "While I live you will stay there. You won't move in here, Peter. I don't want you to bank on that. If I die you will starve, Peter. You will go back to bush" (p. 181).

The logic of the colonel's discourse makes it clear that the other can never acquire any status than the stereotype in which he is fixated. The colonel's anxieties verge on delirium; he constantly repeats to himself: "I'll be waiting. I'll say, 'It's Peter. Peter hates me.' And you won't come past that door. I'll kill you. I'll shoot you dead...This is how I swear my oath...under these lights, in the open, before witnesses. Tell your friends" (p. 183). It is both the terror and a desperate attempt to control the signifiers of terror that mark the anxiety. Apparently it is a conversation between the colonel and Peter but the colonel's reaction is very much caught in the drama of vacillation in figuring the other as a fetish - fearful and desirable.

Linda too shares the very sentiments of civilizing mission which the colonel figure passionately upholds. But when Linda expresses them Bobby appears to resent her. At one point in the narrative Linda gives an account of her frightful tales about the castrating, terrifying other. In spite of the fears about the other Linda cannot help complimenting her own decision to live in the country: "I never dreamt that so much of my married life would have been spent anguishing about things like 'terms of service'" (p. 124). In response to the self-pitying comment Bobby appears to be angry and to distantiate himself from Linda by recriminating other expatriates for their corruption: "We lecture the Africans about corruption. But there's a lot of anguish and talk about prejudice when they rumble our little rackets. And

not so little either. We were spending thousands on overseas baggage allowances for baggage that never went anywhere" (p. 124). Bobby's benevolent self-criticism certainly sets him apart here from the unrepentant imperialist subject such as Linda, but it is not difficult to notice the limits of such benevolence in the narrative. In the drama of vacillation I am unravelling the moment the object moves away from the zone of familiarity, where identification was thought to be possible, where through recognition the object could be controlled, Bobby's benevolence fades away into fear and the subject feels endangered. This can be seen in their encounter with the trade union workers on their way.

Bobby and Linda stop at a restaurant - Hunting Lodge - for coffee. They wait till lunch there and when they are about to leave Bobby is asked to give a ride to a worker. Bobby takes him in and immediately fixates him in his (the "African's") "smell": "He filled the car with his smell" (p. 136). Once the African is reduced to what is familiar Bobby begins a conversation only to strengthen his stereotype. The African tells him he works as an "Anyanist". Bobby elaborates the word with unconcealed mockery: "Oh, you mean *trade* unionist. You *organize* the workers, you *bargain* with the employers, you get your members more money, better conditions. That's right?" (p. 136 emphasis original). The mocking definition of the terms is at the same time to fix the African in his (Bobby's) own terms. Soon they find another worker standing on the road drenched in the rain. The African asks Bobby to take the drenched man in: "Linda rolled down her window and breathed deeply" (pp. 136-37). Bobby is quick to identify the new African as another unionist. When Bobby reaches the road where he has to take a different route the first African asks Bobby to drive in the direction he wished to go. When Bobby is still undecided as to what to do Linda puts her hand on the rear door handle and asks the workers to go out of the car. Bobby stops the car immediately and the Africans walk into the rain.

On the heels of 'recognition', as it were, comes the fantasy of fright, threat. The moment the Africans move out of the familiarizing definitions (Bobby gave them) they become signifiers of nightmare, they appear to strain the limits of his benevolence. The narrative authority

registers both the signs associated with the vacillation of recognition and disavowal - "smile" and "menace". The "Africans" at once are smiling and menacing creatures. Though the narrative authority adds that both the signs were of no importance Linda says in her very next sentence: "What a smell! ... Absolute gangsters. I'm not going to get myself killed simply because I'm too nice to be rude to Africans". The shivers of terror, as Said has argued[10], constantly force the subject, in the colonial contexts, to fixate the "African" (other) as a frightful creature: "It's these damned oaths they're swearing. They feel that everybody's scared stiff of them as a result... You can smell the filth they've been eating...It is a smell of rotting vegetation and Africans. One is very much like the other" (pp. 138-39). Linda is narrativized in the text at once as a devouring yet barren female. The trauma she dreads in the presence of the other is that of rape and mutilation. She says that she "hated the place from the first day [she] came here..." From that very first day, she says, she wanted to get away from "Africa". For "Africa" threatens her with cannibalism and savage lust: "You go out driving...and you see a naked savage with a penis one foot long...You see two naked boys painted white running about the public highway" (p. 218). Bobby, resentful of Linda's assertions, attempting to distantiate himself from her asks what prevented her from leaving "Africa". Linda's response is only slightly different from that of the colonel's earlier. Recounting some more "frightful stories" Linda claims that : "You should either stay away, or you should go among them with the whip in your hand. Anything in between is ridiculous" (p. 218). Bobby, in a self-flagellating response, lashes out at Linda at this point but his own benevolent self-criticism does not differ much from Linda's or the colonel's. And the narrative voice itself overlapping with that of the character system defines the "Africans" (in the scene with the workers) through a trope that serves as a variation in the same stereotyping: "the Africans standing on the highway. Black: *emblematic*". And the emblem is dissolved "in the rain and against the tar". Bobby sees it in the mirror.

The next scene opens with Bobby repenting his disavowal (rejecting the Africans in the rain), which, at the surface level of the narrative, is articulated in his resentment against Linda:

"I've never got on with people who talk about things like the smell of Africa" (p. 139). But, of course, Bobby himself would like that "smell" in a familiar, known atmosphere: "in a warm shuttered room", as part of his desired object (p. 139). That is, Bobby, very much like Linda, though apparently seeming to differ from her, recognises the other as long as it is metonymically fixated, made "palatable". Once there is uncertainty about this metonymical, emblematic reduction Bobby too is terrified by the savagery of the other. And it is precisely in this metonymical 'partial' way that Linda 'recognises' the police officer who stops them on the way. The officer is, as Linda defines him, "the fat one, with plain and fancy clothes" (p. 140). After the search of the car the officer smiles and raises his hat. The narrative voice records that his hair was done in "English style". The gesture, the appearance enable Linda to recognise the officer: "It's a consolation anyway that he's one of 'ours'" (p. 141). Bobby does not seem to pay attention to Linda's comment. But in an identical scene on a next stop it is Bobby who recognises and identifies the 'African' in more emphatic terms.

The scene is an 'accident' spot where the king is probably killed. A black American officer, a man of "authority" approaches Bobby's car and tells him about the 'accident'. In this scene too it is possible to see the overlapping of the narrative voice with the voices of the characters. Linda responds "to the authority of this man." The narrative registers the identification clearly: "The smile and the accent, and the unexpected compassion of the advice ["Drive carefully"], gave his words authority. Bobby felt the little thrill of human fellowship. It was something more than the sentimentality that overcame him whenever, innocent himself, and white, he met African officials or policemen doing a difficult duty. He was anxious to show that he obeyed, was responsive" (p. 213). This scene symptomatically embodies the argument I am constructing. The identification of 'human fellowship' that the narrative attributes to Bobby is not the result of the American policeman doing his duty conscientiously. For the plain-clothes officer in the earlier scene too was doing his 'duty' and very much according to the 'rules'. But neither the characters nor the narrative voice feels any feeling of 'fellowship' with that officer and other officers met on the journey. However, there is a

'recognition' of the officer and this 'recognition' colludes the narrative voice and the voices of the characters, and this 'recognition' could be called metonymic fixation: the officer becomes one of "ours".

(iii)

Benevolent self-criticism and self-mortification in the character system do not alleviate its fear about the traumatising other, its paranoid anxiety about the 'native'. The text of "In a Free State" seems to reinforce the view of the 'native' as the terrifying and castrating other. The earlier scene of recrudescence of primal fears, occasioned by the scratches made by the worker, repeats in the narrative once again suggesting the other as a source of incapacitation. This scene, however, occurs soon after the incident with the hysterical colonel pronouncing his judgements on the 'natives' and asserting his passion for 'training'. The colonel's outburst and the panic it conceals works on Bobby and Linda. Soon after the incident with the colonel they both take a walk on the boulevard near the hotel. They walk through the colonial holiday resort area till the end of the boulevard and continue their walk further. As they venture into the area with "overgrown gardens" and intense "blackness" they hear a dog barking. In no time they find that the barking dog is joined by a pack of growling dogs: "and soon they were walking between dogs *that obeyed no boundaries*." The pack threateningly surrounds them, "paws ripping through undergrowth, and then, over the low twisted wooden fence...And always from the black road ahead, came the sound of more dogs. *No voices called to the dogs*" (p. 188 emphasis added). The narrative voice is hinting at a scene that is more than a mere dog chase.

In that moment of panic Linda reminds Bobby of the trauma he had suffered from the dog-bite: "You said your mother's dog left those two parallel lines on your calf?" (p. 189). Earlier, we remember, Bobby referred to the dog and his mother as "poor dog and poor mother" and said that he very much liked to have those scratches on his calf. That was in a mood of identification with and recognition of not just the African who made the scratches on the

windscreen but the very trauma itself in familiar terms (to recognise the castrating effect). That was the controlled situation, though it does not completely conceal the threat. Now after all the panic-stricken talk of the colonel about disciplining and training, Bobby, amidst the "dogs" threatening to tear them apart, reacts with a terror which is more acute than the colonel's: "I'll kill them. I'm wearing these steel-tipped shoes. I'll kill the first one that attacks me. I'll kick its *skull* in. I'll kill it" (p. 189). Such hysterical repetition echoes not just the colonel's fears but even deeper primal fears. For the figure of the dog, as I have suggested earlier, has two associations and both these culminate in threatening the subject with the dread of castration: the other ('native') and the mother. Both appear as the overpowering forces in the narrative. Both the panic-stricken subjects reassert the colonel's discourse on disciplining as a way of controlling the threatening forces. Bobby says that the dogs were brought to attack the Africans: "They trained them to attack Africans." Linda adds that they were not trained well. The narrative authority says earlier that the dogs obeyed no boundaries, but now shows that the edge of the boulevard is their boundary. These "dogs" were the creatures of darkness, the narrative authority suggests: "the darkness was thinning in the flourescent light; and the boulevard was the boundary the dogs recognised" (p. 189).

The scene, as it is textualized, immediately preceded by the colonel's discourse on discipline and followed by another appropriate scene further exemplifies the text's ruses and the motifs I am constructing. That the figures of the other and the mother, metonymically expressed through the dogs, are incapacitating forces can be seen in two dreams which the text arranges symmetrically at the beginning and end of the narrative. The night after the shock of the opening scene with the Zulu the Bobby figure has a dream. In the dream Bobby feels that he was on his back and a "liveried boy was standing above him" - almost like the castrating figure. And the dream indeed has that effect on Bobby, for he feels that his head ached so much that it might explode; the dream appears to be a variation in the theme of castration (p. 110). An identical dream repeats towards the end of the narrative immediately after his final 'adventure' with Carolus (another of his object-choices). But the castrating agent here is not

just the other but mainly a "woman whose identity he couldn't be sure of." He dreams that he is at the wheel and the "woman" figure has mortally wounded him with her recriminations: "Everything she said was accurate; everything was wounding; ... she wounded him and wounded him, more and more deeply; and there was rage and ache in his head, which seemed to explode." This wound and the exploding head make him collapse and stretch himself (p. 197). But it is important to see that the dream is occasioned by the figure of the other - the object of desire.

After the scene with the "dogs" Bobby returns to the hotel exhausted and sits in the bar looking at the "dusty head of the barboy." One finds now in Bobby his feelings of fear vacillating towards that of identification: "Bobby thought: poor boy, poor African, poor African's head [earlier it was "poor dog and poor mother"]; and tears began to come to Bobby's eyes" (p. 190). We remember Bobby responding in a similar way in his first adventure with the Zulu (Bobby's blue eyes moistened then). "Affection and hostility", Freud writes discussing the theme of fetishism, "in the treatment of the fetish - which run parallel with the disavowal and acknowledgement of castration - are mixed in unequal proportions in different cases, so that one or the other is more clearly recognisable"[11]. Now Bobby's move, as in the scene with the Zulu before the unexpected threat moved him away, is toward "affection" or identification with the fetish - the love object, the "African". But to recognise and identify, as I have been arguing, metonymies of fixation have to be deployed, the terms of recognition have to be defined. In the process of attempting that Bobby reproaches himself for being caught up in his own anxieties and for being "influenced by the colonies", as a result of which, he thinks, he has ignored the boy for so long. But in spite of his self-reproach and attempts to free himself from the colonel's 'influence' the very terms Bobby uses to make a contact with and to show affection toward the "African" are precisely from the very discourse the colonel rehearsed in Bobby's presence. The narrative authority registers this mode of recognition: "they [the "Africans"] hoped not only to practise their English but also to acquire manners and knowledge." Bobby slips unhesitantly into the role of the teacher: "It moved Bobby to be

singled out in this way" (p. 190). Very soon after assuming the role of the teacher Bobby contemplates an adventure and invites the boy - Carolus - to his room that night. The intimacy he attempts to establish with his love-object at that moment is disturbed by the sudden noise of his car's burglar alarm.

Later that night Bobby waits in his room for Carolus. Carolus turns up with tea. But contrary to his expectations, in spite of the bargain (Bobby promises to give Carolus five shillings) Carolus informs the colonel about the tea and brings a bill from the colonel. Bobby's disappointment angers him: "Anger swept through Bobby; and his anger grew at the sight of Carolus's heavy face" (p. 196). Bobby signs the bill furiously and asks Carolus to go out of the room at once. But Carolus does not budge and demands the promised money: "You give me." Bobby becomes uncontrollable and shouts in rage and humiliation: "Give you? Give you nothing. Give you whip" (p. 196). Bobby is now sliding toward the point of hostility in his vacillation in relation to the object. But then the other point is also the point of nightmare, the point which recrudesces his primal fears. Carolus's face suddenly terrifies Bobby: "Sitting up in bed, looking at the inflamed African face coming nearer to his, he saw it invaded by such blank and mindless rage that his own anger vanished in terror, terror at something he sensed to be beyond his control, beyond his reason" (p. 196). Indeed, that which is beyond control and reason is precisely the fear of the primal threat that traumatises the subject in the colonial discourse: "those terrifying stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy which are the signal points of identification and alienation, scenes of fear and desire, in colonial contexts"[12]. But the vacillation in Bobby's case seems too rapid. The moment he gives Carolus money Bobby feels that he has "misread the boy's face, had seen things in it that were not there", that Carolus was only "fresh from the bush" (pp. 196-97). But the terror that strikes him in that moment like the panic of the scene with the "anarchic" "dogs" is something that is associated with his object of desire - the "Africa(n)".

In the last scene of the novella both the forces of incapacitation - the other and the mother - are combined in the figure of the soldier who fractures Bobby's body. The soldier's "eyes were

friendly, womanish" (p. 230). That is a mere moment of recognition, desire. And the scene presently repeats an event that occurred much earlier in Bobby's life. The soldiers crush his wrist and not only smash his watch (which happened earlier - p. 153) but fracture his wrist now: "the knowledge of the fracture, so deliberate, the knowledge that what had been *whole* all his life had been broken" (p. 232). The watch with broken glass in the earlier scene is itself associated with another breakdown ("watching yourself become a ghost" p. 153) which along with that other traumatising experience of cauterization is recrudesced by the scratches made by the other (the "African" and the mother's 'dog'). In the present scene the broken wrist and watch once again emphasise the lack, the incapacitation, incompleteness, which the subject suffers from the (m)other. The other once again becomes the agent of castration: the act of castration "may be distorted, or replaced by other types of attack upon the wholeness of the body (accidents, syphillis, surgical operations)...It is possible to put castration anxiety in the context of a series of traumatic experiences which are also characterised by an element of loss or separation from an object"[13]. The text of "In a Free State", as I am arguing, through its various ruses and desires constitutes the subject as an incapacitated being. And in order to do that the text also defines the native as the castrating agency.

(iv)

The text of "In a Free State" brilliantly captures through its ruses of vacillation and fixation the more recent arguments about colonial discourse developed by critics like Homi Bhabha. The pattern of "experience" the ruses develop forcefully brings out the imperialist conception of the colonial scene as the dangerous cathexis. This aspect of the text, however, makes one wonder about Bhabha's argument which is mainly constructed on colonialist texts. My point is that Bhabha taking his cue from Said's *Orientalism* confines his analysis to preeminently European texts. A text like "In a Free State", I feel, problematises such a restriction of his otherwise useful argument. For such a text is no longer constructed by an

imperialist subject in this context - and yet the apparatus of vacillation and fixation construct the other as dangerous cathexis. I feel that Bhabha's argument, very much like Said's earlier book, does not pay sufficient attention to such problematic postcolonial texts.

However, the apparent radicality of the Naipaul text, as I have said earlier, is itself problematic. One wonders whether the virtue of deploying expatriate (imperialist) subjects absolves the text entirely from a certain complicity with what it appears to critique. To be politically radical the postcolonial text needs to distinguish its own construction of the other (if such a term is appropriate at all) from the ruses it provides for the character system in its (the system's) cathecting of the native into an other. But the text of "In a Free State" with its device of radical realism and its overlapping with the character system in fixing and representing the native, appears to fall short of any such intention. The critique must *assign* the 'native' a different position than the one it finds in the colonial discourse. Otherwise, the critique (if it is intended) turns out to be a benevolent one. And such a critique cannot escape from the bind of constructing the other as a figure of the threatening uncanny.

In the Naipaul text in general, however, "In a Free State", is the only narrative to address itself to the problem of constructing the imperialist subject[14]. But the process of subject constitution one sees in the Naipaul text in general - through the ruses of deferral and anticipation, and vacillation and fixation - further dilute the radical intent (if any) of the text in its reading of the imperialist subjectivity. For these very ruses and their effect of incapacitation constitute postcoloniality in Naipaul's text. In fact one need not unravel the entire text (spreading from 1988 to 1957) in order to track this mode of subject constitution. For a single text like *In a Free State*, with its apparently odd weaving together of genres such as journal entries, short stories and a novella, where each of these repeats the story of subject formation with a variation, unfolds the situation of postcoloniality. I think it is more rewarding to read the weaving of this text in terms of subject formation and postcoloniality for the narrative import as Naipaul's text's in general is generated toward representative of postcolonial situation.

The journal entries that flank the stories and novella on both sides in the form of Prologue

and Epilogue in fact anticipate and repeat a form of subjectivity which the body of the text weaves out in varied ways. The Prologue sets forth the narrative's encounter with what I wish to call the 'scapegoat subject'. The scapegoat subject is very much like the narrative subject but the latter fears the former and observes him only from a 'distance'. The scapegoat subject in the 'Prologue' is a tramp who looks "very English" but is not. The narrative subject speculates that the other "might have been a romantic wanderer of an earlier generation" guarding an unfinished creative piece in his rucksack (p. 8). The narrative subject himself appears to be a variation of the scapegoat in that he is a modern version of the other wanderer: "tourists like *ourselves*, who were *neutral*, travelling only for the sights" (p. 8 emphasis added). And as the narrative subject constructs the scene there are only two "observes" on the steamer - the narrator and the tramp: the narrator observers the scapegoat "surveying the room", their audience (pp. 8, 11). They both appear to wish for the "camouflage and protection of company" but in fact desire only "privacy" (pp. 9, 11). But this very 'recognition' of the other is tainted for the narrative subject with the fear of the scapegoat. He only seeks to protect himself alone: "I fear to be involved with him" - and so remains as the "neutral" "tourist" (p. 12). The other is recognised and yet disavowed.

This pattern of vacillation continues and repeats in the Epilogue also. If the scapegoated subject (the tramp) perturbs the narrative subject in the Prologue a variation of that in the form of a spectacle disturbs him in the Epilogue. The narrative subject, towards the end of his journey is on his way to visit ancient Egyptian temples at Luxor. He stops at a resthouse on the way there. There he sees a group of beggar boys in front of the resthouse picking up the crumbs of bread from the sand the tourists threw at them. A man who serves coffee in the resthouse constantly runs among the boys with a camel whip. The scene becomes an entertainment for the Italian tourists who wait to photograph the man with the camel whip attacking the boys. When he really begins to beat the boys the narrative subject is enraged. The long-controlled neutrality of the tourist appears to thaw, the recognition-scene reemerges as it were: "I saw that my hand was trembling. I put down the sandwich I was eating on the metal

table; it was *my last decision*. Lucidity, and anxiety, came to me only when I was almost on the man with the camel whip" (p. 243 emphasis mine). But the mood of identification, the decision to transact with the world, to get involved with the other, evaporates in no time. On the heels of the recognition comes the moment of disavowal and threat; and the subject feels exhausted, drained by the decision and desires only to withdraw at once: "I felt exposed, futile, and wanted only to be back at my table" (pp. 243-44). And the rest of his stay at Luxor, he suggests, is tainted by his mood of futility and feeling of incapacitatedness: "Soon they [the boys] would be back, raking the sand for what they had seen the Italian throw out"(p. 244). The mood of disavowal continues and even takes the form of a longing for that original completeness, an unviolated beginning. He projects such a vision on to an ancient Egyptian painting: "Perhaps that had been the only pure time, at the beginning, when the ancient artist, knowing no other land, had learned to look at his own and had seen it as complete" (p. 246). In contrast with the violating reality that vision, the narrative subject feels, remains only "fabrication" a "cause for yearning". However, the narrative ruses of recognition and disavowal, which are in a way a repetition with a variation of the ruses of deferral and premonition which we have seen in *MM*, seem to project a possibility of an unviolated order, an untainted plenitude. Indeed it is such a project that we see Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* promising. The subject, the figure of the writer, in *EA* in contrast with the incapacitated ones we have seen so far in the Naipaul text, claims access to such a perfect order. In the text *EA* the writer figure narrativizes his experience of writing a book that resembles the novella we are analysing here. What is important to note here is that in the narrativization, the subject claims to have found 'fulfilment'. That is, the subject is projected no longer as an incapacitated being, someone with a lack so to speak. We will come back to this theme later on. In contrast to that, the way the text of *IFS* like *MM* constitutes subjectivity does not leave us any option for a dialogue with that 'violating' world it narrativizes. The model of subjectivity they conceive remains an incapacitated one.

In such a narrativization of subjectivity the real power-wielders appear to be only

anonymously present. In the text of "In a Free State" they are signified by the incessantly *yak-yaking* helicopter hovering in the text almost until the end, and the American soldiers cropping up here and there. It is certainly true that the very emergence of the postcolonial condition is inextricably linked with American imperialism in the post war period. But it is precisely because of this that the situation of postcoloniality - the variously situated categories of the 'natives' - can no longer be assumed to be transparently available. For the situation (consisting of factors such as "dependency", "tribalism" and "feudality") is constantly *maintained*. The device of radical realism which the text adopts to narrativize the postcolonial condition in terms of "immemorial" landscapes, and the "bush" life of the "natives", seems to be predicated on such an assumption of transparency. In the context of Africa, as politically interested historians such as Samir Amin and Manning Marable suggest, such transparency can never be found, especially after the systematic disruption of the continent in various historical periods[15]. It is only when the condition of postcoloniality is historically situated and analysed in politico-economic terms of world capitalism that the postcolonial subject finds a possibility of transacting with that world. It is highly doubtful whether Naipaul's mode of subject constitution can achieve that.

If the Naipaul text articulates postcoloniality through the scapegoated figure of the incapacitated subject my contention is, as I argue, that the (hidden) agenda of the text is self-consolidation. The subject, fabricated through various ruses, is distantiated from the 'self' that weaves the subject. I have attempted to concentrate on certain moments of this weaving in this section. The next section is an attempt to elaborate Naipaul's engagement with the scapegoat and analyses the ruses in the context of the 'world' and the context of the 'self'.

Section B Postcolonial Dispatches

(Chapters Five to Seven)

Chapter Five: Allegories of Information

NATIVE INFORMANT -1: MANOHAR MALGONKAR

NATIVE INFORMANT - 2: U.R. ANANTHA MURTHY

NATIVE INFORMANT - 3: SUDHIR KAKAR

NATIVE INFORMANT - 4: M.K. GANDHI

The narrative movement of the Naipaul text moves along the lines of self-restoration. The text figures this project of self-restoration through the construction of an incapacitated subject who operates more or less as a scapegoat in the text. The scapegoat thus posited can be construed as a narrativization of (post)coloniality in the text. Postcoloniality, for our purpose, could be described as the specificity of the postcolonial world involved in the global politico-historical forces, and the effect of that world: the postcolonial subject. That is, the term postcoloniality indicates a certain formation of the subject as an effect of the imperialist expansion, and its shaping of the world. The project of self-restoration adopts a procedure in narrativizing postcoloniality which would be termed a scapegoat mechanism[1]. A scapegoat mechanism is a method of producing meaning through what the method assumes to be pure opposites; that is, the site of meaning is indicated through opposites and the relation between the opposites is hierarchised. Thus, in the Naipaul text the scapegoat that is figured is someone *against* whom in an attempt to radically differentiate and distantiate himself the narrativizing subject operates in the text's representation of the postcolonial world. That is, as I will argue, even a patently auto-biographical project (a genre which is known for its *self*-contestation) can rely on a scapegoat mechanism in its self-definition.

In the earlier sections of the thesis I have demonstrated how Naipaul's project narrativizes the (post)colonial as an incapacitated figure. The text seems to construe almost all the figures of the narratives from 1957 to 1987 as debilitated subjects; and it is against such scapegoated figures that the project of self-restoration is plotted. When one observes these various figures spread across the Naipaul text what strikes one is the absence of one particular figure which Naipaul cherished: the figure of the writer. (There are two exceptions which I will explain shortly). Thus when we survey the text we see the gallery of ('defective') figures. Mr. Biswas is a painter of signs, a shopkeeper, a journalist and a *failed* writer; if the writer in the text *AHB* is Anand, as some critics claim, we can see that the text preserves that aspect of Anand outside the narrativization; he does not enter the narrative as a writer. Ralph Singh is mainly a politician recording his memoirs; Santosh is a servant; Jimmy Ahmed in *The Guerrillas* is a

"revolutionary"; Salim in *A Bend in The River* is a shopkeeper; and Bobby is a civil servant; Ganesh Pundit in *The Mystic Masseur,* as the name indicates, is first a pundit and then a politician. The figure of the writer is conspicuous by its absence in the Naipaul text.

But there are two exceptions to this pattern. One *does* find the figure of the writer in the earliest narrative of Naipaul, *Miguel Street* (1959)[2]. Here the writer appears in the figure of Mr. B. Wordsworth. The other exception is the recent 'novel' *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) where this 'novel in five sections' is about the writer and his business of writing. Why is it, one wonders, that the figure of the writer is 'outside' the signification in which we find the representation of postcoloniality? What do these exceptions signify? It could, perhaps, be said that they signify an asymmetry in the text and as its effect a privileging of the figure of the writer. The writer does not appear as the scapegoated figure in the text. In *Miguel Street,* for instance, the text establishes a curious consonance between the narrative subject and the figure of the poet in two respects. In spite of the comical adoption of the name, Black Wordsworth, to refer to a figure in the Caribbean countryside, the text distinguishes this figure from all the others in the narratives in two ways. Firstly, by giving this figure the standardized language of the narrative subject - whereas *all* the other figures in this text speak the dialect. Secondly, while all the other figures - Bogart, Hat, Popo etc., - are constructed on the tragic formula of undergoing a surprise reversal of fortune, and of suffering from a tragic character defect[3], the narrative subject and the poet figure are freed from this tragic frame. There is no reversal of fortunes in the construction of these two figures. Thus at the textual level one finds Naipaul's investment in the figure of the writer. For Naipaul, as I suggested, it is the figure of the scapegoated other that becomes a source through which self-consolidation can be achieved. Thus all the figures that appear in the thirty-year span of the text are more or less the "negative" models of the scapegoat. The "negative" models are reinscribed at every turn in order to distinguish the narrativizing 'self'. The 'self' begins to be produced through this positing of opposites - the 'self' and its opposite - the scapegoat. And the ground of that production - the narrative - in turn becomes the valorized and unproblematic medium of self-restoration in the

text. *The Enigma of Arrival* can be analysed, as I will show in a later section, as an epitomization of such a quest and such a valorization. For it is in this text that one can bring together the various strands of the project (of self-restoration) spread over thirty years.

If one of the ways of constructing "negative" models is through the narrativization of the incapacitated subject as the signifier of postcoloniality, there is, however, another trajectory, which the drama of self-restoration relies on, and it is a repetition or variation of the earlier activity: designating the scapegoat. The drama this time is enacted through the construction of or representation of "India". In this part of my thesis I will attempt to analyse the modes through which this designation of the scapegoated "India" is figured. The objects of analysis will be the two narratives on India (*An Area of Darkness*, 1964; and *India: A Wounded Civilization*, 1977) and the narratives Naipaul uses within these narratives (Malgonkar's *The Princes*, 1961; U.R. Anantha Murthy's *Samskara*, 1967)[4]. My contention is that these various narratives are employed to figure the construct "India" and that object is then declared as the historico-geographical referent - India. Instead of pursuing the truth of measuring the construct against the referent, I will argue, in these narratives we can track the windings of the project of self-consolidation.

Naipaul functions as the investigating subject in producing the scapegoat other in his narratives on India. The concept of the 'investigating subject' appears to operate originally in ethnographic discourses; the investigating subject constructs these discourses which are re-presentations of other cultures for the purposes of the culture of the subject. The concept in fact partakes of a much larger philosophical tradition than its association with ethnographic discourses implies. For in setting up the distinction between inquirer and the object of inquiry as the starting point the concept follows the postulation of an epistemological binarism established in the philosophical tradition (of the West). In establishing the binarism of the subject versus the object of inquiry, the model proceeds as if these two categories were mutually exclusive, separable through clearly defined and maintained boundaries; the categories thus defined are hierarchised in the model[5]. Although Naipaul can claim the advantage of being an

"insider", through his ancestral link to India, his narratives nonetheless follow the paradigmatic activity of the investigating subject: use of native informants. Native informants are the main, perhaps the only source, for the investigating subject in his/her construction of knowledge about 'other' societies. As in the ethnographic discourses the native informant (in Naipaul's text as well) becomes the authoritative representative of the 'native' customs, practices, languages, in short the key to knowledge about the object - the 'native' world. Because of this positioning of the native informant the information s/he provides acquires transparent value in the constructions of the investigating subject.

In order to track the windings of the self-restoration project in the Naipaul text we will focus on four of the native informants Naipaul employs in his narratives to figure the scapegoated other. These are: Manohar Molgankar (and his narrative, *The Princes*), 2) U.R. Anantha Murthy (and his narrative *Samskara*), 3) Sudhir Kakar (and his disciplinary truths) and 4) M.K. Gandhi (and his reflections). In concentrating on four of these figures I have two points to make: firstly, to assert that it is possible to select certain moments of a text or from the narrativization of an event in order to dislodge the dominant concerns of the text or the narrativization; secondly, in mixing the "historical" (i.e., 'nonfictional') sources with "literary" (i.e., 'fictional') ones my attempt is to contest the conventional hierarchisation of Naipaul's work into 'nonfiction' and 'fiction' which I analysed earlier. My analysis, in the following sections, will attempt to show how Naipaul through a specific reading strategy - which I wish to call essentialist hermeneutic - reinscribes the scapegoat in all the information he gathers from the native informants. Further, I will show how Naipaul's project of self-restoration allegorises the information, and how the modes of narrativization adopted by the informants themselves are in a certain complicity with Naipaul's schema. The purpose of my own reading is to indicate how such readings (offered by Naipaul and his informants) abstract postcoloniality from a network of forces whose effect it after all is.

NATIVE INFORMANT - 1 : MANOHAR MALGONKAR

(i)

In the early sections of *AD* through carefully orchestrated autobiographical reflections and anecdotes functioning as tropes embodying an argument, Naipaul devises three indices to figure "India"; these are "caste", "poverty" and "religion". These indices shaped with the status and claim of Naipaul as the 'investigating subject' and the 'native informant', as I will show in the following sections, are also at the same time used to distinguish the narrativizing self. It is in order to substantiate his tropological argument that Naipaul draws on the information from the native - Manohar Molgankar and his narrative *The Princes*. At one level the brevity and precision of Naipaul's argument about *The Princes*, the active decoding of certain lexes and passages, is illuminating and admirable. Naipaul's reading of the novel aims at defining the governing norms of the society and this is done by treating the relation between the narrator of the novel and the 'untouchable', Kanakchand, as paradigmatic of the entire society.

In Naipaul's recounting of the novel we see that the king (Hiroji - father of the narrator, Abhayraj) covers up his aboriginal ("casteless") past by altering his genealogy with the favour of brahmins; the brahmins reinscribe his genealogy with noble caste provenance. The king is against social progress and discourages education in his kingdom but spends lavishly on his personal whims. However, he gives five minimal scholarships annually to deserving students. In the school, established by the narrator's grandfather, the 'untouchable' boys study along with princes. But they sit on the floor at the back of the class. When the princes play they provide the audience from a distance. Naipaul picks up a scene from the novel in which Kanakchand joins princes in the play one day. In the play he trips Charudutt - a half-cousin of Abhayraj. All the bullying princes of the class along with Abhayraj abuse Kanakchand: "Cow-eaters, stinkers, cow-skinners" (p. 64). When Charudutt beats him and along with other throws him into a pond Kanakchand shouts back at him: "Bastard!... You are no prince. You are a whore's

son" (p. 64). Abhayraj is attracted by the word and asks his private tutor (an Englishman) the meaning of the term. Naipaul's reading aiming to allegorise the relation between the prince and the untouchable remarks, after recounting the scene, that neither "tutor nor pupil speaks of the scene in the school ground" (p. 64). But the text of the novel shows otherwise. For the tutor, after hearing the story from the prince, does comment, albeit mildly, that the princes should not have thrown the boy and his books into the pond (*P* p. 45).

In fact what the benevolent tutor speculates turns out to be true the following day. Kanakchand is sent out of the class for attending without books which he cannot afford to buy. Abhayraj, as Naipaul recounts, then generously gives his own books to Kanakchand. Kanakchand finds a gift book of Abhayraj among the class books and promptly returns it to the prince. It is, Naipaul feels, a touching scene and rendered with fidelity. But the remark that immediately follows the scene, Naipaul observes pertinently, distorts it all and "cuts the ground from under our feet" (p. 64). "He was as sound as a silver rupee when he began," Abhayraj comments, "What made him turn so sour and twisted in later life?" (p. 64). Naipaul puts his finger on this crucial passage and his insight is brilliant; but the problem with this reading arises in its refusal to examine that response (of Abhayraj) as an ideological construction in a text and not as a transparent model to be used to characterise the other from whom distance is desired. For Naipaul's reading of the novel is within his tropological schema which attempts to establish the model of domination and surrender or obedience ('Degree') as paradigmatic of the other (India). In such a figuration of the other resistance to the model is never seen from within it: it is always outside it, expressed by the investigating subject[6]. Thus we find Naipaul pouncing on the passage with a comment which nevertheless combines passion, rhetoric, rage and concern: "Kanakchand sound as a silver rupee! Kanakchand, untouchable, cow-eater, stinker, squatting on the floor at the back of the class, sitting on the fountain wall for two days because he has lost his books! Did his soundness lie in his acceptance of degree? Did it lie in his refusal to steal from someone who had made him a valuable gift?" (pp. 64-65).

Yet, as Naipaul shows, the friendship between the prince and the untouchable develops.

Kanakchand from time to time tells the prince about the spreading nationalist movement. One day he pulls out a 'Gandhi-cap' from his pocket which shocks the prince for Kanakchand tells him that it is the cap and no longer the king which represents the people. This other aspect of the Kanakchand figure - its potential to offer resistance from within the model - remains unemphasized in Naipaul's reading. (This whole section of the novel, in which Kanakchand shows the prince the signs of spreading opposition to the king, called in the novel's hegemonic logic "The Education of a Commoner", does not appear in Naipaul's reading of the text.) But Naipaul picks up another scene which illustrates the index he uses in figuring "India": poverty. One day Kanakchand gives the prince some enormous bean-seeds as a gift. The prince does not know what to do with them and is embarrassed. Naipaul quotes the prince's response: "Abhayraj is 'vaguely distressed at my [sic] first contact with the playthings of the poor bean seeds [sic] found in the forest'" (p. 65). The prince is always at a loss to understand why the poor don't have money. Naipaul brilliantly picks up another (doubly) symptomatic passage from Abhayraj's rhetoric: "I did not realize it then, but Kanakchand was my first direct contact with the quivering poverty of India" (p. 65). This time it is not the entire passage that is important to Naipaul but for his analysis a specific word from the passage is crucial. "It is a singular word," Naipaul emphasises, "this *quivering*. At first it seems unnecessary; then it seems theatrical yet oddly matter-of-fact; then it seems a concession to a convention of feeling" (p. 65). Theatrical response to poverty, concession to a convention of feeling: the insight is important. Naipaul elaborates his argument, quoting a passage from the text in which the prince describes Kanakchand's lunch: one black roti, a chilli and an onion: "It seemed that even the onion was something of a treat, and that bajra or millet bread and chilli powder mixed with groundnut oil formed his main meal of the day. I watched with fascination as he ate, hungrily and with relish... He wolfed the very last crumb, biting alternately on the charred bajra roti and the onion. And when he finished the very last mouthful, he licked his fingers clean" (p. 65). The description (by the prince) is clinical and certainly, as Naipaul writes, it is "like a description of the feeding habits of a rare animal" (p. 65). And Naipaul then gives his

axiomatic gloss on the event: "Poverty as occasional spectacle: this is our poverty" (p. 65). The prince finds two chocolates in his pocket and offers one to Kanakchand who not knowing what the thing is throws it into his mouth, wrapper and all: "Abhayraj exclaims. Kanakchand spits it out and - sound as a silver rupee, remember - makes this curious statement: 'Oh, I didn't know. I thought Bal-raje was playing some kind of joke on me - making me eat green paper'" (p. 65). The friendship, Abhayraj's curiosity and generosity, all these would continue, Naipaul's reading implies, as long as Kanakchand remains obedient and acknowledges the rewards offered him. The model, thus, cannot be contested from within. And it is the investigating subject who would observe this incapacity of the scapegoat.

Like the gift of books and the reward of chocolates the prince showers on Kanakchand, as Naipaul shows, another favour for being obedient. He writes an essay for the untouchable to win the scholarship the king offers. But in India, as Naipaul figures it, one cannot contest the code of obedience whereas Kanakchand has already shown a potential for such a gesture. On the day of the presentation of the award the king, after a long peroration about how loyalty would be protected and dishonesty punished in his kingdom, whips Kanakchand for carrying the 'Gandhi-cap'. However, as the bond of loyalty between the prince and Kanakchand is not yet disrupted the prince persuades his mother to provide for the untouchable's education.

Abhayraj feels guilty and attempts to console Kanakchand who now avoids the prince. The prince is surprised and feels that in spite of his help, Kanakchand never shows any 'gratitude'. The anguish suffered by Abhayraj, Naipaul shows, is not because of Kanakchand's humiliation but because of "turning a high-spirited, ambitious boy into a malevolent revolutionary" (p. 66). Naipaul pounces once again: "again that distorting gloss, that cutting of the ground from under our feet" (p. 66).

Kanakchand becomes prominent in the national movement and is made a minister after the independence and the king loses his principality. The king unable to suffer the humiliation, goes out unarmed after a wounded tiger and is killed. Abhayraj the narrator describes Kanakchand now as a disgusting, cringing, repulsive character. He vows to avenge his father

whose values he has already accepted. One day while Kanakchand is speaking at a public meeting Abhayraj stands in the audience. Kanakchand hinting at the humiliation he has suffered at the hands of the king perorates about the atrocities of the king and enthuses the audience with ideas of freedom. Abhayraj interrupts the speech and walks onto the platform and flogs Kanakchand twice with his riding crop. "This is the action with which," Naipaul writes, "the book ends. This is what is presented for our approval; this is what, after the tragedy of the Prince's fall, restores calm of mind to the narrator and is meant to restore it to us" (p. 66). 'Rebellion' is a virtue that cannot be expected (or accepted) in India, Naipaul's reading strategy implies, and the native informant proves it.

(ii)

The investigating subject's reading of the 'native' information is pertinent but remains problematic. It is pertinent because it focuses on moments which cannot be avoided in any worthwhile analysis of the narrative. But at the same time the insights are problematic because of the way the moments are interpreted and the purpose they serve in the Naipaul text. The indices of poverty and hierarchic domination of caste are certainly important in discussions on India but to interpret all responses to it as essences, as components of a mentality is unacceptable. For the context which the investigating subject builds up through his tropological arguments and within which the reading of the narrative is located partakes of the epistemological space the subject constructs. And this space seems to figure a formula: poverty linked to caste (hierarchy) linked to religion is the mentality of Indians. Although the reading focuses on important moments it reduces the moments to some extra-textual essences and allegorises them as Indian 'reality'. In what specific ways the formula functions and the way the tropes embody it is elaborated in a subsequent section. But for the present it is necessary to note that the reading Naipaul offers of the text, because of its emphasis on certain essentialized features, ignores the wider network of historico-political forces which operate through it. It is

possible to read the narrative of *The Princes* from the aspect of it unemphasised in Naipaul's reading and see the effect of such undermining in the Naipaul text.

The Princes could be read as a treatment of the theme of 'infidelity' and loyalty. The theme is acted out through the triadic relationship of the king, the Rani and Kanakchand. Since the drama itself is set in the colonial period the primary triad is enveloped by another, larger triangle of relationships. The agents of the secondary triangle are the British, the king and the nationalists. My contention is that the theme of infidelity, through a kind of doubling-effect, intertwines the two triangles and enmeshes the narrator within them; and the narrator unashamedly celebrates the normative scheme of the patriarchal order.

Early in the novel the theme of infidelity is introduced by Kanakchand's explosive utterance - "bastard" - which attracts the narrator-prince. But in no time the narrative subject begins to discover that the theme of infidelity has begun to disrupt the primary triangle and its patriarchal values represented by the king. For he "dreams" that the Rani is involved in an illicit affair with a palace officer. This costs the Rani her divinity, for as long as she remains subservient to the codes of the primary triangle, the narrativization shows, she gains the attributes of "goddess", "perfection itself" (*P* p. 183). The other agent of infidelity in the primary triangle, at the level of the narrative movement, is the untouchable Kanakchand. If the Rani is degraded as a "bitch" from being a goddess, Kanakchand's activities turn him in the narrative from "a high-spirited ambitious boy" to a "malevolent revolutionary" (*P* p. 93). For Kanakchand's Gandhi-cap, his refusal to subordinate, his infidelity, is a metonym for a larger disruptive force: the freedom movement signified in the text by the Gandhi-cap and the Congress Party.[7] From the perspective of the autocratic norms of the king all the nationalist leaders appear as "the goondas led by traders and lawyers!" They are more treacherous than the British because they try to "grab" his principality by "subverting the loyalty of the people towards their ruler" (*P* pp. 162, 296).

The *text* of *The Princes* can be said to bring together the infidelities of the two agents of the primary triangle: the Rani and the untouchable. Kanakchand's transgression has an effect on

the Abhayraj figure which is in fact a varied repetition of the trauma the subject suffers when he sees his mother's betrayal, her infidelity, in his "nightmare"; this nightmare also functions and repeats in the text as the "primal scene" (*P* p. 53). The trauma returns when the Kanakchand figure shouts in the streets: "the raj is dead." The guilt suffered by the subject ("Abhayraj") is not just the anxiety of the oppressor finding threats from the oppressed but it also signifies the deeper sense of disturbance and wrong suffered by the "bastard" - that disruptive signifier with which Kanakchand enters the subject's glorious world of gods and goddesses[8]. Thus they both signify threat to the order he cherishes. The threat they pose, in a word, appears to be the trauma of castration. And to guard himself against this threat the subject would participate in denigrating them. Since Kanakchand signifies the nationalist movement which deprives the king of his kingdom the untouchable other becomes a scapegoat for the subject's guilt. He would avenge his father by horse-whipping Kanakchand in public.

But, as I suggested earlier, the themes of infidelity and and loyalty acquire double-edged signification in the narrative. The doubling-effect of the themes is not a sign of the success of the text's narrative strategies. On the contrary it is a measure of the novel's 'failure'. The novel's failure is for deeply politico-aesthetic reasons. For any activities of the agents of the primary triangle - the Rani and Kanakchand - which violate the norms signified by the king and narrativized by Abhayraj are depicted as gestures of infidelity or disloyalty. And the celebration of the norms by definition implies subordination and repression of the "weaker" agents - women and the 'lower' castes. The survival of the discourse of the primary triangle itself is contingent upon its complicity with the colonial ideology and power. This can be seen in the text's amalgamation of the patriarchal values of glorifying bravery and toughness with the colonialist ideology of manliness and its ethos of "Never Give In" (*P* p. 82). The king's collaboration with the colonial regime is never problematised in the text, whereas the nationalist movement signifies forces which would expose this complicity and threaten the triangle of relationships.

Abhayraj's narrativization of the events is largely confined to the primary triangle. But

the inscriptions of infidelity or disloyalty that the subject attributes to any activity in the primary triangle acquires a different meaning in the larger triangle of disruptive forces. Thus, the Rani's desertion of the palace is a 'violation' of the patriarchal discourse, hence infidelity in the primary triangle. The Rani's gesture can be seen as a 'positive' transgression in the perspective of the larger triangle, although the gesture has no direct effect on the forces of the larger triangle. Whereas Kanakchand's violation becomes a metonymic dislodgement of the discourse of the primary triangle and by extension strengthens and articulates the larger forces of the bigger triangle. All the virtues which the narrative cherishes (the discourse of the primary triangle) and which effect the narrativization acquire totally different meaning in the context of the larger triangle.

Naipaul's own reading of the text is confined largely to the explication of the primary triangle, for it isolates the codes of this triangle from the larger historical and political aspect of the relation between the princes and the colonial power. Although Naipaul is critical of the responses in the primary triangle to the two indices (of caste and poverty), he represents these hegemonic responses (of caste hierarchy and poverty) as uncontested and invincible aspects of the "India" he constructs. This information is then allegorised as the Indian "reality". Such a message is inescapable in the tropological argument Naipaul constructs and within which the analysis of *The Princes* is located. Kanakchand, like Naranappa (in *Samskara*) who signifies the 'low' cultural force, as I will show shortly, functions merely as a figure to reinscribe the deficiency, the lack of any potential for 'rebellion' in Naipaul's reading of the narrative. For people in India, as the investigating subject declares elsewhere, are "used to reverencing a Master and used for centuries to the idea of *karma*"[9]. The purpose such an argument serves primarily is self-consolidation of the investigating subject. For, indeed, the deficiency and the resulting responses are seen by the subject as characteristic effects of an Indian essence: 'non-seeing'. It is this nonseeing, this master key which the subject discovers, he finds illuminating all the information from the informants in his figuring of India. The subject observes that it is this nonseeing and its corollary, denial, operating in Abhayraj's responses to poverty which

explains the deficiency: "This is the Indian withdrawal and denial... The poor becomes faceless... The obvious, must be ignored" (p. 67). The investigating subject's concern is, as we read, not really with the presence or absence of the poor in Indian representations of 'reality', for even when they are present such representations are seen to be nothing more than expressions of a continuity of unconcern (pp. 215-216). The subject's concern is more in figuring metonymies to construct the other. For the nonseeing, as in the case of *The Princes*, is not seen as any effect of historical-political overdeterminations of the larger triangle; it is rather offered as an extra-textual essence locatable outside these determinations. For he argues, on the very lines of his reading of *The Princes*, that such metonymies - denial, withdrawal allegedly resulting from nonseeing - enable the othered Indian to cherish his/her notion of a "whole" India. In order to maintain this notion of wholeness, in India, the subject points out, history has been neglected: historical facts "had been acknowledged and ignored" (p. 188). Although the moment of *The Princes* appears to be a minor move within the long narrative of *An Area of Darkness* the reading that is offered there by the subject in fact permeates the entire Naipaul text. And in such a reading Malgonkar, like others who follow this section, becomes only a native informant who would 'prove' the reading. The reading serves the self-restoring project of the observing subject who, in figuring the metonymies, would define the self (his own) against them or purge the self of these metonymies. We can see in the following section a similar reading strategy reinscribing the Indian 'self' through the 'negative' metonymies in Naipaul's reading of *Samskara*. We will also see how such reading, in its documentary use of the text (reading the text for information), manages to abstract it from the network in which it is enmeshed.

> In the framework of class and political structure this specific character (moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man) could be realised without distortion only in Carnival and similar market place festivals. They were the second life of the people, who for a time entered the utopian realm of community, freedom and abundance... As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated a temporary liberation from the prevailing myth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges and norms of prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalised and completed.
>
> Mikhail Bakhtin[10]

(i)

Naipaul's reading of *Samskara*, in *India: A Wounded Civilisation* (1977), is separated by over twelve years from his use of *The Princes* in his figuration of India in *An Area of Darkness*. The narrativization of India moves through a tropological pattern. *Samskara* functions as another 'native' trope in the narrative designation of the Indian 'self' and Anantha Murthy enters the Naipaul text as the native informant. The moment of *Samskara* like that of *The Princes* is situated in the context of the text's (IWC) delineation of the Indian deficiency and Gandhi's 'vulnerable' 'Indianness': Indian "defect of vision"[11]. *Samskara*, for Naipaul, is a remarkable novel which "takes us closer to the Indian idea of the self, and without too much mystification" (p. 104). Naipaul recounts the novel in which he sees the Acharya as the "central figure" of a brahmin brotherhood; the Acharya's loss and his anxiety to recover his identity become crucial to Naipaul's reading of the novel. Naipaul sees the Acharya's life as fatalistically determined in which the Acharya thinks he was inherently a "man of goodness"; this goodness, the Acharya reasons, was the result of his good deeds in his previous lives, his *karma*. "In the Acharya's reasoning," Naipaul comments, "no one can *become* a man of goodness; he is that, or he isn't" (pp. 104-105 emphasis original). The Acharya sees some people as 'clods', the "men of darkness" as by nature lacking goodness and consequently as devoid of any desire for salvation.

The Acharya is married at a very early age to a crippled woman and he views his marital life as an act of sacrifice, an ordeal in asceticism: the "act fills him with pleasure, pride, and compassion" (p. 105). The Acharya is renowned for his knowledge of scriptures; he "is the 'crest-jewel of the Vedanta'" - and "the Vedanta", Naipaul adds, "is the ultimate wisdom" (p. 105).

Very early in the novel the narrative sets up a problem. In the brahmin village, Naipaul recounts, there is a "fallen" brahmin. He drinks, catches sacred fish in the temple pond; he eats meat and keeps an untouchable mistress. The brotherhood fears excommunicating him for he threatens to further pollute them by converting himself to Islam, if expelled. Such pollution would break up the brotherhood. The problem arises when the "wicked" brahmin dies of plague. Although he is fallen, the dead man is after all a brahmin and his cremation rites have to be done only by brahmins. The problem arises as to whether he should be considered a brahmin at all after all his "wicked" deeds. Who should perform the rites? The problem seems undecidable, but the matter is urgent. For in the intense heat the body is rotting and the plague threateningly spreads as dead rats collapse in gutters and in kitchens. And with the uncremated body in the village the brahmins cannot eat.

The brahmins approach their leader the Acharya for a solution. But the Acharya, Naipaul comments, "cannot give a quick answer. He cannot simply consult his heart, his goodness" (p. 106). Since the brahmins treat the problem as an issue of pollution but not, Naipaul observes, as a "moral question" it becomes a matter for the laws, the "sacred books". The Acharya will look into the books for a solution. But it takes time and in the meanwhile the plague spreads. Some untouchables in the village die and are burned along with their huts.

The Acharya, Naipaul feels, is anxious now to find a solution to protect his reputation. Whatever decision he takes has to be the correct one. After failing to find a solution from the books, the Acharya, Naipaul reasons, "can only turn to magic". The next morning the Acharya goes to a Maruti temple and performs some rituals. He puts a flower on each shoulder of the god's statue and waits; if the flower on the right shoulder falls first the dead man is eligible for

brahmin status, and the brotherhood can perform the rites. But no flower falls and the exhausted Acharya waits the whole day. The Acharya prays and pleads in anguish with god but finds no response. The Acharya begins to doubt himself and his goodness. Suddenly remembering the medication he needs to give his crippled wife the tormented Acharya returns home in the night.

On the way back he meets the dead man's mistress who expresses her concern and desire for the Acharya. In the forest dark the Acharya touches her body "and he is enveloped by the moment." The Acharya sleeps with the untouchable in the forest. The Acharya wakes up in the middle of the night in a daze, "imagining himself a child again, in his mother's lap." "It cannot be said," Naipaul reflects, "that he falls or sins. The words are too positive...the sexual moment simply happens" (p. 107). Naipaul quotes a passage from the novel where the Acharya is recollecting at a later point the sexual adventure and attempting to see how far the act was done wittingly: "It was a sacred moment - nothing before it, nothing after it. A moment that brought into being what never was and then itself went out of being. Formless before, formless after. In between, the embodiment, the moment. Which means I'm absolutely not responsible for making love to her. Not responsible for that moment. But the moment altered me - Why?" (p. 107)[12]. Yet, Naipaul feels, the Acharya's "reasoning is strange, but that is now the Acharya's crisis: not guilt, but a sudden neurotic uncertainty about his nature"(p. 107). This is a new turn in the Acharya's life. The old problem recedes and the dead man is 'unceremoniously' cremated by his untouchable mistress with the help of a muslim who was once helped by the dead man. Neither the Acharya nor the others in the brotherhood are aware of the 'solution'.

Now the Acharya is tormented by the newer problem - whether he is really a good-man or is simply a part of the other "tigerish" world. The Acharya has earlier reasoned that one's goodness is the natural outcome of one's deeds in the earlier times. But, Naipaul asks, "how does a man know his true nature, his 'form'?" "We shape ourselves," the Acharya feels at one point in the text, "through our choices, bring form and line to this thing we call our person" (p.

107). But what about the Acharya's own defining choice, Naipaul inquires; was it the long ascetic "life of sacrifice and goodness, or that barely apprehended sexual moment?" (p. 107). The Acharya finds the problem undecidable and continues to ruminate. He feels lost, cut off from his community. "Because men are not what they make themselves," Naipaul explains, "there is no question here of faith or conviction or ideals or the perfectability [sic] of the self. There is only a wish for knowledge of the self, which alone would make possible a return to the Hindu bliss of the instinctive life: 'to be, just to be'" (pp. 107-08).

The Acharya's rumination intensifies as he leaves his village after cremating his wife, his 'sacrificial altar', who dies of plague. He wanders around villages, through the forest path, testing and observing how his identity would emerge. He wonders whether the people he meets see just a brahmin in him or the highly reputed "crest-jewel of Vedanta," or see him simply as a fraud. He moves into a village fair and wanders around testing himself with temptations of woman acrobats, pollutions of coffee-stall and soda-pops, and the "lower-caste excitement of the cock-fight". The Acharya does not find any middle way between the "pollution-free brahmin world" (p. 108) and "the world of ordinary pleasures". "Men are defined," Naipaul reasons, "by the world; they are defined by the pollution they can expose themselves to" (p. 108). The Acharya feels, wandering in the "polluting world", as Naipaul observes, that he has become himself a polluted thing. He prepares himself to take a decision. He decides to go back to the village and tell them about his deeds and wanderings; his sexual adventures and 'polluting' pleasures of the fair. "He will simply be telling them," runs the commentary of the Naipaul text, "about the truth of his inner self, which by a series of accidents - perhaps not really accidents - he has just discovered"(p. 108). Naipaul seems to read this decision of the Acharya as the final "sterile" turn inevitably resulting from the Acharya's instinctive perception and blinding 'self' absorption. He reads the decision as forming the closure of the novel and allegorizes the Acharya's actions as reflections of Indian mind.

Samskara is a problematic novel. The major responses to the novel could be discussed under three categories: "existentialist", "culturalist", and "evolutionist". The existentialist approach reduces the novel to the identity crisis of the Acharya figure; the culturalist mode examines the Acharya's life pattern and his decisions in the light of the Hindu 'regulative psychobiography' and scriptural enunciations; and the evolutionist approach sees the novel as an allegory of civilizational development from the 'epic' to the 'novel' era; this growth is seen to be realised in the change of the Acharya from possessing an 'abstract' ego or 'self' to a concrete or critical individualism. Naipaul's own interpretation partly incorporates the moves of the first and the third trajectories. What is crucial in all these trajectories of reading, however, is the privileging of the Acharya character. All these modes of interpretation in three different frameworks recount the novel from the Acharya's point-of-view, or rather they 'centre' the Acharya. In doing this, as I will argue, they are in complicity with the novel's narrativizing logic. The problematicity of the novel makes possible another kind of reading which enables us to see the subtext not only of the novel's narrativizing logic but of the other modes of interpretation as well.

The novel *Samskara* can be read as narrativizing the oppositional forces (or discourses) of high-serious brahminism (or brahminical Hinduism) of the hegemonic culture and the riotous culture of laughter and frolic of the marginalized. The crucial fact is that this confrontation takes place in the colonial period (the Congress is yet to come to power). It is easier to figure out that the narrative constructs the Acharya as the paragon of hegemonic cultural norms. Although the 'fallen,' 'wicked' dead brahmin, Naranappa, cannot be said to represent the 'low' culture, (this will be explained later), the low-cultural forces can be said to function through him.

The Acharya has earned the highest reputation in learned circles and is a master exponent of the brahminical law-codes. Naranappa is already a part-victim of the codes of the brotherhood: Garudacharya, a prominent member of the brotherhood attempts to grab his orchard, attempts to influence and threaten him through a corrupt swami (*S* p. 8);

Lakshmanacharya seeks to gain his property through a marriage alliance. Naranappa is a methodical breaker of all the tablets of the hegemonic community. He defies caste norms in a community where caste bonds have their functional validity. He walks out of a marriage bond with a crippled wife through which an elder relative of the community attempts to exploit him. And when the crippled wife dies he does not go to the funeral rites. He displaces the sign-system in a group which shows blind reverence to the system. He throws the sacred stone into the river and spits at it. He mixes among Muslims and drinks. And he defiles the sacred pond by eating the fish from the pond, consecrated to god. The community maintained the taboo under the fear that any one who fishes in the sacred pond would die coughing blood. Naranappa exorcises the spell as it were by displacing the discourse. And above all as a challenge and shame to the community he keeps an untouchable mistress, Chandri. Under his influence another youth of the community walks out of his wed-lock in favour of an untouchable. Another joins the army. Naranappa, thus, becomes the "corrupter" of youth in the community (*S* pp. 6-8).

The novel meticulously develops contrasting details, between the community and the forces Naranappa signifies. All the flowers in the backyard of the brahmin houses go to the worship of god, while those of Naranappa's go into Chandri's hair. The intoxicating fragrance of the night queen flowers from Naranappa's backyard was like the "raging lust"; and it envelops the entire community throughout the night (*S* p. 14). In contrast to the emaciated, perennially child-bearing brahmin wives, Chandri is represented as full-blooded and bodied. It must be, however, registered that Chandri circulates in the text under the well-entrenched signifier: property. Either she is sexual property (when she is with Naranappa) or she is reduced to the wealth she gets from Naranappa: gold and jewels. The brotherhood is lured by both. And eventually the Acharya himself occupies the property as a sexual object. Chandri has no other signification either in the text or in the interpretations of this text. In fact it could be said that the female 'untouchable' in general circulates in the text as sexual property.

The community with its high serious norms of caste hierarchy and discourse of pollution

maintains, in Bakhtin's phrase, an "epic distance", farther away from contemporaneity, from the world of passion and laughter. In such a community Naranappa becomes a virtual threat to the existence of its values. "I'll destroy brahminism": his threat to the community (*S* p. 23). It is through his ribaldry and passion that Naranappa, metonymically standing for the force of the 'folk', 'degraded' culture, rips open the lust and avarice concealed under the sign-system of respectability and seriousness of the community; and thus provides a trajectory through which the hegemonic culture can be brought closer to the "earth", "reality". "It is precisely laughter," Bakhtin argues in a similar context, formulating his theory of the novel from the roots of the "degraded" culture, "that destroys the epic, and in general destroys any hierarchic (distancing and valorized) distance"[13]. And precisely that is what the hegemonic community fears: the threat to the valorized hierarchy and its discursive field.

When Naranappa breaks the sacred taboo and 'defiles' the forbidden pond, for instance, "the Acharya was afraid of the bad example - with this kind of rebellious example, how will fair play and righteousness prevail? Won't the lower castes get out of hand? In this decadent age, common men follow the right paths out of fear - if that were destroyed where could we find the strength to uphold the world?" (*S* p. 21). It is symptomatic of the high culture to view any threat to its hegemonic status and its sign-system as a danger to the 'world'; metonymy of the segment is metaphorised into a whole. Naranappa, and the subterranean force with which he allies himself, while stalking on the margins constantly attempts to destroy the culture of respectability which hopes to preserve itself through a sanitizing distance from the former.

The Acharya at one point recollects an encounter with Naranappa and the encounter can be said to capture the process of "uncrowning" of the high-seriousness of the privileged ideology. This Naranappa performs through well-targeted parody and mockery of the codes and their significations. The Acharya goes to warn Naranappa after the latter had fished in the forbidden pond. The Acharya finds Naranappa completely drunk when he approaches him. But for a moment Naranappa appears to feel ashamed of his state, bends forward as if with reverence and humility toward the paragon of epic culture: "He looked as if the sacred bird of

prey had swooped and held him in its talons, as if he'd been turned to a worm that minute, bewildered as when a closed door suddenly opens" (*S* p. 22). The Acharya seeing the gesture of humility feels he could assert his power and subdue Naranappa to respect the codes.

But the next moment in a retorting defiance Naranappa rises up and laughs at the Acharya. And in an utter subversive gesture calls for his drink: "Chandri! Where's the bottle? Let's give the Acharya a little of this holy water!" (p. 22). This is a shattering blow to the Acharya, the greatest, the most learned man of the community. He shakes in anger and humiliation. Then in a barrage of ridiculing and parodying comments, with unceremonious references to sacred myths and pouncing on the hypocricy of the other elders of the community, Naranappa disturbs and weakens the Acharya. Here the Naranappa figure's ribaldry and derisive laughter, however, should not be taken as a gesture of mere personal scoring of points over another brahmin. It is not a sign of caste-rivalry either. The activities of Naranappa have more than a personal force in the given context. They signify the tradition of subversive laughter. "Laughter demolishes fear and piety," Bakhtin remarked, "before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact... The object is broken apart, laid bare (its hierarchical ornamentation is removed): the naked object is ridiculous; its 'empty' clothing, stripped and separated from its person, is also ridiculous. What takes place is a comical operation of dismemberment"[14]. Indeed, the Acharya feels "uncrowned" as Naranappa begins to laugh at the unforseen result of the Acharya's practice of explicating erotic poetry, which provokes a youth to rush and make love to an untouchable. Naranappa challenges: "Let's see who wins in the end - you or me. I'll destroy brahminism, I certainly will"(*S* p. 23). Though the ridiculed and crest-fallen Acharya shouts at Naranappa furiously "You low-born scoundrel!" Naranappa's challenge ("who wins") echoes at every turn in the Acharya's life.

Curiously, in Parts II and III of the novel the Acharya himself appears to go against the discursive-field, the codes of the hegemonic ideology of which he is the renowned paragon, the 'crest-jewel'. The first of such "defilements" occurs when he has his sexual adventure with Chandri. Later on he wanders into a village fair and drinks coffee and watches the acrobat

woman. And yet these 'lapses' cannot be compared or identified with Naranappa's project of demolition. For the Acharya, in spite of or rather because of such 'lapses', their signification seems to remain untarnished. Throughout Parts II and III - the so-called phase of transformation and identity crisis - the Acharya's fear of being discovered remains unabated, and actually intensifies. This response of the Acharya is a classic indication of his investment in the sign-system the high-culture cherishes. The Acharya, for instance, leaves the village after his sexual act and the cremation of his wife, to wander away aimlessly from human vicinity into some kind of wilderness, suggesting another ideal of the hegemonic culture - that of sanyasi's renunciation. He leaves behind his awards of shawls, his wealth and also his god, who, he feels, was so far a mere "set of tables, learned by rote." "Once you leave God," the Acharya speculates, "you must leave all concern for all the debts, to ancestors, to gurus, to the gods; must stand apart from the community of men" (*S* pp. 89, 90). The Acharya's discourse is so rooted in the high-culture of Brahminism that even this desire to renounce becomes another trope in the same sign-system. And the next thought that moves in his mind after meeting a villager is naively symptomatic: "When you shed your past, your history, the world sees you as just one more brahmin." One more *brahmin?* It is symptomatic that in spite of the alleged purging of himself of the past and of history the text should construct the code of his re-cognition as a brahmin. The text cannot move the Acharya beyond his discursive system: "He was a little disturbed by the thought" (p. 91). He is panicked by the information that a caste-man of his village is nearby and walks away from the place in the fear of being discovered. The crucial difference between Naranappa and the Acharya in their respective activities is that while the former willingly demolishes high-serious brahminical signs through his subversive mockery and laughter, the Acharya, even when he wittingly attempts to reinforce decision and shed his past and live with Chandri is unwittingly still all the time controlled by the brahminical code of signification. The Acharya's wanderings in the carnivalesque village-fair and his responses to it substantiate this point of difference between the 'high' and 'low' practices. The Acharya is led into this world of frolic by Putta who meets the Acharya during his wanderings.

Putta with his unceasing talkativeness, his unexhausted mine of riddles and his rootedness in the this-worldly life of the carnival is a potential figure of the 'low' cultural force. Geographically and symbolically his world of passion and grotesquery is distanced and marginalised beyond the temple walls inside which continue the monotonous rigmaroles of the hegemonic culture. Nevertheless, the marginalized world appears as at once subdued and as posing threats from the boundaries. Putta becomes the guide to the Acharya in this carnival world. If Naranappa's subversive unmasking through parody and travesty is a 'violent' (if comic) exposure of the significations of high-seriousness to the reality of passion and laughter, then Putta's guiding of the Acharya into this world is a 'benevolent' (if energetic and carnivalesque) initiation. But in both the stages, the Acharya though shaken still continues to valorize the norms of which he is the renowned exemplar. The Acharya is never free from panic throughout his wanderings - the fear of being discovered and exposed, the risk of jeopardising his reputation.

The construction of the carnivalesque fair - with its din of joy, the thrilling cock-fights, the breath-taking feats of female acrobats, the temptations of refreshments, the songs of the balloon-sellers, the jingling bells of Bombay-peepshow-Box, and the rending cries of the beggars - is admirable in the novel (*S* pp. 110-114). In this world of revelry and energy the Acharya walks like one "entranced". "Praneshacharya stood," the narrative asserts, "outside this world of ordinary pleasures and looked at the gathered crowd... His eyes, the only disengaged ones, incapable of involvement in anything" (p. 112). While Putta is absorbed in watching the cock-fight the Acharya ruminates in panic: "He had abruptly dropped into a demoniac world. He sat down, in utter fear: if in that nether-world where he decided to live with Chandri, if in that depth of darkness, in that cave, the cruel engagement glinting in the eyes of these entranced creatures is just a part of that world, a brahmin like him will wilt" (*S* p. 114). It is precisely because of the culture of distance that the Acharya belongs to and valorizes that he feels choked in the laughter of the carnival. Indeed his interpretation of this world is deeply imbued with the signification of his values: the "Eyes all around the wings - the knives - the beaks - the talons.

Immersed, the oneness, the monism, of desire and fulfilment, that art Thou. I dread it. It's the dread of being transformed from ghost to demon"(*S* p. 118).

In *Samskara*'s narrativization of the oppositional forces of high-seriousness (of brahminical discourse) and the laughter of the marginal culture the latter's strategies to dislodge the eminence of the former (signified by what the Acharya stands for) achieve only a partial 'success'. The Acharya decides to tell the brotherhood all he has done. And this very assertion, irrespective of whether the Acharya will live with Chandri subsequently or not, is a symptomatic ratification of the power of the brahminical value norms in the text. For the very desire to recount to the brotherhood is a vindication of one's investment in the hegemonic discursive field. (In contrast, for instance, Mahabala, another subversive of what the Acharya stands for, never comes back to explain himself to anybody). And when one reads the novel as a confrontation of the 'low' and hegemonic forces of the society, *Samskara* with all its narrativizing skill becomes not an anti-brahminical novel, as some irate 'brahminical' responses have argued, but a 'brahminical' text (in the sense of being in complicity with the ideology) to the core. This point can be substantiated from another angle.

It is only the Acharya who, as I have suggested earlier, can be referred to as the paragon of hegemonic codes; whereas Naranappa cannot gain representational status with respect to the low-cultural forces. This can be seen from a crucial point in the novel which the narrative just broaches but symptomatically does not problematise. The point concerns the problem of excommunicating Naranappa. All the brahmins are in favour of excommunicating Naranappa. The Acharya gives two reasons for refraining from doing so. He feels it is advisable out of compassion but also out of fear of Naranappa's threat to convert to Islam which would pollute the entire brotherhood. What is intriguing here is why does Naranappa - the defiant, the systematic dislodger of the brahminical codes, the rebel who would 'uncrown' the Acharya - want to retain his brahminical status, badge of recognition? Why does he care to retain it? Why does this sign have any meaning to him who is determined to destroy brahminism? What investment does Naranappa, after all his riotous unmasking of high-serious signs, have in this

trope of brahminical order? The novel is as silent about this as it is emphatic about the Acharya's return to the village and the brotherhood. Indeed we are given clues to Naranappa's death-bed hankerings after god. Chandri tells us that he chanted god's names just before he died. Certainly Naranappa is not in bad faith. But the text's silence on this point makes one feel that the Naranappa figure, despite all his rebellious subversion, did 'invest' in the discursive-field of high-cultural codes. This investment may metaphorize some kind of nostalgia of Naranappa for the code[15]. The trace in Naranappa, though it need not necessarily contradict the forces that mediate through him, makes the novel all the more 'brahminical' for it silently constructs a desire for the world which the Acharya valorizes. Further, it makes the textual construction of the 'low' culture subservient to the hegemonic codes (thus the 'low' circulates largely as the signifier of sexual passion in the text).

The important approaches to the novel suggested earlier show a certain complicity with the narrativizing logic of the text when they privilege the Acharya and read the story as an allegory of the Acharya's 'identity' crisis. A.K. Ramanujan, the translator of the novel, for instance, in his commentary reads *Samskara* as dealing with the "rebirth of one good brahmin" who must undergo a "transformation" in order to perform the rites for the dead man (*S* p. 140). By treating Naranappa as the mere 'anti-self' of the community and the Acharya, Ramanujan limits and appropriates the passion of subversion that functions through him. For he attributes Naranappa with an "ideology" which is that of "modern secular laws". Whereas when he comes to read Putta one sees the weakness of this interpretation. Putta for Ramanujan, is the 'denizen' of the 'netherworld', without an 'ideology'; he is a "pimp without *samskara*" (in-born qualities). Putta, Ramanujan writes, "is so completely and thoughtlessly at one with this world that he is a marvel." And in seeing Putta's world of carnival as "the ordinary and the familiar, the purity of the unregenerate, the wholeness of the crude," Ramanujan is in complicity with the narrative logic of *Samskara* (*S* p. 140). Both the culturalist and evolutionist interpretations suffer from this limitation as they reduce the problem to the Acharya's anguish and transformation or trace the meanings of the Acharya's 'lapses' in terms of the high-cultural

system.

(iii)

Naipaul approaches *Samskara* after his commentary on Gandhi's blindness, and through his essentialist hermeneutic in order to illustrate the Indian 'self'. He shows admiration for the novel. He feels that the narrative in translation is "hypnotic, and the brilliance of the writing in the original Kannada can be guessed"(p. 109). While admiring the narrative Naipaul uses it to project his harsher generalizations on Indian society and people. Quickly transposing and identifying the fictional character of the Acharya as any Indian of any historical period Naipaul makes his sweeping generalization: "Knowingly or unknowingly, Ananthamurthi has portrayed a barbaric civilization, where the books, the laws, are buttressed by magic, and where a too elaborate social organization is unquickened by intellect or creativity or ideas of moral responsibility (except to the self in its climb to salvation)" (p. 109). This becomes a 'documentary' critique for it uses the text for its ostensible "truth-value" and metaphorizes the documentary truth as the unmediated reflection of "reality". The document, in effect becomes a source of information, as in the case of *The Princes*, to substantiate a prefabricated design of the investigation. The investigating subject shows a constant propensity to offer totalising generalizations on the basis of the documentary readings he makes: "These people are all helpless, disadvantaged, easily unbalanced; the civilization they have inherited has long gone sour; living instinctive lives, crippled by rules... they make up a society without a head" (p. 109).

It is predictable that the investigating subject should isolate and privilege the Acharya's character (as the custodian of high-cultural norms), as he does with the hegemonic responses in the case of *The Princes*, and leave all the other details as minor motifs of the narrative. For it contributes to his figuring of the negative metonymies of the Indian 'self': continuity and nonseeing. Further, it reinscribes the model of monolithic, imprisoning ideological frame and

the alleged absence of contestation of the model from within. These metonymies need to be repeated in the Naipaul text for they form the condition of the project of self-consolidation which must be necessarily distanced and differentiated. But to concentrate on the Acharya's anxieties as central to Indian society is to acknowledge the success of the strategy of entrapment that the novel deploys; it is, even while being critical, to (reductively) look at 'India' from the perspective of the monolithic model; and thus extend that mythical construction of the Indian 'self' as eternal and unaffected by history.

In such an ahistorical reading of the text the investigating subject like other critics does not even broach a crucial point - that the novel is set in the colonial period. Although he acknowledges the detail that the Congress Party was mentioned, and the availability of a bus-service and newspapers, he feels that "certainly Gandhi doesn't seem to have walked this way." Yet he observes that "the age [in which the novel is set] seems remote"(p. 109). A.K. Ramanujan goes further and says, "Yet the time is a stereotype of what might be called Indian Village Time - indefinite, continuous, anywhere between a few decades ago and the medieval centuries"! (*S* p. 143). It is precisely such undermining of specific details in the narrative, for the purposes of an atemporal reading, which abstracts the documentary truths from the network in which they are figured, and offers a reading which is allegedly true eternally.

It is crucial to notice that although the brahminical culture retains its high-cultural status in the novel it does not directly become the *ruling* culture in colonial times. For even this culture itself might be affected by the codifying practices of the imperialist regime. We know from the details of the novel that the village, contrary to Ramanujan's abstract timeless Village, has already been disrupted by the colonial institutions and discursive field. Shivamogge seems to be the nearest power-centre where all the offices of the area are located. Law courts and commercial crops have already made inroads into the village. The new power is more likely to be wielded by people like Manjayya, who is shown always as either writing his accounts or referring to his business dealings - the life-lines of the disruptive discursive field. It is Manjayya who gives us a glimpse of the colonial apparatus when at the end of the novel he

decides to go to the town to inform the authorities about the epidemic of plague. "In his very practical brain," the text tells us what Manjayya has planned to do: "One, to tell the municipality...two, call in doctors and get everybody inoculated; three, get rat exterminators and pumps, fill the rat-holes with poison gas and stop them up; four, if necessary evacuate the people from the agrahara" (*S* p. 102).

That Manjayya could quickly decide what course of action to follow is not amazing when we observe that in the colonial history plague is the most highly taken care of (or most feared) of diseases from the late nineteenth century onwards[16]. It was the plague epidemic, which received immediate attention from the colonial authorities. Plague, writes the subaltern historian David Arnold, unlike cholera was not native and was believed to be an invasion probably from Hong Kong and "it threatened the commercial life of India's second largest port and manufacturing centre [Bombay]. The official reaction was prompt as well as vigorous"[17]. The anti-plague campaigns of the 1890s were so virulent and unconcerned with the sentiment of the natives that in the ensuing social unrest the colonial officer in-charge of the campaigns was murdered[18]. The plague measures of the turn of the century were criticised by many in power. Lord Curzon commented that it was all "science and compulsion, and evacuation at the point of the bayonet"[19]. And the only man who has the knowledge and access to this apparatus in the novel is Manjayya. The crucial details marked in the context of Manjayya will counterpoint Naipaul's and Ramanujan's argument and enable us to see that the village is not at all enveloped by some mythic timelessness, changelessness, or remoteness but is very much like any other Indian village, is exposed to disruption and a violence which the essentialist hermeneutic cannot read.

But Naipaul, as an investigating subject, is constructing a 'thesis', forging a master key: "Since I went to India I've become interested in the way different cultures have different ways of seeing"[20]. Following Albert Camus's reflections on Hindu culture which Naipaul quotes approvingly elsewhere (discussed in a later section [cf. Ch. Six] in my thesis) he reinscribes his scapegoated model: "When caste and family simplify relationships, and the sanctity of the laws

cannot be doubted, when magic buttresses the laws, and the epics and legends satisfy the imagination, and astrologers know the future anyway, men cannot easily begin to observe and analyse" (p. 112). This gloomy prediction is an inevitable outcome of an engagement which sets out to argue metaphysically about a unified (Indian) 'self' as the ground. Within the novel, *Samskara,* there is ample evidence, which Naipaul's reading displaces, which shows the ways in which both the centripetal forces of a high culture and the centrifugal forces of the low culture are engaged. The novel suggests also how the menacing forces of laughter and mockery ridicule and puncture the epic distance of the hegemonic culture. Laughter, which familiarizes the distanced sacred world, brings it into proximity with the other 'degraded' world, and, as Bakhtin argues, serves as a crucial factor in approaching the world fearlessly: "As it draws an object to itself and makes it familiar, laughter delivers the object into the fearless hands of investigative experiments - both scientific and artistic - and into the hands of free experimental fantasy"[21]. But Naipaul, in privileging the Acharya's ruminations on the 'self', in spite of his anxiety and concern, is positing an effect for a cause, a metaphysic as the ground. Both his readings of Gandhi (as I will show shortly) and of *Samskara* to show the "Indian blindness" as grounded in the Indian self - are the investigating subject's desperate exercises to distance himself from that alleged Indian 'self'. In effect his inquiry continues to reinscribe the promise that for Indians with their (alleged) religious mentality "India is still whole".

In attempting to distance himself from 'India' and Indian 'mentality' the investigating subject posits 'India' as the scapegoat - a combatant whom he can control and overpower only through knowledge. The desire is repetitively present in the text. The reading strategy of essentialist hermeneutic imbricated in the Naipaul text largely relies, as I am arguing, on 'native' ('inside') informants to illustrate its arguments, to construct its knowledge. The arguments, in effect, appear to be entirely based on 'observations' - the shibboleth of scientific activity - a mere theorising of visual data. But what such arguments conceal is the condition of possibility of their operation, how they emerge. The medium through which the analysis is conducted remains untouched by the critic. We locate such a covering up operation in the

Naipaul text when it draws from native informants unproblematically. The following section will analyse how Naipaul relies on Sudhir Kakar's information to illustrate his scapegoating of the 'native'.

NATIVE INFORMANTS - 3 : SUDHIR KAKAR

(i)

Sudhir Kakar is a practising psychotherapist whom Naipaul met in India during the Indian Emergency. Kakar developed an impressive thesis about Indian cultural identity. His study draws from various sources ranging from clinical practice, anthropological/sociological work, psycho-analytical arguments on childhood, myths and a range of cultural practices. In short, Kakar's study, entitled *The Inner World,* can be described as an attempt to construct an Indian 'episteme'. This episteme in turn is used to illustrate the development of personality in Indian culture. The operative principle of the episteme, according to Kakar, is the Hindu ideal of *moksha; moksha* is described as the liberation of the soul from the body and the cycle of births; it is the fusion of the soul with the universe; the ideal is compared with Freud's notion of 'Oceanic feeling'[22]. Kakar attempts to demonstrate that this desire for fusion operates in various ways in the Indian cultural context. In the social organisation, the elaborate caste-clan division and extended-family system, the desire manifests as dependence on others; in yogic practices the meditative stage of *samadhi* becomes a displaced analogue to the cherished ideal; in (Sanskrit) aesthetics the ideal experience finds an analogue in the experience of *rasa* (literally, juice - a work of art is expected to evoke the same *rasa*-feeling/emotion in the audience as that which it contains - thus providing the possibility for fusion); in the sex act, the ideal fusion finds an imperfect resemblance.

Kakar's book cautiously tabulates the impact of the episteme in the present day Indian

context (Kakar was writing during the [1974-77] Emergency). He argues that the ideal of dependence obstructs the development of an individual(ist) personality. For the ego development is hindered because of the absence of a proper male model in the joint-family situation, which has multiple male members. As a result the Indian personality is said to grow with an "underdeveloped ego". The child's prolonged dependence on the mother's nurturing further works towards the delaying of the child's ego development. Because of the father's remoteness the male child is said to avoid the Oedipal tensions. On the contrary the child in the Indian cultural situation, under pressure from a 'bad mother' - one who has devouring passions which are normally unfulfilled in the extended family context - surrenders his own undeveloped sexual difference by identifying with the mother (pp. 87-103). So in two ways the mother figure appears to be the obstacle to the growth of the male ego: as a nurturing benefactress, she encourages the child's dependence, his attachment to her; and as the devouring 'bad mother', she would possess the vulnerable child. It is because of the omnipotence and ubiquity of the mother that the child is said to strive to maintain an "Oedipal alliance" with the father rather than become involved in Oedipal conflict. The "alliance" with the father is sought in order to withstand the overwhelming pressure of the mother. Kakar draws on a range of mythological and clinical evidence to illustrate his argument.

Throughout the book, Kakar contrasts the effects of the Hindu ideal - as it allegedly manifests itself through social organisation - with the 'Western' development of the ego; and the purpose of this contrast appears to be to show how diametrically opposed these two conceptions of personality are. Kakar's construction of the episteme reinscribes the unceasing continuity of the Indian tradition at the cultural level and its impact on the ego development.

It is needless to point out that Kakar's argument finds an echo in Naipaul's own figuring of India. By the time Naipaul completed his *IWC* Kakar's book was not published. But from his meeting with Kakar and especially from Kakar's correspondence (I think just one letter, IWC p. 102) with him, Naipaul summarizes Kakar's argument in his book. Endorsing Kakar's arguments without any critical hesitation Naipaul buttresses his own construction of the *idee*

fixe: the Indian 'self'. Since it is the norm of individuality rather than "communal vision" which is required for human development Naipaul finds such model a remote possibility in the Indian context. And this situation for him is clearly allegorized by the Acharya figure in *Samskara* on the one hand and the norm of obedience he emphasizes in his reading of *The Princes* on the other: the lack of developed ego which is the result of the Indian nonseeing and withdrawal. After disclosing the religiosity of the Indian 'self' Naipaul expresses concern: "How can anyone used from infancy to the security of the group, and the security of a minutely regulated life, become an individual, a man of his own?... He will be like the Acharya in Ananta Murthi's novel, tormented by his formlessness" (*IWC* p. 112).

It is interesting that Naipaul's line of argument should converge with a specific intellectual trend in post-independent India. This convergence, however, should not be explained in terms of a 'natural attitude', an unmediated formulation of the allegedly fully formed phenomenon out there "in the plenitude of its Being"[23]. The convergence must be analysed in terms of the narrativizing logic of their respective constructions. Naipaul, for instance, dismisses the historical and sociological inquiry that continues in India as being unhelpful to the Indian context. "The European approach elucidates little," he asserts, since it only unsuccessfully attempts to equate India with Europe (*IWC* pp. 129-30). Such a critical remark can be seen as pertinent only when it is offered within an inquiry alert to the fundamental problems of disciplinary enunciations. That is, if discipline formations and disciplinary enunciations are the effect of the imperialist network in the postcolonial world how can any utterance from the 'human sciences' stand outside the network? How can any inquiry escape from the (allegedly) "European approach"? The remark of the investigating subject in the Naipaul text does not raise these issues. On the contrary the investigating subject goes on to endorse without hesitation the "psychoanalytic" approach to India as if his earlier remark, expressing resistance to historical and sociological disciplines, were not applicable in this case. The subject does not proceed to inquire into the historical conditions that made possible psychoanalytic readings of (other) cultures and the institutionalization of this discipline in the colonial world[24]. Kakar's

own disciplinary enunciations and Naipaul's allegorization of these enunciations produce their truths through such disavowals.

Kakar's own book could be read, in spite of its disciplinary specialization, as a work about 'self-discovery' like Naipaul's own. Indeed Kakar himself acknowledges that in the introductory part of his book: his intellectual itinerary is a "reconnaissance of my own origins" in which self is defined "as the battle ground": the journey itself eventually is claimed to have a "therapeutic effect", besides advancing knowledge in the field. Locating himself in the lineage of "modern" Indian thinkers which, according to Kakar, starts with Ram Mohan Roy, he declares that his journey is a "psycho-social discovery of India" (pp. 12-14).

(ii)

It can be seen from Kakar's arguments that his work developed in affiliation with a specific line of psychoanalytic theory generally associated with American readings of Freud. In this tradition of reading Freud, developed as "ego psychology", a specific 'agency' (the ego) of the psychic apparatus (id, ego, superego) is isolated and privileged. The ego is figured as the all-determining category and metaphorised as the personality as a whole; it is also claimed that this category can be localized through neat geographical boundaries distancing it from the other two agencies of the psyche. Thus in the Kakar argument the ego becomes the "organizing principle" of his study and in turn "of personality" (pp. 1, 11, 19). Since ego is the constitutive principle of the personality all the discussion about it is charted in developmental terms - in terms of the growth of the individual. Following the "tenets of ego psychology" Kakar's argument seeks to explain the ego development by emphasizing the cultural aspects alone in which the personality is (supposedly) submerged. That is, the ego (through the personality) becomes a mirror which would clearly represent the cultural features and through which alone one can understand the ego. This reduction of the ego to cultural categories could be described as a culturalist approach.

The fundamental difficulty with the arguments Kakar relies on is that he fails to distinguish between psychology and psychoanalysis. He appears to use the terms interchangeably. Even when the Kakar argument comments about the Oedipal situation this thematic (regulative model with ethico-political implications) is largely plotted in psychologistic terms, sketching the ego's growth in linear terms - from the unconscious to the conscious as if these were some exclusive localisable vessels. In fact such a culturalist reading appears to be present in India from the very early days of the introduction of the discipline (as psychiatry) during the colonial period; and it seems to have gained prominence in the post-war period, influenced by the American readings of the discipline especially those of Erik Erikson[25]. One can argue that in the sixty odd years of its life in India the discipline remained a "regional science" - carrying forward the colonial model of curing the "mental aberrations." Indeed such an approach to the discipline seems to contribute in its present practice to the building of national therapeutic models[26] . But this culturalist approach with its nativist designs is impervious to the complicity of the discipline itself with the narrative of imperialism. In fact this imperviousness seems to operate in the neutralization of the radical aspect of the discipline of psychoanalysis also. This can be seen from the interpretations the Oedipal thematic receives in the Indian branch of the discipline.

From the early days of the discipline (in India) the practitioners and commentators seem to have been troubled by the thematic - neither by the politics of the disciplinary model nor by the politics of its normative value but I think by its ethical implications. The ethical implications are resisted from a pre-eminently *culturalist* perspective. This resistance can be seen from Girindasehkar Bose[27] (founder of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society) to Kakar, from Ramanujan[28] to Neki[29] and to Kunal Chakrabarti[30] in their monological, reductive reading of the thematic. This reading can perhaps be called 'homosexual' in the sense Irigary describes it (as a transaction among males alone)[31]. In its Indian version the theme is reduced to an expression of the conflict between father and son. Reduced in this way, polarized arguments and camps develop which dig into myths and clinical evidence to champion their truths about

the presence/absence of Oedipal tension in India. Defined in this way the Indian ego is said to develop through "submission" and "alliance" with the father. What none of these arguments, obsessed with the fight with the fathers (to decide eventually in favour of the father), undertake to analyse is how the (Oedipal) *phase* signifies the fundamental (universal) division: sexual difference. For the basis of all signifying practices is that difference, and the phase provides the child with access to its social sign-system. Since cultural representations are crucial to this argument cultural images of women (benevolent nurturer and fiendish devourer) are invoked to substantiate this theory of the 'weak ego' of the Indian (male) child. That this very figuration of woman itself could be the effect of the disciplinary model is not examined in these contestations of the Oedipal thematic. For the real purpose of inquiry here remains male ego-formation and not how the whole problematic itself is entangled with the signification of the feminine[32]. The double representation of the figure of woman as deified maternal and denigrated and dreaded female, is not seen as part of the very problematic in the monological reading of the ego-formation.

The blurring of the difference between psychology and psychoanalysis could be seen as an effect of the failure of Kakar's argument to attend to the fundamental (and potentially radical) contribution of *psychoanalysis:* Freud's decentring of the subject. Psychology as a discipline (and even in its pre-disciplinary formations) has not provided any space for the discussion of the subject and its asymptotic nature. In its place an onto-theological argument constructed a monolithic category termed the ego. Although it is possible to trace the positivist Freud - in his work - who equates ego with consciousness one can perhaps treat it as a sign of tension in a work which is permeated by the problematisation of this supposedly localisable place of consciousness[33]. The ego appears, in the positivist approaches, as a configuration of a unified, synthetic form. Conceptualised in this way the discourse of ego-psychology (and perhaps psychotherapy) attempts to harmonise, make compatible the relation between the ego and the society. The Kakar argument very much continues the line of the ego-psychology as it follows the conceptualisation of a "highly complex personality which constantly works to create a

common solution for the strivings of all its psychic sub-structures, a process which demands a maximum of synthesizing and integrating activity on the part of the ego" (p. 6). So the project develops a behaviourist marking of the graph of the ego-development (p. 10).

Unsuspicious of its basis, and the history of its basic position, the Kakar argument turns to culture to describe the ego; explanations in cultural terms are invoked to account for a specific ego formation. And these specificities are generally discussed in terms of the West/Indian binarism. Operating with the paradigm of the ego's adaptability to the society the Kakar argument faces an anomaly in the Indian situation. Unlike in the case of the West where the id/ego distinction is said to be clear, in the case of India it is supposed to be blurred: the Indian ego is "relatively passive and less differentiated" (pp. 6, 20, 104). The anomaly is 'explained' in terms of a reality-oriented Western ego versus self-absorbed Indian ego. The explanations of the anomaly take on Hegelian imagery to reinscribe the binarism. Unlike the Western time-sense the Hindu time-sense is allegedly psychological rather than historical: "it has the dream-like quality of timeless time" (p. 47). As against the Western cultural beliefs the Indian ones are "not based on a logic of extension or linear reasoning, but are absorbed as a kind of dream-like, intuitive inner orientation early in life" (p. 48). Given its skewed path of adaptation to reality (time) and reason (world) the Indian ego turns out to be "underdeveloped" (which obviously matches the post-war economist's label for the third world "underdeveloped" countries, or economies). The Kakar argument does not deem it necessary to examine, at any stage, the disciplinary conditions of his thesis, the archaeology of the 'science' as it made its way into the non-European world.

"He is insensible to shades of meaning, and Cartesianism is fundamentally foreign to him; the sense of balance, the weighing and pondering of an opinion or action clashes with his most intimate nature"[34]. He is doomed to remain instinctive, impulsive. The passage appears familiar. But it comes from Fanon. And Fanon, faced with the formidable disciplinary establishment (psychiatry) of the "scientific truths" confronts them and decodes them. The passage is the summarizing of some specific disciplinary or rather institutionalized 'truths' about

the (North) African 'mentality'. The passage could have come from Kakar's work for his work never questions the disciplinary truths and it is on such loyalty that the Kakar argument is based and whose extreme manifestation Fanon debunks. Whereas for Kakar his disciplinary truths ("essential nature" of the Indian personality) are unhampered by history at all; they could be found in any period of history from the time of myths to the 4th century B.C., to the 20th century India of the Emergency (pp. 6-7). The "essential nature" of the Indian personality, the Kakar argument runs, is the result of the culture's overemphasis on the "primary processes" (the symbolizing activity of the psyche): "primary-process organization looms larger in the Indian than the Western psyche" (p. 104). Thus we get another binarism: Indian psyche is more sense-oriented ("sensible" - physical) and the putative Western is intellect-oriented ("intelligible" - rational). For magic and animistic practices condition the Indian psyche whereas logic and rationality operate the Western psyche (p. 108).

The Kakar argument, once it sets up the binaries, cannot avoid hierarchising them (rather, the hierarchy is in-built). For there is not just the implicit assumption of the superiority of the esteemed rationality of the West (which enables him to construct a logical, rational argument about those who are unable to operate these categories) but Kakar is more explicit: he declares that in times of change - that is, in the "modern" period, late 20th century India, "underdeveloped ego... is a risky luxury except under the most bountiful and utopian of natural conditions" (p. 107). That these utopian conditions, like the category of the primary-process, are theoretical fictions is what the Kakar argument is not prepared to concede and examine (pp. 104-108). It is on this fiction that Kakar produces his discourse of the deficient Indian psyche.

The frame from which the behaviourist psychological project of the Kakar argument derives can be called "humanist" - in that its ground assumption of the stable ego is conditioned by the theologico-humanist thought of Europe. The violence of humanism is that while professing all egos to be equal it declares some egos to be more equal than others: "That is what contaminates, more or less implicitly, the so-called notions of the strong ego and the weak

ego..."[35]. The idiom of the "underdeveloped ego" is part of the same nomenclature of violence. Thus the coveted zone of the ego - clearly separated from that of the 'cauldron' of impulses of the id in the Western man's case - is claimed as a "conflict-free sphere in which the libido is neutralised, delibidinized, in which aggressivity itself is deaggressivised"[36]. Conceived in this way the humanist/psychologistic schema is simply impervious to the specific radicalization of psychoanalysis by Freud, his decentering of the subject.

Freud made the category of the subject ex-centric to the axis on which (humanist) psychology conventionally charted the graph of individual/ego. The conventional axis and the ex-centric subject are then conceptualized as in an asymptotic relation. The subject occupies a position that can never be localized on the ego-axis, thus the subject appears to be the radically unsayable part of the psyche. The moment attempts at articulation of it are over (that is, each 'success') one discerns always already something in excess of the formulated, the systematized (such as the economic, the political, the sexual). The ego-psychological project cannot deal with this ex-centricity, this excess through its neatly charted itinerary of stages: "The idea of a unilinear, pre-established individual development, made up of stages each appearing in their turn, according to a determined typicity [sic], is precisely and simply the giving up, the conjuring away, the camouflage, the negation, properly speaking, even the repression of the essential contribution of analysis"[37]. The Kakar argument as it derives from the humanist/psychological schema, cannot be considered psychoanalytical and in effect remains in complicity with the violence of the larger project of humanism.

And it is only such a programme of ego-making (the aim of the 'regional science') which could assert that since "*a totalistic rejection of the personal-cultural past* is the prerequisite for radical action, [it] does not exist either among India's various political elites or among the masses of the people" (p. 42 emphasis original). At least the period during which Kakar was writing (1975-76) should have warned him against his assertions - for the Emergency (1974-77) itself is a symptom of the culmination of forces of repression, which disprove the alleged passivity or submission of Indians. In fact Kakar's text, composed in a moment of crisis, reads

like an allegory of the colonialist text like the ones Fanon deconstructed, for it does not address itself to the crisis at all. "In periods that are not periods of crisis," Gayatri Spivak writes, modifying a comment of Paul de Man, "or in individuals bent upon avoiding crisis at all cost, there can be all kinds of approaches to [the social]... but there can be no [insurgency]"[38]. Indeed Kakar's text appears bent upon covering up the crisis for his text, like Naipaul's and Ramanujan's commentaries on *Samskara* earlier, is set in some eternal India in which crisis and change seem remote. The condition for change he prescribes and the assertion he makes in a period of crisis are dangerously bizarre for they set forth impossible demands for changes to take place in a sign-system; for to demand a totalistic rejection of the text in which one is always already entangled is to ask for an impossible Archimedean point. This is a cynical deferral of possibilities of change that could be tracked in a (certain) intellectual trend in the postcolonial Indian thought. It ignores the historical possibilities, or it reinscribes the signs of change in terms of the schema it fabricates - thus attempts to neutralise those possibilities of change. In effect it can never be sympathetic to 'insurgency'[39]. That Naipaul should take to this schema without hesitation does not come as a surprise to us, given that his own work is engaged in worlding the scapegoat through such a schema.

Kakar becomes a convenient native informant for the Naipaul text: "himself Indian and has practised both in Europe and India." Thus Kakar carries the badge of "insider/outsider" at once like Naipaul himself (p. 102). While accepting all the information he gleans from Kakar's letter Naipaul adds his own gloss on it: religion and religious practices are reduced to "magic and animistic practices". So Kakar helps Naipaul to reinscribe Camus once again: "The need, then, for *individual observation* and judgement is reduced; something close to a purely instinctive life becomes possible" (*IWC* pp. 102-03 emphasis mine). The Naipaul text provides a dossier on the Indian mind which tallies, as Fanon reads them, with the truths on the African mind which the French/European psychiatrists established: "It is less easy for Indians to withdraw and analyze." An Indian cannot describe his sex act whereas a Western man can (p. 103). So the Acharya's rumination over his sexual adventure is like the inability of Kakar's patients to

describe their sexual act: nonseeing resulting from religious mentality deprives Indians of the descriptive capacity (*IWC* p. 107). Naipaul further goes on to allegorize the information without for a minute considering the need to doubt his own technique, his own medium which is providing him with these (scapegoated) truths: since the Indians have the "negative way of perceiving" (lack of individuality, exploratory capacity, assertive self and the gaze) "it is fundamental to an understanding of India's intellectual second-rateness..."(*IWC* p. 104). So any utterance from a native informant which fits the designation he figures acquires the validity of self-evident truth. The medium that constructs the truth is deemed to be transparent. So hand in hand the developed egos go forward while the scapegoated underdeveloped egos languish in their blindness and deficiency. Since history and a political reading of the disciplinary formations are elided, the schema of the Kakar argument and the Naipaul text endorse the ideology of individualism as an unproblematic and coveted ideal; the category of the individual acquires a transparency that any one can verify. Concerned only with the stable egos and unified individuals these arguments cannot undertake to read the imperialist 'interpellation' of the subject as 'individual'[40] and the complicity of the human sciences in this subject constitution. But the avoidance of this difficult but necessary deconstruction of the disciplinary truths can only reinforce, in spite of their professed concern, the imperialist truths. For they continue to shape the paradigm of individualism, and privilege the gaze as the source of the synthesized self-hood while distantiating themselves from the scapegoated other.

Both Naipaul's thesis of the Indian 'self' and the Kakar argument about the Indian 'ego' are exercises in an essentialist hermeneutic, which posit a grounding, sovereign ego and identify it with the conscious 'self' beyond the immense effect of an enormous network of the 'psyche' which disrupts this stable ground interminably and dislocates the neat divisions persistently. But it is the faith in the neat boundaries between the self and the other - built into the epistemological space Naipaul the investigating subject operates with - that draws the subject to the Kakar argument for it facilitates the self-making programme, it enables the (assumption of the) self to measure its distance clearly from the other. Above all both the narrativizations

(Kakar's and Naipaul's) provide them with the key of knowledge which enables them to figure and control the scapegoat. In scapegoating an objectified other whose metonymies are nonseeing and self-absorption the investigating subject is imagining the 'self' and a rationality which can be nothing more than fictions. Only through the schema Naipaul adopts can these be valorized. There is, however, a moment in the Naipaul text when one sees the possibility of the manichean boundaries being disturbed, or being redefined as interanimating rather than segregated from each other. Such a moment one sees in Naipaul's reading of Gandhi who also enters the Naipaul text in the form of a native informant. Gandhi provides a moment in the Naipaul text for the investigating subject to problematize the binaries he is operating with. But such a problematisation disrupts the self-restoration project, denies the subject the condition of self-differentiation and distantiation. In short it contests the cherished project of narrative self-consolidation. But this does not finally seem to happen, for ten years after his reading of Gandhi Naipaul still prepares to write the itinerary of his writer's synthesized self-hood. Gandhi is absorbed into the manichean text. The next section analyses the moment of Gandhi in the Naipaul text.

NATIVE INFORMANT - 4 : GANDHI

> When men cannot *observe*, they don't have *ideas*.
>
> V.S. Naipaul[41]

Curiously, Naipaul's early reflections on Gandhi (in *AD*) appear to contradict all the attributes of the scapegoat one discovers in the text. Gandhi, Naipaul argues in *AD*, remains a *powerful observer* of all the degrading aspects of Indian reality to which other Indians are blind; these are the realities of beggary and uncleanliness. Since beggary in India has a religious sanction, Naipaul observes, people accept and perpetuate it. But Gandhi reacted against it and denounced "misplaced charity", which he felt would encourage nothing but "laziness, idleness, hypocrisy and even crime." Naipaul finds this response strange in India: "It is the attitude of

the foreigner who does not understand the function of the beggar in India and is judging India by the standards of Europe"(*AD*, p. 69). Naipaul is disturbed in India when he finds people defecating in public places; he feels enraged when others deny what he observes: "But the truth is that *Indians do not see these squatters* and might even, with complete sincerity, deny that they exist: a collective blindness arising out of the Indian fear of pollution and the resulting conviction that Indians are the cleanest people in the world"(*AD*, p. 70, emphasis original). But Gandhi is free from this "collective blindness" for he as an "observer", Naipaul argues, insisted that Indians learn "the science of sanitation" from the West.

Naipaul feels that Gandhi the "observer is seeing what no Indians see." Gandhi "looked at India as no Indian was able to; his vision was direct, and this directness was, and is, revolutionary... he does not ignore the obvious"(*AD*, p. 73). Naipaul gives an intriguing explanation as to why Gandhi becomes an exception to the Indian "collective amnesia": "He saw India so clearly because he was in part a colonial." In Naipaul's explanation one can find an echo of self-reflection. Gandhi, Naipaul observes, had lived with the migrant Indian community in South Africa for twenty years. In the alien South African setting "*contrast made for clarity*, criticism and discrimination for self-analysis"(*AD*, p. 73 emphasis added). It is the self-critical comparative vision, the ability to distance and separate which Naipaul understands as the colonial vision of Gandhi, that makes him unique among Indians.

Naipaul pursues his theme of "collective blindness" of Indians, their inability to see, the absence of the gaze among them, in his later writing. In an article, "Indian Autobiographies," in 1965 (included in *OCB*)[42], Naipaul emphasises precisely this point: "the Indian habit of exclusion, denial, non-seeing." And curiously, Naipaul, who found in Gandhi, a 'revolutionary' with a 'direct' vision a year earlier (in *AD* in 1964), now sees Gandhi's autobiography as falling prey to the "collective amnesia" of Indians. Naipaul observes that Gandhi does not record a single descriptive detail of the London of the 1890s in his autobiography. Naipaul analyses this absence of descriptive abilities among Indians as a clue to what he termed Indian "collective blindness." He finds this defect in all the autobiographies of

Indians he reviews in the article. He attempts, following Nirad Chaudhuri, whose *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* becomes a sole exception to Naipaul's thesis, to define the trait of "non-seeing": "It is a lack of wonder, the medieval attribute of a people who are still surrounded by wonders." And in autobiographies, Naipaul observes, this lack of wonder is "converted into a hectic self-love" (*OCB* p. 61).

Curiously, at a later point in an interview Naipaul suggests the universal implications of the trait of "non-seeing". "Columbus," Naipaul observes, "a medieval man, voyaging in a miraculous world, which causes him no surprise. Isac Newton living in both the worlds"[43]. But nowhere in his work does Naipaul analyse this trait in these terms. Nor does he relate his observation to the larger implications of the privileging of perspective in post-medieval Europe, which has gained unprecedented prominence in Western signifying practices. The attribute, in spite of Naipaul's suggestion, is always treated as something essentially Indian , peculiar to the Indian 'mind'. This trait of "collective blindness," Naipaul feels, which foils Indian attempts at autobiography, is a corollary of a "religious view of life." So the probe slides into culturalist explanations[44]: *men* who lack the gaze cannot write novels. And the intellectual source invoked to support this culturalism is Albert Camus, once again. In his Camus-like argument the "blindness" of India is reflected on: "a society which has not learned to see and is incapable of assessing itself, which asks no questions because ritual and myth have provided all the answers, a society which has not learned 'rebellion'"(*OCB*, p. 64).

In *IWC* (1977) Naipaul returns once again to the theme of Gandhi's blindness. Concentrating on specific instances from Gandhi's autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth* (1927), Naipaul repeats his argument made twelve years before (in 1965). Gandhi, Naipaul feels, in his autobiography was obsessed with his own internal dilemmas; he did not describe any thing that did not affect him physically or mentally: "The inward concentration is fierce, the self-absorption complete"(*IWC* p. 98). Gandhi was, Naipaul argues, incapable of describing the people he had met, and places he had visited; the London of the 1890s remains an undescribed city and in its place Gandhi gives us a series of internal disturbances. The only

people who find a place in his autobiography are those who share Gandhi's obsessions: vegetarians, theosophists. People and places are reduced just to their names. Gandhi's blindness is not only toward London but, Naipaul observes, continues even in Gandhi's twenty years of South African life.

In South Africa Gandhi's internal search did not stop: "The adventure never ceased to be internal: so it comes out in the autobiography. And this explains the most remarkable omission in Gandhi's account of his twenty active years in South Africa: Africans" (p. 100). Naipaul's point is that although Africans appear only fleetingly their predicament, to which Gandhi showed concern, did not enable Gandhi to make a "political decision about Africans." He turned more and more inward: "His experiments and discoveries and vows answered his own need as a Hindu, the need constantly to define and fortify the self in the midst of hostility; they were not of universal application" (p. 100). Gandhi's blindness, his "defect of vision", Naipaul's observations imply, is a cultural trait resulting from a narcissistic self. Naipaul seems to ground this notion of self in the alleged Indian "religious view of life".

There are at least two issues in Naipaul's assessment of Gandhi that need attention: first, the apparent discrepancy between the two views - Gandhi as a 'revolutionary' with an observing eye free from Indian blindness in *AD* and Gandhi with defective vision, as blind Indian, in the later writings of the Naipaul text; and, second, Naipaul's object of analysis, on the basis of which Naipaul proceeds to generalize: Gandhi's autobiography.

The discrepancy between the two views of Gandhi arises because Naipaul does not sufficiently clarify in his later writings why Gandhi is free from Indian blindness. The absence of clarity here does not suggest a tension in the line of thought the investigating subject employs here - a tension arising out of contestation of the model applied from the object being analysed. The discrepancy is only apparent and not a contradiction in Naipaul's thesis. The only way the two interpretations (or observations) gain their coherence is when we understand the Gandhi with defective vision as "pre-colonial" (in the Naipaul text). That is, the non-seeing Gandhi who floated blindly in England and South Africa, Naipaul's argument implies, is one who is yet

to be affected, yet to acquire the 'critical' 'distancing' vision, the boon of the gaze that would give him ideas and set him apart from the blind Indians. The 'non-seeing' Gandhi is totally 'Hindu'. It is only after the struggle and test, as it were, of England and South Africa, the logic of the Naipaul text proceeds, that Gandhi acquires his critical vision, the gaze that equips him with the perspective. The 'colonial' Gandhi was a combination of, to use Naipaul's hypostasized dualist schema, (this will be shown in detail shortly), "positive" ('Western' 'critical') and "negative" (Indian, blind) attributes (*AD* p. 208-09). The Gandhi that received Naipaul's admiration is the 'revolutionary' who with his critical vision distanced himself from the non-seeing Indians - the subjects of lacuna.

When Naipaul returns to Gandhi in his later writings, in *OCB* and *IWC*, it is to emphasize the "negative" Indian aspect which, the Naipaul text argues, limits Gandhi's vision and political awareness. In *IWC* Naipaul introduces another theme in his interpretation of Gandhi - the theme of racial awareness. Although he had fought, Naipaul argues, a racial battle in all his South African years, Gandhi "had no means of expressing...of formulating the true racial lessons of South Africa" in India (pp. 154-55). Naipaul seems to argue that Gandhi's failure lies in his inability to develop in India a national awareness. In the caste-divided India, Naipaul argues, Gandhi with his racial lessons from South Africa ought to have developed a group identity among Indians, but it was his religiosity, his "negative" Indianness which blinded Gandhi to such a task[45]. So Gandhi too, after all, remains a gazeless victim of Indian amnesia. The threat from the object can be averted when it is neutralised and clear boundaries are made within it to locate the identifiable aspect from the scapegoated one. So Gandhi too becomes a source of information, he too falls neatly into the manichean pattern along with other informants discussed earlier. The investigating subject is more explicit: he identifies the 'pre-colonial' Gandhi with Anantha Murthy's Acharya: Gandhi's blindness in England "is remarkably like Ananthamurthi's wonderful description of the Acharya's wanderings in the world...In both men there is the same limitation of vision and response, the same self-absorption" (p. 110).

What is intriguing in Naipaul's interpretation of Gandhi is his unproblematic demarcation of a Gandhi with a "positive" critical vision from a Gandhi with "negative" defect of vision - while both the readings are absolutely based on Gandhi's *writings after* his exile (in England and South Africa). That is, how is it possible to draw two antithetical views on the same person based on a single text or set of texts written simultaneously? The problem one faces here is not akin to Paul de Man's thesis of blindness and insight; that is blindness operating as the productive condition for insights (such as Husserl's insightful critique of ethnocentrism based on his blindness to his own ethnocentrism)[46]. In Naipaul's interpretation of Gandhi, blindness and insight do not coexist (as they do in de Man's thesis) but one cancels (or is assumed to deny) the other - for Naipaul is engaged in producing essentialising, totalistic vision, a master key to 'explain' Gandhi and India. If the South African trials and tribulations endowed Gandhi with a 'Western' critical vision - and when Naipaul depends for his 'reading' of Gandhi on the material which virtually came out only *after* he acquired the so-called critical vision - how can the Naipaul text isolate a few passages from Gandhi's work and name him as either 'revolutionary' with a radical vision or a holy-man blinded by Hinduism?

This brings us to the issue of Gandhi's autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth* (1927). Both empirically and theoretically Naipaul's claims that Gandhi was blind to people and places while he was in London and South Africa have little ground. Gandhi does show descriptive ability when he meticulously describes a visiting writer, Narayan Hemchandra, while he was in London[47]. Naipaul's insistence on descriptive detail seems pedantic at one point when he argues about the absence of Africans in Gandhi's autobiography. Even before Gandhi had begun to write his autobiography in regular instalments in *Young India* he finished writing his personal account of his life in South Africa, *Satyagraha in South Africa*. In his *Foreword* to *Satyagraha* Gandhi mentions that all those who were acquainted with the serialization of his autobiography "cannot afford to miss these chapters on South Africa"[48]. The first few pages of *Satyagraha* will suffice to dispel the argument that Gandhi lacked descriptive ability or that he was blind to Africans[49]. The limitation of Naipaul's hermeneutic can be gauged from his

demarcation of "positive" and "negative" Gandhi based on problematic texts. Naipaul, while engaged with words and texts seems to map the 'life' of Gandhi, through a linear model, in which he (Naipaul) would see a break, a rupture, a point from which Gandhi would be 'revolutionary'. Having imagined this boundary Naipaul seems to move the 'other-side' as it were of the break to characterise another Gandhi. Both the binarism of Naipaul's plotting and the essentialism (Gandhi's Hindu mind) of his argument become obvious the moment we insist that Naipaul was after all offering a 'reading' of texts in which both blindness and insight are problematic issues; and from the text neither of them can be taken in isolation to posit a ground for a totalising interpretation.

But to read that other way, to see the one bringing the other to crisis, is to endanger the project the investigating subject has narrativized. It is to introduce the argument about the structural Unconscious which disrupts the neat boundaries of the ego-psychology in Kakar's argument; it is to see the possibility of the productive interrogation of the distantiated high-cultural codes (by the'low' cultural codes - as in *Samskara*); it is to see internal resistance to the hegemonic self-explanations; and above all it is to realize the impossibility of ever segregating the scapegoated other from the self. But such a risk the investigating subject cannot invite. The anxiety about catching 'impurities' from the other threatens the subject. His tropes, his native informants must repeatedly sanitize the distance and define his purity.

We will now attempt to read, before proceeding to analyse the narrative of self-realisation (in *The Enigma of Arrival*), certain tropological repetitions we have mentioned in earlier sections. This will involve examining the implications of the 'ruse of the gaze' in which the investigating subject invests in figuring the scapegoat.

Chapter Six : Narrative as Self-Restoration

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1) *FORGING THE PAST*

2) *NARRATIVES OF THE GAZE*

3) *WRITING AND REBELLION*

1) *FORGING THE PAST*

The ruse of the gaze is deployed to serve two purposes in the Naipaul narrative: firstly, to differentiate the observing and speculating investigator from the others who enter the narrative; secondly the differentiating gaze serves as a source of self-preservation and consolidation. The gift of the gaze, in the narrative, is expected to provide the subject with a wholeness which it had lost in its social existence but hopes to regain in its narrative figuration. In contrast to this sense of loss and desire the investigating subject feels that the people whom he sees do not recognise the loss and live under the illusion of 'wholeness' provided them by their religious mentality. And this 'mentality' is subordinated as 'negative' Indianness against which the 'positive' wholeness of his seeing is cherished. This operation can be said to form an epistemological space in the text through events, issues, themes and an evocation of memories from a distant past (childhood); and the space thus created enables the investigating subject to offer generalizations about others who enter the narrative and to assert his difference as the observer and speculator. This space, as we will see, is above all a space for forging the past.

In the early pages of *An Area of Darkness*, the difference the space constructs is introduced through the tropes of "darkness" and "light". "India", Naipaul writes, was associated with the memory of childhood and was therefore only a mythical land, "a country never physically described and therefore never real... a country *suspended in time*" (*AD* p. 27 emphasis added). Although as an investigating subject Naipaul had read any number of books on India, this imagined but unspecified and timeless land never found a correspondence in those books: "It remained a special, isolated area of ground..." (*AD* p. 27). This imaginary "India" is likened to a featureless hut surrounded by the (engulfing) darkness of the dusk, "though for a little way around the hut there is still light" (*AD* p. 30). The tropes of difference begin to take shape. In contrast with all others who came from this area of darkness and who had been enveloped by it, for the investigating subject the "*light* was the area of my experience, *in time and place*" (*AD* p. 30 emphasis mine). The project of self-restoration in the text proceeds through a binary

division of tropes and by relegating one side of the binary to a remote past of the subject (childhood) or as the (projected) attributes of the others from whom distantiation is sought. Thus the anecdotes about his grandfather and the Gold Teeth Nanee in *AD* serve as the initial examples of how the text depends on such scapegoats for its existence. For both the grandfather and the Nanee time and place do not matter: "as soon as he [the grandfather] had left his village he ceased to *see*... He had abandoned India; and, like Gold Teeth, he denied Trinidad" (*AD* p. 30 emphasis added). Another crucial trope stands out, the trope of the gaze: *seeing*.

The trope of imaginary India, however, has a paradoxical signification in the text. On the one hand, as mythical and inaccessible from books but cherished from childhood, the trope is invested with a glory and plenitude, a wholeness (thus evoking the Imaginary in the psychoanalytic sense). And the trope thus figured becomes an object of desire, which beckons the subject towards it: "In spite of myself, in spite of lucidity and London and my years, and over and above every other fear, and the memory of the Alexandrian cab-driver [image of the forlorn, abandoned existence of a foundling], some little feeling for India as the mythical land of my childhood was awakened" (*AD* p. 42). The object thus figured and desired is also an object of dread. By the end of the journey the subject feels that he should not have made that journey for "it had broken my life in two" (*AD* p. 265). "India" is an object towards which he has a vacillating relationship, he would at once identify himself with it and is repulsed and threatened by it. The "phantasmal memories" of childhood that the subject constructs are also signifiers of threat for they "are like trapdoors into a bottomless past" (*IWC* pp. 9-10). It is the fear of being sucked into that bottomless pit that works on the anxiety of the investigator. But it is through this very trope of Imaginary India that he would seek protective distance from the trapdoor: this he would do by projecting onto the others all differences as opposites. That is he would purge himself of all the attributes he associates with the others that are scapegoated in the narrative. And these others are those who cherish that "negative" wholeness of India: the area of darkness, with its other attributes of timelessness and unspecified space. In that trapdoor of darkness "even now...something of darkness remains, in those attitudes, *those ways*

of thinking and seeing, which *are no longer mine*" (*AD* p. 30 emphasis added).

The attributes, however, that figure the scapegoat might have been a part of the 'self' but that was only in the moment of 'prehistory' (timelessness) for the the purging began the history: "And in India I was to see that so many of the things which the newer and now perhaps truer side of my nature kicked against - the smugness, as it seemed to me, the imperviousness to criticism, the refusal to *see,* the double-talk and double-think - had an answer in that side of myself which I had thought buried and which India revived as a faint memory" (*AD* pp. 35-36 emphasis original). However, it is also asserted that a hundred years of separation from "India" "had been enough to wash me clean of my Indian religious attitudes" which condition the scapegoat's illusion that "India is still whole" (*IWC* p. 9). But it is not entirely so for we have already seen that the 'history' of the subject did not begin with the historical separation (indentureship) because that separation did not make the others any less "Indian" ("dark"); and his first exposure to the Indian darkness was in Trinidad which separated him generations earlier from India. It is the "history" of the subject that is important for the double articulation (paradoxical implications) of the text I am constructing - for it is at the basis of the narrativization, the medium or the technique, Naipaul is invested in. For it is that "history" (and the technique it shapes) which becomes the motor of his project, defining "what separates me from the country... [and diverges him] from the attitudes of people to whom India is still whole" (*IWC* p. 9). We will come to that "history" shortly. But let us continue with the examples of the binarism that "history" constructs through a tropological argument.

The imaginary India is also constructed through a nostalgic idealistic recounting of childhood memories. Naipaul recounts two such anecdotes intended to illustrate the prevalence of certain Hindu rituals and their meaning in an alien social situation (colonial Trinidad). The reminiscence also records what should be taken as a childhood response to a ritual such as the recitation of *katha* (generally a *puranic* or mythological tale). The *katha* was recited under a pepal tree in a municipal park which attracted the attention of the passers-by: "For those of us at school at the time the public ceremony had been a strain. We were becoming self-conscious,

self-assessing" (*AD* p. 32). But later on, the response to the ritual changes: "It was a scene of pure pastoral: aryan ritual, of another continent and age..." (*AD* p. 32). The ritual continues in Trinidad and the nostalgia is cherished (for the subject). Similarly, Naipaul's description of the brahminical ritual of the thread-ceremony reinscribes such a nostalgia: "I had no belief; I disliked religious ritual; and I had a sense of the ridiculous. I refused to go through the *janaywa*, or thread ceremony" (*AD* p. 34). The self-conscious distantiation is expressed in this recounting in different, rather nostalgic terms: "So I refused, though now this ancient drama, absurdly surviving in a Trinidad yard, seems to me touching and attractive" (*AD* p. 34). This nostalgia seems to be not (just) for the ritual of childhood but for that Imaginary 'India', that pastoral which, as I will show in more detail in the section on *The Enigma of Arrival* later, such rituals are believed to constitute, that original order and plenitude they supposedly signify[1]: they "outline a whole vanished world" (*IWC* p. 9). There is a tendency in the Naipaul text to use "memories" at every opportunity to signify that lost order, that pastoral origin. Thus the memory of the language - Hindi - spoken during childhood is directly traced back to the language of the time when Buddha lived (6th century B.C.) - Pali. And in this leap to that order the medieval origins of Hindi become insignificant[2].

Another signifier crucial to the construction of the imagined India in the text is caste; and one finds it caught in the paradoxical signification, once as a constitutive part of that plenitude called "India" and once as a metonymy signifying the scapegoated other. Caught between these articulations caste as an historically developed institution, and the politics of its continuity in contemporary India, remains largely marginalised in the text. Consequently, one finds the signifier operating more as an hypostatised category in the text. From a section in *AD*, however, where we find memories of past are feelingly narrativized, it is possible to elaborate a specific argument about caste.

The argument develops through tropes and anecdotes. Naipaul recounts the childhood memories of his horrified response at seeing boys sharing Popscicles and Palates, local iced lollies. This reaction, Naipaul writes with honesty, continues to be present in his response even

later on: "This was more than difference; this was the uncleanliness we had to guard against" (*AD* p. 33). In another anecdote he relates how he had avoided sucking a pipe during a chemistry experiment when he saw that the pipe was already made 'unclean' by others. This avoiding of the pipe is observed by another Indian boy who whispers "Real Brahmin". Naipaul's response to the comment, although encoded in historical terms, does not conceal the nostalgia for lost origins: the recognition of the caste background - in the term "Real Brahmin" - indicates the "loss" of a world: "a sadness for our common loss: mine, which he did not suspect, *the result of my own decision or temperament,* his... the result of history and environment" (*AD* p. 35 emphasis added). On another occasion, on his first visit to New York, Naipaul writes, he survived just on sweets for fear of eating something "impure". But in the more recent reconstruction of this moment in *EA*, the subject surprisingly reveals that he carried bananas and a half-cooked chicken, which he eats in the darkened hotel room. There is no mention of surviving on the sweets from the flight[3]. It is the fear of 'impurity' which comes out in his recollection of his visit to a 'relative's' family in Trinidad as a child. The rumour that the people were muslims, simply pulls him back from touching the vermicelli they offered.

In the Trinidad Hindu community Naipaul finds such an "India" of 'wholeness' absent. It appeared to exist as a whole only in the artefacts of the community. But the artefacts failed to contribute to the totality of "India" for in the 'imperfect' Trinidad society "Sweepers we had quickly learned to do without. Others supplied the skills of carpenters, masons and cobblers. But we were also without weavers and dyers, workers in brass and makers of string beds" (*AD* p. 29). The images conjure up an "India" that was once whole, intact, with its caste norms constituting such a totality. In the Trinidad community he finds the loss of such plenitude, that pastoral origin. Yet he could not escape the feeling, the subject confesses, that a new relative, though wealthy, was a *chamar* (leather-worker caste), whenever he met him: "*but the thought still occurs* [that he is a *chamar*] whenever we meet and that initial sniffing for difference is now involuntary" (*AD* p. 33). But a sense of loss grips Naipaul when he fails in his attempt to get Ramon - a Trinidad acquaintance, who, faceless and lost, dies in England - cremated in

accordance with Hindu rituals: "This [cremation according to Hindu rites] alone would spare him final nonentity" (*AD* p. 41). The passage is once again an allusion to the nostalgic past, that fantasy land of the pastoral. For the 'history' (in both the senses - that which separated them from India a hundred years before and that other one which enables the subject's construction of that 'past') has deprived them (Naipaul and Ramon) of a "warm, familiar land. For us no such land existed" (*AD* p. 41).

It is possible, perhaps, to argue from the graph of childhood memories of 1930s Trinidad, sketched by Naipaul (in 1964), that he was only *describing* the force of an ideology permeating the daily practices of individuals. But such a description, narrativized with so much feeling, ends by constructing the ideological practice (such as caste) as a monolithic, all-powerful cultural category. That is, the signifier of caste becomes the inescapable, imprisoning and all-determining code of the society.

Naipaul's 'social theory', if one can use that term to describe the investigating subject's reflections, divides Indian society and Western societies into caste and class societies respectively. Class (Western) society, Naipaul writes, is based on a system of rewards, hence it could continually develop. In contrast, caste society frustrates all programmes for change and development for, Naipaul reports in 1964, it reduces a human being to his mere function and thus nullifies all his ambitions. That is, the essence of the profession determines everything for the person and imprisons him in it. Further, the observer-speculator Naipaul endorses the insight of Gandhi-the-seer about how this prisonhouse of caste system is at the root of both the fragmentation of and the foreign rule over India. Only Gandhi could see, Naipaul argues, that "[s]anitation was linked to caste, caste to callousness, inefficiency and a hopelessly divided country, division to weakness, weakness to foreign rule" (*AD* p. 74). But such a reading, (both of the code and of the native informant), or like the earlier 'memory' about the absence of caste-stratified social organisation in Trinidad, isomorphically reduces caste to signify professional status alone and explains the professional essences (name of a profession) as making any other existence for the bearer of the name impossible; that is, professional essences

a priori preempt any possibilities of 'contamination' of the structure through overlapping, criss-crossing of the essences. It is this view which emerges from the paradoxical signification of caste in the Naipaul text. But this is a patently documentary reading for it does not give any place for mobility within the system which one finds (even) in liberal readings of the code[4]. Secondly it does not examine the fact that outside this dominant social matrix signified by caste there are other social formations (such as the so-called 'tribes') which the reductive reading of the system cannot make sense of. (It is true that Naipaul is not unaware of this for he sees the old king in *The Princes* as the 'aborigine' who manipulated the system to acquire caste status. But such a possibility is not seen as in contradiction to his reading of the code. For when he sees such possibilities, as I will show shortly, it is for the essences his vision searches). But that this very mobility *into* (and within) the caste-system is a privilege which would continue the subordination of the other social codes cannot be read by this documentary approach to caste-system. Let us see how this argument is used to construct a 'theory' of 'social change' in India - before returning to our theme of the double implications of the signifier caste and the 'history' that it constructs.

The signifier, caste, becomes the constitutive element (along with religion) of another 'index' of the referent "India" in the text: poverty. In the Naipaul text these three indices caste, poverty and religion, as I suggested earlier, contribute to the 'worlding' of 'India'[5]. It is not so much with these indices that one finds problems as with the way the text narrativizes them. Naipaul constructs, for instance, the index of poverty and the Indian response to it through a parable. The parable is about a Sikh who, returning to India after years abroad, sat among his suitcases and wept as he first came into contact again with Indian poverty. The parable is immediately framed as the "Indian" response to poverty; and Naipaul describes initially his own response as in no way different from that of other tourists who make "observations of no value". But the entire chapter (called "Degree" in *AD*) is centred on Naipaul's own anxiety to differ not only from the "Indian" response but also from that of tourists. There is an almost photographic, naturalistic description of the emaciated bodies, shrunken faces, diminished physique of people

- although described with pain. Naipaul attempts to differ from Indians and tourists through an analysis *not* of the material forces and events that effect poverty in the world but through an explanation of what he constructs as the "Indian" attitude: non-recognition, denial and withdrawal. These become the essences of that India and its inhabitants from which distantiation is sought by the investigating subject. The procedure the text adopts is to unveil these essences in its construction of the Indian social structure. Premchand (a Hindi novelist), the investigator comments, laments over the plight of the beggars who returned from houses empty-handed, but did not recognise the fact that there was beggary. Naipaul traces these attributes to the religious mentality of Indians. What begins initially as a description appears to follow a prescriptive schema. For only through the repetition of that schema can the project of self-distantiation and self-making be realized. Thus the persistence of poverty in India finds explanations within the limited/limiting matrix of the religiosity of the Indian mind[6]. It is true, however, that the question (or the degree) of what is poverty needs to be tackled in terms of cultural codes (at one level)[7] but the problem of poverty (or the solutions for it) cannot be analysed in terms of 'naturalised' ideological codes alone. For the description of an event or code may itself be in danger of turning prescriptive as long as it confines its epistemological difference only to the task of unveiling, without showing that the veil in the first place is itself a construction. Whereas in the Naipaul text the procedure is aimed at maintaining the veils of codes in designating the others; for such maintaining of the veil provides the condition of possibility in the subject's self-restoration.

In order to understand (the codes that maintain) poverty (and to find possibilities of changing it) one needs to "look at both ownership patterns and exchange entitlements, and at the forces that lie behind them. This requires careful construction of the nature of modes of production and the structure of economic classes as well as their interrelations"[8]. Whereas in Naipaul the recognition of the veil of code denies the other such a possibility. It is the abyss of poverty, the investigating subject argues, which imprisons one in caste norms and caste norms which in turn maintain poverty. The signifier of caste serves, in the Naipaul text, the purpose

of worlding that 'India' that the subject attempts to free himself from for the restoration of his self. In addition, it serves yet another function.

The caste system, the subject argues, was not always a dangerous and decayed institution, as it has subsequently become; only when its 'pragmatism' decayed did the institution become dangerous and turn into an obstacle to change: "*In the beginning* a no doubt *useful division of labour* in a rural society, it has now divorced function from social obligation, position from duties. It is inefficient and destructive; it has created a psychology which will frustrate all improving plans" (*AD* p. 78 emphasis added). The symptomatic phrase stands out: *in the beginning*. When was this 'beginning'? The caste system was 'useful' in what sense? We get a hint of the period Naipaul seems to have in mind when he writes: "Caste, sanctioned by the Gita with almost propagandist fervour, might be seen as part of the older Indian pragmatism, the 'life' of classical India" (*AD* p. 78). Was the beginning, then, the 'classical' India? Where does this classical period begin and end? What criteria would determine the 'classical'? What is classical India and where do the signifying practices of classical or medieval *break* with the 'modern' ones? Should such a break signify an irreclaimable loss or disappearance of the structure of feeling of a 'different' social situation? These become relevant questions in the Indian context when one looks at the problem of periodization in Indian historiography.

The mainstream historiography of most 'authoritative' texts divides the periods on the basis of dynastic rule - and this procedure is the legacy of colonial historiography. In this approach Indian history 'develops' in three periods - 'classical' (said to be 'Hindu'), 'medieval' (said to be 'Muslim') and 'modern' (British/Indian)[9]. Naipaul's account seems to follow the model offered by this colonial historiography[10].

In situating Naipaul's generalizations (which are *necessary* but problematic[11]) in the context of colonial historiography my intention is not to dismiss him simply as an Orientalist. It is, on the contrary, to show how a system of arguments could develop from what are apparently non-theoretical reflections; and how such a system implicates one (wittingly or unwittingly) in a 'choice' of argument. To show the limits of the text which cannot articulate the possibilities of

change or gaps in the ideological practices of a society - for it defines them as a monolithic prisonhouse of doom. Further, to track the nostalgic, idealistic element in these reflections through which a yearning for a wholeness, a totality, finds expression.

Naipaul's characterisation of caste in 'classical' India is symptomatic of an approach which conceptualises caste as an hypostatised category. For Naipaul, caste was a product of the 'pragmatism' of an 'older' India. This 'older' India, as I argued earlier, for which Naipaul evinces a longing seen in the nostalgia for rituals of the past, is mainly an imagined past. For nowhere in his work does Naipaul either attempt to construct the past in historical terms or refer to a single work that undertakes the task. For Louis Dumont, the most formidable advocate of the approach which emerges in Naipaul's reflections, the caste system was a fully developed institution by 800 B.C.[12]. The one source in which this - culturalist - approach grounds its argument is the scriptures. And through a documentary approach to the scriptures of the past the conceptualization of the caste system emerges[13]. Naipaul's use of the Gita is symptomatic in this regard; the Gita is the one scripture that repeatedly appears in Naipaul's analysis[14]. Each on to his own duty, says the Gita. Naipaul uses the dictum to explain the division in Indian society (*AD* p. 47): the divisions are the result of caste mentality. Naipaul alludes to another 'authority' to substantiate his message of the Gita: Shakespeare. He compares the Gita's assertion with Ulysses's speech on 'degree' in *Troilus and Cressida*. Like Naipaul's own reading of the Gita here, however, the Ulysses passage is used elsewhere to celebrate the continuity of a European order, an Elizabethan world picture which is said to have the capacity to absorb the new while retaining the older. Though Naipaul constructs continuity for the purposes of defining "India", like his counterparts he ignores the fact that the examples go against his arguments: the Gita elaborates a brahminical approach and hence cannot be relied upon as a guide to the analysis of social formation; and Ulysses in any case fails to maintain order: the workings of 'degree' in the Greek army in effect show the disruptions in the order not the continuity of absorption and celebration[15].

Naipaul probes for essences in the various anecdotes he constructs to assert the continuity

of the more than two thousand year old ideological practice the Gita enunciates. So in the anecdotes what we are made to see is the people's resentment at doing any other work than the one they are expected to do. Thus we see in the 1960s India a hotel worker refusing to clean the floor for his job is only making the bed; the clerk who wouldn't bring water when someone faints; the clerk who will not type an officer's letter for he is only a 'steno' and typing is not his duty; people enjoying their picnic while someone drowns on the beach because they wouldn't take any risks as courage is not the quality of their caste/profession. Mobility in the system is acknowledged but the (caste) essence is searched for and that is identified as the 'Indian' reality (*AD* pp. 47, 50-51, 78); and all these anecdotes gain the significance of parables in the text: "Adventure is possible. But a knowledge of degree is in the bones and no Indian is far from his origins. It is like a physical yearning" (*AD* p. 55). Naipaul the investigating subject is infuriated by what he considers as the sterile continuity he discerns in the anecdotes. Indeed, it is continuity alone he sees, for his analytical schema provides in these continuities scapegoats for his project. Thus, unhesitatingly he would suggest that a late seventeenth century traveller like Ovington would remain in "many ways a reliable guide" to India (*AD* p. 56).

It is certainly true that clearly one cannot demand sociological verities in the Naipaul text; it is not for the 'accuracy' of its truths that one consults the Naipaul text. Though one cannot ask a 'writer' for a disciplinary formulation of his material (in sociological, historical terms) one can claim with justification, I think, that the 'writing' itself has come to be a disciplinary formulation at least from the early nineteenth century (this point will be elaborated in a later section cf. "Folding Back"); and such a formulation itself can be analysed as a specific mode of narrativization of the social text. Such narrativizations, whether consciously intended by the 'writer' or not, may reiterate certain political 'choices'. This is the effect of the social text's overdetermination of the writer's specific narrativization. It is the fact of the inter-animation of the verbal text of the writer and the social text which can be used to justify 'sociological', 'historical', 'psychological', readings of the 'literary' text. But the problem with such approaches is that they may unduly subordinate one discipline to the other - thus celebrating a

specific disciplinary virtue. In my thesis, my own attempt has been to be cautious of such disciplinary privilegings. This has become possible for me in analysing Naipaul's narrativization as a tropological construction - a narrativization of the social text through tropes. My interest has been not so much in checking the 'truths' of these tropes (though that activity cannot be completely disavowed) against a 'reality' but to examine *how* these tropes build a system, a discourse and what purposes that system serves, and to situate the implications of that system within the social text it narrativizes.

The tropological narrativization has followed, as I am arguing, a binary schema through which the text projects all differences (between the 'self' and the others) as oppositions, and thus fixes the scapegoats in the narrative. All the information sought from the native informants, which the subject allegorizes, serves the purpose of reinscribing the scapegoat. However, in the childhood memories that Naipaul constructs as the investigating subject, in these apparently 'non-theoretical' reflections one can track a pattern which is in consonance with the readings of the other informants we discussed earlier. It is not the history of the indentured labour migration, as I suggested earlier, that marks the distance between the subject of the Naipaul text and the others that inhabit India (and enter the narrative) as Naipaul wants us to believe. It is not the effects of that history that make the Naipaul subject. The Naipaul subject is made through a specific 'history', a specific narrativizing medium. Naipaul wants us to believe in the *narratives*, that that subject can be localised, can be consolidated and made 'whole' in the narratives. In a linear charting of his 'life', as he does of Gandhi's, Naipaul localises that subject formation in his 'second birth' that England is said to have given him[16]. So that 'second birth', like Gandhi's 'positive' self and Kakar's 'developed ego', can be said to equip him with the gaze which in turn makes him a speculator - a man of ideas. It (allegedly) enables him to mark that moment which separates 'history' from 'prehistory' in the sketch of his own life, and thus to purge himself of the 'negative' essences of the 'prehistory'. And this second birth that provides the subject with the technique to unveil the blindness and ignorance of the scapegoat also at once re-stores and consolidates the subject. But the gaze of the second

birth cannot once and for all free the subject from the anxiety which the scapegoat, the other-side of the binary, creates. The ambivalence toward the object remains. And the only way the anxiety can be overcome (even if transiently) is through a knowledge over the object which enables the subject to control it, define it and distantiate it. Thus the paradoxical implications of the indices of caste, poverty and religion, while subserving the project of self-restoration, contribute to the figuring of a scapegoat whom the project attempts to control through narrativization. That is why the tropes repeat, the narratives continue and more and more information is sought from the 'natives' to manage the scapegoat - for the 'wounded civilization' would disturb the subject; and in the analysis of the allegorized information the text replicates all the traits that Naipaul would deny in himself or would attempt to free himself from (and *EA*, as I will show later, is a celebration of such self-restoration achieved through distantiation). But the paradoxical implications of the tropes, through which the self-restoration is sought, the 'wholeness' of 'self' is wished, work against precisely that wish of fulfilment, of totality which Naipaul hopes to achieve. For the subject is after all a textual effect and, as I argued in the section on Kakar earlier, cannot be localized; the totality of the fulfilment of the subject is only a mirage. The next section elaborates this point through the psychoanalytic fable I have been alluding to in my thesis.

2) *NARRATIVES OF THE GAZE*

The psychoanalytic fable constructs the subject in two phases. In both the phases specularity or the gaze operates as a crucial signifier computing the subject's formation. The first phase, called the 'mirror-stage', initiates the play of the gaze, where the child views his own reflection in the mirror and develops ambivalent responses towards the mirror image. This first involvement in this specular circuit has a paradoxical effect on the child. The child at once recognises and mis-cognizes the reflection (itself). The child's initial recognition itself is predicated on its prior alienation. That is, the child's prior separation from itself makes possible

the recognition. Caught within the specular circuit the child sees the reflection in the mirror as an-other person who appears as a coherent, well-integrated image; in contrast with the reflection the child senses itself as a fragmented, dispersed body. In effect the child is lured and repulsed by the image simultaneously. Lured, because of the child's desire to identify itself with the image when seen as a coherent, whole figure. Repulsed because the child views the reflection as a threat and as a disturbing figure[17]. This phase is also described as the 'pre-Oedipal' period. However, specularity which initiates the vacillation of the child toward its image does not seem to gain any specific prominence. The gaze in this phase is likened to the absence of perspective - marking a specific position of the viewer from within the painting - in medieval paintings[18]. The child is simply caught up in a specular circuit which it cannot yet begin to signify. The tension which the ambivalence indicates in this phase does not yet signify any specific meaning, it only prefigures the tensions of another stage.

The subject is said to gain access to a signifying chain in the second phase of its itinerary. This accession is coterminous with a specific signification of the gaze. The gaze, to continue the earlier analogy with painting, is like the emergence of perspective in Western painting; that is, the force of the gaze operates from the interior of the painting, channelling the perspective of the viewer. Thus the meaning of the detail (in the painting) begins to be produced in accordance with the gaze. The gaze in this phase, unlike in the first stage, appears to be endowed with double implications: it is at once the vehicle of sight and producer of meaning. The crucial difference between the two phases is the result of the double implications the gaze acquires in the course of its formation of the subject. For the double-implication of the gaze indicates sexual difference by providing the subject with a signifying chain. In the psychoanalytic fable, as we are recounting, the child begins to become aware of sexual difference from the moment s/he sees the absence of a penis in the female. Thus the sight produces a knowledge of the 'lack' in the child.

The signifying chain to which the child gains access is built on this fundamental knowledge of the lack. Thus the primary signifier in the chain - the phallus - represents an

absence in the subject. This signifier begins to channel forth desire and anxiety of the subject as it begins to operate with the language-signs. In the female child the desire is said to take the form of penis-envy, the desire for something she lacks and in the male child the anxiety about the lacking (castration) and the desire for the totality of the body which is threatened (in fantasy) by castration. Thus the desire and anxiety repeat in the form of presence and absence in constituting the symbolic chain. Although the phallus seems to signify the lack the passion it channelises in the form of desire in fact represents the mother's object of desire - the female's desire for the fulfilment of the *lac-una*[19]. In effect, the privileged signification of the phallus mainly -in the symbolic order that the fable constructs - is the desire for that presence, that plenitude or wholeness (perhaps that original body of the Imaginary), which is always felt to be endangered by the subject's awareness of the absence. It is this privileged signification imbricated in the operation of the phallus as the master signifier which is said to purvey the truths of the symbolic order: "The phallus is a signifier, a signifier whose function...perhaps lifts the veil from that which it held in the mysteries. For it is the signifier destined to design in their entirety the effects of the signified, to the extent that the signifier conditions them by its signifier-presence"[20]. In other words the phallus represents the subject's desire for the other's object of desire which is in the first place the master signifier. The circuit comes back but with the crucial difference: now it operates the asymmetry of sexual difference. The stage on which this drama is enacted is named the "Oedipal stage". And it is through this stage that the child graduates into the symbolic order that repeats the alternating pattern of presence and absence in producing meaning.

I am not sure, however, that the fable denies the double-implication that I am tracing in the thematic of the gaze. On the contrary, the fable reiterates them when the subject is figured as a voyeur - the one who sees secretly. But the position of the voyeur is predicated on an anxiety - the anxiety of being caught, the threat of being exposed and shamed. Yet he is conditioned by the desire to *see* by being unseen. Thus the voyeur's position - albeit at stake - provides the subject with a displaced analogue to sexual pleasure: visual pleasure. The voyeur's

pleasure is at the cost of someone else's unawareness of being the object of pleasure. (The appeal of the popular cinema, it is argued, is based on positioning the spectator in the position of the voyeur)[21]. Thus in the fable we are recounting, the signifying circuit of the phallic gaze involves the subject in privileging specularity and associating it with speculation (ideas). That is, ideas with their teleological implication of 'truths' and specularity move in conjunction with each other.

The fable, I think, gives us an immensely useful set of tools to understand and analyse various signifying practices in which we are implicated. If the symbolic order is an oscillating pattern of presence and absence, unity and lack, no signifying text such as the verbal, the painter's, the filmic can escape this pattern. But the pattern itself cannot be treated as a balance-sheet aimed at providing a 'normal' model. And the subject 'interpellated' in such a pattern is nothing but an effect of the pattern. This subject is always at variance with the individual of the social text. Although the social text with its economic, political, social, cultural and historical elements is intermeshed with the symbolic order the subject remains ex-centric with the individual. But it is a consistent (if not deliberate) conflation or confusion of the two (the subject and the individual) which seems to operate in the construction of the imperialist subject as the 'proper' model. The ex-centricity of the subject is suppressed in this construction and a 'normal', superior (male) being is made. The stories of Orientalism and colonial discourse (attempt to) enumerate this subject's self-consolidation. But even such texts cannot have complete authority over their discourses for they constantly reveal the anxiety about the terrifying other. Nonetheless the desire for self-consolidation finds justification in the pretext of making the 'good society'. Such a justification materializes in making the (domesticated) 'native' in such a way that he would remain obliged to make himself in accordance with the model. This is in line with the logic of the phallus which provides the subject accession to the symbolic order by figuring its desire in terms of the phallus. The circuit seems vicious and formidable.

The Naipaul text (like that of Kakar) seems to be in line with the imperialist project of

worlding the world and self. This seems to happen because of a metalepsis or confusion of effect for cause (which was used to justify domination in the case of imperialism). For what the Naipaul text constructs as the 'result' of the 'second birth' shares all the attributes that we noted in the fable: the subject has the seeing eye and operates a symbolic chain (the narrative; the *EA* is a culmination of this mode of narrativization). But such a construction serves another function in defining itself against an other which is eventually subordinated to the subject ('proper') being constructed. The pattern that develops in the repetitive constructions of the subject in the Naipaul text can be diagrammed as a double tropological chain (in which -x- represents an associative link, a sliding of signification):

Gaze -x- Seeing -x- Light -x- Knowledge -x- Writer -x- Consolidation

Blindness -x- Non-seeing -x- Darkness -x- Ignorance -x- Scapegoat

Thus the gaze that enables the subject to observe equips him with a system of knowledge through which self-consolidation is sought. But the operation brings forth an other, an opposite who is blind due to the lack of sight and as a result is imprisoned in the darkness of ignorance yet continues to cherish a wholeness which is no longer available in the world. The Naipaul text stands on this asymmetry; and it is only through that asymmetry that it can re-present, narrativize the scapegoated object that enters the narratives. This re-presentation is essential for the narrative in order to save the subject from the threatening cathexis of the object, the *lacuna*, the trapdoor of the bottomless abyss it *sees* and fears. But this anxiety of being engulfed, the fear of being dismembered can only signify the unbridgeable gaps that remain in the text. The text exists because of such gaps. The subject that emerges from the pattern is nothing but an effect of the text with no extra-textual origin of self as such. (This does not mean, however, as I have already asserted, that the text has hermetically sealed it from the world into an exclusively verbal maze). When an extra-textual origin is asserted as the source of the self such

an assertion can be said to commit a metalepsis, and the political effects of such a metalepsis I have already suggested. Naipaul's project, by investing in the vocation of writing as a source of self-consolidation, making the self whole, imposing order on the world (cf. "Mappings" and the chapter on *EA* which follows), conflates the textual effect with an extra-textual origin - the metaphysical 'self' as if it were outside of, transcendental with regard to the sign-system in which it is found. And it is precisely for such an extra-textual essence that he searches in the scapegoats who enter his narrative and the information he gathers from the native informants. My point is that the textual subject cannot be conflated with the psychobiographical signified (Naipaul) for measuring the growth of 'success' of the writer. The subject as an effect in fact indicates the impossibility of such a unification, totalization of the 'individual' for the subject remains at variance with the individual, fissuring the presumed unity. And my contention is that Naipaul's investment in his project moves on such lines. It is there in his desire to impose order on the world and to preserve his self; it is there in his conviction of the presumed virtues of the 'second birth'; and there in the faith that the virtues can be maintained uncontaminated, can be separated once one gains access to them from the other 'impurities'. It is like faith in the exclusiveness of binaries which construct a system such that they could never corrupt each other once a line is drawn between them. It is like Kakar's assertion about the division between the id and ego, between the 'developed ego' and the 'underdeveloped ego'. Thus it is the Kakar argument that appeals to Naipaul and not the Gandhi of his own construction for in the latter the binaries - the "positive" and the "negative" - are shown to be blurred, and, eventually, he is absorbed into the abyss of "Indianness." Whereas the Kakar argument erects the binaries by subordinating the "underdeveloped ego" which is said to result from the absence of clear boundaries between the ego and the id. In effect the 'proper' models that emerge from the Naipaul text and the Kakar argument are predicated on the assumption of such clear boundaries, binaries, can be kept apart. The scapegoat of the Naipaul text is notorious for mixing the boundaries. One can see this as the motor behind the reiteration of the writer's project in the most recent text of Naipaul *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987); this text, as I will argue,

is an attempt to reassert the writer's wholeness, to bring the 'man' and the 'writer' onto one axis.

The fortune of the second birth and the gift of the gaze enable the Naipaul subject to keep himself away from the 'impurities' of the scapegoat. They make possible the narratives of knowledge. Since the scapegoat lacks the gaze, and in effect is devoid of ideas, it cannot represent itself in the novel 'proper', a (proper) narrative of knowledge cannot develop in the regime of the blind. For, the novel proper can flourish only in an area where the individual ego develops and asserts, where the ego makes 'rebellion' possible, which by its very nature absent from the land of the 'underdeveloped ego'. These observations are part of the larger text of Naipaul's worlding of 'India'. But to support his arguments it is not the native informants whom Naipaul invokes now (since the novel is of the West) but that counter-revolutionary Algerian-French intellectual and contemporary of Fanon - Albert Camus. The next section elaborates Naipaul's arguments and attempts to situate them along with Camus's in the wider context of the politics of ideas.

3) *WRITING AND REBELLION*

(i)

In the preceding sections I have shown how the tropological argument of the Naipaul text uses the indices of caste, poverty and religion to construct the figure of "India(ns)". But through the double implications of these tropes and the pattern of narrativization employed in recounting the 'memories' we have been able to suggest the collusion between the narrative's project of self-restoration and the much larger text of imperialist self-consolidation; further we were able to note how the *text* of these narratives can be used to disrupt such a wish for self-unification. This strategic reading of text(s) can be used to situate, as I attempted in the case of the native informants, the verbal texts that Naipaul employs to buttress his argument in the wider politico social text. This section attempts to *read* Naipaul's scattered speculations on the

novel (an institutionalising of 'writing') and his buttressing arguments.

As a definition of the novel Naipaul offers a vague generalisation, in ethnocentric terms, of what the Western novel expresses: "The novel is of the West. It is part of that Western concern with the condition of men, a response to the here and now" (*AD* p. 214). However, it is possible to trace a specific account of the novel in Naipaul's general statements. One gets a clue to the theoretical trajectory Naipaul leans on when he approvingly quotes a passage from Camus's *The Rebel*. Camus distinguishes what he calls the 'literature of consent' from the 'literature of rebellion'; the literature of consent is believed to be prevalent in the (European) classical period and the literature of rebellion in the modern period. The novel being the art form of modern times, Camus argues, it is absent in the classical period: "When it exists [in the classical period], with very few exceptions, it is not concerned with a story but with fantasy.... These are fairy tales, not novels. In the latter period, on the contrary, the novel form is really developed - a form that has not ceased to thrive and extend its field of activity up to the present day....The novel is born at the same time as the spirit of rebellion and expresses, on the aesthetic plane, the same ambition" (quoted in *AD* p.216).

Two sets of contrasts stand out in Camus's passage and through them we can trace the conceptual model the passage seems to derive from: literature of rebellion as opposed to literature of consent; modern versus classical period. All the major theories of the novel from Hegel to Lukacs to Bernstein are postulated in similar binary divisions: classical versus modern, epic versus novel, religious versus secular[22]. In positing the problem in these terms each of these theorists is forced by the very logic of their argument to trace and emphasise the opposing elements on the two sides of the binary division. Since the novel develops in the modern period in opposition to the classical period it is said to be endowed with the capacity to bring together the heterogeneity of modern life; in other words it is said to provide the modern analogue of a lost unity of the classical period. Thus unity is worked out by the "productivity of the spirit" manifesting through the reflexive individual and constructed in an autobiographical form. Thus the novel is said to preserve the values, that were once maintained in the society by an external

power. All those attributes that make the novel are declared as absent in the classical period and its cultural forms - myth and the epic. Thus the epic is posed as the Other of the novel. Another significant feature of this theoretical schema is its periodization of history. Many theoretical accounts of the novel locate the 'origin' of the novel in the seventeenth century. The psychoanalytic fable with its analogues from art history also locates the prominence of the gaze in this period. Various theories of historical change also privilege moments in the seventeenth century as initiating a "break" or "shift" in European 'consciousness' and thought[23].

Bakhtin is one thinker who developed a countervailing argument by re-locating the origin of the novel in 'immemorial' oral tradition - the tradition of laughter. Bakhtin argues that the initial basis for the novel was already available in the 'low' cultural art forms, such as fables, magical tales, satyr-stories etc... The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bakhtin demonstrates, merely show the culmination of the form which was developing over centuries[24].

Camus's own theory of rebellion is framed within the trajectory of the periodizing historians. The history of rebellion he is 'invoking', Camus tells us in his *The Rebel*, is in fact the "history of European pride"[25]. Camus's theory develops through a scapegoating of non-European societies in which he denies rebellious elements. In European societies alone, Camus argues, the spirit of revolt can exist because there "a theoretic equality conceals great factual inequalities" - and the political freedom available to people enables them to revolt against the inequalities (*R* p. 28). It might appear that Camus is describing rebellion in a technical sense in that it describes only the reaction of the subject in the conditions of a bourgeois society. But not so. After a vague and extremely generalised essentialist account of 'rebellion' (*R* pp. 23-25), Camus unwarrantedly goes on to argue that the concept of rebellion in the West is radically different from that of the non-European societies like Hindu, Inca and central African. He immediately goes on to declare that "we could even assert, with considerable assurance, that the idea of rebellion has no meaning in those actual cases" (i.e., in Hindu, Inca and Central African societies. *R* pp. 25,26)[26]. Although Camus at one point characterises rebellion as an aspect of "modern" society, at another point he goes on to trace its continuity in

the "European" past: "However, a Greek slave, a serf, a condottiere of the Renaissance, a Parisian bourgeois during the Regency, and a Russian intellectual at the beginning of the nineteenth century would undoubtedly agree that rebellion is legitimate, even if they differed about the reasons" (*R* p. 25). No wonder North Africa (Algeria) does not appear even in the early 1950s when Camus was writing. For the entries are aimed at chronicling the sagas of a progressive "European self": "In other words, the problem of rebellion only seems to assume a precise meaning within the confines of Western thought" (*R* p. 25). Camus assumes unquestioningly the 'classical' period (Greek society) as an unproblematical part of an ever-developing "West" - a construct which appears to be the result of a post-Renaissance 'nationalist' myth. Then Camus goes on to declare, without a scrap of evidence to support his argument, that "the spirit of rebellion finds few means of expression in societies where inequalities are very great (the Hindu caste system)....The problem of revolt, therefore, has no meaning outside our Occidental society" (*R* pp. 25-26). Which period in Indian history? Where does Camus find the caste system alone stifling 'rebellion'? And what is the caste system in any case? Camus does not deign to consider these issues[27].

If the site of rebellion is opened by a contradiction between 'theoretical equality' and 'factual inequalities' is it not possible to find similar sites in other societies also? Camus, uncritically and unaided by historical and empirical evidence, is indulging in essentialist generalizations. He takes for granted that Inca and Hindu societies are fundamentally sacred and myth-ridden; he also assumes that in these societies - since "all the answers having been [sic] given simultaneously" by tradition (*R* p. 26) - rebellion cannot take place. In his own proposition on the cause of rebellion Camus adheres to a vague psychologistic generalization: rebellion is "*humanity's* gradually increasing awareness of itself as it pursues its adventurous course" (*R* p. 26). We know from Camus's argument that "humanity" here stands, for white, Western male citizen of post-Renaissance European society (*R* pp. 25-26), as it did in Hegel who would also celebrate the relay of the European spirit (against the slumbering Orient and unanimated Africa)[28]. Proceeding with his strategy of generalization Camus does not even

broach the issue - how the "factual inequalities" can be defined and by what means one can come to define them. Camus does not see the need to query the position of the person who makes such enunciations. Camus avoids these issues by simply reinscribing the other as a scapegoat in order to consolidate the "European self". "The rebel is a man [sic]," Camus declares, "who is on the point of accepting or rejecting the sacrosanct and determined on creating a human situation where all the answers are human or, rather, formulated in terms of reason" (*R* p. 26). This is the periodizing logic which posits a moment of break after which all that was continuous in the pre-break situation is believed simply to die. It is as if Camus's type of rebel would decide one day to rebel and after that day cease to be a person with anything in common with his own self prior to the decision: "From this moment every question, every word is an act of rebellion, while in the sacrosanct world, every word, is an act of grace....The disappearance of the one is equivalent to the appearance of the other" (*R* pp. 26-27). Indeed this is the teleology of the periodizing (and psychologistic) argument which denies any traces in the "experience" after the "break".

Camus's argument involves a host of contradictions. In one breath he can say that rebellion is human and expresses human solidarity and in the same breath he can declare that the non-European is outside the frame of the 'human': "Man's solidarity is founded upon rebellion, and rebellion can only be justified by this solidarity. We then have [sic] authority to say that any type of rebellion which claims the right to deny or destroy this solidarity simultaneously loses the right to be called rebellion and actually becomes an accomplice to murder" (*R* p. 27). And Camus does precisely that. He defines rebellion by positing an other which is denied rebellious aspects. The strength of Camus's concept of rebellion depends on the vigour with which he can deny it to non-European societies. And ironically this disavowal robs Camus of his basic position.

It is not surprising that Naipaul should uncritically endorse Camus's Eurocentric psychologistic accounts in his analysis of Indian society. For, arguing along the lines of Camus, whom he quotes approvingly, Naipaul offers us a similar kind of manichean tale in constructing

the hypostasized Indian 'self'. He writes, for instance, that the Indian-British encounter was bound to fail because of the incapacity of Indians for self-assessment. This incapacity is what Naipaul terms "Indianness". The encounter itself was a clash, Naipaul feels, between "positive" European and "negative" Indian forces: "and nothing more negative can be imagined than the conjunction in the eighteenth century of a static Islam and a decadent Hinduism. In any clash between post-Renaissance Europe and India, India was bound to lose" (*AD* p. 208). This appears to be a historical reflection. But the essentialist categories are very much pre-fabricated and could 'explain', in the Naipaul text, *any* period of Indian history. So the need for historical specificity can be avoided[29]. However, Naipaul goes on to say, paradoxically, that the negativeness of India was also India's strength, for it is this principle which, he argues, enabled India to face the conquerors: "India's strength, her ability to endure, came from the negative principle, her unexamined sense of continuity....It is there in the 'ancient culture' architecture; it is there in the much bewailed loss of drive, which is psychological more than political and economic" (*AD* p. 217). This back-handed compliment is only a gesture of neutrality. But it dissimulates essentialism in a psychologistic mode and offers this as the truth about the society. For the tropes that move (in) the argument are clear enough: "positive", rebellious and capable of self-analysis (hence developing) as opposed to "negative", acquiescent, incapable of self-assessment, bogged-down in sterile continuity and hence static. Indeed the very post-Renaissance logic of arguing - through postulation of an other as the scapegoat - from which the Naipaul text cannot extricate itself forecloses any other possibility of analysing the clash between Europe and its others. In fact the well-established line of colonial historiography follows this trajectory of argument as it declares the West as the sole agent of inspiration and change in Indian society: "The stimulating forces are almost exclusively Western, viz., the British Government, English education and literature, christianity, oriental research, European science and philosophy, and the material elements of Western civilization"[30].

The Indian-British encounter, however, was for Naipaul a failure causing confusion in the minds of people; it dislodged the continuity believed to be cherished in India for so long.

Naipaul argues this in a cautious and attractive assessment of the Raj architecture and a brief browsing through the changes in English history (here all of Naipaul's sources are literary - *AD* pp. 190-200). The encounter, however, did infuse certain 'positive' principles into the Indian self, as we have seen in (Naipaul's reflections on) the case of Gandhi earlier. Yet, the Naipaul text argues, metonymies of negativity continue to befuddle Indian thought and it is these traces which become obstacles to Indian achievement: "The penetration was not complete; the attempt at conversion was abandoned". The "negative principle" of continuity obviated the penetration. "It is a principle which, once diluted, loses its virtue" (*AD* p. 217). So the totality of negative principle closes up the trapdoors refusing the positive light. But, when was this "negative principle" undiluted, pure and whole? Once again one finds the conceptualisation of a pre-fracture India, if one can put it that way, as the source of undiluted strength. Paradoxically, while acknowledging the rupture resulting from the Indian-British encounter, which made a break with continuity, the Naipaul text nevertheless focuses throughout its analysis only on recognition scenes - the scenes that would assert the negative continuity. For those scenes would serve the double articulation of the project of self-restoration: identification and separation. Thus the project would search for negative totalities in the tropes it uses. The monological reading adopted by Naipaul in reading various native informants, as I showed earlier, is the inevitable effect of the project that seeks self-consolidation. Thus Kakar and Anantha Murthy provide the "undiluted" models of Indian self. Whereas Gandhi and R.K. Narayan provide the "fractured" models[31]. But Naipaul is quick to point out that the "fracture" is ineffective for he could still locate the negative continuities in the figures they present. Thus Gandhi the 'revolutinary' seer becomes the blind man of "Indianness". And Jagan (in Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets* 1967), disturbed by 'modernity' would still fall back on the props of that abyssal past from which the narrative (Naipaul's) seeks to separate the subject. Not that Naipaul's text does not find changes at all: "It is possible to find the India that appears not to have changed since Mogul times but has, profoundly" (*AD* pp. 216-17). Yet it concentrates mainly on the continuities, for the teleological model his argument embodies

insists, as in the case of Camus's rebel, that changes signify total cessation of continuities from previous ways of life. And this emphasis on the continuities in the construction of the other is germane to the project of self-consolidation. Thus the identification the narrative seeks is that of the totality of the subject - the 'positive' self-hood imagined to be present once, as in the pastoral India and now retrievable only through the narrative.

The Indian novel, Naipaul argues, represents the aborted relationship between the positive and negative forces which the Indian-British encounter is supposed to have entailed. The novel, which according to Naipaul is a Western art form showing Western man's concern for the here and now, is bound to cause confusion in the Indian understanding. Endorsing Camus's argument about the nature of Indian faith in the sacred, Naipaul argues (elsewhere), that it is the ritualistic Indian life that "smothers the imagination" and stifles the growth of the novel in India[32]. The religious mentality of the people nurturing the metonymies of negativity, Naipaul's argument implies, denies the concern for here and now and disables the Indian novel from developing its own forms. That is why, Naipaul writes in a ridiculing tone, "In India thoughtful men have preferred to turn their backs on the here and now and to satisfy what President Radhakrishnan calls 'the basic human hunger for the unseen'" (*AD* p. 214). Clearly the only argument Naipaul builds up in relation to the Indian novel is psychologistic - concerning the religious mentality of Indians - and this argument, like the earlier mentioned theories of the novel, considers the novel as a genre of secular society; by implication the social analysis is plotted in the binarism of secular as opposed to religious society. Like all arguments through binarisms - which privilege one (novel, modern, secular) while scapegoating the other (sacrosanct, myth, epic) - Naipaul's argument is impervious to the interanimations of the binaries posed as opposites. For, as I have been arguing, the condition which made it possible for the subject to emerge in the Naipaul text is the scapegoated and subordinated other. But the narrativizing logic proceeds without attending to the asymmetry it creates. Similarly in the case of the novel, as I suggested earlier, Bakhtin reworked the binaries to make the moments of the novel an effect of the interplay between the hierarchized binaries ('low' and high cultures).

(ii)

However, I realise that my own critique of binaries begs at least two questions. Firstly, in systematically attempting to locate moments in a text to dislodge it isn't my own thesis becoming a prey to the binarism I critique? Does Naipaul become the scapegoat of the thesis? Secondly, having critiqued the disciplinary truths of Kakar and Naipaul's appropriation of them, how can I justify my own appeal to the psychoanalytic fable? Although the two questions are apparently unrelated my attempt (in the thesis) has been to engage with them on the basis of their relatedness. This relatedness cannot be tracked at the methodological level. That is, any critique of binaries cannot hope to promise a non-binary alternative. For binaries dissolve and resurge as binaries. Hence my attempt is not to substitute a unificatory model but to emphasise the relatedness and hierarchisation of elements that become the condition that makes the possibility of the text, the subject in Naipaul's writing. This mapping is done not in order to make a simplistic rejection of the text for any such critique cannot escape the methodological trap it questions. The postcolonial text must be situated and interpreted within the system of signifying practices rather than through a (self) marginalising comparative study of islands of nativism, or through a disciplinary segmentation (such as Caribbean - West African, Third World or Commonwealth literature etc.). The figuring of 'Naipaul' in the text is being done in order to bring the methodological double bind into crisis by situating it within the political by examining the unemphasised side of the narrative(s). Hence the double structure of the critique in my thesis. That is, the larger triangle in which Naipaul's critique of, for example, *The Princes* can be situated, the wider ramifications of the cultural conflicts of *Samskara,* and the deeper implications of Kakar's technique must be established, and in the light of these the narratives have to be read. But the Naipaul text offers a monological reading, so to speak, by reducing these narratives to an extra-textual essence of the 'self'. It is the underplaying of the wider network that enables Naipaul to reinscribe the violence of binaries which the network introduces. It is the "risk of luxury" (to corrupt Kakar's phrase) of the postcolonial to ignore

this wider network. But the re-cognition of the network does not give the critic moral licence to dismiss others superciliously. On the contrary, the critic begins to realize that what the re-cognition has made accessible to him/her is only a dangerous privilege, that after all his/her own technique is also a part of that network: that "in the beginning" there was only corruption - and not purity (as Naipaul would have it). That is why the second question above becomes unavoidable.

But the network itself is not impenetrable. It has no destiny in its worldmaking for it can be reworked from the margins to disturb the arrangements. But such a re-working can be done with the tools and modes that do not turn us from situating ourselves within the network. Such tools, irrespective of their provenance - either from within the imperialist network, or the conventional binary West/East - can be *used* to rethink the pattern. Thus Fanon's critique of the disciplinary (scientific) truths, not Mannoni's modes of dependency complex, can be a starting point; thus Lacan's (or Derrida's) rethinking of the philosophical Freud, and not Kakar's uninterpreted model of humanism, can be a source in this reading of the network. The tools drawn from a variety of sources may be helpful in such a reading but the makers of those tools themselves may not necessarily be aware of the network to which their systems are linked. Thus Lacan's system like Foucault's presents the allegory of crisis within European culture (from the seventeenth century) but neither of them situates this system within the global historico-political transformations. Yet the tools of their systems are useful, as Bryson's arguments are for instance, in constructing "negative" arguments to 'begin' with[33]. I do not feel, however, completely convinced that the Lacanian Symbolic, based on the primacy of the signifier (the phallus) can free itself from the circular logic it erects. This circular logic, as I suggested in my recounting of the fable, itself may reiterate the conventional asymmetry between the sexes for which psychoanalysis has been severely criticised. But it is difficult for me to pursue this discussion of the Lacanian Symbolic any further for such a detour would obscure the question I raised earlier[34].

The techniques I use, thus, in figuring Naipaul do not transpose the thesis into a binary

matrix where a simple rejection of Naipaul through an oppositional attitude is celebrated. Such a rejection does not measure the complexity of the dangerous privilege of the postcolonial. It is this danger that forces us to see that Naipaul is, after all, 'one out of many' of postcolonials shaped by the predicament and no prophylactic can preserve one from such predicament. The 'privilege' is in re-cognizing the inescapability, not in the sense of an 'escape' of one out of many (from the postcolonial world to a purer origin) but in the sense of already unavoidably corrupted sources. Any criticisms of Naipaul at the level of the figuring of these differences between self-restorative projects and corrupted sources are, nevertheless, justifiable. We can indicate the differences by reading a "parable" of the postcolonial 'self' which Naipaul himself constructs in his short story: "One out of Many".

Chapter Seven: One Out of Many

DEFECT OF VISION

> . . . unfreedom can only be fully recognised if an objective economic system is related to the subjective experience of those trapped within it. Indeed, finally, the unfreedom is that relationship.
>
> To Live he can sell his life.
>
> John Berger[1]

DEFECT OF VISION

Naipaul's self-restorative project, as I argue, moves through the narratives under the assumption that an area of self can be consolidated, preserved and distinguished against all others who enter the narratives. Thus the self-consolidation figures *one* out of many as being different. This figure is achieved as I have shown in earlier sections, through a manageably synoptic reading of the information from the native informants and an allegorization of that information in defining the others from whom distantiation is sought. The scapegoat other thus figured appears to be a unified, monolithic, coherent Hindu 'self' (and order) in the narratives. But the difference of one out of many can be maintained only on the condition that one constantly and anxiously reinscribe the others through the procedure of the scapegoat mechanism[1]. The scapegoat mechanism operates through a hierarchic binarism. But such a critical schema disturbs the critic (the subject) at the prospect of the dissolution of the binaries or the play of the opposites. One can see such disturbance in Naipaul's narratives on India. In the first section of the narrative *An Area of Darkness* Naipaul feels a threat from 'India' - that it would deny him his long cherished difference, his separateness ('apparent' racial difference in Trinidad and England) from the others. For 'India' appears to absorb him, to turn him into one among the many. This disturbs the subject: "Now in Bombay I entered a shop or a restaurant and awaited a special quality of response. And there was nothing. It was like being denied part of my reality. Again and again I was caught. I was faceless. I might sink without a trace into that Indian crowd... recognition of my difference was necessary to me. I felt the need to impose myself, didn't know how" (*AD* p. 43). The dangerous chaos of 'India' becomes a threat to this wholeness of the subject. But the anxiety of losing integrity demands a ruse through which the self can be re-stored. It is at this conjuncture that the ruse of the gaze (with its double implications of specularity and speculation) comes into play, promising the subject the desired self-hood in the narrative. To become different from the surrounding many, Naipaul buys a pair of glasses - called "Crookes" - and worlds his 'India' through this coloured

gaze (*AD* p. 43). The gaze makes it possible for the subject (as he assumes) to assert his difference and define it in opposition to the others who are figured as lacking it; the others who lack the gaze become part of the crowd and remain traceless in the world.

It is in these terms that the parable of Santosh is narrativized. It is the story of one of many of these undifferentiated who disappear traceless in the crowd. The parable can be read as a displaced analogue to Naipaul's own readings of the native informants in that it becomes a reinscribing of the Indian 'self' from which Naipaul seeks to differentiate himself.

The story "One out of Many" appears in a collection, *In a Free State* (1971), written between Naipaul's two narratives on India. The story runs on a simple plot about a servant - Santosh - from Bombay who suffers dereliction and gets lost in the wilderness of a North American metropolis. The Santosh figure who accompanies his master to Washington is represented as being contented to remain subservient to the master's presence. Thus the master appears initially as the mirror image of the Santosh figure; the narrative tells us that "he [the master] was the man who adventured in the world for me, that I experienced the world through him, that I was content to be a small part of his presence"[2]. The mirror figure (the master) is seen initially only as a coherent, well equipped entity and no possibility of a tension between the two perspectives adventuring person and the slighted presence of the 'perceiver' is envisaged. Given the absence of tension in this double perception we will describe such a response as a sign of "obedience". Although the text will make it more explicit, let us note that in the logic of the Naipaul text the double-perception of the gaze and the sign of "obedience" are mutually exclusive and at variance with each other. Not that the two signifying codes forever remain as antinomies, never overlapping each other. But when they are brought into proximity the text views the scene as an anomaly. We shall illustrate this point.

The narrative is a retro-spective account by the Santosh figure of his life in Washington, interspersed with reflections on the past - life in Bombay. In this retro-spective account, life in Bombay comes to be signified in totality under the sign "obedience". Whereas in Washington the sign and its signification appear to be disrupted at times. For Santosh begins to become

aware of the tension between the signifying codes of the gaze and "obedience" from the moment he "discovers" himself in the mirror: "Slowly I made a discovery. My face was handsome...I became more careful of my appearance" (p. 35). The tension has two effects: firstly, the Santosh figure begins to dislike his master; secondly the master figure is substituted by other mirror images - the American TV stars. The tension manifests in the dislocation of the signification of "obedience" which appears to control the relationship until the discovery by slighting the subject: "I was ceasing to see myself as a part of my employer's presence, and beginning at the same time to see him as an outsider might see him" (p. 37). Further, in violation of the bond of "obedience", Santosh begins to cultivate secrets: his acquaintance with the supermarket sales-girl, his relation with the negro maid. He never shows his master the green suit he buys soon after his 'discovery'.

Complementary to the sign of "obedience" the text develops another code which can be referred to by the term "purity". In fact throughout the text the ghetto life is textualized through the codes of purity. On his first encounter with the blacks Santosh's anxiety marks the coded response: "I had never dreamt that this wild race existed in such numbers in Washington and were permitted to roam the streets so freely. O father what was this place I had come to?" (p. 26). At another place, in the pre-tension period as it were, attempting to preserve himself against the advances of the black maid, the Santosh figure invokes the scriptural authority legitimising the code of purity: "But in our country we frankly don't care for the *hubshi*[3]. It is written in our books, both holy and not so holy, that it is indecent and wrong for a man of our blood to embrace the *hubshi* woman. To be dishonoured in this life, is to be born a cat or a monkey or a *hubshi* in the next" (p. 35). Needless to say, the passage reminds one of the Acharya of *Samskara* in Naipaul's reading of it. But in concommittance, as it were, with the disruption of the sign of "obedience", the 'discovery' also sharpens Santosh's anxieties about the code. For the Santosh figure, as if responding to the effect of the discovery of specularity, his gaining of the gaze as it were, welcomes the black maid's advances and sleeps with her. This adventure unleashes the tension in the subject.

The narrative line is patterned on a monological route for it constricts the possibilities for the subject. For it appears to the Santosh figure that the tension that follows his discovery of specularity cannot be managed, controlled by him. The discovery appears to be a curse to the subject. He feels polluted by his adventure and feels penitential: "I bathed and bathed afterwards. The smell [of the black maid] would not leave me...Penance and cleansing." (pp. 38-39). Unlike the Acharya, in Naipaul's reading, Santosh feels that he has sinned, and fallen. He meditates and fasts (pp. 38-39). The violation of codes makes Santosh desire, the textual logic runs, for a total destruction of the city including himself. He wishes the (black) riots to continue: "At every sign that the burning was going to stop I felt disappointed and let down" (p. 40). Thus the disruption of any of the codes which the discovery brings, the text implies, would only make the subject yearn for a greater chaos.

The chaos, however, can be averted, the text suggests, only when the pre-tension codes reappear, however transiently. And this suggests that the specular adventure appears only as a liability, an aberration. That is, Santosh's recognition of his difference appears, as the narrative logic implies, to be a burden to him. Yet the aberration has its effect on the Santosh figure. With all his secrets and shame concealed in him Santosh deserts his master. But the very next relationship he enters into is itself initiated through the code of purity. Santosh is represented as attracted by the religious talk of Priya - a restaurant owner. "Why don't we renounce," Priya says to Santosh in his first meeting, "and go and meditate on the river bank?" (p. 42). The passage appears to be comical but it is not, for it is such a discourse which provides the motor of the narrative. Priya is only a slight variation of the theme, for he too shares the codes: "The trouble...is that this shopkeeping is not in my blood. The damn thing goes *against* my blood...You and I, we will renounce" (p. 43 emphasis original). Santosh is immediately drawn by the "sweet and philosophical" talk of Priya and agrees to work as a cook in his restaurant (pp. 42-43). However, once the tension is unleashed through the re-cognition of difference, the discovery of specularity cannot be denied or conjured away, for it appears to shatter the (pre-tension's) 'equilibrium' of the Santosh figure, as 'modernity' does in Naipaul's

reading of R.K. Narayan's characters. The new relationship, apparently under the norm of old codes, cannot be identified with the pre-tension life: "I had looked in the mirror and seen myself and I knew it wasn't possible for me to return to Bombay to the sort of job I had had and the life I had had. I couldn't easily become part of someone else's presence again. Those evening chats on the pavement, those morning walks: happy times, but they were like the happy times of childhood: I did not want them to return" (p. 41). Yet the adventure of specularity itself cannot be celebrated - it can only function as an unexorcisable burden. Similarly the object of sexual adventure - the black maid - is no more than a frightful female: "I saw her as Kali, goddess of death and destruction, coal-black, with a red tongue and white eyeballs and many powerful arms" (p. 38).

The logic of the text continues in plotting the tension of the double perception of the gaze and the codes of "obedience" and "purity" as mutually opposed. When they overlap it is not any possibility of transaction between them that we see but a contrived hierarchisation in which, given the Naipaul text I am constructing, the underplayed - the gaze - is valorized. Such a valorization operates through the scapegoating of the subject for whom the gift of specularity could be no more than a burden. Concommittant with the burden of specularity the Santosh figure is overwhelmed by the castrating woman. As a gesture of "renunciation", succumbing to the 'chaos' following the discovery, the Santosh figure marries the black maid: "To be empty is to be calm. It is to renounce...I have closed my mind and heart to the English language, to newspapers and radio and television, to the pictures of *hubshi* runners and boxers and musicians on the wall. I don't want to understand or learn anymore [sic]" (pp. 55, 57). This is indeed a displaced analogue to Naipaul's own scapegoating of the Indian 'self'; for it is in line with the mechanism of reading which Naipaul employs in his assessment of 'Indians', his sources. The displacement here, however, has no radical import as such, but on the contrary it is used to distinguish 'Naipaul' the creative subject. The displacement can be seen in the contrast of scenes between Naipaul's own anxiety at being absorbed in the Indian crowd (apparently arising out of effacement of racial specificity) and his denial of such a specific sense of difference to the

Santosh figure who, after all, is one *out* of many. But in Naipaul's narrativization he remains one *among* the many undifferentiated. In such figuration of Santosh he appears only as a variation of the Gandhi in Naipaul's 'second' reading of Gandhi. That is, Santosh is like the 'blind' Gandhi who failed to develop a racial sense among Indians. The failure is explained in terms of the *idee fixe* of the Indian 'self'. Thus the 'nonseeing' Santosh would withdraw into a simulated pre-tension code and try "to be, just to be" (to use Naipaul's own idiom). Even when he receives a call from the ghetto to join them - "Soul Brother" - in the riots, the gloss of the text is explicit: "I understand these words; but I feel, brother to what or to whom? I was once part of the flow, never thinking of myself as a presence. Then I looked in the mirror and decided to be free. All that my freedom has brought me is the knowledge that I have a face and have a body, that I must feed this body and clothe this body for a certain number of years. Then it will be over" (pp. 57-58): Naipaul's judgement would be that life is reduced to the level of instincts, to mere physical existence. Here the difference between the scapegoat figure and the self-consolidating subject which the Naipaul narrative maintains can be seen clearly. The Santosh figure is that other who is incapable of feeling his difference, his distinction, like all those who enter the narrative; whereas the self-restoring subject is anxious to assert his separation from those whom re-presents.

The contrivedness of the narrative can be seen in the formulaic gloss Naipaul gives in an interview. Describing the story as the "immigrant's view of the capital of the world" Naipaul extends its application to an entire culture. While referring to the specificity of cultural perceptions Naipaul asserts that the absence of the gaze is the Indian peculiarity. It is because of this Indianness of his character (Santosh), Naipaul suggests, that the narrative is devoid of a great deal of descriptive detail; the events are shown only at a distance, in the background[4]. But the obsessiveness of the project of self-restoration which uses the scapegoating mechanism, as I argue, remains impervious to the other possibilities, other ways of transacting with the social text. In effect the wider network from which the verbal text can never be extricated remains unemphasized; the 'self' is offered exclusively as the master key to a situation that must be seen

as an effect of the network. More specifically, in the parable of the Santosh figure the story of one out of many millions of (the third world) migrant workers is obscured. The text, obsessed with its schema, can only view the initial gesture of the master to bring Santosh to the metropolis as a favour (against all 'odds' and 'insults') to the servant. Later on, Priya's own exploitation (his anxiety about losing Santosh - the cheap labour) and the symptoms of crisis expressed by the black power movement 'riots' of the late sixties remain blissfully marginalized. It is true, however, that Naipaul's gloss for the text *In a Free State* is that it was about "power and powerlessness"[5] but in the context of "One out of Many" it is precisely such a theme that is obscured by the schema. Powerlessness, when it is present, is metaphysically articulated through an essentialist construction of the Hindu 'self'. In terms of the textual logic, if the gaze signifies power (against the blindness of renunciation), then the text is undoubtedly on the side of power - for it defines the powerless by a code valorized by power. But to represent one out of many of those who are uprooted by the international division of labour one needs different strategies and other models of narrativization which the Naipaul text cannot provide.

But what is ironical and perhaps a kind of cruel justice in the case of Naipaul is the critics' reading of Naipaul as one out of many Indians. Such readings as I showed earlier (cf. Introduction) look for a master key worked out by Naipaul himself and read his text in terms of the key. John Thieme is one critic who consistently followed this trap. Such reading remains in the trap which, I feel, the Naipaul text springs; for the trap is the figuration of the scapegoat and the assumption on which it is made is that one can make oneself in complete opposition to the scapegoat. What the scapegoat signifies as "Indianness" is used to explicate Naipaul's own work (that means, on his own terms) and Naipaul himself is treated as an illustration of this essence. So what he fears is brought back to him and Naipaul is made one out of many 'Indians'. But such circular projects cannot even broach the issue of the wider network for they operate within the limits set by the narratives which Naipaul himself constructs.

Section C *Anathoths of Violence*

Chapter Eight: Prospects of the Desire

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1) *PASTORAL MUSINGS*

2) *VIOLENCE OF THE GAZE*

3) *DISFIGURATIONS*

> My place of retreatment [would be on] an old cocoa estate.... There is no finer house than the old estate house of the islands.... In the deep valleys of cocoa woods...I would have gone riding in the early morning. The labourers would have been at their *undemanding tasks*... [and their tools] are like the weapons of medieval knights...[and they are the] arcadian figures.... Labourers of the olden time! Not yet the 'people'!.... So the days would have passed, literary labour interdigitating with agricultural; and that word agriculture would have acquired its classical associations and lost its harsher island significance.
>
> V.S. Naipaul[a]

At the end of the narrative *The Mimic Men* (1967), Ralph Singh ruminates over his future vocation: he speculates that he might become a businessman or a journalist, either he would work as a civil servant at the United Nations or he might spend the next ten years writing a history of the British Empire. The subject of *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987)[1] appears to have traversed through some of these areas that the Ralph Singh figure meditates on. Indeed such an itinerary is narrativized from the very site of 'tranquility' where Ralph Singh desired to retire: an agricultural estate. Although *EA* focuses on certain moments of the Naipaul text (spread over the last thirty years) it can be read as an epitomisation of the project of self-making that we have been tracking in the earlier sections. For the reconstruction of the moments, however, the narrative invests in a specific period in the Naipaul text from which the moments are narrativized. The period, as I have suggested earlier, is that privileged phase of the 'second birth' of the self-consolidating subject. Although the actual period of the writing of the narrative (*EA*) is given as October 1984 to April 1986 the narrative movement of *EA* begins from that localized moment of the 'second birth', the early 1970s. But, as I shall argue, the ruses that operate the Naipaul text can be used to undermine this teleological localization for such localization attempts to establish neat geographical boundaries and to define the ruses as its effects. And the ruses, as I analysed in earlier sections, are already there in the Naipaul text 'prior' to the localized moment of the second birth.

But the teleological project of Naipaul, proceeding from the moment of the second birth, culminates in *EA* in an attempt to consolidate the subject by synthesizing the 'man' (the psychobiographical signified) and the figure of the 'writer' - the 'nonfictional' individual and the 'fictional' character. Thus in *EA* we do not come across a scapegoated subject but the privileged writer figure - but this figure is declared (through circumstantial evidence, and 'truths' of 'real' life events) to be the biological entity V.S. Naipaul himself (though it must be noted that he avoids the proper titles scrupulously, and also the titles of his earlier narratives which are recounted in this text). This, indeed, is the present ultimate point of the teleological movement of the Naipaul text. *EA*, "a novel in five sections" attempts to produce this

synthesized subject through the motif of pastoral. But the ruses that operate in the narrative, as I will attempt to show, and the implications of this motif can be strategically analysed to disclose the fracture imbricated in the text and the impossibility of such synthesizing. Further, it is possible to show the contradictory coherence of this project in asserting the 'self' through the very devices it assumes it has overcome. In the following sections I will attempt to elaborate these points.

1) *PASTORAL MUSINGS*

It is possible to discern two crucial facets in the narrativization of the unnamed subject of *EA*. These can be termed "representation" and "romance". Through these two interrelated elements the double theme of *EA* - the motif of the pastoral and the synthesis of the subject - is constructed. In fact the theme of synthesized self can be analysed as a varied repetition of the motif of pastoral. The pastoral motif, in the narrative, has paradoxical implications in that it signifies simultaneously a freeze-shot of perfection (in nature) and a threat to such an ideal signification. In other words, it is the perceived threat which can be said to enhance the value of the imagined constructions of pastoral objects. In the narrative itinerary of the self-consolidating subject we find the subject oscillating between the double signification of the pastoral. Thus the area surrounding the 'half-neglected' manor-house cottage where the subject comes to *rest* is represented intermittently as an emblem of decay. The frozen images, of the gypsy caravan, the decayed hay-rick and the old farm-buildings, which one finds in the subject's prospect are represented as "remnants and ruins, relics of other efforts or lives" (p. 16). Jack - the farmworker - is a mere figure in the prospect but also a relic of the past, who "lived among ruins, among superseded things" (p. 19). However, it is because of their decay, and notwithstanding the subject's awareness of the deceptive oldness of them, that the narrative invests these ruined emblems with a perfection of antiquity, a grandeur of the pastoral. The emblems of the prospect transpose the subject, through a fantasy journey, from the isolated

moment of the selected past (the moment of the second birth) to the Elizabethan past, from there to medieval, to Roman antiquity, to the landscape of pre-human nature, "a vision of the world before men" (pp. 46, 49-50). Jack's garden is one such emblem - "medieval village in miniature" - which suggests to the subject the idea of Jack as the "remnant of old peasantry", of Roman antiquity (p. 22). This double signification of the narrative is reinforced by the subject's notion of antiquity as a perfect order and his idea of literature as testifying to that (p. 24).

The pastoral motif emerges through the melancholic soliloquy which is the vehicle of the narrative. The subject's forays into the past from the arrested moments of the present and frozen emblems of perfection-ruin are parallelled by his own long walks into the valley. In these walks the language, which is the source of the subject's traversal into the past, is shaped through a densely matted visual and pictorial detail. The density of detail in fact obscures not just the narrative movement but even the viewer's movement in his walks. In effect, we get frame after frame of Salisbury, Wiltshire, landscape which induce the subject's solipsistic itinerary into the past. The subject feels that it is these walks and the prospect which aid his rumination, which "enabled me...to shed the nerves of being a stranger in England" (p. 23). Whereas earlier in this very England every "excursion" into the country was like "tearing at an old scab" (p. 13). The subject feels that it is the valley and his country-cottage which have saved him from such a lacerating experience. Indeed they changed, in his view, England - once the source of affliction - into a refuge, a protective "home" (p. 83). And the fantasy this setting and the walks induced in him is that "I never ceased to imagine myself a man of those bygone times, climbing up to have this confirmation that all was well with the world" (p. 23). The arrested frames of the pastoral constantly re-inscribe this fantasy of continuity in the narrative.

But the pastoral can also respond to history, indeed it can incorporate history without impairing the pastoral motif. The narrative is profoundly aware of the re-stored nature of the past it cherishes in the images of ruins. The subject in fact appraises the activity of restoration for he sees it as an expression of historical sense. The activity of restoration and the historical

sense, in effect, appear to be aspects of the pastoral motif, for it reiterates the grandeur of the past, it celebrates the continuity. Yet it also indicates the threat to such continuity, the transience of the glory, for the restoration itself is an intimation of the inevitable decay. The subject discerns gaps in such continuity - the vision of unretrievable 'history': "history here, where there were so many ruins and restorations, seemed to be plateaux of light with intervening troughs or disappearances into darkness" (p. 50)[2]. Such a vision of history, as I will show more elaborately in the next chapter, has very little place for 'agency' in historical events and historiographical reconstructions. It projects a quasi-millennial vision. In such an alternating geological pattern of darkness and light, grandeur and decay, it is difficult to see how the narrative would retrieve the 'areas of darkness' which are forcibly maintained as such in the very periods of glory; specifically, how can such a vision of history narrativize the subjugated histories within the glorified historical moment? Indeed, the text of *EA* is not entirely unaware of the problem but the way it reacts to it, as I will show shortly, is concerned more with the glory of history than with what that glory conceals.

The melancholic pastoral treating the manor-house cottage as the refuge, home, celebrates its glory and fears its decay. As a stranger in the valley, with his "luck of solitude" the subject "had seen everything as a kind of perfection, perfectly evolved" (P. 51). But the celebration of the perfection at once becomes also a requiem to the ideal prospect, for what is glimpsed in the frozen present and transposed into the past is also seen to be threatened. This is identical with the investigating subject's perception, in *An Area of Darkness*, of the fading light of dusk that surrounded the hut which was about to be engulfed by the encroaching darkness (*AD* p. 30). But unlike the earlier narrative where the trope of darkness is used to figure the scapegoat, in this story of the self the pastoral incorporates darkness - that history which, paradoxically, while appearing to disturb the pastoral perfection reasserts it. The new farm-buildings and the new roads are accepted by the subject by substituting the notion of flux for decay. Since decay is perceived to be at the root of grief the subject attempts to alter his sense of history by incorporating, as flux, a continuum of change: "And I had fallen back on old ideas, ideas now

not so much of decay, as of flux and the constancy of change, to fight the distress I felt at everything - a death, a fence [in the landscape which was once open], a departure - that undid or altered or threatened the perfection I had found" (p. 51). Yet along with the notion of flux, the idea of the inevitability of ruin is also tracked back to ancestral origins. Initially the subject views the idea of decay as a temperamental response: "To see the possibility, the certainty, of ruin, even at the moment of creation: it was my temperament" (p. 52). But quickly he suggests the overdetermining factors of this 'temperament': he feels it's the Hindu idea of a "world outside human control," the penury of migrant labourers and the squalor of the plantation society which developed his sense of arriving in the world at the wrong time - at a time of the beginning of its decay (pp. 51-52). Similarly, the manor-house that welcomed him is already decaying but through the fading images of the emblems he can visualise the pastoral perfection.

Although both the views - the entropic view of history (as cumulative decay)[3] and the prophylactic against the former, the "ancestral ways of feeling", the notion of a continuum of flux (p. 53) - are offered as alternatives in the narrative it is possible to see the shared basis of these apparently opposed views. Firstly, in both the views human intervention in shaping the historical events is displaced; secondly, both the views actually centre on a frozen moment of the present, either to glorify the grandeur of the past or to celebrate the status-quo of the present. Thus the subject by accepting the decay as an aspect of historical flux welcomes the present as it is and decides "not to interfere", like his landlord, with the emblematic ruins of the manor-house and the valley (pp. 195-96). But the narrative does not sustain the subject with the idea of flux for long and the subject, in effect, reverts eventually to the entropic view. As the signs of decay encroach on the order protected by Pitton, the gardener, and the Phillipses (the servants at the manor-house), the subject's sense of grief dismisses the sense of flux with which he attempts to reconcile himself to the present:

> I had lived with the idea of change, had seen it as a constant, had seen a world in flux, had seen human life as a series of cycles that sometimes ran together. But philosophy failed me now. Land is not land alone, something that simply

> is itself. Land partakes of what we breathe into it, is retouched by our moods and memories. And this end of a cycle, in my life, and in the life of the manor, mixed up with the feeling of age which my illness was forcing on me, caused me grief (p. 301).

This is a requiem to the glory of the past which the notion of flux does not adequately express for the subject. Indeed the subject declares at the end that it was the notions of "grief and glory" (the paradoxical significations of the pastoral) which enabled him to realise the narrativization of *EA* (p. 318). Like the earlier idea of flux even this pastoral vision is explained in terms of ancestral overdetermination. The Indian community of Trinidad, the subject feels, has always cherished the fantasy of the wholeness and glory of India from which the community has been severed. But as we have seen in the earlier sections, it is this very metonym of wholeness that was used by the investigating subject to reinscribe his separateness, his distance from India; for the metonym is used to figure the scapegoated 'India'. In the narrative of *EA* that very notion of wholeness (perfection) is transposed by the subject to further remoteness - not in India, not in London; he would "put this perfect world at another time, an earlier time" (p. 120). But this notion of perfection, as I contend, is always glimpsed by the subject in the frozen-images of the present. Thus his imagined plenitude, glimpsed in the prospect of the valley is projected onto Jack: "Jack's vision of the valley as a whole place would continue; *a vision without the decadence that was in my eye;* a vision of childhood that would expand in the adult mind" (p. 77 emphasis mine). This is the unerring gaze that hopes to retrieve the imagined plenitude in the narrative of self-consolidation. Such a desire for retrieval insists on the condition of the primal loss which the entropic view of the past constantly attempts to recuperate. In this the pastoral turns out to be, as Roger Sale has argued in a similar context, not just about the inaccessible distances but ultimately about destinations[4]. The destination, in our context, of the narrative which takes off from the split-second images of the present is eventually self-restoration, a desire for the recuperation of the gap, unification of the man/subject ('writer').

2) *VIOLENCE OF THE GAZE*

You don't lose anything much when your landlord's house is burnt down.
Céline[5]

Three years ago in a review of Geoffrey Grigson's *Country Writings* Simon Rae remarked that Grigson must be "the only person in the country to have marked all the anathoths (places with an echo) in his locality [Wiltshire] on a 2 -inch Ordnance Survey map...."[6] Even while the reviewer was writing his remark, another weary perceiver, from the very Wiltshire of Grigson, was composing his own pastoral anathoths in the solitude of a manor-house cottage. For *EA* indeed offers a painstaking survey of the valley and the thickly matted detail ranges from the grass-blade to the fading skylark. In fact the narrative can be described as a celebration of an unerring gaze. But to (reduce or) explain the detail and its echoes in the narrative in terms of an ethnic peculiarity ("Hindu ancestry") would be to operate within the limits of the narrative movement. It is to examine the narrative in terms of a master code suggested by the narrative itself. Such assertions of the master code, as I argued earlier (cf. Introduction), assign the code the status of a signified, a fully-formed meaning as if existing outside the medium through which it is represented. That is, in such assertions the ruses that operate in constructing the ethnic peculiarities remain unexamined; they appear to gain the status of transparency. One such ruse that is unmistakably present in the text of *EA* is the ruse of the gaze. Indeed, as if the gaze is the boon of the second birth he has been endowed with, the subject devours the prospect through his unerring gaze. But such celebration of the gaze itself has a history, the ruse itself is historically determined. The ruse, as we understand from the historians of change, is inextricably linked with representations of landscapes.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, historians of landscape tell us, there is said to be a mutation in the European representations of landscape. In contrast with the abstract, or rather undifferentiated, representation of the land in pre-Renaissance Europe the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries tend to emphasize the specificity of detail in the land*scape*. Indeed, the word "landscape" itself is said to appear for the first time in sixteenth century Dutch paintings. In this post-Renaissance use the term came to mean "pictorial representation of countryside". Such representations could either develop a generalized yet pictorial view; or they would tend to emphasize a specific or particularized but visual signification of landscape; that is, in either metaphoric or metonymic significations of a tract of land visual detail is emphasized. This convention became prominent by the eighteenth century, so much so that visual and pictorial became inextricable elements in any representation of a tract of land[7]. By the end of the eighteenth century visual representation and contemplation of landscape became characteristic virtues of the cultivated and any observation on landscape knowingly or unknowingly incorporated the (contemporary) conventions of viewing[8]. But such a mutation also developed an asymmetry in the representation of landscape. The asymmetry was in the glorification of *cultivated* landscape in contrast to the denigration of uncultivated land. From Thomson to Wordsworth English poetry embodies (albeit variously) this asymmetry in its figuration of 'nature'. Uncultivated land is denounced for its allegedly 'threatening' nature: "This discomfort is, before anything else, a *visual* discomfort"[9]. The ruse of the gaze, it is clear, has a determinable history and specific implications. Naipaul's narrative, we can suggest, is not free from that history and its implications.

The prospect which the subject longs for and cherishes is thoroughly cultivated, and the subject is not unaware of it. In fact it is this cultivated aspect of the valley which stimulates his craving for the valley. In his view of entropic decline, his "sense of glory dead", the encroaching wilderness of the manor-house estate in fact reinforces his sense of pastoral perfection, the perfection of order the estate once signified (for the subject): "in the wild garden and orchard beside the watermeadows I found a physical beauty perfectly suited to my temperament and answering, besides, every good idea I could have had, as a child in Trinidad, of the physical aspect of England" (p. 52). Above everything England signified the notion of order to the subject. The classic epitomization of such order for the subject is in Jack's garden,

Pitton's work and the protection of Mr.Phillips. It is Jack's meticulously cultivated garden, the subject tells us, which acquainted him with the seasons: "His garden taught me about the seasons, and I got to know in a new way things I must have seen many times before" (p. 32). Jack's garden shows him the possibility of fertility in a land which he suspected of lacking any life: "But afternoon by afternoon I considered Jack's garden, noticing his labour, and looking to see what his labour brought forth" (p. 32). Jack's garden is celebrated for its cultivated order. Jack's labour is acknowledged but it is primarily to reinforce the order and to declare Jack's *harmony* with that order: "Jack, it seemed, was looking for labour, looking for tasks, seeking to keep himself busy. And then it came to me that more than busyness, the filling of the day, was involved, and more than money, the extra money Jack might have made from selling his plants and vegetables" (p. 33). This figuration of Jack as a "part of the view", as a segment in a unified, stable country prospect is very much in accordance with the pastoral norms which the re-formed conventions incorporated in the landscape representations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[10]. The subject, though profoundly conscious of change, persists in seeing Jack as at "home" like the subject himself, in the "setting". In his patch of ground, the subject declares, "Jack had found fulfilment." Jack is a "man *in tune* with the seasons and his landscape" whom the subject as an alien in the land (initially) envies (p. 33 emphasis mine). Jack's labour, his cultivated garden, the subject suggests in a Wordsworthian vein, represents "human celebration" (p. 42) (indeed Wordsworth's shadow is very much on the subject who describes Jack's father-in-law as the "Fuel Gatherer", p. 20). When the garden goes wild, subsequently, at the time of Jack's death, the subject welcomes the saddening decay for it reasserts his entropic vision of decay and the pastoral motif. So in the subject's schema there is little difference between Jack as the remnant of medieval peasentry and Jack as the labouring 'agency', for the activity of labour is recognised only for reiterating an harmonious order, a perfection of the past. The figure of Jack like others in the narrative, in effect, operates only to maintain the circularity of the pastoral motif.

The labour of the manor-house workers - Mr.and Mrs. Phillips and Pitton - is viewed

mainly in relation to the grandeur of the imagined past. Thus Pitton's labour, although uninspired by the mysterious sense of the gardener as the creator (pp. 214-15), ony serves to establish an order which is reminiscent, for the subject, of the imagined plenitude of the past. After Pitton's departure from the manor-house, the subject reflects: "Now there was no Pitton; his day and his order seemed as far away and as unreachable as the original grandeur of the garden had seemed to me when I had just arrived and, among the relics of that grandeur, found only Pitton" (pp. 291-92). So Pitton, after all, provides an occasion for another freeze-frame within the pastoral motif. For simultaneously he is the source of retrieval and yet the reminder of loss. Similarly, Mr. Phillips with his protective presence helps the landlord and the subject recover from their respective morbid "nerves" (p. 289). Mr. Phillips makes possible, for the subject, the shelter he required at the manor. He too signified a remnant of order. After his death, as with Jack's garden, the subject finds a threat to the order: "There was no Mr. Phillips now.... And the people who came to work in what remained of the garden had become mauraders and vandals" (p. 292). Signs of chaos forever seem to surround the still-points of permanence the subject wishes to cherish: "The pastoral idiom affects reflective melancholia at the transitory nature of life, but tries to locate and isolate still points of permanence"[11]. The figures of Jack, Mr. Phillips, Pitton (and their labour) and the emblematic ruins of the estate serve the purpose of cherishing the subject's imagined glory.

As the pastoral motif can incorporate history without any impairing of the motif, the Naipaul text can accommodate "labour", "work" in a way which would isolate from and purge these elements of their potentially disruptive aspects. It is only after such sanitizing activity that they are incorporated in the text, to celebrate them in an abstract way. Labour and work, in the narrative, have paradoxical implications in that they signify an order and at the same time threaten the permanence of such order. The ruins around the old farmhouse which the subject sees in the narrative's pastoral logic represent perfection and also an inevitable undoing of the work: "reminders of the impermanence of men's doings" (p. 44). The reflection on the present is also a requiem to the past, a despairing acknowledgement of the transience of effects of

actions. It is in this very melancholic speculation that the subject reflects on global historical events: "Men came back, men went on, men did and did again. How small the caravels were that crossed the Atlantic and intruded into the *evenness of history on the other side...*" (p. 44 emphasis added). Historical events are neutralised into pastoral musings. Early European expansions are recognised as *Man's* activities with paradoxical implications. For they are shown as intrusions into the pastoral tranquillity, the fantasized El Dorado which the history "on the other side" represents for the subject; and at the same time the immense labour of men's doings, for the subject, are also sorrowful reminders of the ephemerality of work in the world, the inevitable decay of what such work has shaped. It is this profound pathos, as I will argue in the next chapter, which lurks within each narrative turn in Naipaul's immense historiographical project *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969). In such visions of grandeur and loss the labouring men (and the resisting subalterns, as I will show) become mere details in an ordered prospect, objects from an overview.

But those overviews and those orders of plenitude, landscape historians tell us, which became the possessions of the cultivated concealed the dark side of the landscape. The unerring gaze that surveyed and represented landscape through an asymmetry is "precisely that of the improving landowner"[12]. By the end of the eighteenth century (in England) the political and economic fact of colossal land enclosures was dissimulated into the cultivated discussions about the pleasing prospect of the (enclosed) landscape[13]; thus, beauty (preeminently visual) was ascribed to enclosed lands and the unenclosed 'wilderness' was invariably presented as ugly in the dominant representations of the landscape[14]. Imposing order on the land became the cherishable virtue of the gentleman (and the 'cultivated') in the eighteenth century. But these values of representation were inevitably the property of a small social group, a group capable of moving from place to place without any difficulty and as a result possessing the capacity to compare various landscapes, provide overviews[15]. And it is this interested social group which continued to represent the countryside as "a stable, unified, almost egalitarian society"[16].

It is not my contention, however, that *EA* should be reduced to the eighteenth century

gentleman's view of society. But I am certainly arguing that the ruses that operate in the narrativization of the pleasing prospect bring the narrative closer to what Raymond Williams described as the *rentier* novel "in which absorption in the details of an essentially local life depends, ultimately, on not seeing its relations with a more general life"[17]. Indeed there are other anathoths in *EA* (to which we will turn shortly) but they mainly subserve the pastoral motif. The narrative tenor is to recount through minute local detail the pattern, the rhythm of the 'tranquil' country life. Jack's garden comes back to mind. Jack the worker absorbed in his labour is incapable of possessing an overview of his land, he is devoid of that sense for the rhythm of his life provides him only with a metonymic view of his activity: "Every piece of ground was separate. Jack didn't see his setting as a whole" (p. 22). In contrast the overseer subject, who celebrates Jack's labour, has that ability to gaze at the prospect - to see it as a whole. But he would, in order to reinforce his pastoral motif, project the same vision of plenitude onto Jack also (p. 77).

The ruse of the gaze and the aspect of the *rentier* novel can be further illustrated in the narrative's representation of the landlord of the manor-house. Although the subject is not unaware, on his solitary walks in the valley, of the darkside of the landscape he persists in separating areas of brightness from the landscape and its associations, for his contemplation. Thus, he confesses that he knew about the land's association with big landowners "who had left their mark on the solitude.... I didn't think of the landowners. My mood was purer" (p. 24). He would yearn for that Other Country of pastoral beauty, isolating it from the unsavoury aspects that make the landscape. In fact the subject's own identification with the landlord of the manor-house (who remains unnamed, like the subject himself) is based on such exclusions. The subject finds the landlord a "benevolent" figure who, like the subject, is on the verge of withdrawing from the world, expressing a desire not to interfere in the world of change. The subject nonetheless acknowledges the 'pampered' and 'protected' childhood of the landlord, but the weight of the landlord's 'benevolence' makes these aspects no more reprehensible for the subject; his play with Indian myths only suggests, for the subject, the landlord's romantic side.

Although he sees the landlord ony twice during his several years of stay in the manor-house the subject develops a bond, an affinity with this figure. This affinity is achieved through a projection of his own pastoral musings onto the landlord's actions and whims. The landlord's withdrawal into the solitude of the manor-house, the subject tells us, has occurred around the time when the subject's own entry into the world has begun; in the narrative logic of *EA* the facts of this action and withdrawal signify the inevitability of decay. And the subject's transition to the manor-house seclusion is only a repetition of an event that has already happened in the case of the landlord. They are both shown to welcome the inevitable decay - the landlord in his love of the ivy which kills trees and the subject in his choice of the deep mauve which is associated with death in his memory.

The subject seeks, above all, a refuge and protection from the landlord and his emblematic manor-house. Deriving such fulfilment from the surroundings the subject feels "immense sympathy for [his] landlord": "I felt a kinship with him; was deeply grateful for the protection of the manor, for the style of things there" (p. 174). Though this gratitude is tinged by the awareness of the kind of relations it is based on, the subject does not allow that awareness to impinge on his sympathy for the landlord. He views the landlord with a "purer" mood and abstains from judging him, for 'judgements', "undoing acceptance, can also undo a relationship" (p. 175). The subject obviously does not wish to undo his "home", his refuge and the second birth it bestowed on him[18]. In effect, the land and its lord both serve the purpose of substantiating the pastoral motif; the landscape itself is purged of the "impurities" of history and politics that went into the making of it. When these aspects appear in the text they circulate, like the other metonyms "labour" and "work", only as passing allusions. Thus, while celebrating Jack's garden the subject refers to the poverty of nineteenth century labourers in the Wiltshire area (p. 33). But the acknowledgement hangs in a parenthesis and the text has no space to narrativize these 'darker' continuities, that other side of the landscape that made the 'Captain Swing' agitations possible in that very area which the subject now traverses and chronicles[19]. Instead he is inclined to remain absorbed in his millennial vistas to glimpse the world at its

peak, the world before men, the perfection of the past.

Yet, as I suggested earlier, the narrative does have other anathoths. These I wish to call the anathoths of violence. These can be located in the curious spatio-temporal movement of the narrative. This movement, although it starts from the still-frames of the 'present' (the emblematic ruins of the manor-house), quickly moves across various temporal-spatial moments. Almost every frozen-image the subject contemplates transposes him into the childhood land of Trinidad. The present frames enable the contrasting view of the past-scape. It is in this double-movement of the narrative from the present to a specific past that we become alert to the anathoths of violence. And these anathoths, of which the subject is acutely aware, are the manipulations of the Empire. Moving in the manor grounds the subject would always wonder at the "historical chain that had brought" him and the landlord together (p. 53). He is aware of the "wealth and security of Victorian-Edwardian times" which, for him, echo in the restoration work he discerns in his surroundings (p. 49). Likewise, he knows thoroughly that the very manor-house in whose cottage he lives and whose grandeur he is delighted by was a product of that Empire and its wealth; he muses over the date, 1911, when the manor-house was restored (p. 176). In the double-movement of the narrative the subject recognises that the plantation wealth that his own ancestors produced as the impoverished indentured labourers in the last century went into the creation of the manor-houses like the one he now (ironically) inhabits (p. 52): "The manor had been created at the zenith of imperial power and wealth..." (p. ∠34-35). These are the anathoths of imperialist violence which repeat in the narrative in the form of allusions. And it is for such anathoths one looks in the pages of landscape historians but seldom finds any rustle[20].

In the double movement of the text *EA* we become alert to these echoes. But the narrative has a peculiar way of accommodating these echoes. The allusions are acknowledged but the text quickly displaces them. The textual movement is never geared to react to those echoes of violence. In his 'purer' mood the subject would move on from these allusions to the 'surprise' and "delights" the prospect holds out for him; he would yearn for the "perfection" and glorious

order the landlord and his manor-cottage signify (pp. 185-86). He is aware of the ironies of his presence on the estate but he would displace them in order to "have" the cottage which he acknowledges as his "home" (p. 83): "It couldn't last, clearly [there was decay already]. But while it lasted, it was perfection" (p. 52). It is this search for pastoral perfection which undermines the other echoes in the text. We find the same textual operation, as I will show in the next chapter, in Naipaul's construction of the history of Trinidad. But such allusions and such displacements even fall short of offering a benevolent critique of imperialism. For, after the initial recognition, they seem to glorify the empire in the name of the *order* it introduced into the world (now) out of control. No wonder the text does not refer to the imperialist violations; it refers at the most to the "imperialist decline" and always to the "Empire". One grave effect of such response to epistemic violations is that it appears to reduce imperialism to colonization alone. That is, when imperialism is identified with colonization (territorial control), the word "imperial decline" will have sinister implications. It suggest the end of imperialism. The text of *EA* is not free from such a suggestion when it refers to the process of 'diaspora'.

Unlike the colonial moment which, the subject argues, "was essentially a movement of Europeans to the New World" the post-war diaspora indicates a great "cultural mixing" (p. 130). The word 'cultural' is crucial in this argument. For the subject sees this diasporic movement essentially in terms of cultural affiliations of people in an open society: "This was a movement between all the continents" (p. 130). As a result of this cultural mixing, the subject reflects, cities like London "cease being more or less national cities." And these "cities of the world" are for the subject the modern-day Romes. But the word "mixing", as we read on, has a very restricted, pre-designed meaning which becomes clear. For in this 'postcolonial' free world 'mixing' is a token sign representing predominantly one-way transactions. For the subject unashamedly declares that the 'free world' is now available for the "barbaric" people of other continents: "They were to be cities visited for learning and elegant goods and manners and freedom by all the barbarian peoples of the globe, people of forest and desert, Arabs, Africans

and Malays" (p. 130). "Mixing" becomes a dubious term the moment "culture" is restricted to the areas from which almost half of the globe is excluded. The subject obviously valorizes the post-war 'open' world and is convinced of the mixing of cultures. What this celebration of culture is totally impervious to is the cruel fact of diasporic movement as the transferral of cheap labour to the squalor of the metropolis. What the subject and the text displace is the truth about the very "barbaric peoples" becoming helpless victims in the increasing international division of labour; that those very "elegant goods" are assembled by cheap labour in the third world sweatshops before reaching the modern-day metropolis which the subject glorifies. This imperviousness is inescapable, given the subject's displacement of anathoths of imperialist violence in his celebration of order. This self-seeking subject, finding an echo of perfection, unity and wholeness in the valley, would concentrate upon and record with his unerring gaze only those sources which consolidate and protect him. Thus he would avoid judging the landlord, and he would displace the continuities in the darker side of the landscape.

He would be heart-broken if his landlord's estate was to be burnt down[21].

3) *DISFIGURATIONS*

The cottage, to adopt Roger Sale's remark on Wordsworth, becomes the linguistic and philosophical castle for the Naipaul subject. Indeed, *EA* is preeminently a declaration of the subject's accession to the symbolic: 'knowledge', philosophy and language. And this accession itself is mediated above all through the ruse of the gaze. The cottage, in the "ancient heart of England" (p. 96), which becomes the subject's home provides him with a 'second life' which opens up the subject's self-knowledge orientation in the text: the cottage has given him a "second childhood of seeing, and learning, my second life, so far away from my first", "the second arrival (but with an adult's perception) at a knowledge of natural things, together with the fulfilment of the child's dream of the safe house in the wood" (pp. 82-83): echoes of Ralph Singh's desire. He would never disavow the specula(riza)tion (the gaze and the ideas) he has

gained access to; he would celebrate them in the narrativization of the pastoral theme and in the re-presentation of his life's activity, his 'romance' and the pastoral. But the motif of 'romance', of 'fulfilment' is oddly at variance with the subject's treatment of the Chirico theme, 'The Enigma of Arrival".

The Chirico theme curiously repeats in various versions in the narrative. First when the subject comes across the booklet, "The Little Library of Art", of the Italian futurist painter he meditates on the theme of the dereliction of a medieval wanderer in an ancient city. To write that tale - a future project - the subject would turn to the tradition he has gained access to: that of the classical European literary world. But then quickly the subject realizes that, 'unwittingly', he has already been making use of the theme in the narrative he is composing at the moment. In further speculating on the theme he learns that, after all, his own life, his own journey from Trinidad to London has already been an enactment of a version of the theme (pp. 92-95). The theme of "The Enigma" has the elements of romance - but a romance, in the text, with a loss, non-fulfilment. The medieval wanderer, in the imagined narrative, is absorbed, swallowed by "the life and noise of a crowded city". And the city itself for the subject, as it was for the investigating subject in the earlier narrative in Bombay, is "something like an Indian bazaar scene" (p. 92). After his activity, his business, the imagined wanderer wishes to return to the quay to board the ship that brought him to the city - but to his utter distress he finds no ship. He is condemned to disappear in the crowded Indian city. The theme of aborted departure likewise repeats in the very narrative the subject composes in the cottage. In the African setting of the narrative the itinerants seek to flower, to find regeneration but in no time their energies are exhausted and their romance is shattered (the narrative with African setting appears to be Naipaul's allusion to *In a Free State*, 1971). There are yet two other repetitions of the theme in the text. If we recognise the theme as that of glory and grief we can assert that the theme has already repeated in the narrativization about Jack's garden and the manor cottage. And when we read the theme as investment and loss then we see that the subject has already faced such a prospect before moving to the cottage in the valley. The subject tells us

about his involvement in the venture of writing a historical narrative on Trinidad and the frustration he has suffered when the venture fell through (this appears to be an allusion to *The Loss of El Dorado*, 1969).

It is against these shattered romances, these aborted ventures that the subject's narrative of self-consolidation, his 'successful' romance, unwinds. The subject, as opposed to all the other figures in the failed romances, is (the figure of) a writer (the maker of the self). Thus in the imagined narrative the business of the wanderer is study or religious initiation or family engagement (not a literary figure); the itinerants in Africa are not people concerned with letters. And it is as the privileged figure of the writer (in the Naipaul text) that the subject introduces himself in the narrative of *EA*. The purpose of this itinerant is self-restoration and his romance is declared to be a success, a fulfilment. And it is in this status, as the successful itinerant, as we will see, that the subject narrativizes his 'life'. The time gap between the actual narrative of *EA* (1984-86) and the still-frame of the 'present' from where the narrative begins appears to suggest the culminating period, the period during which the unification of the subject/'man' has occurred. That is why that other journey, the subject/man/writer's romance, is at variance with the theme of "The Enigma"; it is not a shattered romance. The narrative of *EA* is a celebration of self-restoration.

In that other journey from Trinidad to London, which the subject retro-spectively constructs, we recognise the subject noticing the figures that were to enter the narrative on the principle of exteriority. That is, in the reconstruction of the earlier moment the subject represents the other figures - the Negro in the hangar in Puerto Rico, the family farewell - as being outside the 'material' which he seeks out to become a writer. The 'synthesized' subject of the present, however, 'explains' that past moment as an instance of the "fracture" which is said to separate the "writer" from the "man", maintains a "gap" between these elements of the subject. The "fracture", the explanation implies, is essentially an ailment: "So that between the man writing the diary and the traveller there was already a gap, already a gap between the man and the writer" (p. 102). The gap, the subject suggests, renders him unable "to visualize the

physical details of arrival [in New York]..." The gaze was obviated by the gap. For he begins to feel that the aspect of the writer he yearned to develop is distressingly separated, for him, from the man - who is merely a creation of abstract education and of the hardships of austerity: "But already I could feel the two sides of myself separating one from the other, the man from the writer. Already I felt a twinge of doubt about myself" (p. 111). The subject has doubts about the glorious image of the writer he cherishes, he wonders whether the writer is no more than the man of abstract learning: "I watched the two sides of myself separate and dwindle even on this first day" (p. 111). He discerns, in his retro-spective account, this fracture even in the first venture of the subject in being the writer. His first story, "Gala Night", the synthesized subject reflects, only recorded his "ignorance and innocence", whereas in the past moment he is said to have felt "knowing and unillusioned" as he wrote the story (pp. 112-113).

But the subject finds the gap unnatural, for he asserts: "*Man and writer were the same person. But that is a writer's greatest discovery. It took time - and how much writing! - to arrive at that synthesis*" (p. 102 emphasis mine). The thirty year long project (of the Naipaul text) of self-restoration finds the final and decisive articulation here (although it has always been there in the text). The assertion and the retro-spective 'explanation' of the other journey underwrite the subject's sense of achievement, his fulfilment in the long sought synthesis.

The synthetic subject, however, is conscious of the factors overdetermining the "fracture" which separated the subject from the man. These the subject recognises as the ideas of 'culture' and the abstract learning which programmed him for those ideas. The 'culture' which the subject now appears to disclaim can be described as the Victorian (literary) world-view - of 'romance': the view signified the notion "that the writer was a person possessed of sensibility; that the writer was someone who recorded or displayed an inward development" (p. 134). The subject quickly associates this view and its aesthetic convictions with the historico-political fact of Empire, he sees these ideas "bred essentially out of empire, wealth and imperial security..." (p. 134). The subject feels that without his knowledge he has already responded to this 'culture' and now sees this impact as at the root of the fracture of the 'writer' and the 'man'

whom he wished to unify. It is this gap which made him look for 'material' while ignoring what was always at hand.

The subject's disclaimer (of Victorian aesthetico-moral values) is made with the conviction that he has already overcome that programming, hence the faith in the unity of the fractured self. This became possible for him, as he recounts, much later: "only very slowly, man and writer came together again" (p. 135). Yet in spite of the subject's disclaimer we can see that his sense of achievement and his own representation of the material he discovers do not completely free his narrative from the ethos he rejects. For in his rejection of the theme of "inward development" the subject substitutes the theme of his own 'self' as the source of material, "the worlds I contained within myself, the worlds I lived in" (p. 135). It is this discovery of his 'self' being the centre for the writing that, the subject feels, enabled him to realize that "both [writer and man] were really the same" (p. 135). One effect of this substitution is that the 'self' gains more prominence than the worlds in which the self is situated. The 'worlds', in turn, are incorporated into the narrative in terms of an asymmetry or principle of exteriority. This asymmetry, even after the subject's alleged fulfilment, appears in the form of his attempt to distantiate the world of the 'self' from the world of the others. The asymmetry emerges in the attempts to foreground self-definition, self-restoration in contrast with the others who become the 'material'.

The subject notes that his abstract education has seeded in him a competitive zeal and programmed him for a race as it were, "in which the fear of failure was like the fear of extinction" (p. 139). Although the subject rejects the values of 'romance' he cannot conceive of his own life as being free of the anxiety these values infused into him. The anxiety of failure and the fear of extinction which are the effects of the 'culture' he denies, are projected onto the world in which he lived, the island and the multiracial society that surrounds him. The theme of "The Enigma" comes back. The subject would not discuss any longer his fear of extinction in terms of the 'ideas' he claims to have rejected. It is increasingly associated, as in the case of the imaginary wanderer in an alien city, with the island on which he was born. The fear,

identical to that of the wanderer, is that of being "swallowed up or extinguished by the simplicity of one side or the other, my side [the Hindu world] or the side that wasn't mine [the Caribbean-African world]" (p. 140). These worlds appear to the subject as the trapdoors from which he wishes to flee to a world which matched "every good idea" he cherishes from his childhood (p. 52). This 'romance' unlike that of the medieval wanderer is not a shattered one, this one of fulfilment manifesting in the form of the subject's (assumed) unification of the writer (the Imaginary figure of childhood) with the 'man'. The 'success' of this romance is in the vigour with which it attempts to protect the 'self' against the 'impurities' of the worlds he describes. So in the narratives he briefly recounts (re-inscribes), the subject observes, it was necessary for him "to acknowledge more of myself....I had first of all to define *myself very clearly to myself*" (pp. 140-41 emphasis mine). In this variety of projects of self-definition and self-restoration, as the subject reinscribes them, the other worlds are at once figured, controlled and distanced through a knowledge that serves the double purpose: self-restoration and figuring the other. But the subject views this very method as going against the ideas of the 'culture' that fractured his self, and as enabling him to synthesize the worlds that were 'part of him'. Thus in the historical narrative, the subject observes, he "had hoped to arrive, in a book, at a synthesis of the worlds and cultures that had made me....I felt in this history I had made such a synthesis" (p. 144). This synthesizing activity is contrasted with what he considers as the onesided projects, that "other way of writing history".

The text of *EA* has already metonymically suggested this 'other way' in the figures of the Negro in the hangar in Puerto Rico waiting to go to the States; the other Negro whom the subject meets on the ship, who was journeying to Germany (in 1950): journeys signifying, for the subject, shattered romances. For these journeys are romances asserting separateness, insularity from the world - delusions of fantasizers (p. 146). The fantasy of the 'other way of writing' history, the subject reflects, seeks "separation of one world from the other" (p. 144). It is this fantasy alone which the subject sees in the black rebellions of the late sixties and early seventies in the States and the Caribbean: "They simplified and sentimentalized the past" (p.

146). In contrast to these doomed romances the subject projects his own project of synthesizing, his own history of the unification of the worlds. We will have an occasion to see more elaborately and specifically such a historiographical moment in the Naipaul text in the next chapter, and to examine these claims and their effects, but for the present we will note that "the other side" has a place in the narrative only on terms of exteriority. That is, the 'material' which an alleged 'fracture' disabled the subject from responding to enter the narrative, after the alleged filling of the gap, healing the fracture - only on a principle of binarism which merely indicates the impossibility of filling the gap, curing the fracture. The subject's own romance is predicated on such a binarism, on such a definition of his "side" against the "other side".

For such self-making, such unification of the man/writer it is a fitting move that the subject should celebrate his pastoral musings, his childhood plenitude. It is only such a motif which can capture and retain, for the subject, that cherished synthesis. But that motif and the ruses which construct it, as I showed earlier, (in spite of the other anathoths), elide economics and politics and mythify history. In the same way we find the text eliding another factor in its allusion to the 'culture'. The subject constantly refers to his ancestors as impoverished immigrant labourers, but completely obscures how he, the descendant of those 'poor' labourers (within two or three generations), happened to get access to such 'culture' in colonial Trinidad. There is a confident assertion in the subject when he declares that the migration to Trinidad has "given me the English language as my own" and a "particular kind of education" (p. 52). The subject repeatedly alludes to his involvement with books, his 'sacrifice', his austerities, but nowhere in the text does he mention who could have access to such a 'culture', such privilege in Trinidad of the 1940s. In the same way that the subject shows his reluctance to refer to the politics of the landscape and his landlord, he would cover up a similar aspect in his own "historical line". Was just a "migration, within the British Empire" sufficient for one to respond to the 'culture'? And especially seventy years after the abolition of indenture system (1917) can the allusion to "impoverished ancestry", separated from the fact of the variedly situated nature of that ancestry to that system, be so simply proclaimed any longer?

The subject in not troubled by this crucial factor that goes into his making. Instead we find in the text a curious tale of the subject's accession to the language. The narrative of *EA* is more akin to a soliloquy than to a dialogue. Soliloquy seems to be the appropriate vehicle for the narrativization of the subject's accession to the language and the symbolic order he yearns for. Thus throughout the narrative we find the subject's alertness to learning words (signs) and their meaning (signification). The subject pounces on, as it were, every word that he comes across (either uttered by the contrived figures Jack, Jack's father-in-law, Pitton, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips or in his reading). Thus his pastime is to amuse himself with the newly learned words: 'avon', 'walden', 'shaw', 'Waldenshaw', (from learning) 'refuge', 'taunt', 'murder', 'rooks' etc.,; he would be lured by every lexis of the utterances which the frozen-figures of his narrative make; he would meditate on them (pp. 25, 39, 41, 43, 48, 56, 67, 69, 71, 73-75). Indeed the subject becomes a varied repetition of the landlord whom he admires. For if the landlord and his manor-house signify wealth and power, the subject's itinerary signifies the wealth of knowledge and language. And the narrativization is singular in its elision of the factors that enabled these respective accessions. The subject deems his acquisition of the language and his unerring gaze as enabling him to re-store his fractured self: "So man and writer became one; the circle became complete" (p. 156). The celebration of the circular project results in the creation of *EA*: "seeking as always a synthesis of my material, my worlds, my own developing way of seeing, I thought of the present book..." (p. 158). And *EA* itself re-writes the past in terms of this project of self-consolidation.

But the totalisation and closure which the project of self-consolidation implies, as I have been arguing in my thesis, are illusions. For they imply - proceeding from a textual system - the possibility of *identifying* the subject (a textual effect) with the psychobiographical signified. In this metaphysical longing to identify the "I" with the biographical self (or biological self) Naipaul's project invests in the Imaginary plenitude, in the possibility of that wholeness, in that possibility of coming into being. In order to achieve its 'synthesis', the Naipaul project erects a series of binaries, and a method of exclusion. But this very binarism, as I have argued, which

subordinates one set of tropes, options, and issues to another set makes it impossible to achieve the closure of the text . For, it is possible to introduce (from within) a certain kind of disfiguration in the text, a disfiguration implicated by the very binaries. That is, the binaries - self and the other - make possible only a contradictory coherence in the text. In order to celebrate the closure, impose a totalisation on the text, the "other side" of the binary must be distantiated and subordinated as the Naipaul project does. But the very moment this is done the text denies the project its fulfilment, its suturing desire for a plenitude, for it already turns the excluded into the condition of possibility for such totalisation. We have already indicated the violence of such totalisation and such exclusions. No project of self-consolidation can avoid this circularity. For the tropes of fulfilment and deficiency which constitute the text cannot be separated through boundaries - the tropes of metaphor and metonymy overlap and disfigure any neat erection of a system.

Yet it is through history we can interrupt the play of the tropes, the systems of self-consolidating knowledge, and question the violence the tropes may perpetrate. For the text of history defies all kinds of closures and its palimpsest makes any closure too vulnerable for comfort. We will now turn to this history, as Naipaul's text conceives it.

Section D *Cartographies*

Chapter Nine: History, Fantasy and Subalternity

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1) *TRACING HISTORIES*

2) *EL DORADO AND THE FANTASY OF ORIGINS*

3) *RESISTING HISTORIES*

4) *IMPRISONING HISTORIES*

5) *DECONSTRUCTING HISTORIES*

6) *NATION AND ITS NARRATION*

7) *COVERING INSURGENCY*

8) *SPECTACLES OF TORTURE[A*

9) *SUBVERTING HISTORIES*

10) *ERASING HISTORIES*

> . . . the concept of history must itself be regarded as historical, turn back upon itself, and only illuminate the context that produced it by abolishing itself.
>
> Baudrillard[α]

1) *TRACING HISTORIES*

(i)

If death is one force in its various guises, as I have attempted to show in this thesis, which disrupts all attempts at consolidation, all hopes of unification history remains another such force. History like death is a paradoxical force in that it threatens homogeneity, totalization and any attempt at closure. Yet it conditions the possibility of *activity*. History, like death, is the trope that works along the ruses of premonition and deferral, anticipation and retrospection, desire and fear. This chapter is an attempt to analyse how history enters the Naipaul text. That is, in a project of self-consolidation and self-distantiation what intimations does the trope of history carry? What ruses are at work in the narrativization of historical events in Naipaul's text?

From September 1966 to November 1968 Naipaul worked on his project of history - a narrative account of the 'origins' of the place where he was born. Perhaps this is the (kind of) work that the Naipaul subject in *The Enigma of Arrival* hoped to construct for such a project, the subject feels, provided him with a chance to unify the 'writer' and the 'man'. Perhaps this is the (kind of) work that eventually lets him down, for the publisher who commissioned it refuses publication. The work, *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969), that Naipaul actually undertook began as a casual reader's curiosity in historical events but eventually led him to the archives; and it is from the archives and certain other early narratives on the region that Naipaul narrativizes the events that affected his 'homeland'. It is a dissatisfaction with the existing accounts about certain moments, Naipaul says, in the Trinidad history which led him to reconstruct the moments through his own work.

The other accounts about Trinidad that offer themselves in general as the starting points are inevitably the constructions of colonial historiography. Thus the early 'comprehensive' accounts are, firstly, E.L. Joseph's *History of Trinidad* (1838), and, secondly, L.M. Fraser's two

volume *History of Trinidad* (1896). Between these two fall the 'historical' reflections of the imperialist citizens: Anthony Trollope's *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1859), Charles Kingsley's *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies* (1871) and that notorious and celebrated work of James Anthony Froude, *The English in the West Indies or The Bow of Ulysses* (1887). These accounts, by the end of nineteenth century, through the logic of affiliation and textual consensus, had already formed representations of the events and agents that effected Trinidad and which were considered significant from the position these narrators occupied. In the process they seem to have established a continuity in the narrative representations of Trinidad since the Elizabethan period and, through that, incorporated the earlier Spanish representations. It is in the context of this discursive formation that Naipaul's narrative emerges. Naipaul's account covers the period from the Elizabethans to the early decades of the nineteenth century. This is in itself an intriguing delimitation. For his account of the land where he was born does not actually cover the moment which associates his own community with that historical continuity which his narrative attempts to establish. Naipaul's 'fiction' might be said to cover that period of history but the enigma of the gap in the 'historical' narrative is too significant to be explained that way. Yet my concern here is not to evaluate one representation ('historical') over the other ('fictional') but to examine how Naipaul articulates the 'tradition' he comes across in his venture. But first we will move through his reflections on 'history' as such before examining the patterns of narrativization in the text.

Naipaul does not attempt anywhere in his work to deal conceptually with the idea of history. Yet it is his specific ways of history writing, his attempts at definitions of history, which enable us to trace the underlying assumptions of Naipaul's project. Thus, in this chapter we will concentrate simultaneously on two overlapping levels, theoretical and methodological, which are largely unexpressed but operate in the project. Naipaul's methodological ruses manifest in the rhetorical strategies he deploys in emplotting his narrative; some of these strategies are: representation; 'novelistic intonation'; etching out historical figures as'fictional' characters. And these strategies, in Naipaul's narrativization seem to line the events at times

with a tragic element. However, these strategies appear at once to lead us into contemporary historiographical debates contesting the fact/fiction dichotomy (the life-line of conventional historiography)[1] and underlining the potentiality of 'literary' or rhetorical strategies in emplotting historical events in narrative. But it is plausible to assume that Naipaul's use of these rhetorical strategies is in continuity with his 'literary' practice; and my own thesis so far has been to problematize the fact/fiction binary on this assumption. That is, in the Naipaul text (perhaps in any text) one can exemplify the crosshatchings of the 'literary' and the 'historical'[2] (cf. "Mappings"). One immediate testimony to this can be found in the subtitles of the text I analysed in the previous chapter (cf. "Anathoths") and of the one I will engage with in the present one. Although the text of *The Enigma of Arrival* is most ostensibly 'nonfictional' (then "why call it a novel?" Jocipovici asks)[3] it remains eminently a "*novel* in five sections". And although *The Loss of El Dorado* appears to be largely a 'literary' response, a 'fictional' narrativization it remains a "History" of Trinidad, however critics might respond to it[4].

Yet as I have argued so far in the thesis, the specific ruses that we locate in the Naipaul text and the problematic grid they collude with remain very much the constitutive factors of the work which I will analyse in this chapter. That is, the ruse of the gaze with its teleological imperative of 'truth' and authenticity, and the hierarchic binary of 'order' and 'chaos', as I will argue, govern the historical project of the Naipaul text. The ruse and its imperative are aimed, as in the earlier moments, at achieving a transparency.

In order to unravel the text woven together by the various strategies we will select as our 'quilting buttons' (*points de capiton*) of the text three moments: 1) the narrativization of the trope (or the 'moment') of El Dorado; 2) the representation of the subaltern - the American Indian, the slave and his insurgency; and 3) the construction of childhood 'memories' in the Naipaul's text (in a general sense). In attempting to locate these moments our aim is to scrutinise the patterns orchestrated in the text and to suggest the assumptions that animate the textualization.

We will start our analysis with a parable. In 1981 Naipaul wrote a book on Islamic

societies called *Among the Believers*. In this narrative Naipaul offers a brief description (summary) of a medieval Islamic historical text, which he uses in his account of the first Arab conquest of Sind in 710 A.D. From Naipaul's summary, which is for Naipaul apparently a critique, we can derive a model of historiography. My contention, is that the historiographic model Naipaul here critiques is replicated in his own historical narrative. The Islamic text Naipaul uses is called *Chachnama*, written in the 13th century. After summarily describing the events dealt within the text Naipaul comments on the religious prejudice of the book. The book, Naipaul argues, describes the events as if "The time before Islam is a time of blackness: that is part of Muslim theology. History has to serve theology" (*AB* p. 134). In the Islamic text history prior to Islam is darkness and this expresses a prejudice. Naipaul's text on Islamic countries proceeds with a crusading spirit exposing this prejudice in the contemporary Islamic world (the section where he reflects on the Islamic text is called "Killing History" (*AB* pp. 125-35)). If we bear in mind this threshold and the division Naipaul's argument implies here, and examine one of the three moments and their 'agents' which Naipaul narrativizes (although Naipaul does not consider the subaltern as an 'agent'), we will begin to see a similar conceptual apparatus operating.

For a convenient moment from where we can begin to trace the 'model' noted in this parable we can examine Naipaul's narrativization of his childhood events. However, it should be clarified, once again, that this move towards the author's childhood 'experience' is *not* intended to define a psychobiographical signified (Naipaul's psyche as such) which then as a master key would unlock all the mysteries of Naipaul's work. It is the textualizing process, the mode of narrativizing and the concept of linearity (childhood as the beginning, the origin) - which is being analysed here. In his retro-spective construction of childhood 'experience' the two tropes which stand out are 'order' and 'disorder'. The first signs of order, he says, he had found in the Port of Spain municipal activities: "I liked the municipal order of each day" (*FC* p. 36). The other main source of order was his school: "Only my school life was ordered; anything that happened there *I could date at once*" (pp. 40-41). emphasis mine). And opposed

to this is the 'disorder' of life at home with its extended family and the multi-racial life of the street: "But my family life - my life at home or my life in the house, in the street - was jumbled, without sequence" (*FC* pp. 40-41). And it is this division, echoing the division he had discerned in the *Chachnama*, which informs what Naipaul calls his "two ideas of history," his "two ideas of time". It is this binarism, which we have seen earlier in his description of his childhood past through the scapegoat mechanism (cf. Ch. 6), of two histories as exclusive of each other, that Naipaul imposes on the text of his 'life': history with dates that affected "people and places abroad"; the reference is suggestive enough but Naipaul becomes more direct about the project: his range (history with dates) was to include Roman history, nineteenth century England and the nationalist movement in India. The 'other' side of the binarism is the 'history' of his family, 'life' without dates: "It was a time beyond recall, mythical...beyond people's memories was undated time, historical darkness" (*FC* p. 59). The tropes are clear enough: 'order,' 'disorder'; 'history', 'time' with 'dates' and without dates; 'light' of history and 'historical darkness'. The binary division Naipaul's text shows us in his life or in the history of Islam is not something simply transparently *there* in those 'texts' but something produced, textualized by Naipaul. Again it should be noted that 'Naipaul' here is not a psychobiographical signified but both an agency and a conceptual apparatus. That is, 'Naipaul' here, as in the earlier patently 'autobiographical' narrative(s) takes the position of a 'function' rather than a mere biological entity. And this 'Naipaul' emplots the 'histories' and 'lives' of the events and agencies of the first two figures mentioned earlier - in the very binary apparatus. However, as I have argued in my earlier Sections, this insistent search for the hierarchized binaries and undermining of the psychobiographical Naipaul do not constitute a gesture in celebration of some formalist position. My attempt here, as earlier, is to engage with the ethico-political (dilemmas, implications and complicities) projected in the 'content' through the patterns, structures, ruses - in short the textuality of the constructions. My aim is not to denigrate a single individual as the sole enemy as such but to situate and examine what he constructs as a 'function' in a wider network.

The concept of 'history' this binarism informs in the Naipaul text is itself historical; and this concept is fundamentally repressive in that it judges everything according to its own epistemic principle. The notion of episteme refers, for the purposes of my argument, to conditions of knowledge or disciplines. The concept of 'history' based on such an epistemic model moves with pretentions of 'universality'. Influential contemporary thinkers like Derrida and Baudrillard trace this category to 18th century European thought. For Derrida this 'universalism' can be located in the 18th century European language theories which in their encounter with non-European scripts repressively assimilate the latter in a model which is preeminently European[5]. Baudrillard in his vehement critique of Marxism as deriving from an 'ideological' 'history' argues that

> Western culture was the first to critically reflect upon itself (beginning in the 18th century). But the effect of this crisis was that it reflected on itself also as a culture *in the universal*, and thus all other cultures were entered in its museum as vestiges of its own image. It "estheticised" them, reinterpreted them on its own model, and thus precluded the radical interrogation these "different" cultures implied for it. The limits of this culture "critique" are clear: its reflection on itself leads only to the universalization of its own principles...[6]

Thus, as the 'universal' category 'history' acquires an epistemic status. In Naipaul this operates in dividing 'history' or 'real history' (with dates) from pre-history (without dates). And similarly, as I have shown earlier (cf Ch. Six), almost all the major theories of the novel operate with this epistemic principle. Thus along with the discipline or system of knowledge ('history') the category 'the novel' appears to be a systematization resulting from the same epistemic grid. The radicality of the novel is signified by its distance and difference from the epic and the myth. It is not fortuitous that the origin of the novel is mostly traced to the 17th and 18th centuries. In Naipaul the binary division is plotted in essentialist/ontological terms. Like the theories of the novel, as I have shown earlier, which assert their identity by constantly fixing their opposite by projecting all the negatives on to it, Naipaul's own history with dates imprisons the 'history without dates' in the realm of fantasy or myth. One finds that the historiographic practice which Naipaul's work vindicates is simultaneously 'historical' and ahistorical. It is 'historical' in the sense that it is informed by a specific epistemic principle

emerging at a historical juncture. It is ahistorical in its projection as 'universal' and its appropriation of other worlds in ontological/essentialist terms. The prevalence of the 'other' history in Naipaul's textualisation of his own 'life' and 'history' does not bring his project into a crisis, since he constantly represses and subordinates the 'other' with fear (and desire - desire in order to assert the difference and distantiate its own project). These impulses of fear and desire can be discerned in the repetitious dreams of anxiety in Naipaul's work. From the 'nightmare' of being entrapped in Trinidad (in *MP* p. 43) to the desire of separating a part of the cloth from a larger one in order to imagine a world woven from the desired part (*AD* p. 266); or the fear of failing to cross the bridge before it collapses, Naipaul's dreams speak of the same shudder and longing (*FC* p. 168).

(ii)

Although the focus of attention in this chapter is Naipaul's historical narrative *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969), the 'historical text' being analysed is not delimited by the two covers of this particular work. Naipaul's entire work and how it is in collusion with colonial historiography is brought forth for the analysis. Here a few markers regarding the narrative *LED* may be in order. *LED* is a narrativization of a range of events concerning Trinidad spread over three centuries. The narrative establishes a "circular project" by privileging two 'moments', the "forgotten stories" of the text (p. 17): the El Dorado search and a Spanish American 'revolution' (on "high principles") (p. 17). The narrative is plotted around these two events. Critical response on this text so far, only in review articles, is confined to offering a commentary on these two events alone[7]. The starting point of my own analysis is that the text is operating within the grand narrative of European self-consolidation - Europe's discovery of the so-called 'discovery' - its appropriation of the other cultures. My task is to document and narrativize how Naipaul's text, moving within the lineaments of the grand narrative, *assigns* a position to the subaltern ('Indian' and the slave) and constructs his/her activities.

Eight years before Naipaul completed his project of the narrative history he reflected with anxiety about the possibilities of writing a history of the West Indies: "How can the history of this West Indian futility be written? What tone shall the historian adopt?" He finds himself faced with three options: 1) the "academic" approach of Sir Alan Burns "protesting from time to time at some brutality, and setting West Indian brutality in the context of European brutality"; 2) the partisanal approach of Salvador Madariaga contrasting English/Spanish brutalities and arguing that unless English brutalities are properly described one is being unfair to Spain; 3) the "academicist" approach of contemporary West Indians who see the story of the slave trade as "just another aspect of mercantilism" and remain "icily detached" (*MP* p. 29 Naipaul does not specify but presumably here he is referring to Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery*, (1966). At a later point in his work Naipaul argues that the West Indian history has always been written from somebody else's "overview". Naipaul is also wary of the complicity between nationalist and imperialist narratives: "The current 'revolutionary' or Africanist overview is not an improvement: it is no more than the old imperialist attitude turned inside out" (*FC* p. 58). But Naipaul does not show here any possibility or mode of distinguishing nationalist from anti-imperialist (in both the narrow-colonialist- and broader deconstructive sense) historiographic practice. Is it not possible to practise historiography without reverting to a nationalist argument or being complicitous with imperialist or colonialist historiography? My own conviction is embodied in the arguments of the thesis.

But something stands out conspicuously by its absence in the choices and possibilities Naipaul reflects on here. The elision of a 'tradition' of historiographic work already inaugurated in the context of West Indian historical writings. I am referring to the absence of any mention of the fascinating historiographic work of Elsa Goveia, *Historiography of the British West Indies*. This work written six years before Naipaul's early reflections deals precisely with the entire period Naipaul is concerned with in his work and offers an acutely critical reading of significant historical writings constructed during the period. The spirit of Goveia's argument is to theorise and document the collusive development of history-making (what we called earlier

the 'worlding') and history-writing. In my reading of Naipaul's text I attempt to situate Naipaul's 'contribution' against the background of the 'tradition' in which Goveia constructed her project.

However, faced with the options and traps they imply, Naipaul further feels that whatever the tone one chooses the history of the islands can never "be satisfactorily told". It isn't just the question of brutality that complicates the matter but it is because there is nothing, for Naipaul, to write about: "History is built around *achievement* and *creation*; and nothing was created in the West Indies" (*MP* p. 29 emphasis mine). The words stand out; *satisfaction, achievement* and *creation*. These are problematic tropes and demand a rethinking of the ideal universality attributed to these terms in this context. Naipaul does not specify the position from which tropes should be examined/received, for he seems to assume them to be universally valid and self-explanatory. Yet, the subject position these apparently vague tropes articulate can be specified, and the historiography these tropes signify can be tracked. The tropes of "achievement", "creation" and "satisfaction" (need) are moves within the larger narrative Baudrillard describes as the "political economy". The narrative of political economny, Baudrillard argues, commences from the rearticulation of man's "progressive" "discovery" or "controlling" of Nature for the *satisfaction* of "human" *needs*. Thus the history of historiography Naipaul adopts itself is of a recent date (17th/ 18th century) and its pretentions and elevations to universality are deeply ideological[8].

Given the problematic effects of such a working definition of history, how can we find the articulation of this definition in the narrative Naipaul develops? I think we can track it in the choices of the options and the ruses through which a certain option is embodied in the work. Further the subject position these signify is of crucial importance in our unravelling of the project. Thus although, for instance, Naipaul shows hesitation in choosing from his three options, his text reveals more propensity towards the Alan Burns (academic) approach than the other two. This can be examined in the way his text assigns the positions of the 'natives' (slaves) in discourse. But before meeting the subalterns we must unravel the mystery of El

Dorado.

2) *EL DORADO AND THE FANTASY OF ORIGINS*

In Naipaul's work the trope of El Dorado does not seem to stand for a figure historically signifying European encounters with other cultures and the ensuing epistemic and racial violations perpetrated on the non-Europeans; the trope is never analysed in historical terms. It is configurated as something that is beyond history, reminding/returning one to the very origins of the world; thus the El Dorado search, a figure which is a trace of imperialist expansion and European self-consolidation, is transformed into a desire for origins. Indeed the *loss* in the title of Naipaul's narrative does not refer to the historical loss suffered by the epistemic violence but only metaphorises the anxieties and despair the subject feels from the supposed loss of that origin (repeated elsewhere in the work as 'home' 'whole') which was believed to be intact and unviolated. Again one can find the traces of this search in Naipaul's structuring of his childhood experiences. Naipaul writes that in the pastoral setting of his father's stories he could see his "fantasy home": "My fantasy of things as they were at the *very beginning*: the ritualized day, fields and huts, the mango tree in the yard, the simple flowers, the lighting of fires in the evening" (*FC* p. 50 emphasis mine). The vision of an 'ordered' community in the beginning. This metaphor of origin, of home, repeats in Naipaul's work, as I have shown earlier, with variations and in disguise as in the figure of El Dorado. Moving among the Afghan 'tribals' in the Khagan valley in Pakistan, for instance, Naipaul is thrilled by the vision of "home" and "wholeness" of life he imagines among the tribals: "the tent, the cooking fire, the mountains, the river, the tea and the *roti*: I felt momentarily I could surrender to the life... I felt taken back to a beginning: that life of animals and tents and the daily march" (*AB* pp. 173-77). Ralph Singh's fantasy of Aryan ancestors evokes similar visions of home in *The Mimic Men* (1967). The pervasive metaphor of 'home' like the message of 'order' it carries in Naipaul indicates a metaphysical project of search for origins. The *loss* of the title signifies only a

nostalgia and the desire for the origin[9]. It is there, as I have shown earlier, in his figuration of an imagined 'India'; it is there in his meditation on an Egyptian painting at the end of *IFS* where he becomes melancholic over the loss of "innocence...the only pure time, at the beginning, when the ancient artist, knowing no other land, had learned to look at his own and had seen it as complete" (*IFS* p. 246). The yearning for 'home' is once again there in the snap-shots of glory in the pastoral musings of *EA*.

There is an ambivalence, however, in Naipaul's treatment of the metaphor 'home'. In the binarism of history and pre-history Naipaul sketches, as I have shown earlier, there is already an implication that 'pre-history' is something irrational, mythical, something against which 'rational' history has constantly to guard itself. Now one finds it is towards a facet of the same 'pre-history' that Naipaul appears to reveal a longing. This (disavowal and longing), however, does not imply any contradiction. One can see a pattern in which the ambivalence is articulated in Naipaul. Naipaul disavows the pre-history as reactionary, decadent fantasy and as irrational urge, as long as he associates it with the subalterns (American-Indians, slaves, insurgents and insurgency). But the longing can be tracked when it is metaphorised as "romance" in the colonial discourse: Naipaul points out later in his narrative, that it was a measure of "the sophistication of the European thought that [it] found romance in the deficiency" of the non-European world (p. 333). This ambivalence or rather the 'contradictory coherence' of the project conditions the ontological/essentialist judgements of the project[10].

While reflecting on a counter-insurgency text in *The Middle Passage* (1962), Naipaul writes he was "puzzled" by the popularity of the book in 18th century England. For, he writes, the popularity of the book was for "its natural history" and "the romance". Whereas he found the book "terrifying" in "its nauseous catalogue of atrocities" (*MP* pp. 202-03). But one finds on page after page in Naipaul's historical narrative the very aspects - 'natural history' and 'romance' - being privileged and repeated (with slight variation) in his accounts of colonial texts. Further these two aspects function as the ruse of the gaze and its teleological imperative, with the implications I suggested earlier, in narrativizing the events in this historical project.

The ruse, as we will note, fills the narrative with overwhelming detail which we will unravel in these pages.

3) *RESISTING HISTORIES*

> We must begin *wherever we are* and thought of the trace... has already taught us that it is impossible to justify a point of departure absolutely. *Wherever we are;* in a text where we already believe ourselves to be.
>
> Jacques Derrida[11]

Drawing on his conceptualization of history, early in the narration Naipaul remarks that the Indians were not "missed" in the West Indies because they "had left no monuments". Since history is the "creation" of "monuments" (especially scriptive - scopic detail) Naipaul seems to argue that Trinidad history begins with Ralegh's account of it: "An obscure part of the New World is momentarily touched by *history*" (p. 14 emphasis added). One can conclude from the remark that it is representations which 'make' history and it is the absence (for Naipaul) of 'self-representations' that deny the 'natives' history. The issue of whether representations are constructions is not engaged here. However, towards the end of the narrative Naipaul reflects in a sardonic tone that history in Trinidad "was a fairytale about Columbus and a fairy tale about the strange customs of the aboriginal Caribs and Arawakas...the good defeating the bad (p. 375). The 'aboriginal' had no place in the history, "he had to be reconstructed from his daily routine" (pp. 375-76). But paradoxically Naipaul's narrative rarely attempts such a 'reconstruction' of the aboriginal life. It is possible that there was a dearth of accessible archival material (though recent research, as I will show, makes one doubt this[12]). But even if it is available it will be in the archival text constructed by the sovereign subjects of the expanding nations. And this material, the archive and the text they construct, need to be *read.* Naipaul's story fleshed with archival material and plotted as a tragic tale relies only on novelistic intonation to distantiate itself from and endorses the archive. That is, the plot itself is premised on the notion of 'objective' evidence ("monuments"). Where there is a lack of such

'evidence', as in the case of the pre-Columbian records (for Naipaul's argument), Naipaul's narrative turns the history into myth. It does not undertake the analysis of the process through which the native is fixed in the colonial representations and is made to remain obliged to the 'law' - enforcing coloniser.

Naipaul writes that of the early Spanish expeditions to Trinidad (before the Spanish conquistador, Berrio) nothing remains - for they were not described; further he adds that "the conquistador who found nothing had nothing to report". This absence of reporting is seen as an indication of Spanish mind-set: "Believing in wonders he had no gift of wonder." The Spanish, unlike the English, were imprisoned in their "medieval" mind-sets and were looking only for a confirmation of what they had expected to find. Consequently, Naipaul argues, for the conquistadors when there was no wonder there was nothing: "A place was then its name alone, and landscape was land, difficult or easy...The sparseness of much of Spanish narrative is a Spanish deficiency. Untouched by imagination or intellect, great actions became mere activity; it is part of Spanish waste. El Dorado becomes an abstraction; deaths become numbers" (pp. 19-20). In effect, in the early part of the Naipaul text the representation of Berrio (the 16th century conquistador) centres around two points: 'history' as 'monuments' and achievements (in narratives and descriptions) and the Spanish deficiency in this area. The two points displace from Naipaul's narrative the crucial issue - how Spanish expansion was occurring, or how Spain was 'worlding' or renaming the natives. That is, the aspect of the collusion between history-writing and world-making remains underplayed or lost within the orchestration of a vast amount of detail to establish the two points[13]. A feeling for landscape replaces the issue: 'Time vanishes in Berrio's narrative, like effort, like the landscape itself" (p. 26). What is important is not just the scopic narratives - for they (even in Spain's case) abound in the worlding of America, but what determines these narratives and what effect they in turn have in the "strategic formation" of the narrative of European expansion and Europe's self-consolidation[14]. For, it should be noted that if scopic detail *per se* is the crux of the matter, by the 16th century Spanish observers like the Dominican Diego Duran, the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagun, Fernandex de

Oviedo, and Bartoleme Las Casas "had touched upon all the major aspects of Amerindian life"[15].

But in Naipaul's narrative the issue of "worlding" is displaced by a scopic quest; for the ruse of the gaze that constitutes the narrative has a different purport. Only one hundred years after Columbus, Naipaul states, an *English* sailor "will write like a *discoverer*" about flying fish of the gulf (emphasis added)[16]. Naipaul's bias for visual detail (as a sign, perhaps, of 'secular' view of the world - as opposed to the supposed religious mind-set of the Spanish) has two consequences in his narrative: it ignores the wealth of detail amassed by the Spanish 'travellers'[17]. Secondly, in privileging the physical detail Naipaul accepts it at face value - as if the detail itself were not a segment in a discourse, a *representation* encoded within a narrative constructing not just 'national' character (as in the Hakluyt narratives from which Naipaul draws heavily in the first part of his text) but also fixing the natives in their accounts. It is only by weaning the specific empirical detail from the discourse of which it is a part that Naipaul obscures the extent to which even the English narratives are determined by 'medieval' discourse (Ralegh describes Guiana as the garden of Eden). However, this operation of the ruse of the gaze, the search for scopic detail, is itself a part of the conceptual grid Naipaul draws on.

Consequently, one can note that Naipaul's propensity for the visual detail, together with the desire to capture 'reality', makes his own narrativization of natives here, and slaves and subalterns later on, complicitous with the colonial discource he is depending on. In the colonial narratives from Columbus onwards, for instance, one constantly sees the fixing of 'natives' in the roles of guide to the gold city and informants. One seldom comes across in these narratives (Columbus, Dudley and Ralegh) a critic raising the question why Indians were so constantly talking about only one theme (paths to the gold city). Our own contemporary narratives like Naipaul's commit their own share of violence by ascribing the beliefs of the natives (anointing the the chief with gold dust) to superstition. It is never asked whether the pattern in which the native is fixed does not indicate the coloniser's desire (this will be shown elaborately later); or whether the native was not imprisoning the colonizer by responding in the way the coloniser

desired. For Naipaul natives passively expressed their "Indian memory" which the Spaniards worked on. When Naipaul looks for a pattern it is again for some scopic detail describing Indian 'life' (which is largely for its own sake): "The seething supper, the war-pipes in the night, the empty houses and the cooking bowls: it is as close as we will get to Indian life" (p. 55). But even this appears in Naipaul as an aside, a digression from the 'main' narrative and the Indians are always "that thick silent Indian population" (pp. 56, 71). However, suddenly in one of his asides while describing the events of 1596, Naipaul portrays them as belligerent and destroying Spaniards. The reason Naipaul gives for this change in the Indians is : "Guiana had changed since Ralegh's visit. The Indians were withdrawing from the area of Spanish control" (p. 74). And the Spanish faced "trouble with the Indians"; Spanish soldiers "were killed by Indians" (p. 75). Thus they appear as contingent - even in Naipaul's "overview" - upon what happens to the sovereign subjects (Spanish/English). One finds in the narrative at several points that the Indians always needed to be "pacified." How did the Spaniards do this? Interestingly when Naipaul refers to documents it is not the Indians he has in mind: "And the papers were forgotten for three hundred years. Time, the discoverer of truth, swallowed Berrio up. No portrait remains of the man who sought the third marquisate of the Spanish New World." The documents remind Naipaul of the oblivion into which his hero fell, whom his narrative attempts to resurrect, and not those communities that resisted and were decimated (p. 77). The point here is not that Naipaul ought to have constructed history from the Indian point of view as such but to suggest the way the archival evidence begins to be shaped in the text.

This pattern of marginalising the native and replicating European representations of them persists in Naipaul's reconstruction of these representations of Caribs and 'cannibals'. Cannibal is the most elusive but well entrenched figure in European discourse on the "New World[18]. The antecedents of this figure can be traced to Herodotus and Pliny (both revived in the period of European self-consolidation usually referred to as "Renaissance"). But mysteriously the Carib comes to be identified as Cannibal (finding literary representation with an anagrammatic variation in Shakespeare's Caliban). And in the discourse of the New World, curiously, from

Berrio to K.R. Andrews if Carib is inscribed as cannibal then the Arawak figures as the more gentle and approachable community. Naipaul's narrativization participates in this persistent story. But in Naipaul's story this replication is somewhat ambivalently articulated. Since Naipaul's narrative is largely constituted in the voices of historical figures it is difficult at times to distinguish Naipaul's judgments from those of the historical personages. His critique of historical agents and their representations subtly operates through a mild tonal variation or a very brief critical remark (as mentioned in the earlier case of the Indian 'life'). Consequently, his recounting of Spanish/English stories about the natives become mostly indistinguishable from his own constructions of them. The area Berrio was traversing, for instance, for three hundred and fifty leagues was "depopulated" for the people were all "eaten out" by the raiding Caribs (p. 27). This is certainly Berrio's account. Since the cannibal as an elusive figure is always already in advance or at the back the people Berrio met were "friendly" - and typically (symptomatic of European riveting of the native in the discourse) they "offered to guide Berrio part of the way to El Dorado" (p. 27). This is the first image of the natives in Berrio's and Naipaul's texts. And Naipaul simply gives the account without clarifying the native actions and questioning Berrio's representation of them. At another point when Berrio reaches St. Joseph (the city he "founded" in Trinidad - an instance of worlding the New World) after Vera (Berrio's lieutenant) occupied it, he finds the area "far from calm". "The man-eating Caribs", this is given as Berrio's thought, "moving down from the northern islands to *the empty* island of Tobago, were a threat to everyone" (p. 36 emphasis added).

Further down in the narrative Naipaul points out that Defoe placed Crusoe's shipwreck "on an *empty* island visited by man-eating Caribs like those Berrio feared" (p. 41 emphasis added). This kind of narration in the actor's voices without clarification and critique continues in Naipaul's story. In 1596, for instance, Domingo Vera, the lieutenant who had returned with a very large fleet from Spain for El Dorado expedition searches for Berrio (for Ralegh had already destroyed Berrio's Trinidad and the latter is in hiding). Vera sends a relief party to meet Berrio and the party, in Naipaul's recounting, "met a fleet of man-eating Caribs

from...Dominica...There were three hundred Caribs. They killed and ate the men and took away the women" (p. 75). Naipaul further quotes the 'evidence' of a Capuchin "official" (p. 119) historian's version of the Carib attack who wrote that the Caribs tore open the chests of Spaniards and ate their hearts and some tore the wombs of mothers and ate their babies (p. 75)[19]. The Caribs continue to operate as cannibals in Naipaul's reconstruction of Spanish 'adventure' (and European expansion).

However, at another point in the text Naipaul suggests that the Spanish complaints about Carib cannibals are more peculiar to *Spanish* expeditions than to other European adventurers: the Caribs "left the Dutch and English alone (and were indeed their friends)". The Spanish talk about cannibals is, Naipaul argues, a projection of anxiety and is in turn a vindication of desire to destroy and enslave. Yet, Naipaul's argument still retains an ambiguity in clinching the issue. It does not make clear whether he believed in Carib cannibalism or was here critiquing the Spanish anxieties: "it [cannibalism] aroused the same wish to mutilate, destroy and enslave as did sodomy, *another open Indian practice*" (p. 79). Two words stand out in the statement and they dilute Naipaul's already inadequate critique: "another" and "Indian". If "sodomy" is one "Indian" practice as Naipaul seems to believe from his "evidence", then, is cannibalism that *another* practice? Naipaul does not clarify but immediately goes on to strengthen his observation about Spanish desire to enslave and destroy the natives, from Spanish sources (p. 79). Further it is difficult to characterize this desire as a manifestation of anxiety peculiar to the Spanish alone, especially in the age of European expansion. Even in English (Dudley and Ralegh - with whom the Caribs were suposed to be friendly) and French (Thevet and Montaigne) accounts one finds this anxiety to possess and destroy appears[20]. (Naipaul himself says at another place in the narrative that the "French and English...united to exterminate the Caribs in one swift action", in St. Kitts [p. 117]). The point here is not just whether Naipaul replicates simply the European representations of the natives, but also his clear repetition of the stereotype of the Carib alone (and never the Arawaks) as cannibal. The Caribs appear in Naipaul's account, as in the earlier discourse, always as "warlike race of Indians", "cannibals".

In contrast, the Arawaks were in "fully advanced climate towards civilisation"[21]. And throughout Naipaul's reconstruction it is the Carib community which appears as the more belligerent, "warlike" (a later euphemism for earlier cannibalism) and brave, constantly causing trouble to the colonising (expanding) nations; in contrast the Arawaks appear more domesticated and passive. Naipaul's narrative does not delve into this stereotyping. And when Berrio first met such a "domesticated" tribe on the Orinoco, Naipaul writes, "Berrio was almost back in civilization" (p. 27). An examination of the basis of this stereotyping leads one into the social formation in pre-Columbian Americas.

Recent researches into these areas reveal that there were two "mode(l)s" of socio/political formation prevailing in the Americas at the time of European expansion: one could be referred to in Partha Chatterjee's conceptualisation as "communal" mode or formation, where communities are not based on an agricultural form of production but wandering groups live by sharing the spoils of their hunt[22]. These communities were "autonomous" in that they lacked a rigidly developed chieftain system[23]. Peter Hulme seems to suport the view that the Caribs belonged to this social formation. Whereas the Arawaks belonged to relatively settled agricultural social groups; and these groups already signify a hierarchical social formation in that they have a chieftain. These latter formations were a mutation in their earlier "autonomous" communal system. Archaeological research in these areas reveals that in the pre-Columbian Caribbean very well formed 'trade' and trade-routes were in existence among these communities[24]. These social/political formations were disrupted by the colonial expansion: "The European invasion therefore shattered the socio-political evolution of Caribbean people, destroying forever (or, better taking over and thereby destroying) the established chiefdoms, but moulding the autonomous villages, *nolens volens* into a military alliance of tremendous technical competence and incredible durability - which the Europeans had then to fight for nearly 300 years"[25]. However, what finds expression in the European discourse of this period - which is already overdetermined by the classical Herodotean discourse of other societies and medieval christian ideas of non-christians - is a war between 'cannibals'

and more gentle and domesticated 'Arwaks'.

The European penetration into pre-Columbian social formations destroyed the "balance" of the social groups in the Americas. Pierre Channu and Pierre Vilar argue that the gold existing for a thousand years in the Indies was siphoned off in two or three years; and they place the Caribbean gold cycle between 1494-1525. Once the existing gold was exhausted the Spanish started to produce "alluvial gold". For this and for pearl-fisheries forced female labour was subjected "from dawn until dusk...it destroyed the previous equilibrium of agricultural production and prevented the growing of subsistence crops"[26]. And this disruption finds expression in Naipaul's own reconstruction even though Naipaul's narrative does not signify that. Naipaul writes that when Berrio met the first Indian chief on the Caroni river, "Moriquito [the chief] was sullen." Moriquito is already (a hundred years after the Spanish penetration into America) involved with the Spaniards. He supplied the Indian slave labourers to Margarita pearl fisheries, in conspiracy with the Spanish governor of Margarita. So, already one finds the prototype of a later and more organised slave trade which was one of the factors that not only disrupted the society or set of relationships and codes of reference but led to the domination of Indian tribes in the Indies[27]. "For three or four hatchets a Carib would sell a nephew or a niece; he asked a little more for his daughter": Ralegh, in his 'nation'-building discourse cites this occasion to register the depravity, the 'barbarous' nature' of the "cannibals"[28]. Naipaul's own account, which is in general aimed at balancing Berrio's image, allegedly obscured by Ralegh, emphasizes more the 'tragedy' of his hero; and in effect, the process of larger violation done to the native societies, in which the slave trade is a crucial aspect, passes unemphasized. Moriquito's programming in this violation is a significant premonition of the more organised epistemic violence Europe's self-consolidation had affected. Later on Moriquito is killed by Berrio's men, not for his illicit slave trade (for Indians were in theory declared to be the King's subjects and trading in them was illegal) but in order to annex his territory in the expanding empire. Moriquito's territory was declared to be important because it was believed that the route to El Dorado lay through his territory. In fact initially

Moriquito appears in Naipaul's recounting as the stereotypical guide to El Dorado; he is represented in Berrio's account as someone with firm knowledge of the gold city. And Ralegh's account reinscribes Moriquito's credentials as guide to El Dorado and portrays him in more pompous terms. Moriquito, Ralegh writes, is "one of the greatest lords or kings of the borders of Guiana." Ralegh has his own purpose in elevating the image of the Indian chief - it is to represent the Spanish "cruelty" and "exploitation" in the Indies. In fact this is the governing strategy at one level in Ralegh's narrative; Ralegh repeats almost like a refrain whenever Moriquito's name appears, that he was killed by Berrio. Naipaul's own account which partly derives from Ralegh's account, to redress the balance as it were in favour of Berrio's tragedy, moves away quickly from the figure of Moriquito and the significance of his activities. Naipaul on the contrary goes on to show the complicity between Moriquito and the governor of Margarita as a conspiracy against Berrio: "Then Berrio saw that the governor, the leader of the relief party and Moriquito were all friends and slaves together. He had misread Moriquito's sullenness; he had made three enemies" (p. 30). This reading, which emphasises Berrio's personal tragedy, plausible as it may sound at the level of the plot of Naipaul's narrative, covers up the trace of epistemic disruption which the complicitous practices of the Spanish and the 'natives' signify.

Yet not all the natives were informers, conspirers and allies of the Spanish as Naipaul's own text occasionally and marginally acknowledges. Naipaul describes an Indian revolt/massacre that was waged in the early 18th century at Arenal as the last of the Indian rebellions, hence the "last sign" (for Naipaul) of Indian life. (In fact his text refers only twice to any such revolts). Even from the sparse detail Naipaul gives, in this regard, one can see that 17th century Trinidad was far from peaceful - that Capuchins going against the authorities continued converting the natives; Carib resistance was persistent and programming of Indians into wage labourers paying tax in the form of tribute (the cruel *repartimiento* system - this will be discussed later) prevailed. The natives continue to appear only on the margins, largely occasions for an aside: "Nothing more was heard of Guanaguanare or his Indians. The

Spaniards classified Indians as Indians of work, war or peace. Felipe described his Indians as being of work [sic]; it suggests what happened after the pacification" (p. 71). But characteristically, Naipaul makes the Arenal revolt seem a spontaneous upsurge (the Indians "became more restive", their "tempers snapped" [p. 119]), devoid of control, organisation and plan[29]. The Indian revolt, one can see even from the bare details Naipaul gives is one among a series of struggles Indians waged against the *encomienda* system which the Spanish empire had established in the early 16th century. Gordon Lewis in his sympathetic approach reconstructs the fierce native resistance to Spanish occupation by unravelling colonial historiography. Lewis, arguing against both Africanist and Hispanophilist historiography which deletes native insurgency (by privileging either African slave or Spanish creole perspective) gives us a measure of the guerrilla warfare the native Indians waged against the powerful Spaniards. Their strategies of resistance included scorching the earth, using a sort of indigenous poison gas, and they managed the art of taking over the Spanish ships (Las Casas describes this). And these resistances were rarely aimless, instinctive, purposeless and patternless outbreaks of confused people as Naipaul often makes one feel in his narrative of insurgency. Behind their physical resistance, Lewis argues, resided a psychological resistance deriving from a "cosmological vision of the things they did not surrender." Indians resisted baptism on the grounds that "they did not wish to enter a heaven full of people such as Christians." They mocked and laughed at the christian religion and considered it an insult to be called a christian. The Caribs used to tell that the causes of the suffering of christians from illness was because they did not live like Caribs. The view of history from the subaltern perspective shows the cognitive failure of the historiography which privileges "European activism" and "the native passivity". What Ralegh depicted as did his Spanish counterpart, Lewis argues, as Indian incapacity to work was "a method of passive reistance." And what was considered as "insane suicide" of the Indians was a biological act demanded by a nature the European mind did not understand.": a measure of epistemic distance[30].

4) *IMPRISONING HISTORIES*

> "...however dominant a social system may be, the very meaning of its domination involves a limitation or selection of the activities it covers, so that by definition it cannot exhaust all social experience, which therefore always potentially contains space for alternative acts and alternative intentions which are not yet articulated as social institution or even project."
>
> Raymond Williams[31]

If the Indian occupied a marginal, contingent position in Naipaul's narrative, the slave in the later period (when the possibility of "monuments" about slaves and their life is plentiful, inevitably in the form of colonial discourse) is assigned no laudable place in the narrative. Naipaul's stereotyping of slaves follows a pattern and this pattern seems to be a case of cognitive failure. The cognitive failure here is determined by his very conceptualization of history in binary divisions (pre-history and 'real' history). One traces the operation of this binarism in Naipaul's division of plantation world into "slave society", the "workaday real world" of the day, of the whites and the "underground", the "underworld" of night, of the blacks: "The slave in Trinidad worked by day and lived by night". And this "night world" of the slave is infected by "magic" "fantasy" and stood for nothing but "lunacy" (*OCB* p. 267). It is the "magicians", Naipaul argues, who controlled this "hysterical" world of fantasy. They persuaded the slaves by "awakening *African [?]* instincts, could give his fellows a sense of the unreality of the workaday world and could incite *normally docile even loyal slaves to rebellion*" (FC pp. 105-06. emphasis added). The workaday world was an illusion for the slaves; and they lived constantly with their weapons of despair: poison and magic. It is within this stereotyping apparatus one finds Naipaul fixing the slaves in his larger narrative (and this stereotyping has far reaching implications - these are discussed below.)

However, Naipaul's stereotyping of the slaves differs from planters' stereotyping of them (this is so in spite of the complicity Naipaul's narrative has with the spectacle of torture it represents). The planters' ambivalence of fear and desire (to possess the slaves even as property) repeats in Naipaul with a displacement. It is articulated in Naipaul's work, as I have

shown earlier as more fundamental and ambiguous feelings of desire/loss and separation/fear. His stereotyping of slaves is one varied repetition of this fundamental anxiety which also seems to inform his conceptualisation of history. This already seems to figure in Naipaul's construction of his childhood past where the two communities (black and Asian) remains mutually exclusive (AD p. 35). The black figure remains in Naipaul's narratives, as we saw earlier, as a figure of threat. This is graphically presented in the grotesque representation of the 'first' black he describes in his first journey to the Caribbean, in *The Middle Passage*, (*MP* p. 11). Thus, the presence of Indians or slaves in Naipaul's narrative is always by default, by means of a "shifter"[32] as an aside in the "straight" story of sovereign history (of documents). Like the Indians earlier who can enter the narrative as guides, the slaves appear only as victims of torture (which is described at great length) or as victims of despair. The narrative disavows any other possibility of assigning a different position to the slaves. Thus, on Coblenz estate in 1794, Naipaul tells us, one hundred slaves died, all of a sudden. Naipaul tells how much they cost and what a loss it was to the planter: "the planter was ruined" and sold the estate (p. 137). The negroes, although "seasoned", died, Naipaul explains, because "They had been poisoned. It was the way of life of the slave islands, where poison was the last weapon of Negro malice, anger or despair...What had been imported with the Negroes was the hysteria..." (p. 137). The negroes appear here to indicate the problems Chacon faced in his last years as governor. Since the case of poisoned negroes appears several times in Naipaul's text it demands an examination as to how/why the slaves enter the narrative and what their actions signify. On the same Coblenz estate in 1801, Naipaul writes, a hundred and twenty negroes died of poisoning At the same time on another estate more slaves were poisoned: "It began to look like a conspiracy, a Negro challenge to authority" (p. 196). That is the only comment one sees here and even that is ambivalent in tone (who saw it as a "conspiracy"?) The narrative goes on to describe the torture the suspects were put to: slaves tortured on the picket, in chains, in the hot chamber, *cachots brulants*. However, Naipaul sees the torture itself as a sign of planters' fears: "The jail as a place of horror: it could not be otherwise: the planters of the commission, entering the jail,

faced the tortures, confessions and rotting bodies like the African darkness that might overwhelm them all: powders turning to insects to ravage a plantation, charms killing the canes, money turning to dung, Negroes dying in convulsions, the world ending in blood : . d flames" (p. 201).

Planters' fears and their coercive apparatus and what are considered as negro fantasies. These details about the anxiety and terror mount in the narrative. The stereotypes are clear enough - the slave and her/his actions disappear into pathetic gestures of futility. And the case itself appears as a contingent, a parasitical story on the main narrative of the conflict between Picton and the new immigrants' (pp. 196-201) - torture as one of the charges against Picton's "kingdom" being prepared. But why did the negroes select certain estates and certain planters (Montalembert, Begorrat and Ladaveza)? What did their gestures signify? Naipaul's narrative does not raise these issues and yet it considers the period, the turn of the century, as a time of intellectual liveliness and peace in the country (pp. 183,373) It moves on to another piece of torture 'evidence' that Picton's enemies would cash in on - the torture of Luisa Calderon[33].

Towards the end of the book Naipaul comments on the simplistic way history is written - which is content only in naming certain people and events but never deals with their past in a more complex way. Consequently, in such historiography (Naipaul does not mention any one specifically) the slave never seems real. Like the extinct Indians the slave had to be "reconstructed" - and only from imagination: "In the records the slave is faceless, silent, with an identification rather than a name. He has no story." (pp. 375-76)

Indeed the slave has no story, and indeed he is a figure of the imagination - that is what Naipaul's long narrative reinscribes; but it adds occasionally names to these slaves. They remain perpetually on the fringes of the narrative, emerging but from an "imaginative reconstruction". They are represented as part of a different world - a world of fantasy and despair. Let me enumerate certain instances of the slave's entry into Naipaul's narrative.

In 1794, for instance, just before the Spanish capitulation, when the island was caught by "hysteria" Naipaul mentions that a "Negro conspiracy was uncovered", and "another uprising ...

was frustrated" (p. 138); that "Four Negroes beat their owners to death," and the negroes were "hanged at once"; that the local negroes sang the *Marseillaise* and wore the French cockade which was a "part of the French absurdity." (p. 139). These instance of slave presence are all, one should remember, parasitic on the main narrative: the decline of the Spanish empire, and the impending humiliation and defeat of Chacon, the last Spanish governor of Trinidad, If at the end of Spanish era the slave (in Naipaul's narrative) enters by default as it were, at the threshold of Picton's era s/he does no better: "The Spanish peons, the former bush-folk, had become a menace." A drunken peon abuses a Spanish lady and he was hanged (the subtletics of Spanish, English administrative actions are mentioned but nothing about the peon(s)). "The runaway Negroes in the interior were hunted down." (That's all). Another negro woman, "called Present", once eloped with a black soldier was brought in and was hanged. A free Negro woman was allegedly raped by four soldiers and one of them was hanged (p. 158). In Picton's era the slaves appear only to annotate Picton's "impartial terror" - as points in the negligible footnotes. And Indians have already disappeared from Naipaul's narrative. Once when they appear, in an aside, they are seen to be lost in "alcoholic ennui" (p. 188). Nearly a hundred years have passed since the last reference to Indians of the Arenal revolt/massacre - and the narrative progresses without them.

There are other modes apart from the role of poisoner/ poisoned, in which the slaves find their niche in Naipaul's narrative - because of their "vice" - "dirt-eating" as it was described in the narrative representations of the slave[34]. So the slave appears either in the form of a self-poisoning creature or poisoned/poisoning idiot: "Negroes were expected to die; they were carried off by overwork, bad food and special Negro diseases, like the *mal d'estomac* caused by dirt eating" (p. 190). When the negro women enter the narrative they are invariably the objects of sex (either for being raped by soldiers [p. 158], or as a source of "young poor white" immigrants' diseases (p. 191). And Naipaul quotes an English traveller's praise of mulatto beauty: "the finest women in the world" (pp. 191-22). And the slaves are always to be found in the vivid descriptions of Vallot's torture (pp. 186-7, 199, 200-1, 220-1, 258). They always

"appear to exist elsewhere," only on the margins of somebody else's narrative, even in Naipaul's construction (p. 194).

The point I am trying to demonstrate is not that the 'natives' or the slaves appear silent in Naipaul's narrative - Naipaul himself has said that in the context of other history books. My point is Naipaul's narrative does not even attempt to see any possibility of assigning a new position to the natives, slaves and insurgents than the one in which they are fixed. On the contrary, Naipaul's narrative colludes with the counter-insurgency *text* in silencing them. One of Naipaul's footnotes becomes exemplary in this regard.

It is not surprising that Naipaul discusses the meaning of jokes in slave society essentially from the perspective of the master; the jokes he discusses are *not* told by slaves but told about slaves by planters - and these are discussed only in a footnote. Only these jokes (against the slaves), Naipaul feels, make the society "tolerable" for masters: "I have the impression that humour was important to the slave society [here the text is referring to the slave-holder's society]. The absurdity of the slave, *in the eyes of the free*, must have helped to make the society *tolerable*" (p. 383 emphasis added). Obviously, Naipaul endorses the supposed passivity of the victim; and the cruelty of the jokes, Naipaul implies, only evokes pathos with regard to the slaves' situation. Such reading does not even broach the issue of slave humour - slave's strategies of subverting the apparently all-powerful codes of 'culture', through a ridiculing imitation of them. And one remembers, Trinidad gains a special place in the history of comic subversion in creating the specifically humorous and uncrowning genre - the calypso[35]. Michael Craton discussing several forms of opposition refers to emulation of masters' ideals as a mode of resistance: "Moreover, the plantation whites did not realize that, paradoxically even emulation was a form of resistance, in that it made a nonsense of the plantocracy's claim that the two groups formed separate societies (or rather, that slaves were outside the only society recognised by the master)"[36].

It is in the context of slave subversive strategies one should recall the question raised earlier regarding slave poisoning. What does poisoning signify? Naipaul's indiscriminate

summary reading reduces it to slaves' weapon of despair. Quite contrary to what Naipaul writes, the poisoner was current as a "folk hero". "And poisoning", as Gordon Lewis has argued, "especially if allied with intimations of witchcraft, could be seen by blacks as purposeful revenge"[37]. And every success of the poisoner is an indication of the popularity and support he gained from his community; all of Naipaul's examples prove this point. Even if slaves are aware, Lewis argues drawing from an authority Naipaul uses, of the presence of a poisoner among them intending to ruin the valuable slaves and animals "they would guard his secret, even when tortured." Surely, it is not just despair that leads people to do this[38]. In fact all the slave activities are described in Naipaul's work as irrational, haphazard, chaotic and anarchic; since they are allegedly the manifestations of the 'night' world they are treated indiscriminately as backward-looking and "lunatic". But even from the bare details of Naipaul's text about slave poisoning one can trace an argument which brings into crisis the stereotypes Naipaul reinscribes. Begorrat and Montalembert, we learn from Naipaul's text, are two prominent planters in Trinidad. Even after Picton's presence the colony was virtually ruled by the French (they continued to dominate the *cabildo*) with whatever law was most convenient to planters. And almost all the French planters who settled in Trinidad in the last two decades of the eighteenth century were driven out either from San Domingo or from other British islands[39]. These planters brought with them their "loyal" slaves from other colonies. Trinidad, far from being "peaceful" appears to be a colony in ferment all the time - affected by Venezuelan insurgents and black revolutionaries from other colonies. When we focus on these traces the events (poisoning) and slaves' actions become neither mysteries nor expressions of despair. It was the "loyal" slaves of the royalist planters who become the targets in both the cases Naipaul suggests. Dirt-eating like poisoning was another resistance-adjustment strategy slaves adopted - this was more frequent in the case of newly arrived slaves. It was usually the newly arrived slaves who would relapse into a withdrawn psychological state which was to puzzle the master. The deliberate inducement to illness by the habit of dirt eating, self-mutilation, self-inflicted injury was "attributed to the harsh treatment of slaves", and a rejection of the protestant ethic of

work[40].

Now, it is appropriate to look again at the manichean binaries into which Naipaul divides the slave society (slave/master): it is the world of day (master's) and night; reality and magic, illusion and fantasy, reason and lunacy. The (negative) metonymies attributed to the slave world, Naipaul seems to argue, derive their sustenance from slave fantasies, their millennarian religions and their magical rituals - in other words their syncretic Afro-Caribbean religious cultures. Naipaul's reading does not touch the profound complexity of the slave world and the differences and divisions that constitute it. This can be seen in his analysis of the 1805 Trinidad insurrection. For nearly 300 pages the narrative moves in the lines of colonial historiography - although presented as a drama of intrigue and tragedy of characters, enigmatic critical paranthesis blurred by benevolent presentation - in which the natives as well as the slaves disappear on to the fringes leading a parasitical existence on the "straight" narrative of metropolitan adventure. Only after 300 pages does Naipaul suddenly spare a few pages to discuss the "life" of the negro "underworld". The episode is a shifter and it starts with a complaint: "So much was written about Negroes. But the Negroes of 1800 remain as anonymous as the Indians of Las Casas three centuries before. It is the silence of all serfdom."(291). What should a critic do faced with such a massive text? The planter only saw, Naipaul points out, the sorcerer, the Obeah, the "drumming and the jumping-up at every opportunity": "It suggests a whole *underground life of fantasy*, linking creole Negroes and new Negroes, French Negroes and English Negroes" (p. 291). Fantasy is a complex word but here it (in Naipaul's rendering) brings slaves together and yet Naipaul's text does *not* unravel either what "fantasy" signified or how it brought people together. The slave world, Naipaul asserts, remains a world of "make-believe"; however, he adds, in Trinidad "it had become many-featured, a dream beyond labour and more real than labour, of power and prettiness, of titles, flags and uniforms, kings and queens and courtiers" (p. 292). The criterion stands out: labour. But the word or concept stood for something different on the slave plantations. It meant labouring entirely for the master. The slave reacted to that. The planter only saw, Naipaul

argues, "a mimicry in the Negro yards of white entertaining." Naipaul for once (and only once) acknowledges the possibilities in the resistance, yet with ambivalence: "Negro insurrection, which *seemed so sudden* in its beginnings and endings and *so casual* in its betrayals, was usually only an aspect of Negro fantasy; but an adequate leader could make it real. The moment would occur when secrecy became its own assurance, when fantasy submerged and ridiculed the world of labour and property" (p. 292 italics added). It is not just the leadership that articulated the slave aspirations and resistance, as Genovese argued in a similar context, but the condition of resources - large estates (enabling bigger groups of slaves come together), weapons, and hideouts etc[41]. Naipaul dramatising the 1805 insurrection, speaks summarily of all insurrections as he did earlier in the case of Venezuelan revolution (this will be discussed later). The 1805 plot was aborted by the betrayal of slaves - it nonetheless struck terror in the planters. Naipaul tells how this planter interrogated his negroes and how that lieutenant broke a negro's silence; and how those other negroes talked openly in front of these French ladies who frightened them (the negroes): "But it [betrayal] was part of the fantasy that they [slaves] should, when the time came, like *magicians*, reveal *the real world* (p. 293 italics added).

Naipaul, describing the insurrection as a fantasy narrates the slave actions in a fairy-tale manner - talking in understatements about the kings, queens and the regiments of the slaves. It was all a "play" and it was over once the inquiry began, Naipaul argues, "the underground Negro kingdoms like exposed anthills, the whip and the chains and worse waiting. ... This was all that remained of the fantasy of the night ... a confused Negro story...a confused fantasy" (p. 295). Even from Naipaul's cynical rendering of the plot one can discern the organisation and the protocols of the insurgency: the leaders were usually from the 'higher' strata of the slave world - 'kings', the carters, the nurses, the doctors, drivers and they conducted their activities between curfew and sunrise, attended gatherings secretly, feigning illness. In Naipaul's text, which narrativizes these events exclusively in terms of master-authority and slave-obedience, these differential marks do not signify an organisation but only signs of suicidally comic fantasy and despair. Historians sympathetic to texts of insurgency like Gordon Lewis and

Genovese demonstrate that it is the slave resistance and insurgencies which gave Caribbean history its special character. The two cardinal elements of this history, Lewis argues, are, firstly, the historical magnitude of slave revolts, which from Spanish period "demonstrated that they [slaves] could storm the heights of heaven in a way that not even Marx fully appreciated"; and, secondly, the historical continuity of revolts from the Spanish period leading to San Domingo (1791) and from then determining every insurgency that followed in the Caribbean. The measure of 'success' or 'failure' of these events, in the retrospective historical narrativization is indicated by the way the historian articulates his own position and his relation to the 'events' and other accounts concerning the events in his narrativization. What is important is to document and theorise how the insurgent (slave) brings to crisis the seemingly all-powerful colonialist discourse (and apparatus) and thus renders "the distinction between success and failure indeterminate"[42]. Whether the 'parasitical' insurgent figures as despairing and 'passive' is a measure of the historian's own position.

That the slave draws from his/her resources of the past while displacing them in the changed world and crosshatching it with the 'experience' of the Indians and creoles is admirably documented by Lewis and Genovese. African communal traditions, we learn, (not the fantasy world of night) of mutual aid strengthened by the "shipmate" comradeship on the middle passage remained the strongest bond in bringing together the fellow sufferers of the plantation colony. It was this "sort of cement that held fellow conspirators together once revolt was underway"; and this bond was reinforced by the oath of loyalty - trace from African past. (The oath was a rendition of a pledge to which certain African communities commit themselves before they attack their enemies). It is the hardship, the circumstances and the syncretic Afro-Caribbean culture, Lewis argues, that helped to form an insurgent ideology "forming not only a praxis but also a theory of revolution. There is, in the first place, and preeminently, the fusion of African cultural forms with revolutionary activity"[43]. Genovese details how Vodun cult in San Domingo, and Obeah in Brazil helped to forge resistance movements[44].

Naipaul argues that colonialism preaches self-contempt among the 'natives'; but this self-

contempt, in his analysis, has utterly damaged the native leaving no source for self assertion open to him (*MP* pp. 71-72). It is this perspective which narrativizes the activities of slaves as fairy tales of the powerless. But rebellion demands self-confidence, and as Lewis argues, it is this confidence that enabled the slave to "purge himself of the white bias, and its accompanying slavist [sic] deference to everything that the white system stood for; to perceive himself, in his self image, as equal, or even superior, to the white master-person; to see himself ultimately, as apocalyptic avenger and final nemesis." Hence, the attire and protocols of kings and queens - strategies to build self-images and consolidate insurgency. Lewis sees this self assertion in the rough notes which Cuffy, the 1763 Berbice rebel leader, sent on to the Dutch colonial governor: "They are written, quite unselfconsciously, as one equal to another"[45].

However, towards the end of the book, after noting the absence of the slave in any substantial way in the history books, Naipaul proceeds to close the narrative with an exception to this general rule. Naipaul leaves this 'exceptional' narrative as an enigmatic and elliptical judgment, but it also paradoxically becomes a judgement on the entire narrative that has preceded it.

Jacquet is a 66-year old slave on a French planter's estate; he is the *commandeur* of the estate. The planter has already suffered the "loss", Naipaul points out, of 125 slaves in twenty two years. Once a new born slave baby ("the father was probably Dert [the planter] himself") was poisoned on the estate. The planter instructs all the negroes to find out who the poisoner was. Suddenly after the death of the baby Jacquet begins to behave strangely and is admitted to the hospital: "he wept and shrieked night and day and especially at night." And finally, he asked the other negroes and the planter to assemble at a place and he would speak to them. He tells the negroes how he poisoned some other negroes earlier and how he tried to kill these. Then he confesses to the master that he had killed the baby. He tells the master that he did not know that he would suffer so much by poisoning the baby and the baby's death was his "misfortune". "Dert", Naipaul comments, "was more astonished and hurt than angry." Dert asks why he did it for "he had always been a good master to Jacquet." "Jacquet", Naipaul tells,

"in his old age had grown jealous." Later Jacquet tells the master that he had often tried to kill all the negroes of the plantation but he could not find the opportunity. The negroes ask the master to throw Jacquet into the furnace. "Dert said no; he didn't feel he could punish the old man." Jacquet asks for a rope to hang himself. Dert gives him a rope out of "curiosity". But Jacquet's "courage failed". A few Days later Jacquet was found dead, poisoned - and nobody knew who had poisoned Jacquet.

Naipaul's narrative enigmatically ends here. The story is not a very unusual one. But why did Naipaul pick this up? Is it only because it is a story of a negro? Or is it to focus the master/slave relationship and the slave's betrayal of a compassionate master? The story warrants us to read in both these ways - for it is presented as an exception to the general rule of sparseness of details about slaves in history books. And it is also a story, we remember, told by the master. It forms part of the evidence given to a commission on poisoning. It is plausible to argue that it is the master's benevolence towards Jacquet, which led to the latter's confession, which makes a place for the story in the colonial archive. But Naipaul presents it as a story of the slave and his re-presentation of the story seems to accept Jacquet's jealousy as the reason for the calamity. But killing children was not an unknown fact in the slave society. Many women slaves practised, Lewis shows, crude abortion in order to avoid work and "to avoid the enslavement at birth of their offspring"[46]. Even if Naipaul's intention is to critique the very conditions which made possible a space for the slave in the colonial archive (slave's guilt and penance in the presence of benevolent master), his own narrative until this moment (of Jacquet) and his textualisation of slave activities go against this final move. For the slave remains a parasite on the dominant narrative so far and paradoxically even in the last trope also.

5) *DECONSTRUCTING HISTORIES*

(i)

If Naipaul's narrative shares with colonial historiography in relegating the native and the slave and their stories to a parasitical status then the 'main' or 'straight' story around which the parasites cluster is narrativised as the "romance" and "tragedy" of "conquistadors" and "explorers". This section tracks the drama of tragedy and arcadia Naipaul feels for.

Naipaul appears to attempt to redress Berrio's story as drawn by Ralegh. For Naipaul Berrio is the lonely, loyal servant of a feudal king chasing after the fantasy of El Dorado. Naipaul draws parallels between Crusoe and goes on to explore how 'fact' meets 'fiction'. 'Fact and fiction meet" (p. 41) - the facts that Naipaul's account makes the fiction meet is his archival work on Berrio which corroborates the 'imaginative', 'fictional' narrative of Defoe. Naipaul skillfully weaves in the Crusoe story here to intensify the tragic story of Berrio. Berrio - so far the account has shown - is a harried, haunted man. Parallel to the miserable story of Berrio Naipaul brings in the story of an abandoned sailor (on St. Helena) who goes mad on coming into human contact. The fantasy of the sailor and the 'fictional' Crusoe, mirror Berrio's quest for Naipaul: "To be the first man on the earth, to see the first shoots of the first crop.... : it is an aspect of what the El Dorado quest had become" (p. 41). In the fiction, Naipaul's narrative suggests, Crusoe is rescued when his "dream of innocence, resource and power ends." Whereas Berrio would suffer the fantasy and die as a lunatic abandoned on an island (p. 41). This is a sympathetic narrative about the sovereign subjects mapping the areas for expansion[47]. Although the narrative does not entirely construct itself from Berrio's perspective it is steered around him, narrativizing what events affected him. This perspective, which moves around the sovereign subjects (constructing colonial/European discourse), incorporates the 'native' through a device or strategy of "encirclement"; and such a strategy represents the natives on the premise of exteriority. That is, the natives reappear mostly as a

part of European discourse, as they are constituted by it[48]. Thus, in an "official's" story, "summarizing the history of the settlement, [who] wrote: 'Guanaguanare [a native chief of Trinidad] withdrew elsewhere" (p. 35); and Berrio's soldiers "had to fight off Guanaguanare's dispossessed Indians" (p. 42).

In portraying Ralegh Naipaul initially appears to re-write Ralegh's account of the El Dorado story differently (exposing Ralegh's plagiarising of the story from Berrio). But paradoxically Naipaul's story is influenced at a deeper, structural level by Ralegh's own account. Ralegh's account of the El Dorado search appears to be curiously imbricated by the signs of tragic premonition and a subconscious knowledge of the impossible task; this could be seen in his narrative. The narrative does not celebrate the glories of the gold city alone - but more importantly it meticulously charts the insurmountable obstacles. That is, while working on the desire of the reader through the descriptions of the wealth of the Incas, the tract also subtly constructs the dangers involved in the voyage. Yet it pompously displays its knowledge about the place as a source of advantage - and hence the possibility of his success which was denied to others. Ralegh's cataloguing of place names, names of the native chiefs and rivers, is a case in point. Ralegh's narrative (subtext) conveys every time the inevitable failure of the enterprise. And it is precisely this motif (which will be analysed below) that operates in Naipaul's narrative - but this could also be said to be deriving from the advantage of retrospective reconstruction. However, there is another trope, crucial for Naipaul, with which Naipaul conflates the ideologeme of tragedy: it is the trope of the El Dorado quest as the search for origins: "El Dorado, which had begun as a search for gold, was becoming something more. It was becoming a New World romance, a dream of Shangri-la, the complete, unviolated world. *Such a world had existed* and the Spaniards had violated it" (p. 31 italics added). From Columbus to Ralegh the El Dorado quest had invoked the fantasy of Edenic myth. But Naipaul seems to suggest that such an 'unviolated', 'original' world had existed (a place in what is now Colombia "had been conquered a generation before Columbus came to the New World" [p. 18]), which comes closer to the myth of origins. Although Naipaul is not directly involved

in invoking the Edenic myth his own account here and in the general treatment of the theme of origins in the text and elsewhere, as we have shown, leads one to feel that Naipaul himself has investment in such an 'imagined' 'unviolated' origin. Indeed it is such a quest that operates in the very desire to undertake the project of 'history' - the narrative about the place where he was born (from its 'origin'). And this quest itself is textualized through the enormous detail suggesting the irretrievable loss and hence the in-built premonition, as in Ralegh's narrative, of 'failure' or 'defeat'. But such a narrativization of history, with its profound sense of the tragic, sees the events through what I called in an earlier chapter an entropic view - the world devoid of its fame, the world which has lost its glory. But the glimpses of such a world, the snap-shots of the 'unviolated', are still yearned for in the narratives Naipaul uses for his own quest. But in order to cherish that glory and that sense of the tragic the narrative tends to displace, in its density of detail, the other narrative, the narrative of imperialism which is itself constituted by the very narratives and their agents Naipaul comes across. These narratives and their agents are tapped, in the Naipaul text, for their scopic detail.

(ii)

Naipaul's criteria of "natural history" (scopic detail) and "romance" find further grounding in his recounting of Ralegh's text. However, the stereotype of Indians as informants and guides appears in the very first contact in Ralegh's narrative. Ralegh's narrative already incorporates them as domesticated - complaining to him about Berrio's (Spain's) tyranny.

The position of the subject ('Ralegh') in his treatise can be traced through the way the strategy of encirclement functions here; that is, the strategies through which the natives and the Spaniards are contained in it can be examined. The natives who appear in his narrative are already domesticated informants and informers needing English care. Ralegh's narrative presents the first image of Berrio as a treacherous, cunning old man. This is intensified by quoting the native informants' version of Berrio's atrocities. The location from which Ralegh

organises his narrative is not inconsistent with the other aim of the narrative - the entrapment of the reader (namely - the patron Queen and the client - the 'nation' - making citizen - the Hakluyt reader[49].) The latter aim conceals another crucial move (which needs to be tracked in the narrative) - to claim sympathy and exoneration.

If the strategic location of the narrator can be traced through the narrative which attempts to position the native/Spaniard on the one hand, and the reader on the other hand, there is a need to disclose the strategies the narrative relies on in order to contain/fix the native. Here we see two discourses operating on Ralegh's narrative and endowing it with enunciatory power: one is the discourse of antiquity and the other is the discourse of "contemporaries". Unlike other adventurers of the age of expansion such as Columbus, Ralegh's text derives more from the discourse of contemporaries. However, one finds Ralegh's invocation of the authority of Pliny while describing the 'native scene'. Ralegh writes that in Trinidad he had seen a "store of oisters upon the branches of the trees, and were very salt and well tasted"[50]. Ralegh appealed to the authority of Pliny in recording this scopic detail. Naipaul, in quest of the visual detail, represents this detail as "one of his [Ralegh's] lies" (p. 57). But such a representation elides the discursivity, that is, the ideological elements affecting and operating through the detail of the text. For in his narrative Ralegh does not simply stop with the authority (Pliny) or only with Trinidad; he goes further in etching out his "imaginative geography"[51]: "the like is commonly seene in other places of the West Indies, and else where"[52]. The 'observation' is at once substantiated by the 'contemporary' authority of Andrew Thevet (a French traveller of an earlier period). As if authorised by the discourses of antiquity and the contemporary Ralegh enunciates: "But in this yland, as also in Guiana there are very many of them" - the trees on which oisters grow[53]. But through this very enunciation (as if licenced by the authority of tradition) Ralegh also marks the "strategic formation" of texts; thus, citing or reinscribing other texts as authorising sources endows his own and others with power of authority. How Ralegh's own text reveals (or rather participates in) the strategic formation of texts can be seen in another instance.

Ralegh's enterprise - the Guiana project (or the El Dorado fiction) is constructed from the strategic formation of the texts. Ralegh gives his project its life through the authority of contemporary accounts of Spaniards on Peru. He "discovers" that the leader (chief) of Guiana was of Peruvian descent. Ralegh gives an account of Peru's riches as narrated by the Spanish authorities. And without hesitation, he goes on to project all that was written on Peru in a magnified way on to Guiana. He refers to the authorities of Pedro de Cienza, Francisco Lopez, Francisco Pizarro and other Spanish 'conquistadors' and travellers. Further Ralegh attempts to increase the "density" of his narrative through what de Certeau calls "utterative markings"[54] - through "eye witness" references such as "as have seen Manoa", "I have been assured"[55]. Ralegh's strategy establishes the authorizing power of earlier texts by recommending the reader (if he/she has any doubt) to read a few sections (Ralegh specifies): "but read the report of Francisco Lopez and others, it will seeme more then credible"[56]. Thus the authority of contemporaries acquires in this strategic formation of texts what Said refers to as "referential power"[57]. Ralegh's own text while reinscribing the other texts with referential power makes a niche for itself in a "national narrative" and becomes a part of the pantheon.

Naipaul, narrating the story in Ralegh's words, pausing only to comment on the accuracy of empirical detail, does not engage with the discursive/textual side of the narrative. Thus, he finds the names of Indian chiefs (whom Ralegh releases from St.Joseph's prison) "exact" and corroborates them through the documentary evidence (p. 60). But in the process the question isn't raised as to what is the frame in which the names (mostly names alone) of the places and people are mentioned. Ralegh's narrative operates within the framework of colonial discourse - in that it *represents* and transfixes what it contains. Ralegh is diligent in naming those Indians who are mostly represented in his narrative as friendly (Moriquito, Topiawari, Caranapa and others), and all these names are associated with the El Dorado quest. And this naming itself is a part of the larger process of territorial expansion of the English - after Ralegh's first visit Guiana is claimed as English country (although it is re-occupied by the Spaniards soon after Ralegh's raid, in 1595). Secondly, the naming is so assiduously practised in Ralegh's narrative

in order to assert his own authority over the place; Ralegh repeats at several places in his narrative that he would gladly lead and dedicate his life in any attempt to invade Guiana. The naming (appearing on occasions like cataloguing) is also in order to distinguish Ralegh himself from Berrio and to prove the latter's inability to deal with natives: "he had no means to discourse with the inhabitants at any time: neither was he curious in these things, being utterly unlearned, and not knowing the East from the West"[58]. Thus naming becomes another aspect of representing the natives and the Spaniards in Ralegh's narrative. And there is a certain kind of complicity between Naipaul's own privileging of the scopic detail and Ralegh's boastful criticism of Berrio. Naipaul almost echoes Ralegh's comments on Berrio's inability to describe: "Berrio converted a journey across an unknown continent into a shortage of food and water, sudden illness, a strong current, a high mountain hard to climb" (p. 62). Naipaul seems to accept Ralegh's criticism of Berrio at face value as if Ralegh's visual details were transparent entities unmediated by any 'vision'. The absence of such detail, for Naipaul, is a measure of "medieval mind": "Berrio, very devout, [was] screened from the world by the completeness of his faith... Ralegh wanted more; he got truth mixed with medieval fantasy", from Berrio (p. 62). To substantiate his critique and as a sign and vindication of Ralegh's "secular" abilities Naipaul cites a descriptive passage from Ralegh - and the passage itself contains the Spaniards as ignoramuses and mere wanderers[59].

Naipaul, gives the details of Ralegh's journey on the Orinoco, and how he suffered, but elides analysis of the pattern in which Ralegh recounts his journey: "He longed for the new but was nervous about the unknown" (p. 64). Ralegh's text speaks simultaneously in two tongues: one goes out to establish the truth about the El Dorado 'fiction'. This he does (in the first part of the narrative) through the strategic deployment of textual authorities; in the second part Ralegh gives a brief history of all the expeditions to El Dorado so far. This works in two paradoxical ways - firstly in substantiating Ralegh's claim about the gold city and adding to the enunciatory powers of the texts; also, it signifies the heroism of the expedition (Ralegh's) itself. But secondly, and more crucially the episodes about the earlier adventures appear as

premonitions; although at surface level the text appears to assert the 'truth' of the story, at the level of the subtext almost subconsciously runs the other narrative of premonition of failure (hence the need to entrap the *reader(s),* to command their belief). Berrio's own story is a trope in this narrative pattern - he at once asserts the 'truth' but also strengthens the premonition. These two strands continue without contradicting each other, of course, into the third part of the narrative where Ralegh actually travels on the Orinoco and almost "reaches" the mythical city - Manoa. Here the narrative once again gains its strength through its operation of assigning the natives a specific position. The natives assert all the 'truths' Ralegh desired to hear (which he himself reinscribed on the authority of earlier texts) - that El Dorado was nearby, that a mine of gold and diamonds was not far off; in addition, Ralegh's narrative inscribes the natives as loyal and obliged to the Queen. That is, as always the natives are once again transfixed as pilots to gold mines and potential loyal subjects of the English nation. In spite of the native's assurances and stories Ralegh does not proceed to Manoa but returns to Trinidad. But this is not to say that Ralegh was simply lying about El Dorado as his contemporaries accused him[60]. The premonition of failure operates as a subtext - perhaps overdetermined by Ralegh's own anxiety to exonerate himself and win the favour of the Queen. Nonetheless this strengthens his strategies and operates in entrapping the reader. Yet, it is after he decides to turn back (with his weak excuses - that he did not have enough force to raid the Inca empire - which Naipaul calls Ralegh's "poetic elision" [p. 65]) one finds the narrative resuming to strengthen the first strand - the 'truth' of El Dorado. He goes on further to chart the strategies for invading Guiana and the Inca empire - and these strategies, by the end of the narrative (replete with references to the natives/places, with the power of knowledge) acquire legitimacy (licence) of authority. And the narrative becomes an invitation to the Queen (the potential reader) to invade: "Guiana is a countrey that hath yet her *maydenhead, never sackt, turned nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not bene torne, nor the vertue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance,* the graves have not bene opened for golde, the mines not broken with sledges, nor their images pulled down out of their temples. It hath never been entered by any armie of strength, and

never conquered or possessed by any christian Prince"[61]. And Guiana is easy to defend if the English built two forts at the places Ralegh would specify. Ralegh's conclusion isn't just referring to pillage at all but to occupation, to territorial expansion. And his narrative has already shown the modes of "worlding" the world into the *New* World. Ralegh's declarations and prophesies may be confined to the specific context and interpreted as observations about unploughed lands of Guiana. But within the wider text of imperialist expansion the utterances certainly gain the metaphoricity perhaps rivaled only by the more systematized discourse of Orientalism/colonialism. In this sense the passage just quoted can be said to already prefigure the (later) assumptions of 'uninscribed' earth - (Guiana) - an assumption which is fundamental to the discourse of expansion[62].

(What Ralegh 'elides' in the narrative is his defeat at Cumana - where he was chased by the Spaniards and Indians. Ralegh's elision may be because this would disrupt his narrative - it would betray him - by showing the Indian and Spanish alliance. Naipaul constructs this episode from Spanish records which is undoubtedly a creditable achievement - given the privilege Ralegh's account has in the English context[63].)

In the main Naipaul's account is a benevolent narrative; the narrative sees, at the level of its plot *all* the participants as "victims" - both the adventurer-imperialist and the disappearing natives. In such a benevolent narrative, and its 'novelistic' treatment (as a series of tragic episodes, miniatures of suffering), the larger and crucial narrative of European expansion and consolidation is rendered (almost) impossible to recognise, for the scopic detail overwhelms; and the subordinated and decimated natives, since they lack any self-representations ('monuments') become occasion only for an aside while the larger part of the narrative occupies the *detailed* account of the European representations. Naipaul writes that Ralegh, though he hated the drunkenness of the Irish and had contempt for the churls of his country, "loved the Indians", precisely for their drunken carousals. And the details on which Naipaul builds his own narrative (mostly from English travel accounts), do not receive adequate critical attention unless they are empirically inaccurate. Otherwise, the empirical detail organised in Ralegh's

account is treated as unmediated truth. Thus Ralegh's descriptions of a chief and his wife on the Orinoco, receive attention but the discursive frame which the narrative creates around and through them is ignored. For, the passage that celebrates the beauty of the native women is a part of the discourse narrating the Spanish atrocities against the natives. A couple of pages earlier (of which the passage is a part) Ralegh represents the Spaniards as lecherous and the English as the most disciplined. Initially when he met the Indians (Arawakas), Ralegh writes, they "feared that wee would have eaten them", or that they (the English) were Spaniards who, Ralegh's native informants report, "took from them both their wives and daughters dayly, and used them for the satisfying of their owne lusts, especially such as they took in this manner by strength"[64]. In the next sentence Ralegh writes about the rectitude of his own crew: "I protest before the majestie of the living God, that I neither know nor believe that any of our company one or other, by violence or otherwise, ever knew any of their women, and yet we saw many hundreds, and had many in our power, and of those very yong, and excellently favoured, which came among us without deceit, starke naked"[65]. For Ralegh the Arwakas natives are the domesticated savages. They signify unusual health, great wisdom; all the native chiefs who are represented as his friends are over 100 years old; and despite no "helpe of learning or breede" the natives are seen as good and generous[66]. And it is in this fetishising context[67] of the savage that Ralegh admires the wife of a chief (in the passage Naipaul cites). Yet Naipaul cites only a part of the passage in order to convert Ralegh's 'sentiments' into a fantasmatic tale. But the full passage reveals the aspect of colonial discourse in which in fact Ralegh is operating. Ralegh describes her eyes and her hair, her talkativeness "among the gentlemen and captains." Naipaul does not tell us that Ralegh even compares her with an English lady: "I have seene a Lady in England so to like her, as but for the *difference of colour*, I would have sworne might have been the same"[68]. Predictably, this is the sign Ralegh falls back upon on two other occasions to distinguish himself (and the English) from the natives. However, I am not sure that Elizabethan society was already asserting racial superiority. It is curious to see that the narrative of self-consolidation and 'nation' building, in its strategies of spatial organisation

should rely on the signifier of colour in order to indicate its difference. Naipaul's benevolent narrative dissimulates the textual/discursive aspects of Ralegh's account into a celebration of scopic detail. Thus the quest for El Dorado which in fact is a move (or stage) in the 'autobiography' of Europe, is covered up in a tragic tale of adventurers. The Bolivar quote at the end of first section epitomises Naipaul's benevolent attitude towards the actors in the tragedy "That destroyed so many": "Would to God El Dorado hadn't been discovered!" (p. 69)[69].

(iii)

Naipaul's examination of Ralegh's second voyage follows the same pattern which he adopted in the analysis of the first voyage and the 'history' in general[70]. In Naipaul's narrative Ralegh's story becomes essentially the story about the gold city - the quest had ended "in an action of amateurs in which all the great ones, and few of the lesser, perished." Naipaul earlier celebrates Ralegh's "three dimensional vision" of society (the implications of this are analysed in the next section), which now is set aside to continue the benevolent narrative - the tragedy of the quest.

Naipaul sees Ralegh's "final adventure" as a mystery and finds a clue to it in Ralegh's 'tretise'. He sees Ralegh's Guiana work essentially as a "book about the discovery of Arcadia" - a work of romance celebrating senses, unseen wealth, life, forest, etc: "The book is part *of the world's romance*." This characterization of the book is consonant with the conventional plotting of the 'origin' of the novel I discussed in an earlier section. In such a characterization, which moves through polarities of epic, myth/novel, 'romance' (genre) appears as a transitional moment - which is at once a yearning for the loss (of the 'epic') and a celebration of a glimpse of what is 'fading'. And it is this 'vision' that the novel 'proper', in the standard theories of the novel, would embody in its form which allegedly becomes a substitute for the lost world. However, in the present context, in characterizing the book as signifying the fading 'romance'

world, Naipaul is using a strategy of exclusion. For him the details the book celebrates "are precise and true." Yet, Naipaul writes ambiguously that the book "catches part of the New World at the moment between that *unseeing* brutality of the discovery and conquest and the later brutality of colonization." And the moment that falls between these two phases of brutality is the moment of romance. Strangely Naipaul's narrative concentrates more on this 'romance' aspect of Ralegh's work than on the brutalities which Ralegh's own work contributes to (Ralegh's plans for colonisation are in fact dissimulated into his love for Arcadia). One wonders how a work transfixing the natives as "naked drunkards", savages and cannibals, can become a part of the "world's romance" unless the world is nothing more than such inscribings.

Naipaul sees Ralegh's "account of Arcadia" and victory as the "story of a defeat." This is possible but not for the documentary reasons Naipaul alludes to. His defeat at Cumana which Ralegh 'elides' and the failure to locate any mine: "that was part of the imprecision" (p. 107). It is not for these reasons Ralegh's account could be read as a defeat at one level. Ralegh's narrative dissimulates the premonition of defeat into the glories and obstacles. But the narrative also moves in other directions - that of hatching blue-prints for subordinating the natives and expanding the English territories over the West Indies. It is in this regard that Ralegh's work becomes a part of the colonial discourse which it constitutes. Naipaul, who recognises, although with admiration, Ralegh's and Keymis's vision of a larger, grander (of course, colonial) world, their three-dimensional vision of the world" - suppresses this aspect of the 'adventurers' in the later part of his narrative. In fact we remember Naipaul invoked this capacity of Ralegh in order to contrast this with Berrio (the Spaniard who looked "from another age"). And towards the end of the second part Naipaul strangely comments: "These men, Keymis and Ralegh, saw themselves as actors in great events, classical figures, even as Vera saw Antonio Berrio and himself. And the quest was heroic. But their world was as small as the classical world, and the world was changing by their own efforts" (p. 107). Naipaul does not clarify the paradox of his earlier statement about their extraordinary abilities (their 'nation making' vision). Perhaps it is not difficult to reason that the benevolent narrative Naipaul is

constructing prevents him from dwelling too much on that other aspect - the moments of "unseen brutality". Consequently, the natives once again become an occasion for an aside, only appearing on the margins of the tragedy and romance of others, "the explorers": "The Indians had changed. They had been dulled by defeat and disappointments, and there is no trace in their stupefied descendants today of that intelligence and quickness which attracted Ralegh and made them such feared enemies, masters of the waters" (p. 107). Once again Ralegh's romantic 'truth' becomes a source to reflect on the native. The process and pattern in which the native is domesticated in the society and marginalised in the narrative is not analysed.

However, in the Ralegh/Berrio contrast, Naipaul's admiration for Ralegh is not just for 'local' reasons - "natural history" and "romance". There is another aspect in Ralegh's text which depends upon the epistemic grid I have indicated earlier, and Naipaul is attracted by this. This is configurated in the trope of the "three dimensional vision" of Ralegh.

6) NATION AND ITS NARRATION

> Nationalism has arrived; it has now constituted itself into a state ideology; it has appropriated the life of the nation into the life of the state. It is rational and progressive, a particular manifestation of the universal march of Reason; it has accepted the global realities of power, accepted the fact that World History resides Elsewhere. Only it has now found its place within that universal science of things...
>
> Nationalist thought has not emerged as the antagonist of universal Reason in the arena of world history. To attain this position, it will need to supersede itself.
>
> Partha Chatterjee[71]

Naipaul argues that Ralegh went beyond Berrio in his quest for El Dorado; for Ralegh planned an empire in the Indies and the overthrowing of the Spanish empire. In contrast, Berrio's ambitions, Naipaul suggests, were very "feudal" in that he was quickened only by god and the honour of the third Marquisate: "and he might have represented this as a service to his

King, who alone could confirm a subject in the enjoyment of wealth and honour" (p. 43). Unlike Berrio, Ralegh, Naipaul's argument goes, could merge his personal ambition into a "greater cause" - "he had an idea of society" which Berrio "didn't begin to have". Ralegh shared his "three-dimensional view of the world", Naipaul argues, with his associate Laurence Keymis (Naipaul parenthetically adds the authority and credentials of Keymis by citing that he was a "fellow of Balliol college, Oxford". One does not find these references in Ralegh's account). Keymis recognised the Spanish "weakness", Naipaul argues, in their inability to develop any "common linke of affinitie" among the 'countries' of the Indies; for the Indies, Keymis felt, lacked any such uniting link. Naipaul takes this Spanish inability further by attempting to find the causes and effects of it. The Spanish inability was a price, Naipaul feels, they paid for "their history, the centuries of Muslim rule and the slow cleansing of their land... ." Consequently, they remained "individuals... the cynical underside of which in the New World left each man isolated and committed in the end only to personal survival." And these Spanish 'individuals', victims of muslim rule, still hankered after a "holy war and an outdated code of chivalry" (p. 43). For the Spaniard loyalty alone is important and these filiative bonds, Naipaul appears to argue, do not create a community: "God and the King: the isolated Spanish official had no other allegiance, no other idea of association. He was an individual... It was part of the Spanish waste; it could be exploited by others with a more developed idea of community" (p. 81).

There are several issues involved here which are crucial to an understanding of Naipaul's ideas of 'history' and his explanations/ narrativization of the histories of post-colonial societies. It is possible to argue against Naipaul's psychologistic explanation of cynical individualism of the Spanish by looking at the transformation of the city states into what was later to be called the 'nation-states' (in Spain), or Spanish unification from around the 15th century. Such a change was first brought about, as Braudel demonstrates, in Spain and one can see it in the coming together of Castile and Aragon. It is this strategic transformation, Pierre Vilar has argued, that made possible not just the Spanish Atlantic expansion[72] but the Spanish

consolidation in the Mediterranean (against the Portugese, the Muslims of Granada). Braudel in fact argues that the internal expansion (or Spanish unification) effected by the Islamic 'imperialism' had "liberated" the energies of Castile for "foreign adventures"; Braudel celebrates these energies in his narrative as "youthful energies"[73]. And this change in Spain also brought forth the modern bureaucratic system and their agents, "civil servants". Braudel tells us that in 15th century Spain already the bourgeios class was beginning to emerge, contesting the aristocracy, and this class appeared in the form of government employee, lawyer and 'civil servant'[74].

Naipaul writes that it is the feudal loyalty of the Spaniards that crippled them into 'individuals'. But Braudel's argument shows that the "selfish interest" of the adventurers was a "widespread evil" of 16th and 17th century France also. In this period the Spanish colonial rulers like others were moved by self interest - simulating loyalty "bureaucracy and paternalism went hand in hand"[75]. K.R. Andrews writes that Tudor expansion policies were very much a reflection of the feudal patronage system: "As for its handling of ventures in commercial, maritime and colonial expansion, it is best expressed by the term 'patronage', signifying a variable interplay of state control and individual initiative"[76]. It is possible, moreover, to read Ralegh's own narrative (on Guiana) as a pathetic appeal to his patrons (Lord Howard and Cecil Robert) and more than anyone to the Queen. In fact Ralegh's Guiana treatise is fundamentally an appeal to the Queen - the addressee being no other than the Queen herself (the invocations to 'her majesty' at various places in the narrative vindicate this). The contract between Berrio and the king is not very different from that of Ralegh's with the Queen in its 'feudal' character. Both were ventures advanced by privateers under the patronage of the nobility and the Queen and the King[77].

Yet, Naipaul is not wrong in indicating the "feudal" character of Berrio's personality, for Spain was not free from such loyalties. On the contrary, it was "still living in the age of crusades"[78]. But simultaneously the Spanish state was forming and this was quickened by that very "three-dimensional view of the world", which Naipaul admires in Ralegh. But Naipaul

chooses to repress it by emphasising the "medieval" aspect in the case of Berrio's activities and the "new idea" of society in the case of Ralegh and Keymis.

However, there is a larger narrative which Ralegh and Berrio metonymically uphold in Naipaul's story. This narrative derives from what could could be signified as narrative of 'nation', or ideology of nationalism. The 'weakness' of Spain and the countries of the Indies, as Keymis argued and whose opinion Naipaul seems to quote approvingly, is due to the absence of any set of ideas which would integrate the society. A few pages later Naipaul figures a similar "weakness" in Mogul India; and once again the absence is noted by an English observer - Sir Thomas Roe. Seventeenth century India, Naipaul observes, drawing on Roe, "was a more glittering empire. But its weakness was the same: the King, only the King, his subjects only mercenaries, not a *nation*" (p. 87 italics added). Naipaul's argument about the unifying power of 'nation' and its absence in India finds full expression elsewhere when he writes about Indian painting. Characterising the Islamic rule and the consequences Naipaul writes: "men were born only to obey rules ... [and were] limited by the *despotism* that went with this idea, the *despotism* that dealt only in power and glory but could create no *nation*" [79].

Naipaul does not seriously undertake to analyse this idea of 'nation' in his work. The aspect of 'nationalism' (a significant feature in his narratives) in his representation of postcoloniality I have already discussed in an earlier chapter (cf. Ch 3). But one can see from his citations that 'nation' stands for ideas that form a community. How can this 'national' community be distinguished from other forms of community already prevalent in this society? Naipaul does not clarify. Like the concept of 'history' the idea of 'nation' is in fact another facet of the basic episteme which continues to flourish in the recent debates on nationalism. One can trace from Naipaul's argument some of the features that constitute the discourse of nation. It can be discerned in Naipaul's contrasting of Ralegh and Keymis's 'three dimensional' vision of society to Berrio's 'feudal loyalty' to King or god; a community strongly knit by language and religion, opposed to the 'individuals' with their "outdated code of chivalry" and 'despotism'. One can detect the divisions that constituted the other two hegemonic categories,

'history' and 'the novel'. 'Nation's' radicality and 'modernity' is signified by its 'secular' 'scientific' character locating it in another sphere as it were, beyond that other world in which its opposites are located. Fundamentally, this principle of division operates in all the major theories of nationalism to date. They articulate a dominant "straight" narrative in which the idea of nation (or nationalism) emerges in the transitional period between ('absolutist') feudalism and (emerging) capitalism (this narrative is also referred to in terms of modes of production.) Some flesh this argument by adding new features such as the "tidal wave of industrialism"[80] or "print capitalism"[81] as the determining factors of nation(alism). In fact, Benedict Anderson drawing on 'literary' material to establish his point argues that the novel becomes a "technical means " of "representing" what he calls the "imagined community" - the nation. For, like the writer writing to an imagined but anonymous audience, the nation is also constituted by unknown people imagining others. Anderson's argument is that this possibility of the imagined community can be envisaged only after the dividing or breaking point which distances the living communities of their structures of feeling opposed to the hegemonic model which allegedly develops after the break. The violence of this binary model is that it turns away with superciliousness from examining the continuities or when it does trace them it refers to them with imperviousness. In the discussions of nationalism this model, privileging a specific moment (mostly of a bourgeois intervention), reduces all that preceded and led to it and continues after that moment - such as peasant's movements of the 'medieval' period, which are reduced to a pre- 'modern' or pre- 'historic' chronotope. "[I]f nationalism is the *only* discourse", Gayatri Spivak writes in a similar context, "credited with emancipatory possibilities in the imperialist theatre, then one must ignore innumerable subaltern examples of resistance throughout the imperialist and pre-imperialist centuries, often suppressed by those very forces of nationalism which would be instrumental in changing the geo-political conjuncture from territorial imperialism to neo-colonialism, and which seems particularly useless in current situations of struggle"[82].

The violence of the hegemonic model becomes at once clear in its constructions of anti-

colonialist movements in the non-European world; for the binary plotting of 'nation' and pre-historic already suppresses other possibilities even within the West. Dominant theories of nationalism (including Anderson's) characteristically privilege a specific phase in anti-colonialist movements and attribute to them nationalist characteristics from that point (Indian nationalism after Gandhi's intervention). Further the other world nationalist movements are always merely seen as derivatives of their original grand models (of the West). (Anderson, who discusses nationalism as something 'thought out', 'created' in the context of the West does not bother to examine these features in the context of non-Western movements - for he assumes that the latter to follow the model[83]). Consequently, the model remains paradoxically imprisoned in its own problematic. For to engage with the "suppressed possiblities"[84] or what Baudrillard referred to as a "radical perspective" of the other worlds (not the geographical Third World as is mostly implied in Baudrillard but the suppressed structures of stories of the conceptual/geographical West also) is to bring to crisis the model itself. This involves demystifying the 'integrating' 'unifying' powers of the 'nation' by exposing how it in fact hijacks, appropriates under its banner, eliding, effacing, the series of struggles that preceded and follow it[85]. The discourse of 'integration' in the (post)colonial context itself is symptomatic of the championing of the nation by middle-class bourgeois leadership under the label 'nationalism'. In this, as the corollary to the systematized discourses of 'history' and the 'nation', the 'novel' too partakes of the 'epistemic' spirit in 'colonizing' all the other existing and earlier genres and themes[86]. In all the three discourses the colonization is legitimated through the hierarchic binarism I have discussed in this thesis.

This rethinking about the 'nation' would bring under erasure the concept of nation itself and forces us to use it only as a "theoretical fiction" - like a myth to tell a story but not to establish it as absolutely true, or the only gateway to liberation. Such re-thinking allows us to articulate struggles against domination and yet avoid allowing it ('nation') to congeal into a dreadful repressive power. This also involves here, crucially, the dissolving of binaries by decentering the privileged point or threshold by articulating the two sides of binaries not as

repressively oppositional but dialogically determining. Then the concept of nationalism which still governs many (in both the texts - social and discursive) can be rubbed against the grain and freed from its ontological/essentialist moorings. "The critique of nationalist discourse", Partha Chatterjee writest at the end of his book, "must find for itself the ideological means to connect the popular strength of those struggles with the consciousness of a new universality, to subvert the ideological sway of a state which ... claims to speak on behalf of the nation and to challenge the presumed sovereignty of a science which puts itself at the service of capital, to replace, in other words, the old problematic and thematic with new ones"[87].

Naipaul's valorization of Ralegh's and Keymis's three dimensional view in fact replicates the hegemonic model, curiously even while judging Spain. In his earlier narrative on India (*AD*) Naipaul views Indian freedom struggle only in terms of Britain's programming of elite leaders in nationalism - a mimicry of English ideas[88]. However, there is a slippage in Naipaul's characterization of Spain as devoid of national tendencies. This comes to the surface when Naipaul discusses what could be described as "creole nationalist" movement. In the context of creole nationalism, as will be shown in the following section Naipaul suddenly portrays Spain as the source of order and integrating ideas. And the very idea of 'nation' celebrated in Ralegh's vision earlier and in Spain's activities in 19th century South America, is represented as irrational fantasy and confusing anarchy when it is articulated in the form of creole nationalism. Further, the very hegemonic class nature of creole nationalism, effacing and appropriating (in the case of Bolivar) other forms of struggle ('Indians' and 'slaves') does not bring into crisis Naipaul's celebrated concept of 'nation'. He judges anti-colonialist struggles in ontological/essentialist terms while ethnocentrically privileging those very ideas when they are 'first' associated with European nations. In the process Naipaul does not clarify how all of a sudden Spain, which was criticized earlier for its 'feudal' character becomes a source of order later on. In effect, the concept of nation circulates as a privileged, unproblematic category in Naipaul's work[89].

7) *COVERING INSURGENCY*

(i)

It is by way of examining how Naipaul's narrative contains 18th century Trinidad (a scene of multiple - contesting - representations, hence, powers) that we will deconstruct Naipaul's covering of insurgency. But first a few markings about changes in the Spanish empire.

The Spanish empire underwent a change in the mid 18th century. Naipaul describes this as the "administrative shake up" (p. 123). One effect of this change was that Trinidad which was under the vice-royalty of New Granada was now brought under the Captaincy-General of Caracas. What does this shake up mean? What effect did it have on the islands? Why did Spain undertake this 'reform'? Naipaul's narrative is very oblique regarding these issues.

The Spanish settlers in Trinidad living on the tribute paid by Indians and the cocoa plantations were moving away from Spanish control in the 18th Century. Naipaul sees this as some kind of degeneration - and not as an attempt on the part of the settlers to free themselves from Spanish hegemony. "For a century and more they had lived close to nature," Naipaul writes; the settlers' spurning of "Spanish code" for Naipaul (he does not discuss the code) becomes a sign of Spanish degradation: "they left their huts...and lived, like the Indians before them, in the bush" (p. 124). Or, they "continued to live with their Negroes in drunken isolation" (p. 125). This is a misreading of the events of 18th century Spain/Caribbean. And this reading serves two purposes: firstly, to belittle constantly (and paradoxically) the importance of Trinidad as a worthless and troublesome piece of land[90]; and this vision by extension incorporates the 'natives' and slaves in the same light. And, secondly, to portray the 'tragedy' of the settler (coloniser) troubled by the island. To achieve this reading Naipaul's narrative represses what threatens this view.

Naipaul with almost sadistic pleasure reads the settlers' reluctance to comply with the Sovereign's rule as an indication of Trinidad's absence from history: "Exempt from history, they

[scttlers] might have gone on scratching for food, and the eighteenth century would have leaked away" (p. 126). What the 18th century Trinidad history indicates is not a withdrawal from history (if such a thing is possible) but a turn in the imperialist history. Trinidad was always throughout its history affected by the events in Venezuela[91]. The settlers' re ɹonse to sovereignty in the 18th century is symptomatic of the turn of history. Throughout the 18th century settlers in the Caribbean islands were struggling to emancipate themselves from dependence on Spain. This they achieved through developing sources of wealth (other than the mineral wealth) - improving subsistence foodstuffs (cocoa in Trinidad), and consumer goods like textiles, tobacco, wines. Spurning the Spanish monopoly system the colonies established trade relations among themselves - thus inter-colonial trade developed[92]. In the process the creole elite was consolidating its position in the colonies. Trinidad functioned as an entrepot to the trade system. Consequently, the revenue remittances to Spain dwindled sharply in the late 18th century. It is these changes and the continuing slave resistances {such as the Tupac Amaru rebellion in 1780} and their cruel 'pacification' (by the creole) that led the Spanish empire to reorganise the regime through the notorious process known as the "second conquest" of America or "New imperialism"[93]. Charles III had his own farsighted calculations in implementing the New imperialism. (This was, however, largely realized with contrary results.) And the French were Spain's allies during this mid 18th century (after Spain's Seven Year war with Britain). For nearly seven years (1763-1770) under what is known as the Family Pact (1761) France exerted a considerable influence on Spanish trade (France almost controlled the Spanish trade). It is as a part of the Franco-Spanish alliance that the Spanish colonies were opened for French settlers in 1776. The earliest French settler with ideas of a plantation colony to visit Trinidad was Roume de St. Laurent: and he obtained a royal *cedula* for French immigration to Trinidad[94]. Naipaul's text is silent about these determinant factors of Caribbean history but only records that "abruptly, Spain thought of taking Trinidad in hand" (p. 126). Naipaul reads the French immigration to Trinidad only as another sign of Spain's inefficiency: "Spain didn't have the men" to reform Trinidad (p. 126). Naipaul constantly avoids the larger dimension of

the Caribbean in order to fix Trinidad as a hopeless spot. Consequently the political implications of the Spanish second conquest of America (in which French settlement in Trinidad is just one local manifestation) remains unexamined in Naipaul. Naipaul describes the governor, Chacon, as a "new man" but does not explain why he is called so. It is necessary to look briefly at Spain's new imperialism in order to respond to Naipaul's delimitation of the field of his analysis and his later appraisal of Spanish counter-insurgency measures (the Spanish Negro Code of 1739 as the "milder" one) and his general assessment of resistance.

Spain's new imperialism was a well planned consolidation and centralisation of Spanish sovereignty. It was a response to the threat of independence perceived in the emergence of a powerful creole class in the colonies. In order to displace and break up the power of the creole class Spain came out with two kinds of reform: economic and social. For nearly a century (until the second conquest) the creole community established a notorious system of producing commercial crops to maintain their economic activity. This activity was established through the cruel device called *repartimiento*, a trap which through forcing Indians to take loans kept them in perennial debt and dependence in order to exploit them for the production of commercial crops: "And it reduced Indians to a form of servitude from which they could not escape"[95]. (Indian rebellion against this system was not absent, as the Tapac Amaru instance shows). Further, the social divisions in the colonies, apart from the economic, were racially, genetically determined - thus creating a rigidly stratified hierarchic society. The creoles (Spaniards born in America) hated mestizos, negroes, Indians and above all pardos [sic] (born to negroes and Spanish): "his ancestry in the union of white and Negro was regarded as so monstrous that it was compared to the nature of the mule, hence the term mulatto")[96]. And by legislation the creoles debarred the other "casters" especially the pardo from the "white" privileges and the status symbols. (He wasn't allowed education). However, the creole were constantly aware of the pressure, the tumult from below. The new imperialism of Spain was addressed especially to these two (economic/social) issues - through the creation of new administrative system (which in certain ways prefigures British bureaucratic imperialism of 19th century), the intendant system.

The intendant system replaced the *repartimiento* and the officials (bureaucratic civil servants), representatives of the sovereign state, kept in check the power of the creole; and all these "new" officials were the new immigrants, entrepreneurs from Spain (Chacon belongs to this class). The state declared monopoly control over the tobacco trade and opened Spanish ports for trade with the colonies. And in 1789 Spain introduced a new, liberal slave law clarifying the rights of slaves, and duties of the masters. This was ostensibly aimed at the improvement of the slaves' conditions[97].

All the measures in these three directions were contested by the creole community. The new class of intendants became enemies of the old aristocratic creoles; they also became a target for racial hostility. In the rigidly stratified racial society the new class from Spain became "more white" than the creoles. The creoles resented the presence of the intendants. It is this racial prejudice that developed an ambivalent attitude in the Americans (creoles) for Spain. Yet it is the pressure from below and the haunting instances of slave revolts that forced the creole to remain under the shelter of Spain - at least for some time. However, the new slave law was neither fortuitous nor humanitarian, as John Lynch argues, in a similar context, about another law giving more rights to the slaves - allowing them to buy "whiteness" by purchasing offices and marrying whites, joining the militia, etc. (In fact it can be argued that Spain's so called 'legalism' from the time of early occupation was never a sign of humanitarianism but only a legitimation of occupying the new world and proselytising - and exterminating - the natives with the authority of the book - the script of *Requiremento* and the scripture. In this regard Lewis Hanke's title *Spanish Struggle for Justice in America,* reads more accurately as Spanish struggle for *In* justice in the Indies). Spain was aware of the creole racial atrocities against the slaves, and also of the pressure building up from below; Spain was also aware of the hegemony and the threatening signs of independence of the creole oligarchy. Apparently in order to ease the tension but essentially to regain control over the colonies and at the same time win over the slaves and Indians - it is with these intentions that Spain introduced both the slave reform laws[98].

Curiously, Naipaul's reading of the 1789 (Trinidad) Negro Code does not refer to any single factors leading to and the consequent implications of the Code. Naipaul synoptically presents the duties and rights the code ordains; and this paraphrasing of the code is an expression of fidelity to the official document. And in order to show the efficacy of the code Naipaul does not undertake any historical analysis into the events of the century effecting Spain but merely contrasts it with the cruel clauses of racial codes of the French and English islands: the French were adding humiliation to severity and the English treating the slave as a piece of property, permitted to torture slaves who hit a white man by his "nose slit, or any member cut off"(p. 132). In contrast the Spanish Negro code was "good code." Naipaul offers two 'explanations' to show why the Spanish code was good: 1) "Slavery in Port of Spain was not yet a simple racial attribute"; 2) "The Trinidad Negro code represented fairly the Spanish mildness, the concern for the individual, the antique Spanish legalism". The mildness of the code was also partly due to the "unproductiveness" of Trinidad (pp. 133-34). However, Naipaul does ask the question whether the code was followed- and as an answer refers to the murder case of Francisco in 1790.

In August 1790 Francisco, a Negro slave, stabbed a Dutch-negro slave in a wake party at the house of a dead woman. Francisco, Naipaul argues, was a "complete individual" according to 'mild' Spanish law; and as there were no racial discriminations in Trinidad, Francisco's status was more like that of the slave of the classical world than that of a plantation colony. This is further corroborated by the defence lawyer's argument that evidence given by slaves against Francisco cannot stand because the slaves cannot be relied on as they are of inferior mind. Naipaul sees this argument as a "long and careful defence of a slave." Subsequently, when Francisco's case was referred to Caracas, Naipaul shows, and when Caracas ordered the slave to be tortured "the authorities arranged for him to escape" (p. 134).

A few points can be made to point out the discrepancy in Naipaul's argument here. Francisco killed the other negro in August 1790; the new Negro Code was issued in May 1789. Naipaul argues that the Spanish practice in Port of Spain in 1790 *"before the great French rush"*

was milder than the code (p. 132). When did the French rush begin? Naipaul himself says "It was in 1776 that Spain, to protect her Empire, opened her empty Caribbean islands to foreign settlers" (p. 134). Obviously the French rush began years before the 1789 negro code was implemented; by 1786 the Trinidad cabildo was dominated by French settlers. The cabildo, with the connivance of the governor Chacon was constantly putting in check any growth of revolutionary elements in Trinidad[99]. So in Trinidad the negro code no longer stands as a testimony to Spanish mildness - but gains its significance only through French dictates. And when one looks at (even in Naipaul's synoptic rendering) the Spanish code one does not fail to see the facade of mildness hiding fears and anxieties of the planter class. The code ostensibly proclaims a civilising intention in baptising the new negroes within one year of their arrival. Yet, it 'mildly' implies that not more than two negroes should be in a room, that they should not 'divest themselves innocently,' they should not drink too much; that negroes of one plantation should not mix with the negroes from another (p. 131). Further one must remember that the negro code is fundamentally a legislation, a sanction enabling the master constantly to define and fix the slave in discourse and in society - thus it signifies master/slave relationship more clearly than it does in the case of slave relationships. That is, Naipaul's citing of a case which does not involve a master directly but only shows the murder of one slave by another cannot be an adequate testimony to prove the 'mildness' of the slave code. Naipaul himself had shown earlier that the rebel Indians were tortured: "Their heads and hands were cut off, their bodies quartered and the pieces spiked on the public road" (p. 120). (This practice very much continued - according to Naipaul's own text - in the late 18th and much of the 19th century.) Further, as John Lynch argued, the 1789 code was totally opposed by all the Spanish colonies: "The creoles rejected the state intervention between master and slave and fought this decree on the grounds that slaves were prone to vice and independence [!] and were essential to the economy. In Venezuela - indeed all over the Spanish Caribbean - planters resisted the law and procured its suppression in 1794"[100]. No wonder, when Francisco's case was referred to Caracas, Caracas ordered the torture of Francisco. Elsa Goveia in her book on the 18th

century slave laws in the West Indies argues that the mildness of Spanish laws was only in the precept. In practice the oligarchic cabildo did not differ from other islands. The despotic Spanish intervention, Goveia argues, to a certain extent attempted to check the oligarchic power but even this failed when the very "humane slave code" of 1789 was rejected by the oligarchies[101].

What is the importance of Francisco's case in Naipaul's narrative? It serves to draw a contrasting parallel to the events on the other islands. But from a different perspective the Francisco case is strategically important to interpret Naipaul's discussion of insurgency in general and Venezuelan revolts in particular. Franscisco's case helps us in locating a shift (elaborated later in my argument) in Naipaul's narrativization about Spain - his representation of Spain in the context of the insurgencies as a source of order, combating the chaos of revolution. The contrast Naipaul draws between Spain and other imperial powers is expected to vindicate the efficacy and humaneness of the negro code which seen from a few years distance looked "like *a pastoral dream* of content" (p. 137 italics added). Thus the negro code appears at this stage as a sign of 'order' in Trinidad, as opposed to the chaos and disorder of other colonies. When one works through the scattered traces of what Naipaul describes as chaos and contrasts it with the coherency and order of the Negro code, as Naipaul paraphrases and narrativizes, one can argue that Naipaul's own text is complicitous with counter-insurgency texts of colonial discourse. In Naipaul's text the revolutionary San Domingo becomes "the richest and most hysterical slave colony" and the revolution itself is seen as a result of the French Revolution (p. 134). And Toussaint appears as a "man of *sudden* genius" (italics added). The Jamaican slave resistance - maroon revolts - is "serious enough to be called a war" (p. 137). "And in Trinidad there were signs of disorder among the Negroes" and the country was anarchic. The anarchy and insurgent elements in the country, Naipaul argues, are because of confusion and an absence of a definable enemy: 'The enemy was authority. Authority was England, the government in France, the French slave-owner, the white slave owner. The enemy was rebellion, the dangerous Negro, the assertive free mulatto, the proselytizing

republican, mulatto, white or Negro" (p. 135). Even from Naipaul's so called confused scene it is not difficult to locate the warring communities and their interests - the royalist oligarchy struggling for independence (from Spain) and aiming to suppress the negroes and their accomplices; the republican migrants joining the slaves to unsettle the oligarchic powers. Naipaul looking for some kind of mythical 'order' can find only chaos in the scene.

(ii)

Naipaul's text intermittently writes about revolutions on the mainland (Venezuela), without clarifying what it meant and the forces they signified. As a result one does not see any distinction in Naipaul's writing between oligarchic 'patriots' (Bolivar, Miranda) seeking independence from the Spanish yoke and other insurrections threatening both the Spanish yoke and the oligarchic racial hierarchy. All the 'patriotic' nationalist movements of Spanish America of the 19th century were in favour of slavery and were constantly disturbed by the challenges from below. Naipaul looks at one such insurgency (though he does not distinguish it from the nationalist one). The insurgency led by Picornell, Manual Gual and Jose Espana was one (short-lived) of a series of Venezuelan rebellions. Naipaul describes their manifesto as a "simple" one which aimed to abolish slavery, class divisions; it promised to remove the tax system exploiting Indians and slaves; the distribution of land to the Indians was on their agenda; it treated all races as equal. Gual and Espana had already started the process of recruiting pardos and Indians into the militia - a programme much resisted by the oligarchy. Naipaul describes their manifesto as "an absurdity, a 'shouting', as one Spanish *official* said, for almost everything" (p. 161 emphasis added). (Naipaul's text seems to have a propensity to quote official's reflections throughout.) The insurgency failed not because its aims were absurd but, as John Lynch had shown, because it "was too radical for creole property owners, many of whom collaborated with the authorities in suppressing the 'infamous and detestable movement' and offered their own persons and haciendas to form armed companies to crush the

movement"[102].

Later on in the text Naipaul reconstructs a dialogue between two brothers; one, Andres, a Venezuelan revolutionary living in Trinidad and another, his brother Manuel, who had come to pursuad Andres to return home. Andres tries to convert Manuel to the revolutionary cause; but the latter refuses and gives his own reasoning (which echoes Naipaul's own argument elsewhere in the text):

> "'*Amigo,* Manuel said. 'I know that all those people who have taken up this liberty you talk about have come to a bad end. And they will always do so. I don't want to be one of them. Ever since I was born my father worked to support me, and I have supported myself ever since I was able. It looks to me that I will always have to support myself by my own labour. The way America is governed isn't going to help me one way or the other'" (p. 172)[103].

However, Andres later convinces Manuel to join them. And Naipaul provides the gloss: "If the revolution was going to be as easy as Andres said, and he was going to be made a general, he [Manuel] would join the revolutionaries" (p. 173) Later when the revolution is crushed and Jose Espana, who was preparing a negro insurrection, is brutally tortured Naipaul comments: 'These Venezuelan revolutionaries were as simple as their words" (p. 175). And Manuel's comment repeats like a refrain in Naipaul's text; it is repeated to suggest that the Spanish American revolutionaries were "simple", lacking any "intellectual" abilities, to exemplify his thesis that revolution in Venezuela was nothing but confusion and chaos (p. 365).

It is in the light of a similar essentialist hermeneutic that one can read Naipaul's narrativization of the 'second' Venezuelan revolution. But it is important to note that Naipaul's account itself comes as a part of the intrigue-drama of Picton/Fullarton rivalry. However, Naipaul views the second revolution as a part of British intrigue, British attempt to realize a long cherished ambition - to sever Spain's hegemony over its colonies in order to establish its own supremacy and control over Spanish American trade (p. 217). In this drama of second revolution Naipaul views Francisco Miranda (a creole nationalist) not only as the victim of British intrigue but also as the scapegoat of Simon Bolivar's 'betrayal'. But there is another

crucial message that runs as an insidious parallel in this part of the narrative: the parallel implies that Miranda's (or any) revolution is itself nothing but fantasy, like that search of Ralegh or Berrio earlier for El Dorado (as Naipaul describes it). Naipaul develops this theme by portraying Miranda as a mimic man a 'non-European' attempting to ape European metropolitan values "a civilization and society more demanding than the plantations and emporia of Venezuela" (pp. 163-64). (Although Miranda is Spanish Naipual's accounts, exploiting his suspect geneology of Miranda, figures him more as a south American.) Miranda is *almost* a European, Naipaul's argument proceeds, but he can never be *exactly* a European[104]. For, in spite of Miranda's mimicry Naipaul sees negative metonymies of South America which disable him from being a European. "No South American revolutionary," Naipaul points out, "had lasted as long in exile or had remained *so whole*" (p. 310 italics added). That's the word: *whole* It is the metonymy for that fantasy of the 'whole' (metaphorised in the images like the Shangri-la and El Dorado), in Naipaul's argument that denies Miranda his European identity. And this desire for the 'whole' is believed to be present in Miranda's blueprint for the Inca empire, which he submitted to Pitt. Believing their 'disabilities' to be economical or political, Naipaul argues, the South Americans like Miranda "could not conceive the deeper colonial deprivation, the sense of the missing *real world.*" And the real world, needless to say, is the cosmopolitan codes "that Miranda had spent a lifetime making good" (p. 310 italics added). (Naipaul extends this argument to the entire non-European world)[105]. Naipaul's discussion of Miranda or the South American revolution becomes more intelligible in the framework of this general thesis rather than in the light of historical/political happenings of Spanish America in the first decade of the 19th century. For Miranda's revolution, like Bolivar's, is nothing more than a creole assertion of its hegemony and independence from Spain[106]. Miranda detested the San Domingo revolution, hated the French model, and constantly feared the black revolt like any other creole; Bolivar never objected to slavery as a system and even expressed the view that a "Negro revolt was a thousand times worse than a Spanish invasion"[107].

Naipaul's characterisation of Miranda echoes Naipaul's own assessment of himself; he

argues that Miranda knew that he was a lonely man, that he no longer belonged to any side: "It was from English people, individuals, that he received the only regard that mattered"[108]. And Miranda's own experience (never analysed properly in the historical context), Naipaul feels, was enough for him (Miranda) to know that "his cause [Spanish American revolution] was an illusion" (p. 315). Yet Miranda cherished his fantasy, his romance of Inca empire (p. 316). Miranda, in Naipaul's argument is in fact a figure bringing together all the earlier moves and tropes Naipaul used in emplotting his narrative: the fantasies and desires of conquistadores and explorers (Berrio, Dudley, Ralegh), empire and fame all rolled into one. But Miranda also stands for something else - the colonial dandy, victim of negative metonymies, cherishing metropolitan glory. As Miranda begins to acquire the status of a tragic victim in his narrative Naipaul represents his actions and 'experience' as being transparent, as being inevitably true. Consequently, we do not get an insight into the events of the early 19th century Venezuela. We begin to see tendentious statements about the society. Naipaul sides with Miranda and another counter-revolutionary Venezuelan lawyer who lives in Trinidad - Level de Goda. Goda's argument that Venezuela had not developed a sense of 'nation', that people were only individuals, and not a part of a community ("they didn't add up to a self-supporting society") sounds very much like Naipaul's own in the case of post-colonial societies. It is not difficult to see from Goda's argument that he was a royalist who supported the Spanish regime: "He saw independence as a long and bloody chaos" (pp. 345-46). What's intriguing is Naipaul using Goda's argument as a gloss on the Venezuelan events.

Naipaul's argument appears to aim at demystifying the radicalism of the Liberator Bolivar. He treats Bolivar as a betrayer of Miranda, the hero. But in order to do this Naipaul's narrative excludes or represses two crucial issues, one of which has already been mentioned in the context of the Francisco case: the politics of Spain's new measures in South America in the second half of the 18th century. And the other issue Naipaul's narrative does not focus is the creole hegemony and its nationalism. Spain's new measures, as mentioned earlier, were fundamentally aimed at gaining control over Spanish America; and its specific ordinances with

regard to the pardos and Indians (a sort of 'assimilation' tactic) were to unsettle and threaten the emerging creole hegemony. In spite of these measures the creole hegemony continued, albeit under constant threats from below; and in 1810 the creole Junta deposed Spanish authority and established their government in Caracas. Miranda gets involved subsequently in Venezuelan events with the help of Bolivar and his 'radical' Club. But the nationalist group itself is divided into radicals (who wanted complete independence from Spain) and Conservatives (who wanted home rule under the Spanish crown). And what is significant is that the radicals no less than the conservatives stood primarily for the advancement of creole interests[109]. Spain, resenting the Junta sends a powerful army to reestablish its supremacy. Naipaul's comment on this counter-revolutionary measure is indicative of the shift his narrative undergoes, (also a sign of the repression it practices): "the defeat of the revolution by a Spanish government army *which was truly of the people.*" (p. 351 italics added). The Spanish army was supported by creole conservatives who became loyalists in no time. How can the Spanish army represent "the people"? And who are these "people" Naipaul is referring to? Naipaul's narrative is silent. His next statement explaining Miranda's "discovery", after Spain's raid is a clear essentialist judgment eliding analysis: "Miranda's appalling discovery, ... which was like Level de Goda's at the beginning of his, that the society was wrong, the cause [revolution, independence] was wrong, that the good words didn't fit" (p. 351). The 'loyalist' de Goda's prophecy earlier was that 'Venezuelans weren't intellectually or socially equipped for independence', and without Spain's support Venezuela would fall apart (p. 344). *The judgment repeated with a variation and guise, in Naipaul's work, conflates the tropes of fantasy, El Dorado, revolution, independence and illusion, and dissimulates imperial hegemony as order, support, control, and intellect. The championing of Miranda's decision to conciliate with the invading Spanish general is a reaffirmation of the dissimulation*: "Defeated but still free to act, he began to think of Spain in a *new way* [ordering? controlling?]. He began to think of partnership. Then he was betrayed" (p. 351 italics added).

The 'betrayer' was Bolivar. But Bolivar and the 'republic' gave Miranda "dictatorial

powers" to turn the tide of royalism and the Spanish army. The republic invested its hopes in Miranda. Bolivar treated Miranda as his mentor. "But the aged revolutionary", as John Lynch argued, "a pompous and pedantic failure who lacked ideas and resolution, could not stem the tide of royalism which swept over the republic...And Miranda completed the demoralization of the republic." In fact Miranda was betrayed by the Spanish general (imperialist betrayal, like that of Pitt's) - for the condition of capitulation was that the lives of patriots and their property would be preserved. The general massacred and destroyed the patriots after the capitulation. But Miranda too betrayed the hopes of the republic. For Bolivar it was a blow and he handed over Miranda to Spanish soldiers. Naipaul considers this as a betrayal - for selfish gain "to buy their [Bolivar and his associate, Miguel Pena] own freedom" (p. 351). But that's debatable[110].

Yet, to discuss the events at the level of 'nationalist' activities alone is to be complicit with Naipaul's argument. The point is not to choose between Miranda (or Level de Goda) or Bolivar, but to analyse these two (nationalists, ideologues) against the pardos, Indians, to measure their politics in the light of the deeper impressions. Naipaul's narrative does not engage the discussion at that level and the deeper oppressions are dissimulated in celebrating Spanish hegemony as a source of order in the former colonies of Spain, and covering insurgency as an aspect of non-European fantasy (as Naipaul's text does earlier in the case of slave resistance.)

8) SPECTACLES OF TORTURE

Naipaul's text shows a proclivity for describing torture - especially torture suffered by revolutionaries, slaves, and insurgents. The Venezuelan revolutionary, Jose Espana, Naipaul tells us for instance, was tortured, his body was quartered and his head was piked on a thirty foot pole. The torture description does not aim at, in Naipaul's text, evoking a sentimental response but seems to serve as a chastising gloss to the 'simplicity' of revolutionary causes/acts. For, Naipaul quotes from counter-insurgency texts - documents fixing the insurgents into

discourse as criminals, and despicable creatures; and his narrative does not aim at tracing the pattern of insurgencies and the 'method' of inscribing them in the discourse. Consequently, one feels only the extraordinary solidity and the inescapable certainty of the powers of counter-insurgency (texts). In contrast, already framed in the gloss Naipaul supplies, insurgents and their actions look incorrigibly stupid and inevitably suicidal. After Espana's body was quartered, Naipaul tells us, five more executions took place and thirty men were exiled: then "The revolution ...was over". That's all (p. 176). A year after Espana's execution Gual is poisoned. Describing the death and Gual's last letter Naipaul quotes a comment Manuel (who had been reluctant to join the revolution) made earlier - and the comment is expected to serve as a judgment on the insurrection: "People who have taken up this liberty you talk about have always come to a bad end" (p. 179). And it was, Naipaul adds, a revolution based on "borrowed words that never matched the society" (p. 181)[111]. Curiously, the representation of insurgency as a pathetic and suicidal activity, parallels the intention of quartering of the body in the eighteenth century. The message of torture as a spectacle in the public place was to goad the spectators to learn the lessons with horror[112]. Predictably Naipaul describes the torture of the insurgents of the 1805 rebellion; and equally predictable was their form of execution: their punishment was a spectacle: "Three Negroes were hanged and beheaded in the main Port of Spain square. Their bodies were hung in chains, their heads spiked." Naipaul adds cynically "It was the end of their mockery" (pp. 297-98). But the insurgency itself remains as a subordinate trope in the main - epic - battle between Picton and his rivals (p. 290-91, 298).

This mode of representation - mirroring the spectacle of torture - is present from Naipaul's very early narratives. In *The Middle Passage* Naipaul emphasises (indents) several passages describing the quartering and roasting of insurgents, from counter-insurgency texts (*MP*. pp. 107, 172, 202-03)[113]. However, even from Naipaul's cataloguing of details one can discern a shift in the form of punishment as a spectacle to that of 'disciplining' in the secret chamber of Vallot's jail. Begorrat, on of the powerful planters and the chief magistrate of Trinidad during Picton's period was always systematic both in torturing and in maintaining records. A- ! it is he

who seems to be responsible for transforming torture as a public spectacle into a 'punishment' in secret chamber, although both the forms of 'punishing' continued in the colonies. It must be noted that the secret chamber torture was reserved only for 'routine' crimes, in the jail as a 'disciplining centre'. (In Picton's "peaceful" period the jail "had also been fitted up recently as a torture chamber with irons, chains, pulleys and other instruments" p. 189). But from all the examples Naipaul gives (who does not trace any pattern in the punishments - the details are only to draw home the horrifying message) one can see that the insurgents were invariably tortured in the public places - their bodies were quartered, heads pierced on the spikes, burnt at the stake. However, it is difficult to distinguish an insurgent from a 'routine' criminal in the colonial society. Thus, for instance, the suspected poisoners of 1801 were tortured, and burnt at the stake. Curiously, after the torture a handbill was found stuck on a sentry box. The bill signed by "Humanists" - criticises the authorities not for the torture but for the *form* of torture. The "cruel spectacles", the bill says, destroy "all tender emotions" and "excites disgust than horror"; The bill also warns the authorities that the "lower orders" may be induced to use torture when they have power. It is not just that the tortured slave disappears - but the bill's implied suggestion is to find an alternative form of punishment. And the "HUMANISTS" are no other than the "new immigrants", (the role of these new immigrants' is discussed in the next section), in Naipaul's narrative Picton's rivals; and the bill had an impact - the spectacle was moved from Port of Spain to St.Joseph (pp. 211-12).

9) SUBVERTING HISTORIES

If the 'reconstructed' story of the native remains parasitical on the 'heroic' story of Berrio/Ralegh in the earlier part of the narrative, the slave's story remains on the fringes of the story of 'intellectual liveliness' - of Picton/ Fullarton rivalry, in the later part of the narrative. It is necessary at this point to examine how Naipaul narrativizes this later part as the liveliest period of Trinidad history.

Eighteenth century Trinidad (indeed the entire Caribbean) can be described as an object of multiple representations (hence the site of contesting powers). The contenders in this battle of representation were the Spanish, French (republic/ royal), Dutch and the English - of which French royalists were gaining an upper hand over the others (locally in Trinidad). But in the last years of the 18th century the English conquest established the supremacy of English representation. Naipaul's narrativisation of the events of this period is expressed through the contending representations and in effect implies that the island scene was chaotic. In contrast to the chaos of the Trinidad setting Naipaul narrates the English naval manoeuvers as the "ordered" and systematic (Naipaul spends over five pages in describing Abercrombie's conquest {pp. 142-48}). In these contending imperialist representations, needless to say, the slave becomes an occasion for an aside. After describing Picton's racialist Negro Code (1800) as concerned only "with the needs and the fears of the Negroes' owner", Naipaul for instance, sketches briefly Picton's illicit trade, his system of collecting tax from every possible source and the torture chamber Picton introduced in Port of Spain. In spite of the active presence of the repressive apparatus and in spite of tyrannical dealings ("modest dealings" p. 186) of Picton and his planters Naipaul considers the early years of 19th century as a "peaceful" period in Trinidad history. "Now, with the peace," Naipaul writes, "British immigrants ['adventurous and gifted' p. 194] began to come" (p. 187); and later on in the narrative this period is characterised as full of "intellectual liveliness" (p. 373).

Once the so called 'peace' is perceived in Trinidad, in Naipaul's narrative itself one sees a shift (analogous to that earlier shift towards Spain). Picton's earlier problems with Spain and entanglements with Venezuelan revolutionaries are displaced by a new set of opposition from within Trinidad, expressed by the new English immigrants of the peaceful period. So the shift now focuses on "internal" rivalry between two forces - the planter class of Picton and the reformist class of new immigrants. Whatever the shift may be there is no change in the position assigned to the slave in the narrative - the slave continues to remain on the margins. But the new men stand for something more complex: they were articulating the earlier desires of Raleigh

(expansion), the new faith represented by Abercrombie and Picton (property and rights p. 195). And this new language is to manifest through institutions and no longer with the repressive apparatus of Picton's alone. The new men signified the shift in the process of European self-consolidation, a shift was which persistently, albeit feebly, emerging in the European discourse. The stages at which a variant of this shift could be discerned are: 16th century episteme assimilating the 'new worlds' as part of European story; 17th century scramble, consolidation of planter class and the late 18th century consummation of power through new discourses. Yet, Naipaul reads this shift as a testimony to metropolitan glory: "The English were 'new men' with concrete gifts. They were putting in steam engines on the sugar plantations in Trinidad [signs of making slave labour irrelevant]; they talked of a canal system to open up the interior. The English editor of the *Courant* was a master-printer of considerable education and literary style... [But] The English were not yet colonial [!]; they were still a part of England" (pp. 194-95) (It was these very men who in the same period were charting up racialist geneologies in India for the Empire)[114].

However, at the level of the plot (which celebrates the 'tragedy' of the heroes, Berrio, Ralegh, Picton) these new immigrants are "cantankerous", "London-style radicals", indentured clerks (the 'poor whites' who died of sex diseases p. 198), and some were "more respectable immigrants" (p. 198) And these new immigrants were Picton's rivals. This rivalry takes a more poignant shape with the arrival of "spiteful" Fullarton, the First Commissioner, in the "peaceful colony" (p. 382). Picton's regime, which continued in many ways Spanish/French plantocratic rule, represented the consolidation of a repressive state system under British supremacy. Fullarton contributed to the articulation of a shift marked by the arrival of new men into the colony. The shift also signifies a stage in the sovereign state's (metropolis) direct control over the colony (and this control begins to operate more subtly through the construction of a series of institutions 'interpellating' the colonials as subjects). It is only at the level of plot that the Picton-Fullarton rivalry provides material for the narrative. And Naipaul's narrative of this drama is a painstaking construction through meticulous details. Yet, in this contest between

the new and old forces (Picton, planter class) Naipaul's narrative does not look for any complicity or continuity (of imperialist motifs) but while acknowledging the 'metropolitan' the genius of the new men depicts Picton's fall as tragic. Naipaul's judgment on Picton is not different from that of Fraser. Naipaul writes like a humanitarian abolitionist. He argues that Picton was tried really for being the governor of Trinidad at the end of eighteenth century: "He was the victim of people's conscience, of ideas of humanity and reason that were ahead of the reality" (p. 157). Fraser in a similar vein argues that no other person in Picton's place could have done differently. (Naipaul's judgement here echoes his earlier reading of Stedman).

However, this period becomes a very lively one in Naipaul's narrative because the new immigrants' war of words against Picton in the English press made (for Naipaul) the country look like an extension of the metropolis. The new immigrants figure as people engaged in "high causes". Subsequently the colony, however, had become, Naipaul argues, "no more than what it was, an outpost, a backwater." Once the British interests began to shift towards Asia, Naipaul feels, Trinidad was neglected and it became "as much an error and a failure as it had been as part of the Spanish Empire" (p. 372). Nevertheless, the liveliness the immigrants created, Naipaul argues, was matchless: "This liveliness - the threats of letters to London lawyers and newspapers, the affirmation of rights and freedoms - was a carry-over from the metropolis" (p. 372). But later on Naipaul adds, this metropolitan vigour declined. Although Naipaul sees that the country was shaped for the century in this period of metropolitan glory he seems to distinguish it from what he considers as the racial perversion of the later period (roughly from the end of 1810). Naipaul does not clarify how such distinction can be made (from what point did the British become racialist?)[115]

In contrast with the later period, "In the beginning[?!], in the time of intellectual liveliness, people like Fullarton [the "spiteful madman"], Hislop and Smith, expecting more of themselves and the world, felt in their various ways that the colony was incomplete and wrong' (p. 373). That Naipaul's narration remains a celebration of metropolitan glory, (following the logic of the principle of polarity distinguishing the metropolis and colonies, the former free from

any contamination of the latter) becomes more clear in the concluding lamentation of the text: "Such officials would not come that way again. There would be no visiting writer like McCallum, coming to Port of Spain as to an extension of the metropolis" (p. 373). Naipaul's point that the later visitors like Froude, Trollope, Kingsley- "tourists from a leading industrial country to an imperial outpost - never questioned the "lesser life of the agricultural colony, which made nothing, imported everything", where education was felt to be irrelevant, comes as a surprise. For these were the writers who praised the empire for maintaining slavery (for it was the first attempt, Froude argued, to emancipate Africans from the misery of their country)[116] and also for abolishing it, who recommended to the sovereign state ways to improve production (for the metropolis), championed the idea of indentured labour system which was intended to create a lasting rivalry between former slaves and the indentured labour (a source for metropolitan legitimation of its presence). Yet the narrative *ELD* expects reflections on the 'lesser life' of the colony from them. But Naipaul's own narrative does not show any traces of the 'lesser life' of the colony. In its search for the intellectual liveliness the 'lesser life' remains outside the 'history with dates'.

10) ERASING HISTORIES

While certain radical historians like Genovese look for a certain kind of evolutionism in the insurgencies (which come of age, for Genovese, in 1789)[117] Naipaul's argument provides not even such a possibility to them. They are no more than fantasies and magical absurdities. The Trinidad rebellion, for instance, as Naipaul echoes a planter's view: "[was] only the pastoral, the re-creation of the life that for many like him [the planter] had vanished" (p. 293). The insurgents' aspirations are only backwardlooking, reactionary longings. What is more intriguing is that these aspirations are always so - whether Naipaul is writing about the Indians of 16th century, or slaves of 19th century, non-Europeans of 20th century. Naipaul's argument implies that non-European or slave aspirations can never move away from the ontologically set

bind in which they are fixed - their longings are always primal, their history always bearing the prefix *pre*. This argument appears more explicitly in Naipaul's narratives of the 1970s. In Argentina, for instance, history disappears (according to Naipaul): "An attitude to history, an attitude to the land. Magic is more important in Argentina; the country is full of witches and magicians and thaumaturges and mediums". This judgment is made after quoting Borges's Hispanophilist view of Argentine history - that history in Argentina begins with nationalist ('patriotic') struggles with Spain. In the country Naipaul always sees " A collective refusal to see, to come to terms with the land: an artificial fragmented colonial society, made deficient and bogus by myths."(REP pp. 113-14). In Zaire, Naipaul finds 'The past has vanished...Where so little has changed, where bush and river are so overwhelming [ontological, *natural* impossibilities], *another* past is accessible, better answering African bewilderment and African religious beliefs: the past as *le bon vieux temps de nos ancetres* ... [That is] the African sense of the void...['The Africans'] dream of a past-... when the dead ancestors watched and protected, and the enemies were only men"(REP pp. 184,196). In the Ivory coast all the "Africans" in spite of their contact with the world of 'workaday' reality remain at *core* sorcerers, chiefs and magic men. The life of activity in restaurants and industries is a "charade": 'The true life was there in the mysteries of the village." But how long would this 'modern' world last (a Naipaulean speculation): 'The new world existed in the minds of other men [Israelis, Americans and Englishmen]. Remove those men; and their ideas - which after all had no finality - would disappear. Skills could be taught. What was fragile - to men whose complete, real life lay in another realm of the spirit - was faith in the new world" (*FC* p. 154)[118].

The binaries of history and fantasy (myth, pre-history) continue in emplotting the other world histories. On one side of the binaries we find the 'living culture', metropolitan 'graces', books and ideas of history; and on the other side "simple, half- made society", societies always enveloped in fantasies, enveloped for ever in "other states of mind", cherishing a longing to be "whole" (pp. 332-3, 335-37, 350, 372-73). Yet this 'other' side is the constitutive force of the Naipaul text. It is this other figure that remains at the basis of the 'contradictory coherence' of

the centre the Naipaul project yearns for. The other figure deprives the subject of the self-consolidation he desires - for the figure recurs and impinges on the project. For the scapegoated other also becomes the traumatic figure of death, disrupting the projects of self-consolidation. The mappings of the subject can neither be unified nor homogenised. It is this which I hoped I could figure in the thesis.

Part III Close-Ups

Chapter Ten: Folding Back

How will I leave this place
then hurr[y] on
to where the wild birds waited [?]

Stanley Diamond

Figuring Naipaul has examined two interrelated issues: the question of postcolonial self-representation in the work of V.S. Naipaul and the larger issue of postcoloniality in the historico-political context of the present times. Naipaul could be described as a peculiarly exemplary figure whose work embodies many of the contradictions and complications of the postcolonial situation. I have attempted to figure this problematic in and through the Naipaul text. Various sections in the thesis are devoted to the analysis of Naipaul's construction of postcoloniality associated with the historico-geographical areas of "Africa" (Ch. 4), the "Caribbean" (Chs. 2, 3, 9) and "India" (Chs. 5 and 6). As my immediate concern in this thesis was with the Naipaul text I have not addressed myself directly to these various geographical areas. The attempt here is not, in other words, to construct the genealogy of the postcolonial world. Moreover, as I am addressing myself mainly to the ideological *patterns* in which postcoloniality is constructed in the Naipaul text, my interest remained confined to the shaping of the subject of the postcolonial world in the text. In effect, the historico-geographical regions of the postcolonial world appear more or less 'allegorically'. This allegorical figuration in the thesis, however, is not offered as endorsing a 'literary' critical stance which legitimises the critic's distance from the postcolonial regions and their problems. The position I attempt to articulate in the thesis does not claim to provide a "knowledge" about these regions - on the contrary it suggests the problems involved in the very construction of knowledge-systems.

But in attempting to articulate a position certain methodological and theoretical problems seemed unavoidable. What method or theory is appropriate in discussing a text which constructs a condition which is the effect of overdetermined, contradictory, historical and ideological factors? What theory or method from the contemporary critical scene is alert to these factors? There is a moment in the Naipaul text where a related problem is addressed. Reflecting on the history of the West Indies Naipaul wonders what tone a historian should adopt in narrating the history of brutality associated with the islands, especially in the (alleged) absence of "achievement and creation". Proceeding with interests other than Naipaul's, my own thesis has been an attempt to rethink the history and 'violence' that determine the

postcolonial condition the tone(s) I was orchestrating could not be in consonance with Naipaul's. But in bringing together my own arguments about postcoloniality and the Naipaul text I began to become vigilant to the problematic aspects of the contemporary critical scene. While responding to various theoretical or methodological paradigms I now consider that the most appropriate way of articulating my own position is through the notion of a 'multiple-narrative structure', by which I mean a critical strategy of reading which articulates various historico-political temporalities embodied in ideological, discursive narrative structures and attempts to problematise any hierarchised arrangement of these temporalities. The multiple-narrative structure functions in my thesis in at least two ways: firstly, in avoiding in the very construction of the thesis the monological strain of a specific (grand) theory; secondly, and more crucially, in presenting the Naipaul text itself not as a linear narrative structure with teleological attributes of origin, growth and achievement, but as a multiplicity of variously repeated narrative moments. Here a point about difference is in order. Irrespective of Naipaul's conception of his own work (the author's intentionality as such) the reading strategy I deploy constructs the Naipaul text as a multiple narrative structure. This strategy enables me to examine the textuality of Naipaul's own conception as it emerges through his work. Hence the use of 'text' in the thesis, to indicate neither a progressive continuum nor an isolated unit of work. While retaining a certain conventional sense of a specific object of work, the concept of 'text', as I have used it in the thesis, is mainly aimed at facilitating the reading of the patterns in which the Naipaul oeuvre proliferated over the last three decades. In working out a specific reading strategy I hoped to attend, with equal emphasis, to the narrative moments Naipaul himself draws on, from a variety of texts, in order to buttress his own 'arguments'. It has been my aim to examine how a variety of texts or textual moments animate the Naipaul text and to situate and narrativize these moments in the context of colonial/imperialist discourses (Chs. 5, 6 and 9).

However, I am aware that it is possible to isolate moments where my own reading is complicit with those conventional critical discourses which I have otherwise interrogated. This

can be noted in my use of two critical 'traditions' - 'marxism' and 'psychoanalysis'. In spite of my claim to have worked towards a strategy of multiple-narrative structure it might be argued that I have simply been working within these established 'traditions'. Clearly, my thesis does indeed draw on these discourses. A certain version of marxism and of psychoanalysis does animate my own arguments, for any discussion of the historical formation of the subject - the moment of coloniality and the making of the citizen and the 'native' - inevitably draws on discourses that have contributed to the articulation of this problematic. And postcoloniality - which is multiply determined by historical events and a variety of knowledge-systems - when it begins to fold back upon the discourses that have shaped it - is bound to be "political" in its interrogation. But I am reluctant to acquiesce in labelling this as 'marxist' for two reasons. Firstly, my own inadequate comprehension of the Marxian text, and secondly, since marxism itself is, in general, in consonance with the grand narratives of the Western discursive practices, it is difficult for me, given the tenor of my arguments, to be *at home* in the master narrative of marxism. I could only suggestively raise this problem in the thesis (Ch 9) without sufficiently elaborating the argument - for such an elaboration (a full critical engagement with Marxian grand narrative) is beyond the limits of this thesis.

There is a similarity here with my use of a certain variety of psychoanalysis. In drawing parallels between the imperialist/colonialist formation of the subject and the textual production of the subject (in the Naipaul text) I found some psychoanalytic arguments around the category of the subject highly pertinent. I argued that in textualising the 'native' as the improper other the colonialist/imperialist discourse projects a model of the 'proper' subject as located in the imperialist citizen . It is through such plotting of subjectivity that the progressive self-consolidation of imperialism is, in part, achieved. The legitimation of this achievement, I argued, is effected under the name of 'civilising mission'. In figuring the Naipaul text I attempted to locate this model in a variety of narratives within Naipaul's oeuvre. In the process of this figuring I regarded psychoanalysis as providing a useful set of tools for my purpose. The thematics of the mirror phase, the Imaginary, the Symbolic and castration appeared to

illuminate and clarify the arguments I was constructing (in and) through the Naipaul text. But this use of psychoanalysis is, obviously, not without problems. I have drawn on only a general discourse of the subject as it is constructed by Lacan without attempting to transform this general discourse in the context of coloniality. There would be two preconditions for any such transformative activity. Firstly a fully expert knowledge of the discipline and secondly and more importantly a demonstration that psychoanalysis as a discipline, albeit in some respects transformed, is necessary to describe subjectivity in the postcolonial condition. Any such demonstration would however, in the first instance, have - as with marxism - to negotiate the very relation between psychoanalysis and Western discourses, and again this large issue is beyond the scope of this thesis. Since in any case - like most literary critics - I do not claim the requisite expertise in psychoanalysis, my use of psychoanalytic thematics remains 'metaphorical' in the thesis. The metaphoricity of the thematic is for another reason also.

Classical psychoanalysis involves a technique of analysing psychic problems associated with individual human beings. But the familiar issue arises: how far is one justified in transposing the psychoanalytic apparatus in the analysis of a textual subject? Could one talk, say, of transferential relation between a text and its reader or, in our context, between Naipaul and the postcolonial world? Again, this thesis stops short of resolving this well-rehearsed question. But in my analysis of the Naipaul text an alertness to psychoanalytic thematics certainly helped me to track the recurring *patterns* of a self-consolidation as it is plotted in a variety of narratives, and also locatable in Naipaul's own reading of various texts. But the reading pattern I have myself worked throughout in the thesis, while contesting a variety of binaries and their implications, seems itself to construct another binary, in terms of self-consolidation and incapacitation. Nevertheless as the argumcnts I elaborated in the thesis show, I hope, imperialism and (post)coloniality cannot be plotted simply in terms of a binarism. I have in fact attempted to show the interrelatedness *within* this hierarchised binary: the desire for self-consolidation which is associated with the imperialist moment can itself be articulated only as that moment cathects the Other with a *lac-una*, an incapacitated subject. It is this

interrelatedness which I have tracked somewhat allegorically in the Naipaul text in its narrativization of the self and of the others who enter the text. Thus the 'binary' is very much a textual effect. In figuring this binary my contention is that the terms are not an expression of my wish to establish such a binary but are the effects of certain narrative/ideological patterns. This binary itself is, of course, a varied repetition in a chain of hierarchised binaries which I attempt to deconstruct in the thesis.

My own effort, however, to articulate the two 'traditions' - marxism and psychoanalysis - needs to be seen in the postcolonial context, where such efforts at articulation are of fairly recent date and which notoriously tend to be inaccessible because of their complicated opacities. One of the directions in which my efforts moved, as I see it, was to transgress and confound the disciplinary divisions. The immediately perceptible disciplines I engage with in the thesis are history and 'literary' studies. Here I must hasten to suggest that the disciplinary divisions I am referring to are no homogenised categories as such. Nonetheless in my analysis I used these categories to refer to a problematic nomenclature called "mainstream" discourses. Given the standardised tenor of their practices, as I analysed them in the thesis, my attempt was to disclose the implications of these practices, their tacit assumptions and the interests they serve - in short, the textuality of these practices. Although I was working with historical texts and situating my arguments in the historical context my own analytical procedure does not derive from the discipline of history as such. My attempt in the thesis has not been to produce a body of historical knowledge about the postcolonial world. Nor was it to contribute to a tradition of literary studies - to illuminate 'Commonwealth', 'Caribbean' or the 'Third World' literature as such. In contesting the 'fictional' (literary)/'nonfictional' (historical) binary my effort was to interrogate the disciplinary divisions and problematise each discipline in relation to the other. Further, this interrogation is narrativized in the thesis within and against the politico-economic context of imperialism/colonialism.

This attempt at bringing the disciplinary divisions into crisis is a necessary task to

undertake in the postcolonial situation. For postcoloniality figures the condition of homelessness. The sanctity of disciplinary divisions can remain unquestioned only at the cost of being impervious to this condition. For the postcolonial condition is patently overdetermined by various discursive, epistemic apparatuses whose provenance is complicitous with the imperialist/colonialist moment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Further the postcolonial situation ought to make one alert to the complicity between discursive practices which generate knowledge-systems and (which are predicated on) the intellectual division of labour. It is a dangerous luxury, to corrupt Kakar's phrase, of the postcolonial to remain content with the discursive practices and their complicities. The conglomeration of discursive practices that constitute the postcolonial subject can find an analogue in the naming pattern in the Caribbean. Hybridity is the sign, as I showed in Chapter Three, which captures this pattern. This sign is the inevitable historical effect of the situation of postcoloniality and only fantasy or wishful thinking allows the postcolonial to deny this condition and invest nostalgically in a certain traces of hybridity as the Ralph Singh figure does. This investment is a desire for an accession to the Name-of-the-Father. Although it is certainly true that the discipline within which my thesis is situated is 'literary studies I hoped to facilitate, in the postcolonial context, through my reading patterns, a contestation of the very nomenclature of 'literary studies' itself. What I presume to be suggesting here is not a plea for a mutation or radicalisation of literary studies as such, although that may be a desirable activity to participate in, but to workout an agenda which examines the very constitution, disciplinarisation and institutionalisation of literary studies itself. Such an inquiry on a large scale turns us more towards the history and politics of the imperialist moment and to the question of value and pleasure in the contemporary media-dominated culture. And obviously this inquiry, which is a way of working out and elaborating my present interests, is also beyond the limits of this thesis.

Figuring Naipaul engages itself with a plethora of problems and issues, as I sketched above, which are endemic to postcolonial situation. But in discussing these issues and in problematising disciplines and divisions am I arguing for another genre of *writing* to facilitate postcolonial discourse(s)? Is it for the establishment of another discipline that I plead here? It is difficult to answer these questions decisively. For they involve once again the problems about naming we discussed earlier. Yet the difference of postcolonial *writing* from the discursive practices that overdetermine postcoloniality is bound to be in the *way* such *writing* addresses itself to its situation. Whether this difference must be defined in generic terms remains a problem especially in the absence of any such precedent. Yet the postcolonial needs to be alert to the danger of pedagogic and bureaucratic congealing of his/her critical practice. In writing on Naipaul, who is already appropriated into the academia world over, I found these issues and problems unavoidable. In this context my critical orientation in analysing the ideological, narrative *patterns* of the text has been, I think, pertinent and fitting. Also in disclosing these patterns the strategy of reading (multiple-narrative structure) I adopted in contesting various issues has been very appropriate. For it helped me in articulating and problematising the two traditions - marxism and psychoanalysis. Further it facilitated the contestation of various binaries in a variety of narratives I analysed in the thesis.

The Naipaul text, as I have shown in the thesis, is predicated on binaristic categories. These categories such as 'fact' and 'fiction', 'order' and 'chaos' etc., have deep ideological and historico-political implications. Especially, in the context of the Naipaul text these categories and the textualisation of the postcolonial world through them earn him the status of the native informant. In analysing the patterns which these categories constitute in the text I tried to show how critical response has valorised them so far. Yet there is a moment in the Naipaul text where the binaries seem to be problematised. And this is the moment of *EA*. The moment of *EA* in the Naipaul text was indeed a pleasant confirmation for me. For I was half-way through my work when *EA* appeared and the patterns I had already disclosed almost predicted such a moment by then; yet, equally, *EA* almost seems to 'predict' my arguments. In other words, the

self-contestatory aspect of the Naipaul text appears to problematise my own reading pattern at the moment of *EA*.

This can be seen in two instances. Firstly, *EA* seems to deny the 'fact'/'fiction' division I disclosed in the text so far. For all the circumstantial and historical reference points in the text (*EA*) appear to indicate the 'facts' about the (psychobiographical) Naipaul himself. And more acutely the ending of *EA* is rounded with a move towards 'history'. The narrative subject almost in an epic manner refers to the historic displacements of the Indian community in Trinidad and projects a vision of future (tragically). Yet the text is called 'fiction'. This way of patterning in the text seems to displace the fact/fiction division I had suggested. But not entirely so. If the text attempts to problematize the binary why call it a 'novel' ("a *novel* in five sections")? What investment does Naipaul have in the term *novel*? The text of *EA* does not seem to fold back on this aspect of its patterning. Further, as I showed in the thesis, Naipaul, in all the meticulous and laborious construction of *EA*, carefully and deliberately avoids all the names - the names of historical agents - of himself and his brother and also the titles of his work. This is obviously an attempt to retain the distinction between fact/fiction and not to problematise their relationship. Perhaps this could be argued in another way as well. Naipaul in constructing the text in a specific way is inducing the reader to read 'facts' into the 'fiction' he has produced. And thus the text might be said to displace the division. Yet the point remains that the text subject wishes the text to be read as a 'fictional' account. I need not belabour this point now.

The text of *EA* has another instance where my arguments about the model of incapacitation and self-consolidation at once found support and yet seem to face a challenge. That is, the aspiration towards self-fulfilment and unification which I had tracked all along in the Naipaul text appears to be realised yet also contested. The subject in *EA* claims to have achieved the unification of the fractured parts of his being - the "man" and the "writer". But at the same time he is not entirely unaware (as is shown by his reflections on the other side of the manor-house, the anathoths of violence), of the ephemerality, the transience, or indeed the

miscognition, of his 'delight' in the supposed consolidation of the self. The moment of the narrative which promises such a unity passes and the subject is forever haunted by the anothoths of death - the greatest divider of all unities, all consolidations. This aspect, elaborated painfully and at length in the text, is emphasised in my reading from a different angle, in my response to the shades of nostalgia for a plenitude, a time of glory which the subject's pastoral musings signify in the text. The intimations of death which pervade the text are then to be read as yearnings for a wholeness, for a time before the wound as it were. But the text seems to be acutely aware of this bind - the desire and the shortchange of the desire, as it were. In effect the tension which the text creates through the musings of the subject both confirms and appears to 'preempt' the arguments elaborate.

But that is the double bind of writing. Since the possibility of writing is itself predicated on the condition to certain exclusions it is useless to claim that one can write without excluding anything. It is the exclusions, as I show in the thesis, that make reading otherwise possible. The point is not whether exclusions are involved in a text but *what* and *how* exclusions condition a text and what purposes they serve in the end. Psychoanalysis, once again, suggests a model which helps one in explaining the patterns of exclusions in a text. Reading-strategies which tend to exclude texts or certain aspects of texts systematically (those which contest the predominant concern of a given reading strategy) invest in a narcissistic desire for self-preservation. A form of transference appears to operate in such situations, where the critic, to preserve his/her critical stand, to avoid being engulfed by the text projects a manageable schema of reading. In constructing my arguments in terms of "ruses" I was alert to this problem. The very category of analysis I used in the thesis - ruse - helped in negotiating the levels of the text. In using this ambivalent term I was attempting to avoid both a reductive rendering of the text and an interpretation in terms of a single psychobiographical agency, in order to raise the analysis to a level where the undisclosed assumptions of reading patterns can be decoded. Psychoanalysis has thus been of considerable use to me in figuring the strategies of reading and in more specific ways of articulating my "political" interests in terms of the problematic of

subject formation. I do not claim to have succeeded in mastering the two traditions of psychoanalysis and marxism. They were helpful in articulating a certain argument about postcoloniality through a certain reading strategy that I called multiple narrative structure.

Whether this critical practice of constructing postcoloniality in terms of multiple-narrative structure should develop into a generic form is debatable. Yet if (at all) such a genre emerges through (postcolonial) critical communities (when) engaged in the battle of texts and the world, discursive practices and intellectual divisions of labour, this thesis will respond to them in a gesture of solidarity ...

NOTES AND REFERENCES

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER ONE

(a) Kumar Shahni, interviewed by Ashis Rajyadhyaksha, in *Framework*, 30/31, 1986, p. 107.

(b) Stanley Diamond, "Hummingbird Learns About Her People," in *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 11 No. 2-4, 1986, pp. 260-262.

(c) Jacques Derrida quoted by Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak in her "Translator's Preface" to *Of Grammatology*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976), p. 1xxv.

(1) My usage of the term problematic comes from Althusser's formulation of it. I understand the term to refer to undisclosed ('unthinkable') presuppositions making possible a more or less organised argument (generally in texts). cf. Althusser, *For Marx*, tr. Ben Brewster, (1965; London: NLB, 1977), pp. 65-77.

(2) Robert D. Hamner, ed., *Critical Perspectives on V.S. Naipaul*, (London: Heinemann, 1977), hereafter, *CP*, in the text.

(3) Hereafter abbreviated and included in the text as *COM* (*Commonwealth* Vol. 6, No. 1, Autumn 1983), *JCL* (*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Vol. X no. 1, August 1975) and *MFS* (*Modern Fiction Studies* No. 3 Autumn 1984).

(4) Apart from reviews and essays in journals I have not come across a single dissertation on Naipaul's non-fictional work in England. A curious fact needing reflection is that only in India (to my knowledge) has nonfiction (especially the books on India) been the subject of dissertations. But a tentative reflection makes me feel that the probable reason for the absence (in the West) or presence in India of such a work can be one and the same: the alleged transparency of a 'non'fictional work. That is, given the polemical nature of Naipaul's work on India, it appeared to provoke (especially after *India: A Wounded Civilization*) an immediate reaction: that is, 'truths' or 'non truths' about 'India' must be countered or celebrated. cf., *India: A Wounded Civilization*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).

(5) *The Middle Passage*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962).

(6) *An Area of Darkness*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964).

(7) *A House for Mr. Biswas*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).

(8) *Miguel Street*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959).

(9) *The Mystic Masseur* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957). *The Suffrage of Elvira*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958).

(10) One wonders what is the implication of the unquestioned privilege accorded to the norm of 'local colour' - details about the setting, authentic to the 'reality' described - which continues to govern 'fiction' and certain assessments of fiction. One wonders whether this passion for local detail is not the legacy of the ethnocentric/orientalist travel-diary representations of the age of expansion: evidence that the author has really *been* 'there' - the kind of personal observation that could not be 'got from books' - a precisely ironic claim!

(11) *A Bend in the River*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

(12) Landeg White, *V.S. Naipaul: A Critical Introduction*, (London: MacMillan, 1975), p. 103 (emphasis mine).

(13) K.I.Madhusudan Rao, *Contrary Awareness, Critical Study of V.S. Naipaul*, (Walter: Crenico,), pp. 23, 31.

(14) *The Overcrowded Barracoon*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, Here Naipaul, responding to condescending reviews of his early writing in England remarks that "People [in

England] are used to reading about non-Europeans through European eyes," that people made political rather than literary judgement on his writing. These comments were first published in an article in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 August, 1958.

(15) The Great Tradition here is a general reference to the institutionalized canon-formation in England, though it has a specific articulation in the work of F.R. Leavis. In the double movement (between the world and the text) of the argument I am attempting to construct here the Great Tradition has its provenance in the 'literary' (ideological) self-representation of colonial/imperialist regimes (to the 'natives' in the colonies and to the citizens of the metropolis) in the nineteenth century. cf., Homi Bhabha, "Representation and the Colonial Text," in *The Theory of Reading*, ed., Frank Glover Smith, (Brighton: Harvester, 1984), pp 93-106.

(16) John Thieme, *Prose Studies*, 5, i, (1982), pp. 141-42.

(17) Eugene Goodheart, *Salmagundi*, No. 54 (Fall, 1981) pp. 53-54. *The Mimic Men*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).

(18) Kenneth Ramchand, "Partial Truths: A Critical Account of V.S. Naipaul's Later Fiction", *Twentieth Century*, pp. 86-87.

(19) C.D. Narsimhaiah, *"Function of Criticism in India"* ed., C.D. Narasimhaih, (Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages, 1986) pp. 118-20.

(20) I use the term postcolonial world not only to indicate in general the politico-geographical areas of the globe which gained 'independence' in the post-war period, but also and preeminently the term is used in the thesis to indicate the world constituted by the colonialist/imperialist structures of domination. For my purposes, the term imperialism is seen as comprising three phases. The current phase of multinational (electronic) control of the globe; the second phase of industrialist imperialism from around 1857 to the second world war; and in the first phase I see the early expansions that are usually termed the 'mercantilist' phase. This last point is further elaborated and analysed with specific reference to Naipaul in the ninth chapter of my thesis. The sources for my argument are cited in the specific context as I elaborate

(21) Derrida, "Living on: Border Lines," *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed., Harold Bloom et al., (New York: Continuum, 1979), p.84.

(22) Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, tr. Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana, 1977) p. 160. (emphais original).

(23) Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., p. 158.

(24) I am using the term Imaginary as Jacques Lacan developed it, to signify the notion of self-sufficient completeness and integration which the child is said to assume in (his own) reflection (in the mirror) he sees at the stage of infancy. cf., Lacan, *Ecrits*, tr. Alan Sheridan, (London: Tavistock, 1985), pp. 2-6. My own use of the concept is further discussed in the later sections.

(25) Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, tr. Peggy Kamuf, (New York: Shocken Books, 1985), pp. 67-68.

(26) Gayatri Spivak, "Translator's Preface," to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., p. lxxxiv.

(27) Bharati Mukherjee and Robert Boyers, "A Conversation with V.S. Naipaul", *Salmagundi*, op.cit., p. 12.

(28) V.S. Naipaul, interviewed by Mel Gussow, *The New York Times Book Reivew*, September 16, 1984 p. 45 (emphasis original).

(29) V.S. Naipaul, *Finding the Centre*, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1984).

(30) V.S. Naipaul, interviewed by Adrian Rowe-Evans, in *Transition*, 40 (1971) p. 56. Hereafter, *Tr.*

(31) V.S. Naipaul, "Documentary Heresy," in *CP*, op.cit., pp. 23-25.

(32) Mel Gussow, op.cit., p. 45.

(33) Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*. tr. Alan Bass, (London: RKP, 1978), p. 279.

(34) Naipaul published his father's short stories in a collection called, *Gurudeva and Other Stories*, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1976).

(35) Naipaul does not offer any sustained analysis of the factors that contributed to this disruption. In the case of India for instance, Naipaul seems to attribute the disruption to Islamic invasions. In such a scene, "of static Islam and decadent Hinduism", the British intrusion was only a "positive" force in eighteenth century India. Although Naipaul acknowledges that the "continuity of the tradition that was maintained" until the eighteenth century was broken with the British, he seems to argue that the 'Hindu' India had been disrupted long before the British intruded (*AD* pp. 204-08). Naipaul's long historical narrative on the Caribbean (specifically on Trinidad) too is not, as I will show, free from circularity and complicity with colonial historiography (cf. Ch 9).

(36) This is not, however, to deny that the world we live in and the texts we read and construct are inextricably linked, that there is a perennial political need to situate the text in the world. What is being resisted here is a certain kind of stance which treats the text as a representation of the world "as it is", the notion that there is a world out there (especially in the context of the so-called Third World) which the text holds up in an unmediated way. Indeed there is that world in which events happen. But the significance of these events is predicated on the narrativization or construction of them in an order, a chain. The world in a way is a chain of such narrativized events. But it must be added immediately that the 'events' always seem to be in excess of their signification. That is, the events can never be once for all fixed in a signifying chain. In fact the events or marks indicate the limits of knowing or knowledge. Since the events have this feature of exceeding their signification no account or narrativization can pretend to show the events as they are as such. However, this licence of the excessiveness of the events is also a warning signal for the critic to be wary of infinite slidings into interpretation. Such an epistemological escape-route is another dangerous temptation akin to the earlier one (the transparency model - to show the world as it is). In contrast to these the practice of situating the text in the world compels us to construct the events in a politically interested way. In doing so it loosens any rigid distinction between the categories, the world and the text, for both stand for (or indicate) processes of narrativization.

(37) On unsuccessful repressions, cf., Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing," *Writing and Difference* op.cit., pp. 196-97.

(38) I use the term 'splitting' in more or less the conventional sense of indicating 'contradictory' responses (of the subject) towards an object. The contradiction signifies here the force of desire which determines the subject's responses towards an external object ('reality'). The desire of self-preservation intensifies the subject's disavowal of what it perceives as threatening; in the same way it would incorporate what it assumes to fulfil its desire. cf., J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, tr. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (1973; London: Hogarth, 1985), pp. 427-430.

(39) ibid., p. 427.

(40) *miguel* in Spanish means desire.

(41) However, John McClure's argument that "Only India is exempted from the general vision of a world of 'half-made societies' that seem 'doomed to remain half-made'" isn't very tenable. For the ruses, as I am arguing, that constitute the Naipaul text and construct the narrative, investigating subject have the same structural effect irrespective of the appellations - "Africa", "India", "the Caribbean" - chosen. In fact these appellations could be treated as figurations in a discourse rather than as any self-evident, self-present entities. McClure's argument in attempting to privilege India in Naipaul's narrativization falls within the critical matrix which attempts to explicate Naipaul's work on the basis of ethnological source. cf., John McClure, "Lessons in Liberation: The Fiction of V.S. Naipaul, Joan Didion and Robert Stone," *The Year Left: An American Socialist Year Book*, ed., Mike Davis et.al., (London: Verso, 1985), p. 187.

(42) Mel Gussow, op.cit., p. 48.

(43) Gayatri Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur", in *Francis Barker et al., Europe and its Others*, (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), vol 1. p. 130.

(44) Gayatri Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur", op.cit., p. 136.

(45) Ivar Oxaal, *Black Intellectuals come to Power: The Rise of Creole Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago*, (Cambridge: Mass., 1968), p. 56. Hereafter page numbers are given in the text.

(46) Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," in *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn, Vol 12, No. 1, 1985, p. 148.

(47) Homi Bhabha, "Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *October*, 28, 1984; pp. 126-128.

(48) Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," op.cit., for the symbol and authority of the "English" book and English writer. I am drawing this analogy between codification processes in India and Trinidad advisedly - though I acknowledge that there are vast differences in the specific operations in the two contexts. Since the "Indian Empire" was so crucial for the English all the blue-prints of the colonial apparatus were drawn in the Indian context. (Not just for the creation of the obliging native, but also for the making of the imperialist citizen; cf., "Scenes of an Encounter," by Jennifer Sharpe, unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Texas, 1987). V.G. Kiernan argues that: "the main patterns of all British colonial adminstration were formed there [in India]; and to the public [English], the empire with its romantic associations meant chiefly India." (Kiernan quoted in Sharpe, op.cit. p. 3).

(49) Derrida, "Ends of Man", in *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. Alan Bass (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), pp. 114-16.

(50) The most recent of such studies is Partha Chatterjee's fascinating work, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, (London: Zed Press, 1987). Chatterjee demonstrates how the early nationalist text contested the orientalist inscribings on the 'natives'. Although such contestations were not free from complicities endangering their stance, Chatterjee argues, they were nevertheless deeply political. As a strategy such contestations had to selectively reinscribe the Orientalist utterances: "First of all, nationalist thought is selective about what it takes from Western rational thought. Indeed it is deliberately and necessarily selective" (p. 41). Chatterjee has a long section on how such a strategy works in the case of the renowned Bengali writer, Bankim Chandra, op.cit., Ch. 3.

(51) Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," op.cit., p. 149.

(52) Seepersad, Naipaul tells us, was an Arya Samajist. Arya Samaj was a Hindu revivalist organisation aimed at building a Hindu National culture. In this, like the early nationalist thought, it was contestatory in intention, but was in deep complicity with Orientalist attitudes in its reverse-ethnocentrism. The clientele for this movement in Trinidad were the landowning petite-bourgeois class.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER TWO -1

(1) The concept of the subject involves a complicated argument. It is a nomenclature to indicate neither an empirical individual nor a 'character', neither an essence nor a 'reality'. Yet the problematic of the subject largely emerges through a confusion of the subject and individual. I will take up this problem once again in Chapter Six but for the present I will indicate that the term (postcolonial) subject refers to what the narrative movement figures and textualizes through the proper names such as "Biswas" "Ralph Singh", "Salim" etc., in the Naipaul text.

(2) I use the term "nuclear family" to denote the codes of 'individual' and 'individualist' as they are developed in the bourgeois social formation in the West by the nineteenth century. These codes, such as liberty, rights of man, self-determination etc., create an ethos of individual as the centre or origin of the codes. It is as a part of this ideological matrix that the notion of the 'nuclear family' emerges. This notion like the other indicates or rather valorizes the primacy of the individual and appears as a promise for the protection of the individual. The underlying assumption of both these interrelated notions is that in opposition to 'community'-oriented norms and ethos the individual-oriented codes are superior and desirable virtues. On the basis of this ideological reasoning the codes of individualism are naturalised. And the process which programmes individuals in this ideological matrix is designated as "interpellation". The concept of "interpellation" comes from Althusser. The process more or less is a subjecting of individuals in such a way that they would in turn construct themselves as 'free' beings (within that 'programmed' mode). What the process and the programming preclude the subject from knowing is the subject's miscognition of his role as the originator of the codes. That is, the codes constantly shape the subject as the maker of the codes whereas the subject is more an effect of them. cf. V.N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, tr. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik, (1929; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1986), pp. 88-89 on the myth of individualism and its underlying assumptions; also cf., the entire chapter "Verbal Interaction", pp. 83-98. cf. also Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, tr. Ben Brewster, (London: NLB, 1971), pp. 160-170.

(3) The nuclear family model is a closed circle in the sense that it does not allow the subject any chance of recognising the illusion of 'independence' and individuality it promises.

(4) Homi Bhabha, "Signs taken for Wonders," in *Critical Inquiry*, op.cit., p. 148.

(5) Bruce King is the only critic I am aware of who promises to give a "structuralist" reading of the novel. King recognises a repetitive pattern in the novel and shows examples. But he uses this pattern to assert the "order and coherence" and "symmetry" of the novel on the one hand, and to "highlight the emotional and social relationships" on the other (*COM* p. 7). His project of "close reading" becomes pedantic when King begins to count the number of times the word "house" is repeated in a passage (*COM* p. 8). In fact, where he promises to give us a "structuralist reading" of the novel (in part III of his essay) King's analysis is a virtual paraphrasing of the narrative which his earlier sections avoided. And the aim of this paraphrasing seems to be no more than to note the repetitions (pp. 10-18). In spite of his claims, what one finds in King's reading is a story of mimeticism. Interpreting the novel in terms of chaos and order, he defines the 'order' (plausibly) not as the character's achievement (as some earlier critics of the novel did) but as "the order the narrator and literary work impress on the events"(p. 1). But King quickly goes on to identify the narrator with Anand and traces a "development" of the narrator's "satiric sense" (pp. 2-3): the narrator must

give "reality pattern and permanent existence in literary form" (p. 5). The father-son relation King maintains is never interpreted in any "structuralist" terms but continues mainly in dynastic linear sequential terms in this "chronological narrative" (pp. 5-6). King assumes without any demonstrable argument that Anand is the narrator of the novel. This assumption is very much a move from the mimetic model. And, predictably, King's reading represents *AHB* as a mark in "the evolution of literature in Trinidad" (p. 5). In short, King's reading retains the prejudices of both the "structuralist" and the mimeticist readings. As a "structuralist" critic he stops at a point where his analysis must begin - what does the repetitive structure signify? As a mimeticist he offers teleological explanations, of 'growth' and 'development' of the characters, and focuses on the realism of the novel. Bruce King, "Anand's Recherche du Temps Perdu", *Commonwealth*, op.cit., pp. 1-18.

(6) Wilson Harris, *Tradition, The Writer and Society*, (London: New Beacon Publications, 1967), p. 40. For Harris, in choosing to concentrate on a "traditional Hindu family" Naipaul restricts the "*open and original ground of choice*, the vision and stress of transplantation...", the "plural forms of profound identity" (p. 40 emphasis mine) and pp. 28-47.

(7) I am referring here to Freud's account of the Family Romance in which the Foundling is characterised as someone who constantly dreams about the nobility and glory of his godly parents who are always elsewhere far away from his earthly parents and surroundings. In contrast, in the Oedipal stage the child is said to transact with the obtruding reality and learns to live with permanent loss of the idyll he imagines. cf. Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality*, tr. James Strachey, Vol. 7 (1959; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp. 221-225.

(8) Samuel Weber, "The Sideshow, or: Remarks on a Canny Moment", in *MLN*, No. 88, 1973, p. 1114.

(9) On representation of castration in dreams, Weber, op.cit., p. 1114.

(10) Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, (1975; New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 76.

(11) Francis Wyndham, quoted on the cover of the Penguin edition of the text*AHB*.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER TWO - 2

(1) V.S. Naipaul, *In a Free State*, 1971; (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.

(2) The language or discourse of American cinema in the narrative is made of American (Hollywood, western) film titles. Further the narrative makes use of various titles and themes of films to present allegories which are contrasted by the events of the subject's own life. Thus already the American film, as in the case of Santosh in "One Out of Many", operates as a source of fabricating the subject. However, the narrative does not qualify the circulation of this discourse in the text. It must be noted that the presence of American cinema is one of the clues in the text to guess the historical period as the post-war Caribbean. Moreover, the presence of American cinema in the Caribbean serves as an indicator, in our reading, for the third phase of imperialism.

(3) Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema*, (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 125.

(4) Sigmend Freud, *On Sexuality* op.cit., pp. 221-225. The Family Romance scenario captures the infant at a stage when sis unaware of sexual difference. But the scenario also prefigures the conditions through which infantile sexuality on the one hand and the sexual difference at a later period on the other are determined. These conditions (or symptoms) can be seen in the child's vacillation towards his parents - his deification of them at one time, his distantiation of the father and suspicion of the mother's fidelity at another time, and his rivalry with his brothers and sisters at another time. However, Freud's argument that the child moves from the Family Romance circuit to the Oedipal circuit (and the former already prefiguring the latter) has been criticized for its monological (and one could add - monocultural) approach. cf., Deleuze and Guttari, *Anti-Oedipus*, London: Athlone, 1984, pp.

(5) Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* tr. Alan Sheridan, (1966; London: Tavistock, 1985), p. 11.

(6) Jacqueline Rose, "The Imaginary", in *The Talking Cure: Essays in Psychoanalysis and Language*, ed., by Colin MacCabe, (London: Macmillan, 1981) pp. 138-39.

(7) Melanie Klein, *The Selected Malanie Klien*, ed., by Juliet Mitchell, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p. 120.

(8) Lacan, op.cit., p. 23.

(9) Melanie Klein, "The Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States", op.cit., pp. 124-25.

(10) Lacan, op.cit., pp. 1-7.

(11) Selvyn Cudjoe, *The Movement of the People*, (Ithaca, New York: Calaloux Press, 1983), p. 33.

(12) V.S. Naipaul, "Power", in *The Overcrowded Barracoon*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 267-275.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER THREE

(1) I am using here Jacques Lacan's formulation of the symbolic order as a signifying system and (modelled on) language to which the child gains accession at the Oedipal stage when (and if) ssuccessfully overcomes the Oedipus complex. (Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, tr. David Macey, (1970; London: RKP, 1977), pp. 78-92.

(2) The figure of the subaltern comes from Gramsci but here Iam referring to the *reading* of this figure by the the "Subaltern Studies Group" associated with Ranajit Guuha. *Subaltern Studies*, Vols. I, II, III, IV and V (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981-86).

(3) V.S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).

(4) Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, op.cit., Strictly speaking the term primal scene is used to describe the infantile sexual phantasies. My use of the term is not at variance with this theme. Laplanche and Pontalis define the concept as : "scene of sexual intercourse between the parents which the child observes, or infers on the basis of certain indications, and phantasies. It is generally interpreted by the child as an act of violence on the part of the father" (p. 335).

(5) Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, tr. Alan Sheridan, (1973; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p. 84. It is interesting to note that Lacan situates the (European) project of subject constitution in the historical moment of the seventeenth century. He suggests that the parallel between the Cartesian argument of the contemplative subject (of "I think") and the general prominence of the field of optics in this period is not fortuitous: "It is not for nothing that it was at the very period when the Cartesian meditation inaugurated in all its purity the function of the subject that the dimension of optics that I shall distinguish here by calling it 'geometrical' or 'flat' (as opposed to perspective) optics was developed" (op.cit., p. 85). Michel Foucault, constructing histories of institutions which produced subjects, from another dimension focusses on the concept of gaze. However, Foucault's scene, in discussing the gaze, is nineteenth century Europe. From the turn of the eighteenth century, within seventy five years, Foucault argues, the gaze has become the most crucial source of power and knowledge in modern medicine's appropriation of the human body, in panoptic surveillance and control of convicts and madmen in prisons and asylums. Yet, one wonders whether there isn't an untracked thread running through the constructions of these two admirable thinkers? In tabulating the strategies and effects of subject formation they seem to be perennially engaged with only one side of what is in fact a double faced giant machine. For their projects concerned with the crisis *within* European history and its effects in subject-formation within the West are not of much help in tracking the history of the other face of the machine, its project of violence which constituted the 'native' as the self-consolidating other of the sovereign subject of Europe. cf. Michel Foucault, "The Eye of the Power," *Power/ Knowledge*, tr. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper, (1972; Brighton: Harvester, 1980), pp. 146-165.

(6) Malanie Klein, "A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States," in *The Selected Melanie Klein*, op.cit., pp. 122-130.

(7) Malanie Klein, op.cit., pp. 69-71.

(8) Klein, op.cit., pp. 125-27.

(9) Catherine Clement, *The Lives and Legends of Lacan*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 171.

(10) If the uncertainty of the "place" of the father turns the subject into a psychotic, how would one narrativize the effects of the distortions or disruptions of the "places" of the fathers which the imperialist epistemic violence practised? My point is that if the so-called civilisinfg mission (the Symbolic) is a codification/effacement of what is cathected (by the imperialist self) as the 'native', and the distortion/ representation such a signifying system upholds, then what theoretical model does psychoanalysis have upon which to narrativize this process (violence) of subjectification? There seems to be a blankness, in this context, in the theory. Neither the 'norm' nor the 'unusual' are helpful here in theorizing this different "experience", for the theory has nothing to say about the other face of the machine I mentioned earlier.

'Epistemic violence', for the purposes of my arguments is a short-hand for the colonialist/imperialist codifications of the laws, 'cultures' and invention of traditions in the non-European world from the period of Elizabethan expansion onwards (but more systematically since the late eighteenth century). I understand this process to be at work in making the 'other' into a 'native', in 'interpellating' the individual as the 'subject'. cf., Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (Urbana: University of Illionis Press, 1988), pp. 280-83; and Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in Francis Barker et al., *Literature, Politics & Theory*, (London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 148-172.

(11) Catherine Clement, op.cit., p. 170. Lacan *Ecrits*, p. 217.

(12) Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders", in *Critical Inquiry*, op.cit., p. 148.

(13) Incidentally, in this context, it must be pointed out that the "patronymic" (the quotes are necessary) "Naipaul" seems to have undergone some mutation on the lines I have mapped above. The "name-of-the-father" can no longer be written in the Indian languages I am aware of (Hindi and Telugu). For the dipthongs (ai and au) in the "patronymic" are alien to the Indian script in that combination. The patronymic already indicates an effect of hybridization as it were. Further one can locate in Naipaul's reconstruction of his father's efforts and adventures to become a writer a certain uncertainty, an ambivalence (his father's) in using the patronymic (if it is really a patronymic). Naipaul writes that his father used two spellings in writing the family name "Naipal" and "Naipaul". But he also used pen-names: "Paul Nye" and "Paul Prye". In his account Naipaul (VS) does not concentrate on these name-changes, these shifts and the element of uncertainty they indicate. Rather he sees the use of pen-names as an index to "those glorious days" when his father practised his vocation (*FC* p. 37). In Naipaul's own use of the family name the uncertainty seems to disappear but the mutation in the patronymic seems decisive by then. However, I am not using this bit of "(auto)biographical" information to substantiate a fictional account or to unveil the truth of the (metaphorically conveyed) fictional account through the truth of information. On the contrary, my account is to focus on the mode of narrativization at work in the so-called "autobiography" and the so-called "fiction". They seem to have a cross-hatching relationship in Naipaul's text.

(14) Here I am drawing on the work of Homi Bhabha: "Of Mimicry and Man", and "Signs Taken for Wonders". But at the same time I am attempting to articulate the liminal figure of the subaltern through Homi Bhabha's work.

(15) Homi Bhabha, Foreword to Fanon's *Black Skins White Masks*, tr. Charles Lam Markmann, (1952; London: Pluto, 1986), p. xvi.

(16) Under the guise of "classical" agriculture the text incorporates a thoroughly ideological version of the "pastoral". By the time of the Renaissance, as Raymond Williams demonstrates, the term pastoral has congealed all its associations with peasants and the troubles and turmoils of the country side into an artifical poetic form about "nature" and romance. Williams situates this sanitizing activity in the period of agrarian capitalism (Europe's historical transition from a feudal to a bourgeios world). That the pastoral theme itself is a re-invention in the eighteenth century becomes clear from the accounts of art historians. But in this re-invention there seems to be a deliberate attempt to purge the theme of its "unpleasant" association: "Thus in writing the Pastorals, let the tranquillity of that life appear full and plain, but hide the meanness of it; represent its simplicity as clear as you please, but cover its misery." (*The Guardian*, no. 22, 6 April 1713, quoted by John Barrell in his *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, i983), p. 1). Indeed it is this sanitizing impulse we find in the text's (*MM*) invocation of "classical" agriculture as the scene of the subject's "interdigitating" activities. In disavowing the "harsher" associations of the activity he is very much in complicity with the lords of the country-house estate. We will come back to this theme once again in the Naipaul text (cf. "Anathoths"). (Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, 1973; London: Hogarth Press, pp. 9-45). (However, it is a significant surprise that Williams's book even while dealing with the "New Metropolis" (pp. 279-288) has not a single reference to Naipaul. For, by 1973 Naipaul had become a significant literary and *political* figure to reckon with. This seems a sorry omission especially when Williams includes various other writers like R.K. Narayan, Achebe, Mulk Raj Anand, and Ngugi).

(17) From Melanie Klein's argument such projection (of the subject on the Garbage) with its desire to seperate 'good' from the 'bad' can be seen as part of psychotic circuit in which the subject is caught. (Klein, op.cit., pp. 118-119).

(18) This very theory of survival with its categorical imperatives repeats in another guise in that other celebrated text of Naipaul - *A Bend in the River* (1979). The Salim figure in the narrative, who moves (in the "wrong direction" p. 9) from Eastern African coast to a central African society, ostensibly as a businessman to start a venture offers us a series of despairing convictions (like Ralph Singh) about the society and his own past. Salim, seeking personal salvation, continually attempts to distantiate himself from his past and the people of the town where he goes to live (but he always refers to the continent summarily). It is in the process of this self-making that the Salim figure asserts that his own choice differentiated him from two categories of people. To the first belong people "soaring above the cares of the earthy", who with their consolation of religion show a "profound conviction about the vanity of all human endeavour." These are the long-visioned Asiatics of Deschampsneufs. For Salim these are his Asiatic muslim ancestors. The second category of people are those who are absorbed in life, whose life, to paraphrase Salim's responses, is reduced to instinctual level. These are the short-visioned Africans of Deschampsneufs. In contrast to them Salim feels that to "go along" with his ancestors was to seek "destruction" and his own journey into 'Africa' is described as a doomed one, for: "at the end of which there was no life." Against these two categories the Salim figure's choice is that of the "*middle ground*, of "a more materialist attitude." This position of the medium visioned survivor enables him, in the novel's logic to, escape at the end from the doomed society and his unspirited ancestry (*BR* pp. 21-23 emphasis mine). However, Salim also sees his choice as creating insecurity in him and this insecurity which he shares with the other expatriate academic - Indar - is explained in terms of the loss of a 'home' a homogeneous order: "Home was something in my head. It had been something I had lost" (*BR* p. 114). Indar too, like Hock in *MM*, yearns for a

pastoral order (*BR* p. 157): "So in my talks with Indar about Africa.... I felt that between us lay some dishonesty, or just *an omission, some blank,* around which we both had to talk carefully. That *omission* was our own past, the snapped life of our community" (*BR* p. 131 emphasis mine). *BR* has a figure analogous to Deschampsneufs in *MM* - Father Huisman. The Father prophesies almost fatalistically and cynically about the inevitability of the success of the "civilization of Europe" (p. 93) and the "retreat of African Africa" (p. 108). The Salim figure like Ralph Singh in *MM* repeats the prophecy in the narrative. In effect the "Africa" that is figured in the subject has a vague desire (for its "beauty") and yet is terrified by its (allegedly) fearful 'presence'. This imagined construction of the other world(s) in Naipaul text is more elaborately analysed in my next Section.

(19) Klein, "Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States", in *The Selected Malanie Klein*, op.cit., p. 151.

(20) Intriguingly enough, even in Naipaul's long historical narrative on Trinidad, *The Loss of El Dorado*, (1969), that history of indentureship and the subsequent period - is absent. The account stops at the moment when the history that constituted Naipaul began in Trinidad (cf. Ch. 9).

(21) The term 'quilting buttons' here is a reference to Lacan's concept of *point de capiton*. Lacan uses the concept to refer to the symbolic dominance of certain signifers in an otherwise tautological discourse in order to 'anchor' the discourse in the 'reality'. That is, as I have shown in my earlier discussion on the concept of text (cf. "Mappings"), any text conceived through linguistic symbols is in the constant circuit of sliding. Signification is possible only when this interminable transposition of symbols is interrupted through the (paradoxical) act of 'stopping' the skidding at certain points. Such an act is paradoxical because they do not promise any decisive termination of the slide, and the signification itself makes use of the symbols once again. Lacan describes such an activity as 'myth'. But this is a necessary paradox and in certain contexts such an activity has interventionary possibilities. My argument, in this thesis, attempts to pursue certain tropes to 'pin down' a certain signification in the Naipaul text and situate the tropes and the text in the wider network of imperialist text. cf. Jacques Lacan, *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, tr. Anthony Wilden, (1968; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1984), pp. 273-75.

(22) It is true that the subject in going against his role-playing appears to accept responsibility for racial "calamity" that erupts in the country on the issue of nationalization. But this responsibility is in no time diluted the moment he extends it from the specific act (of whipping up racial passions) to cover his entire "parenthetical life" that he led in the country: "It was a responsibility that began with that moment of return to the slave island, that moment of morning stillness; it continued to the moment of my final departure" (p. 240). For, such an action is never decisively faced and is in no time weakened when Ralph Singh accepts the money and the ticket to London the new leaders give him. The subject's gloss on this action ("responsibility") is familiar: "And my acquiescence, again in a role that was *given me*, need not be wondered at" (p. 242 emphasis added). For this is the mask of role playing that the text gives the subject throughout.

(23) This view of despairing conviction appears to echo Trinidad's first Premier Eric Williams's own position. Williams 's political philosophy is said to have been conditioned by "the assumption that the economic self-interests of the strong tend to be the final arbiters of history; and the West Indian territories were not to be numbered among the strong" In a striking contrast C.L.R. James, while concentrating on the very distress which the text (*MM*) holds up as a sign of incapacitation, "will always look to the weak, the exploited, for the motive power to break historical continuity and establish qualitatively new societies" (Ivar

Oxaal, *Black Intellectuals come to Power*, op.cit., p. 76) and colonialist narrativization of the (post)colonial 'native'.

(24) Fitzroy Ambursley and Robin Cohen, "Crisis in the Caribbean: Internal Transformation and External Constriants", in *Crisis in the Caribbean*, Ambursley and Cohen, eds., (New York: Monthly Press, 1983), pp. 2-21.

(25) Jose Miguel Sandoval, "State-Capitalism in a Petroleum-Based Economy: The case of Trinidad and Tobago", in *The Crisis in the Caribbean*, op. cit., p. 265.

(26) Bridget Brereton, *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 171.

(27) Gerard Tikasingh, "Toward a Formulation of the Indian View of History: The Representation of Indian Opinion in Trinidad, 1900-1921", in *East Indians in Trindad*, ed., Bridget Bereton and Winston Dookeran, (London: Heinemann, 1982), pp. 12-13. However, in Tikasingh's view of history there seems to be little space for the other races of Trinidad. His is a partisanal approach almost verging on racialist arguments.

(28) Sahadeo Basdeo, "The 1934 Indian Labour Disturbances in Trinidad: A Case Study in colonial Labour Relations," in *The East Indians in Trinidad*, op.cit., p. 62.

(29) ibid., pp. 63-64.

(30) Manning Maraable, *African and Caribbean Politics*, (London: Verso, 1987), p. 51.

(31) Ivar Oxaal op.cit., p. 5.

(32) Mahindranath Gosine, "Ethnic Heterogeneity and the Black Power Movement in Trinidad: An Historical and Socio-Structural Analysis", (Ann Arbour: University Micro films, 1985.) pp. 165-171, 256-292.

(33) Marable, op.cit., pp. 48-55.

(34) Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," op.cit., p. 296.

(35) Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question - the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse," *Screen*, vol. 24 No. 6 Nov-Dec, 1983, p. 18-36.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER FOUR

(1) What I mean by the term character system in the chapter is the variety of the charecter figures which the narrative constructs. Although, as I argue, these figures may be variously situated in relation to one another the ruses that operate in their textualisation seem to have more or less a certain kind of regularity. It is this regularity of the ruses I attempt to track in this chapter.

(2) Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 72.

(3) V.S. Naipaul, *In a Free State*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).

(4) Katherine Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1984), p.79.

(5) Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question - The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse", *Screen*, vol.24, No.6, Nov-Dec, 1983, pp. 18-19.

(6) Although it is the gaze of the other that becomes the source of fear it is of a similar postulation of the other as dangerous that Fanon writes: but the hero is imprisoned through the gaze: "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened! Frightened! Frightened!" (Franz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, op.cit.,) p. 112.

(7) This theme, in the colonial context, is elaborated by Homi Bhabha in his "Other Question" op.cit., p.18-36; (my own analysis partly draws from Bhabha's work).

(8) The text's attitude towards the homosexual subject - Bobby - is equivocal. One wonders whether such a charaterization assigns the text with any progressive element, for the homosexual element in the subject is narrativized more as an ailment, abnormality, a sign of being incapacitated and hence a deviation, rather than as a politically and ideologically defensible way of life.

(9) Fanon quoted by Homi Bhabha in the "Other Question", op.cit., p. 30.

(10) Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, op.cit.; p. 195.

(11) Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism", *On Sexuality*, op.cit., p. 357.

(12) Homi Bhabha, op.cit., p. 25.

(13) Laplanche and Pontales, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, op.cit., pp. 56-57.

(14) Although Naipaul's *Mr. Stone and the Knight's Companion*, (1963), has the subject as a European it cannot be said to construct this subject in the context of the colonial or postcolonial scene.

(15) Samir Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa - Origins of Contemporary Forms," and Folker Froble, Jurgen Heinrichs, Otto Kreye and Oswald Sunkle, "The Internationalisation of Capital and Labour," in *Political Economy of Africa: Selected Readings*, eds., Dennis L. Cohen and John Daniel, (1981; Essex: Longman), 1982. Manning Marable, *African and Caribean Politics*, op.cit. Naipaul's text could also be read as a narrativization of the events of the mid sixties in Uganda. The events appear to be references to Obote's and the postcolonial petite-bourgeosie's gaining of hegemonic power and the consequent dismantling of a "federalist" structure in Uganda. The 'federalist' structure of Uganda was more or less a dissimulation of collaboration of the colonial regime with the native chiefs. For the 'federalist' region of Uganda was confined to Buganda which was dominated by Kulak 'chiefs'. These chiefs themselves were mostly formed by the colonial land policies (an instance of imperialist 'invention of tradition') in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Obote dismantled this system by annexing the federalist Buganda into the petite-bourgeois (bureacracy, merchant-trader and commercial - Indian - bourgeoisie) controlled Uganda (Kampala region) {cf. Chs. II, III, V, VI and VII of

Mamdani's book). Although Naipaul's account ominously foreshadows the Amin years of Uganda - through the indirectly presented internal power structure - it cannot analyse specifically this situation of postcoloniality in historical and politico-economic terms. For one such brilliant analysis in the context of Uganda see Mahamood Mamdani's *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, (London: Heinemann, 1976). cf. Said, "Bitter Dispatches from the Third World", *The Nation* May 3, 1980. pp. 522-525.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER FIVE

(1) Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History*, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1983), p. 18.

(2) Although *Miguel Street*, (1959), was published as his third book Naipaul mentions that this was his first attempt at being a writer. cf., *Finding the Centre*, op.cit., p. 30.

(3) It would take more space than I have available to argue this at length, but in this apparently comic narrative the crucial structural ruse that operates in the making of the various sketches in this text is the tragic formula of reversal of fortunes. Each sketch in the narrative, I would argue, is endowed with a dominant predilection which in the course of the narrative changes the fortunes of the figure. Thus, Bogart who appeares initially as a dull man with "captivating languor" about him and turns out to be a smuggler, but his predilection - womanising - leads to his downfall; Popo's fake carpentry turns him from a happy-go-lucky to a morbid figure. Bigfoot the fighter's *hubris* is in his boastful might; he is knocked out by a fake soldier. Elias (wishing to go to England) ends up as a dirt-cart-driver and Morgan (the greatest pyrotechnicist) burns down his own hut. It is this ruse of tragedy that works through these sketches.

(4) Manohar Malgonkar, *The Princes*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961), hereafter *P* will be cited in the text.

(5) This necessarily brief description is based on various sources: Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: RKP, 1978); Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1975). But I have especially benefited from Gayatri Spivak's arguments and Derrida's critique of the structuralist project. cf., G. Spivak, "Translator's Preface," to Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, tr. Gayatri Spivak, (1967; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976), pp. liv-lix; and G. Spivak, "Imperialism and Sexual Difference," *Oxford Literary Review*, 8:1-2 (1986), pp. 225-238; Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences,", in *Writing and Difference*, op.cit., pp. 278-291.

(6) We see the same model permeating Naipaul's figuration of the slave and his insurgency and subalternity in his historiographical project, *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969). This is analysed in a later section.

(7) However, this confining of the Freedom movement to the figure of Gandhi and the Congress Party is itself an elitist reading of the Indian freedom struggle. For it erases the series of Subaltern struggles which at a very late point were appropriated by the nationalist (Gandhi/Congress) movement. cf., Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, (Delhi: OUP, 1983). Thus even the text's denunciation of the nationalists too is made from a hegemonic site.

(8) In her psychoanalytic theory of the novel Marthe Robert constructs a homology between the psychoanalytic fable of the child's growth and the development of the novel. The development is plotted in two stages called the Foundling and the Bastard stages. The child in the Foundling stage is engrossed in a parental idyll cherishing the omnipotence of the parents. Protected from reality by the glorious parents the child at this stage is said to be unaware of sexual difference. The second stage signifies a disruption in the idyll when the child, becoming aware of the obtruding reality begins to discard his mother from the idyll and distances his father into nobler regions. This is the Bastard stage when the child becomes aware of the sexual difference. As the mother 'falls' from glory in the child's view, the child suspects her fidelity and supervises her love life. In Robert's homology myth and Romance signify the Foundling stage and the novel signifies the Bastard stage. Marthe Robert, *The Origin of the Novel*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983), 28-39. Although this is not the place to examine Robert's arguments one can point out that her account of the fable and its homology with

the novel seem to follow a positivistic route. In a later (cf. Ch. 6) section in this thesis I pursue these arguments in more detail.

(9) V.S. Naipaul, *IWC* op.cit., p. 92 (emphasis original).

(10) Bakhtin quoted in Laura Mulvey's "Changes: Thoughts on Myth, Narrative and Historical Experience," *History Workshop Journal*, 23 Spring, 1987, p. 17.

(11) U.R. Anantha Murthy, *Samskara*, tr. A.K. Ramanujan, (Delhi: Oxford, 1976); hereafter all further references to the work, abreviated *S*, will be in the text.

(12) The passage reminds one of Ralph Singh's recollection, in *The Mimic Men*, of a similar moment when he spends a night during a stopover in a city with a prostitute. The recollection resembles the Acharya's ruminations and provides a counterpoint to Naipaul's arguments: "The self dropped away, layer by layer; what remained dwindled to a cell of perception, indifferent to pleasure or pain; neutral perception, finer and finer, having validity, existing only because of that probing which, growing fainter, yet had to be apprehended, because it was the only proof of life; fine perception reacting minutely only to time, which was also the universe. It was a moment that was extended and extended. There could be no issue; it was a moment which, when release without fruition came and perception widened again, defined itself as an extended moment of horror. It is a moment that has remained with me...that moment of timelessness, horror solace. The Highway Code! Through poor hideous flesh to have learned about flesh; through flesh to have gone beyond flesh" (*MM* pp. 236-37).

(13) Mikhail Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, tr. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, (1981; Austin: University of Texas Papers, 1983), p. 23.

(14) Bakhtin, op.cit., pp. 23-24.

(15) In an interview the author, Anantha Murthy, expressed his nostalgia for that past in unambiguous terms: "I want to go back to the world of *Samskara*. I am much pulled by the kind of values that *Samskara* world created and the only thing is that those values are not being lived." What values? *The Sunday Observer*, April 22-28, 1984, p. 13.

(16) Indeed it is this very disease that earns India a place (of course as a signifier of death) in that celebrated European text, *Death in Venice* of Thomas Mann.

(17) David Arnold, "Cholera and Colonialism," *Past and Present*, November, 1986, p. 147.

(18) P.J. Catanach, "Plague and the Indian Village," in Peter Robb ed., *Rural India: Land, Power and society under British Rule*, (London: Curzon, 1983), pp. 218-221.

(19) Arnold, op.cit., p. 148.

(20) V.S. Naipaul, "Without a Place," *CP*, op.cit., p. 45.

(21) Bakhtin, op.cit., p. 23.

(22) Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World*, (Delhi: Oxford, 1978), pp. 16-17. Hereafter page numbers are cited in the text.

(23) Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, (London: MacMillan 1983), pp. 3-4.

(24) Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, tr. Constance Farrington, (1965, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 200-250. Fanon, writing during the turbulent period of Algerian revolution passionately begins to deconstruct the (psychiatric) disciplinary formations about the Algerian 'mind'. The last section in the book "Colonialism and Mental Diseases," uses every example (case) to show how racialist politics produce 'scientific' truths. In India too the discipline of psychiatry began as early as 1922, but there is not a single work I am familiar with which discusses its affiliations with the narrative of imperialism. Kakar

doesn't even broach this point. The British School of Psychoanalysis in Ranchi was in fact started by a Lt.-Col. Owen Berkley-Hill. J.S. Neki, in his paper on Indian achievements in the discipline simply mentions the fact of the British role in *developing* the science in India but does not even bother to refer to the other narrative: "During the British period there was little psychiatry practised outside *mental hospitals*." What was the link between the colonial apparatus and the "science": Neki the "normalizer" (of the "mentally ill") does not open up the thicket. J.S. Neki, "Psychotherapy in India: Traditions and Trends", in *Psychotherapeutic Practices*, M. Kapur et.al., (Bangalore: Nimhans, 1979), pp. 120, 121 emphasis mine.

(25) The Indian Psychoanalytic Association which has affiliations with the International Psychoanalytic Association was formed in India in 1922 and continues to this day, with thirty five members - but with very little modification in its disciplinary model - that is, it continues to be culturalist. cf., D.N. Nandi, "Psychoanalysis in India", in *Psychotherapeutic Practices*, op.cit., pp. 21-32.

(26) All the contributors (practising and theoretical analysts) to *Psychotherapeutic Practices*, op.cit., show this desire to find Indian equivalents of the model. And Kakar's own recent book, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors*, (1982; London: Unwin Books, 1984) verges on the dangerous celebration of the nativist therapeutic models - which is also a continued ratification of the regional science as practised by the American peers. After Lacan it is Derrida who (perhaps more radically) frees psychoanalysis from being confined to "regional science". cf. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., pp. 87-89.

(27) T.G. Vaidyanathan refers to this in his "Authority and Identity" (forthcoming) in *Daedalus*. Vaidyanathan continues the long tussle with the thematic but his own grounds for a counter argument against the Oedipal model remain culturalist. Neki gives a longer account of Bose's attempts at a national variety of the science. Neki, op.cit., pp. 121-23. (I am grateful to Mr. Vaidyanathan for sending me a prepublication copy of his paper).

(28) A.K. Ramanujan, "Indian Oedipus," in A. Podder ed., *Transactions of the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies*, Vol XVI, 1972, pp. 127-37.

(29) J.S. Neki, op.cit., pp. 128-131.

(30) Kunal Chakrabarti, "Psychoanalytic Approaches to the Study of Ancient Indian Myths," in *Situating Indian History*, eds., S. Bhattacharya and R. Thapar, (Delhi: Oxford, 1986), pp. 384-403; Chakrabarti has also published a review of Kakar's book in *Studies in History*, Vol, II, no. 1. Jan-June, 1980.

(31) Luce Irigary, *This Sex Which is Not One*, tr. Catherine Porter with Caroline Burke, (1977; Ithaca: Cornell, 1985), pp. 170-72.

(32) Thus in his celebratory review of Kakar's book Satish Saberwal, a sociologist, argues in a benevolent tone that the model of devalued female in the Indian social set up can be justified because the female ("girl") gains "important psychological compensation in the particular affection given by her mother and others in the natal household"; the review is in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XV No. 11, March 15, 1980, p. 554.

(33) Jacques Lacan, "Psychology and Metapsychology," (1954), in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II*, tr. Sylvana Tomaselli, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), p. 8.

(34) Fanon, op.cit., p. 241.

(35) Lacan, "Psychology and Metapsychology," pp. 5, 12; and "Freud, Hegel, and the Machine", (1955), in *The Seminar*, op.cit., p. 68.

(36) Lacan, ibid., pp. 68, 64-68.

(37) Lacan, "Psychology and Metapsychology," op.cit., p. 12; and "Knowledge, truth, opinion," in *The Seminar*, op.cit., pp. 13-16.

(38) Quoted by Spivak in her "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," in *Other Worlds*, (London: Metheun, 1987), p. 197; interpolations in the quotation are Spivak's.

(39) As a contrast to both the Naipaul and the Kakar arguments one can cite E.P. Thompson's reflections on his visit to India during the Emergency. At the very outset Thompson declares his purpose in visiting India during that period. Although he visited under the aegis of exchanging some manuscripts one can see that his real interest is in seeing "how the Emergency was biting and how it was being resisted." Thompson's reflections, addressed to an English audience, were openly against any condescending view of the country of that period. It is this political solidarity that one can see in Thompson's account of the resistance groups he met in India and a glimpse at the work of the organizations and the tragedies they suffer - and yet continue to struggle: the "long working-class and peasant histories, in which generations of activists have struggled and suffered." Neither the Kakar argument nor the Naipaul text can sympathetically narrativize these histories. Instead, Naipaul, after his totalising essentialist readings and endorsement of the native informants, would admire the rabidly communalist-reactionary organisation like Shiv Sena in Bombay and the dangerously reverse-casteistic group of Tamil Nadu: "Some like Shiv Sena in Bombay... and the Dravidian movement in the south...have positive regenerating effects" (p. 114). Naipaul writes this during the Emergency. (Thompson's account was first published in *The Guardian*, 16 Nov., 1978, and later collected in his *Writing by Candlelight*, London: Merlin, in 1980; 1983, pp. 135-148).

(40) Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's texts and Imperialism," in *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12 no. 1, 1985, pp. 244-45.

(41) V.S. Naipaul, *IWC* op.cit., p. 112, emphasis mine.

(42) V.S. Naipaul, *OCB*, op.cit. p. 61.

(43) V.S. Naipaul, "Without a Place", op.cit., p. 45.

(44) Culturalist approaches ratify hegemonic self-explanations of sign-systems mostly through the source of high cultural discourses (alone); or they attempt to establish a correspondence between everyday practices and the hegemonic self-explanations. (Kakar's work, for instance is a case in point which combines both aspects of the culturalist approach). Culturalist approaches have severe limitations especially in the postcolonial context. For the hegemonic self-explanations they adduce are themselves thoroughly entangled in the imperialist network - in that their production and systematization are already effected by the codification process of the hegemonic 'human sciences'. (On imperialist codifications of hegemonic culture, cf., G. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," in Cary Nelson ed., *Marxism and Interpretation of Cultures*, op. cit., pp. 281-82). A culturalist approach with its investment in the 'native' (cultural) essence relies on questionable grounds when it isolates a 'culture' from the network. Thus prior to the culture-specific assessments of signifying practices one must necessarily have a general measure of the global effects of the network from around the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at least; in other words the need for a 'general science' as against the 'regional science' of culturalist approaches (cf., Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., pp. 87-88). In the absence of this, culturalist approaches, as they are practised (in India), are bound to remain essentialist and ahistorical.

(45) Elsewhere, I have argued that Gandhi's seemingly "mystical" and "superstitious" practices served his strategies of 'subversion'; I have also attempted to show how

Gandhi's larger task - 'confronting' imperialism - did not obsess him with the notion of national consciousness. The chapter, "Critical Traditionalist," is in my unpublished M.Phil dissertation, "V.S. Naipaul's Vision of India," submitted to Kakatiya University, India, in 1984. However, I must immediately add that my reading of Gandhi and other material in my earlier work is more in the nature of sociology of literature. The approach and the arguments here differ radically from my earlier work.

(46) Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight,* (1971; London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 14-16.

(47) M.K. Gandhi, *My Experiments with Truth,* tr. Mahadev Desai, (1927; Ahmadabad: Navjeevan Publishing House, 1972), p. 54.

(48) M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa,* tr. Valji Govindji Desai, (1928; Ahmadabad: Navjeevan, 1972), p. vii.

(49) This empirical argument is elaborated in my "Critical Traditionalist", op.cit., pp. 245-94.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER SIX

(1) For it is the same pastoral order which that other Naipaul subject, the Ralph Singh figure, yearns for and for him rituals like *Asvamedha* signify, and link him to, that order. The paradoxical signification of this order in the text of *The Mimic Men* I have elaborated in ch. 3).

(2) V.S. Naipaul, "Introduction", in Bridget Brereton and Winston Dookeran, eds., *East Indians in the Caribbean: Colonialism and the Struggle for Identity,* (Millwood, N.Y.,: Krauss International Publishers, 1982), p. 4.

(3) V.S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (New york: Viking, 1987), p. 105.

(4) M.N. Srinivas, *Caste in Modern India,* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962). Bernard Cohn, *India: The Anthropology of a Civilization,* (Englewoodcliff, N.J.: Princeton Hall, 1971), pp. 127-28.

(5) The concept of "worlding" derives from Heidegger's argument about the origin of the work of art. Heidegger describes the emergence of a work of art as a result of the rift between the 'earth' and the 'world'. The "worlding" of other worlds during the period of colonialism/imperialism can be described as an analogue to the Heideggerian formula. But my adaptation of the concept comes from Gayatri Spivak's reformulation of the analogy in which the colonized space is signified as the 'earth' on which the imperialist project, with its necessary yet contradictory assumption of uninscribed 'earth', proceeds to world a world. cf., Gayatri Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur," in Francis Baker, ed., *Europe and its Others,* op.cit., pp. 133,148.

(6) Satish Saberwal while arguing from a sociological point of view, asserts that it is the schema of religious explanations (of ideological practices) which operates in many Western and Indian sociological accounts which "desensitizes" one to the problem of inequality in India. One can see that this argumnent turns the tables against the schema by showing the confusions between prescriptions and descriptions. cf., Satish Saberwal, "Sociologists and Inequality in India: The Historical Context," *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol XIV, No. 788, (Annual Number) 1979, p. 253.

(7) Hobsbawm's point cited in Amartya Sen's *Poverty and Famines,* (London: Oxford, 1977), p. 17.

(8) Amartya Sen, op.cit., p. 6.

(9) Romila Thapar, *History of India,* Vol. 2, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), pp. 20-21.

(10) Colonial historiography could be said to take form in two stages at least: the early Orientalist accounts constructing 'India' as the land of origin ('centre') of the West and later on the work of the Utilitarians emphasising the distance and difference between the Orientalist India and the enlightened West (to legitimise the civilising mission). The corner stones in these two stages are the work of the William Jones and James Mill. Mill's six volume work was prescribed reading for (the empire-making) civil servants in the nineteenth century. The double move of imperialism (territorial worlding and knowledge- making - 'good society' and 'human sciences') can be said to posit the disciplinarization of historiography (in the Indian context at least). No historiographic project in India can operate by disavowing this polito-disciplinary formation. That is, the disciplinarization of historical writing, the components of this activity and the immediate aims and purposes of such discipline formation must be *read* when historical events (institutions, even everyday practices and the so-called commonsense attitudes) are

narrativized. Only recently the Subaltern Studies Group has inaugurated such a reading against the grain of the discipline. But even by the time Naipaul began writing on India oppositional voices against colonial historiography were not altogether absent. D.D. Kosambi's work on ancient India appeared as early as 1956 (*An Introduction to the Study of Indian History,*) and 1962 (*Myth and Reality*) and in 1965, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline* appeared; R.K. Mukherjee's on the East India Company in 1955; Romila Thapar's work on Asoka in 1962 and her monumental *History of India* (vol. 2) appeared two years after Naipaul's *AD* (in 1966). Even by the time of his second book on India (1977) Naipaul does not seem to have taken account of the stream of historiography that was spreading in India. Consequently his reflexive assertions largely reiterate essentialist judgements on India. cf., D. Lorenzen, "Imperialism and Indian Historiography of Ancient India," in S. N. Mukherjee, ed., *India: History and Thought: Essays in Honour of A.L. Basham,* (Calcutta: Sabarnarekha, 1982), pp. 84-102; and Jennifer Sharpe, *Scenes of an Encounter,* unpublished Ph.D thesis submitted at the University of Texas, 1987 (I am grateful to Arjuna Parakrama for sending me a copy of this thesis).

(11) Generalizations are necessary in order to articulate one's position in a society and that society's place, in turn, in an extremely divided world. For these articulations can no longer be confined to a specific event in isolation from the wider network with which such an event is inextricably linked by history. And to understand that history and that network for any interventionary purpose generalizations are unavoidable. But generalizations are problematic because one may endanger one's project by blurring the specificity of the problems or they may serve one as a convenient alibi for deferring involved understanding of the problems.

(12) Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchius,* tr. by M. Sainsbury, (London: Paladin, 1972); Dipankar Gupta, "Caste, Infrastructure and Superstructure: A Critique," *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. XVI, December 1981, pp. 2093-2104.

(13) A documentary approach uses texts as sources of transparent representation of reality. Such an approach does not examine the way the text *re-shapes* its 'documentary' ('representational') aspect, and the purposes such re-workings serve, its effects in a social formation. cf., Dominic LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History,* pp.32-34

(14) The Bhagavad Gita is a syncretic text interpolated into the epic, *Mahabharata,* sometime around 200 A.D. The Gita, for reasons yet to be analysed, becomes an important document in the nationalist movement. I am not aware of any work which analyses how and why this document becomes a source for the nationalist leaders (as opposed to the subaltern class) for the articulation of their aspirations. Gandhi, Ghosh, Tilak among others offer selective readings of the Gita. It would be worth tracking the links between the selective invention of Indian tradition in the Orientalist approaches and the sudden prominence of this document. Such a study - which would also address itself to the continuing dissemination of selectively constructed scriptural ideas through the popular media would be fascinating but is obviously beyond the scope of this thesis. D.D. Kosambi's construction of the Gita, its sources and the purposes it served may be a starting point for such a study. But in the present context let me quote a (mildly positivistic) passage from Kosambi against the "brahmin methodology" of using the Gita for interpreting society: "A great deal of the confusion over the *Gita* derives from ignorance of reality, of the actual practices of large social groups; and from taking brahmin documents as representative of all Indian society." cf., D.D. Kosambi, "The Historical Development of the Bhagavad Gita," in Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, ed., *Studies in the History of Indian Philosophy,* Vol. 3. (Bombay:

Popular Publishers, 1981), pp. 246-47 (the quotation comes from note 3. of the essay).

(15) Franco Moretti's *Signs Taken for Wonders* has been useful to me in developing this comparison. Moretti, *Signs* tr. Susan Fischer and others, (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 48-49, 295.

(16) V. Naipaul, "Without a Place", op.cit., pp. 39-40.

(17) Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, op.cit., pp. 2-4. Jacqueline Rose, "The Imaginary", in *The Talking Cure*, op.cit., pp. 138-141.

(18) Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, op.cit., pp. 112-114. Norman Bryson, *Vision in Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, op.cit., pp. 97-98.

(19) Lacan, *Ecrits*, op.cit., pp. 197-198.

(20) Lacan, *Ecrits*, op.cit., p. 285 (here I am using Gayatri Spivak's translation of the passage; cf., Spivak, "Translator's Preface", op.cit., p. lxv).

(21) Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen*, 16.3, 1975, pp. 6-12.

(22) cf. Georg Lukacs, *The Theory of the Novel*, tr. Anna Bostock, (London: Merlin, 1971), pp. 56-83. J.M. Bernstein, *The Philosophy of the Novel: Lukacs, Marxism and the Dialecticsof Form*, (Brighton: Harvester, 1984), pp. 44-69, 147-172.

(23) For the argument concerning a radical 'epistemic' shift in European thought, Foucault's work, especially *The Order of Things*, has become prominent.

(24) Mikhail Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, op.cit., pp. 41-83. However, what is intriguing in Bakhtin's argument is his privileging of the very characteristics that are formulated around the early nineteenth century. While displacing the novel into the low cultural art forms of antiquity Bakhtin retains all the attributes of the novel characterised by the theorists who would ground the origins of the novel in the seventeenth century. I must add, however, that my earlier use of Bakhtin's argument is not contradicted by my reservation against his working out of the theory of the novel here. For although Bakhtin works through the binaries of 'low' and high cultures the force of his argument is in emphasizing the moments of *interaction* of these discourses and marking the potential of 'low' codes against the valorized schema of high culture. It is this spirit of reinscribing the binaries that fascinates me in Bakhtin's work and my own thesis is to a certain extent in consonance with such a project of rearticulating the binaries. However, it is Bakhtin's attempt to read back the content of a nineteenth century problematic (of the novel) that bothers me for I feel that that problematic itself is an effect of hierarchised binaries which Bakhtin's thesis is arguing against. But I don't think this reading back would dilute Bakhtin's specific contribution - re-working the binaries.

(25) Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, (1951; Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1965), p. 16. Hereafter, abbreviated *R*, included in the text.

(26) It is difficult to guess Camus's sources here. But his own remark on "mediterranean culture" can be a clue to the attitude Camus had towards the non-European region. In this essay there is just a reference to the 'greatness' of Oriental thought but nothing substantial appears in terms of analysis as such. But the unity he imposes on the East/West here to the core remains a French version of European 'self': "which in fact served to legitimise France's possession of Algeria." So Oriental thought is appropriated through the Arab regions for Algeria is already dissimulated as a part of France. cf., Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Camus*, (London: Fontana, 1970), pp. 11-13.

(27) Camus's arguments should be situated within his writings on Algeria during the last phase of his life. Camus was the kind of colonizer who would ask for justice

as long as the controlling power of justice is in the secure hands of the colonizer. Any questioning of such 'justice', such unequal control, would not be termed 'rebellion' but denounced as 'terrorism'. Thus as long as Algerian insurgency did not disturb the Parisian intellectual he would remain silent or glorify the heritage of justice (between 1945-54). But once the FLN (National Liberation Front of Algeria) and its insurgents begin to question the positionality of 'justice' he would deplore the Front. Camus condemned the Algerian Freedom struggle, denied them the right of independence and attacked the insurgency as "terrorism which operates blindly." For he felt that it would be mad to contemplate that the French should leave Algeria and argued that the French workers in Algeria were "exploiting nobody". Camus's writings on rebellion and Algeria are permeated by the counter-insurgency rhetoric. And it is within such rhetoric that one should read his denial of rebellious element in the non-European societies. When the Algerian rebellion threatened the French roots in the colony Camus supported the repression of the insurgency and refused negotiations with the FLN. O'Brien op.cit., pp. 65-66, 74-75; David Caute, *Fanon*, (London: Fontana/Collins, 1970) pp. 42, 48; Irene L. Gendzier, *Franz Fanon: A Critical Study*, (London: Wildwood House, 1973), pp. 161-162.

(28) Ronald Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," *Modern Asian Studies*, 20, 3 (1986), pp. 425-27. However, Inden's essay reads like a catalogue of how the bad West saw India. Inden's essay seems to me to be a misappropriation of Said's work (though Inden acknowledges his debt to Said). For after Said such methodology can become a dangerous pastime (for the postcolonial). I feel Inden's work cannot escape that. The only 'usefulness' of this essay for me is the catalogue it gives of the 'enemies' of India. Inden does not problematise his own sources and betrays his endeavour by ignoring the work that has emerged from that very India he is out to protect. A simple lip service to the Subaltern Studies in a footnote at the end of the essay will not do. Let me pick up just one pious intention of the essay: Since India has "still not regained the power [in 1986!] to know its own past" the critic would go forth to "produce a knowledge of India that helps restore that power"(p. 403); and the enlightenment we get at the end of the forty five page essay is that Indian ideas and institutions are "every bit as rational (or irrational) as those of the modern West"! (p. 446).

(29) Paucity of historiographical material on eighteenth century India at the time of Naipaul's first narrative (1962-64) might be adduced to make allowance for this colonial view of history. Recent researches, however, question such a view of eighteenth century India. cf., K.N. Panikkar, "Cultural Trends in Pre-Colonial India: An Overview", *Studies in History*, Vol. 2 (1980), pp. 63-80.

(30) J.N. Farqhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, (Delhi, 1976), quoted in K. N. Panikkar, "The Intellectual History of Colonial India," in Romila Thapar and S. Bhattacharya, eds., *Situating Indian History*, op.cit., p. 408. Other authorities in this line of argument (working mostly in the 1960s) are Charles Heimsath (*Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, Princeton, 1964) and David Kopf (*British Orientalism and Bengal Renaissance*, Berkeley, 1969).

(31) Naipaul's use of another native informant - R.K. Narayan - runs very much on the lines which construct the Santosh figure in "One out of Many". The Naipaul text introduces a split (as it does in the case of Gandhi and Santosh) in Narayan's work and this split is located in a chronological (not in the social text) charting of the work. Prior to 1967 Narayan's work is said to celebrate or maintain "equilibrium, " "wholeness" - that metonym of continuity (Indianness) that characterises the scapegoat. In 1967 (the year of Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets*) the equilibrium of the work is cracked up (the "shattering of the world") and the reason for this is located in what is described as "modernity" - machines,

American-Korean woman, 'foreign-returned' son.

Naipaul resolves this "cracked up" work of Narayan by drawing the equation of the text in terms of "religious" reconciliation = "Hindu response to the world": the schema that narrativizes Santosh's life. Predictably in Naipaul's reading the "cracked-up" world evokes in the subject a desire for and an anxiety about the 'lost' equilibrium. However, Naipaul's splitting of Narayan's work serves two purposes: 1)to fix 'Narayan' as Naipaul's own prehistory ("That's where we all started") as the Santosh figure is said to function; and 2) to consolidate the project of distance and difference - through a scapegoat alterity who cannot function and who laments over the loss - the crack.

Narayan's text is certainly fractured but the fracture cannot be confined to and privileged in a specific book in a chronological sequentiality. The fissure is always already there. It is not whether the fissure is there but how it is contained and how the effect of 'unity' (if it is there at all) is brought forth, that must be examined. Further the effect of such containment has to be interpreted through the text and not allegorized as some putative Indian 'mentality'. And the Naipaul text avoids that. In effect Narayan - the native informant *par excellence* in the Naipaul text - becomes a convenient figure for defining the scapegoat. Naipaul's discussion on R.K. Narayan appears in both the narratives on India *AD* and *IWC*.

(32) V.S. Naipaul, *OCB*, p. 98.

(33) A "negative" argument serves two purposes: firstly, to use the tools of a critical discourse - such as psychoanalysis in my context - to critique another position; secondly, since this 'negative' use does not necessarily mean a complete endorsment of the assumptions of the discourse which provides the tools, a potential critique of the discourse itself is not ruled out in such uses. I use Bryson's arguments to interrogate the assumptions of a ruse that operates in the Naipaul text: the ruse of the gaze. Bryson's own argument, I feel, is an attempt to articulate a formalist and a materialist position in the specific discipline of art history. So in what appears to be an 'inside' critique of art history Bryson constructs an epistemic system (knowledge system conditioned on a specific key in a particular epoch) which, as he argues, operates the 'Western' notions of painting from Pliny to Gombrich. The key to this system could be referred to as "representationalism". Through various 'mutations', as it were, such as from "natural attitude" (with faith in the plenitude of a referent) to Essential Copy (variations of the natural 'outside'), from 'perceptualism' to the age of the Gaze, the continuity of the episteme was unhampered for the key continues to be "representationalist". The regrettable effect of this formidable episteme, Bryson seems to argue, is that the discipline (practice) continues to exclude the materiality of the 'body' from the discipline. That is, the 'body' as the vehicle emphasizing the *process* or the *duree* of the activity itself does not enter the discipline - it is finessed out of practice, the brush-strokes are smothered out to provide a ready-made product, as it were. Yet there is a way through which the episteme contains the body - and it is through the voyeuristic cathexis of the gaze: the body is framed as an object of sexuality. Through the practice of isolating a minor motif or detail from the medieval schema (of European painting) in post-medieval Europe the procedure of fixing the object of the eye becomes prominent. Landscape historians too acknowledge this 'mutation', as I will show in a later section (cf. Ch 8), and map it as a culmination from a generalized presentation to a particularized *outlook*. Bryson problematises this 'moment' (mutation) and attempts to articulate (for he does not elaborate this) the logic of the gaze with the discourse of sexuality. In Bryson's problematization however, the logic of the gaze comes under critique.

I am not competent to tackle this argument at the level of disciplinary criticism but I remain unconvinced by a certain argument of Bryson. In Bryson's construction the gaze remains a Lacanian trope but Bryson does not clarify his differences from Lacan for, I feel, his critique differs from Lacan's. Secondly, Bryson's unproblematic deployment of the signifier "China" in his argument. For Bryson, the 'Chinese' episteme achieves what the 'Western' episteme fails to do: incorporation of the body as a signifier of process, activity; the brush strokes define the artist's physicality *within* the painting. So "China" really operates to designate the "West". It is in the deployment of "China" that the formalist in Bryson comes out. For Bryson does not see the need to situate/chart the Chinese schema other than in disciplinary terms. My point is that Bryson avoids the need to situate the schema in the social formation of Chinese society as he does not in the case of the West. In effect what we seem to get is a transparent 'China'. For in the construction of the Western schema Bryson draws from a variety of sources (philosophy, history, marxism and post-structuralism) whereas *all* the sources that inform him about the "China" are mostly periodical essays - fifteen in all - from just *one* disciplinary source: art history. Bryson's deployment of "China" seems to be in line with *Tel Quel*'s use of the Orient, as in Barthes's Japan and Kristeva's China: its aim is to use the Other to clarify the 'self'. But this colludes Bryson's construction with an argument which he attempts to critique: the "moment" of the gaze, the moment of mutation in European history.

(34) Luce Irigary' work is a formidable questioning of the discipline from this angle. I am drawn to Irigary's argument about the gaze because of her deconstructive reading of the signifier, her exposure of the phallocentric bias of the argument. I think what Bryson briefly works out - the links between sexuality and the gaze - Irigary elaborates in an admirable narrative. Luce Irigary, op.cit.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

(a) John Berger and Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man*, (London: Writers & Readers, 1975; 1982), pp. 7, 86.

(1) Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual Histories*, op.cit., p. 280.

(2) V.S. Naipaul, "One Out of Many," in *In a Free State*, (Harmondworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 37.

(3) *Hubshi* seems to have an Arabic origin - *Alhabash* in Arabic refers to Ethiopians. In North India *hubshi* appears to refer to the 'untouchables'.

(4) V.S. Naipaul, "Without a Place," op.cit., p. 45.

(5) ibid., pp. 46-47.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

(a) V.S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, op.cit., pp. 32-34 (emphasis added).

(1) V.S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival: A Novel in Five Sections*, op.cit.

(2) We can see a similar assertion in the investigating subject's construction of India in *IWC*. But such an assertion comes in the context of his dismissal of the "European approach" to the historical construction of the Indian past. For such an approach "makes nonsense of the stops and starts of Indian civilization, the brief flowerings, the long periods of sterility..." (*IWC* p. 130). But when he turns to the European past he finds the same alternating pattern of darkness and light.

(3) For the argument on 'entropic decline', I have followed Patrick Wright's fascinating book, *On Living in an Old Country*, (London: Verso, 1985), p. 70.

(4) Roger Sales, *Pastoral and Politics*, (London: Hutchinson, 1983), p. 16.

(5) Celine, quoted in Patrick Wright, op.cit., p. 35 emphasis mine.

(6) Simon Rae, review in *New Statesman*, January 11, 1985, p. 33.

(7) John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 1-2.

(8) Barrell, ibid., pp. 3-4.

(9) Barrell, ibid., p. 32, emphasis mine.

(10) John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting: 1730-1840*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980; 1983), pp. 4-5.

(11) Roger Sale, op.cit., p. 16.

(12) Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape*, op.cit., pp. 58-59.

(13) Barrell, ibid., p. 32.

(14) Barrell, op.cit., p. 75.

(15) Barrell, ibid., p. 63.

(16) Barrell, *The Darkside of Landscape*, op.cit., pp. 4-5.

(17) Raymond Williams, "Region and Class in the Novel," in *Writing in Society*, (1983; London: Verso, 1985), p. 231.

(18) If one treats the subject's life as being parallel to Naipaul's own one can see that it was during this period (1970-80) of his stay in the manor house cottage that his harsher judgements on the African, Caribbean and Indian societies were shaped. Indeed Naipaul can distantiate from and scapegoat these relations conveniently.

(19) Sales, op.cit., pp. 78-79.

(20) Barrell's work is fascinating but is devoid of the double movement I suggested above. The only word where Barrell's allusion starts and stops is "mercantilism." In fact the late eighteenth century attitudes of the cultivated which Barrell so meticulously analyses - as attempts to impose order on the land and language - operate as an allegory of a much greater violence imperialism has unleashed. For it is during this very period that the British imperialist mapping of territories, its worlding of the world (in India) was steadily progressing. cf., Spivak, ("The Rani of Sirmur," op.cit.,) and Bernard Cohn who in "Language of Command and Command of Language", shows the way in which specific translations and selective usages and inventions of 'traditions' began in India from the late eighteenth century onwards *Subaltern Studies*, vol. IV, (Delhi: Oxford, 1986), pp. 226-329. But Barrell has very little to say about the worlding of the 'third world'. His narratives remain one-dimensional. Roger Sale in his *Pastoral and Politics*

alludes to the fact of colonies and the wealth from the plantations. But there is no larger treatment of that aspect in his work either.

(21) The subject's romance with the manor-house reminds one of that other disputed Calkey Abbey of 1984. This estate, precisely because of its 'remoteness' to modernity, its very 'decay' became the ground on which the Conservative political interests converged and championed the cause of 'preservation', 'making the heritage'. Similarly the subject's musings on the manor-house might improve its value in the National Heritage market. On Calkey Abbey cf. Patrick Wright, op.cit., pp. 38-42.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER NINE

(a) Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, tr. Mark Poster, (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975), p. 47.

(1) Roland Barthes, "Historical Discourse", in Michael Lane ed., *Structuralism: A Reader*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 154-55; Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978), pp. 121-134.

(2) Gayatri Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur", op.cit., p. 130.

(3) Gabriel Jocipovici, *The Spectator*, detail mislaid.

(4) Thus Jesse A. Noel in his scornful review of *LED* feels that what this "entirely orthodox hindu" had done cannot be treated "as a new style of historical writing which ought to be copied by academic historians." Further, " No one will seriously recommend it as a prescribed text in any history course at university level." However, he would endorse it as "an excellent recommendation for the study in the English Departments" for Naipaul's novelist's prose. Noel's denigration of the work is based on his high esteem for the 'scientific' nature of the historian's job: "Scientific research still aims at determining the truth" unlike the novelist's dramatic style. Jesse Noel, "History and Homelessness in Naipaul," *Caribbean Studies*," 11, ii (1971), pp. 83-87.

(5) One can see in Derrida that the so-called "Chinese prejudice" is a way of assimilating a radically *different* model into a European theological one. cf. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., pp. 76-81. However, it is a surprise in Derrida that this process should be located in 17th and 18th century history. For European encounter with the non-European cultures was already prominent by the end of 15th century; and the model of assimilation of the other world 'texts' (in the broader and general sense) was essentially the one Derrida locates in the 18th century. Perhaps this may be due to Derrida's situating of what could be called the Western 'episteme' in the language theories of this period. However, the term episteme in Derrida differs from Foucault's in its problematization of what Foucault would treat as radical breaks. Derrida's episteme has the force of the entire metaphysical tradition of the West from Plato to Heidegger.

(6) However, Baudrillard in championing the possibility of the "radical perspective" of other cultures seems to go to the extreme of valorizing "primitive" "societies" - as if these societies could be found in their 'pristine form' even after the epistemic violence perpetrated by the imperialist expansion (not just of European society but crucially in the present context its discourses). One gets the impression that Baudrillard's valorization of the radically different perspective of symbolic practices isn't checked by the fact of imperialist fracturing of other epistemes. Another difficulty is that Baudrillard does not undertake to examine the politics of the symbolic code of 'primitive' societies - and the lineaments of domination-repression operating in these societies. Consequently for Baudrillard too the Third World seems to become a convenient radical signifier. cf. Baudrillard, op.cit., pp. 88-89. For the discussion of the Third World as a radical signifier cf., Gayatri Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur," op.cit., pp. 128-29.

(7) J.H. Elliott, "Triste Trinidad"; J. Noel, "Historiography and Homelessness in Naipaul"; "The Failings of an Empire," in *Times Literary Supplement*, Dec 25, 1969, p. 1471. For J.H. Elliott the narrative has no 'structure' which, he feels, might disturb historians. This absence of a pattern is read as an indication of Naipaul's refusal to impose a "structure on incohate mass of facts." (J.H. Elliott, "Triste Trinidad," *New York Review of Books*, 14 (May 21, 1970), pp. 25-27.)

Some critics like Margaret Nightingale go further in explaining the 'structure' they find in the narrative. For Nightingale the narrative exemplifies a "cyclical theory of history". But that's not all. She goes on to give us an ethnicist key from her discovery. This 'cyclical' structure is traced to Naipaul's psychology: he was "unconsciously influenced by the Hindu concept of *maya*, which studies the illusory nature of the world." Yet, Nightingale, like John Thieme, wishes to save Naipaul from being a Hindu. So she says that in his historical depiction "Naipaul was reacting against the Hindu concept of *samsara* - [the view] that existence is an endless sea of changes." Nightingale does not see the contradiction between her earlier notion of 'cyclical' (*maya*) and her suggestion about Naipaul's fight with *samsara*. (Margaret Nightingale, "V.S. Naipaul as Historian: Combating Chaos," *Southern Review: Literary and Interdisciplinary Essays*, {Adelaide, Australia}, 13, (1980), pp. 239-250).

(8) Baudrillard, op.cit., pp. 53-58.

(9) Derrida demonstrates how this metaphor of home runs through the metaphysical projects of Western philosophy. cf. Derrida, op.cit., pp. lxxiii-ixxiv.

(10) After explaining the *loss* through the Egyptian painting in *In a Free State* Naipaul suddenly feels recoiled by the sense, as it were, of associating the 'romance' of origin with an *Egyptian* painting. He feels now the "beginnings" were nothing more than "a fabrication, a cause for yearning, something for the tomb." *IFS*, p. 246.

(11) Derrida, op.cit., p. 162.

(12) Arie Bonnert, "The Arawak Indians of Trinidad and Coastal Guiana, ca 1500-1650," *The Journal of Caribbean History*, vol. 19:2, 1984, pp. 123-188.

(13) The surveyor-'explorer'-'adventurer'-'historians' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries "in collecting historical evidence...were also contributing not only to the writing of history but its making also." Elsa V. Goveia, *Historiography of the British West Indies*, (Mexico: Instituto Panamericano de Geografia e Historia, 1956), pp. 16, 17-18.

(14) 'Strategic formation' is a methodological device Edward Said introduces in his study of the 'field' of Orientalism. This device is used to analyse the "relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large." Said, *Orientalism*, op.cit., p. 20.

(15) John H. Elliott, "Discovery of America and the Discovery of Man," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 58 (1972), p. 104.

(16) Quite contrary to Naipaul's hypothesis, Margaret Hodgen argues that one of the most striking features of Columbus's *Journal* is its freshness and modernity - and its "photographic detachment". Curiously, she also feels that the *Journal* contains a strong feeling of "friendliness" and it was "less medieval than that of Sir Walter Ralegh". Margaret Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seenteenth Centuries*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), pp. 17-20.

Yet it should be noted that Hodgen's argument is replete with anthropologistic prejudices. She classifies "the savage cultures" as "typically history-less" for they have "no documents" (p. 356).

(17) John Elliott, op.cit., pp. 103-109. Goveia, op.cit., pp. 11-16.

(18) Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, tr. Brian Massumi, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 70.

(19) Naipaul's text is pervaded by representations of such gory details. The detail seems to acquire a pattern and carry a message. This is analysed at a later point in my argument.

(20) Hayden White analyses this anxiety about the cannibal as a fetishistic expression of the desire to possess or to destroy. White, *Tropics of Discourse*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978), pp. 126-27.

(21) Detail mislaid.

(22) Partha Chatterjee, "More on Modes of Power and the Peasantry," in Ranajit Guha ed., *Subaltern Studies*, vol. II, pp. 317, 319-322.

(23) Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797*, (London: Metheun, 1986), pp. 74-78.

(24) Arie Bonnert, op.cit., pp. 137-140.

(25) Peter Hulme, op.cit., p. 78.

(26) Pierre Vilar, *A History of Gold and Money 1450-1920*, tr. Judith White (1969; London: NLB, 1976), pp. 66, 107.

(27) Vilar, op.cit.,

(28) Ralegh, "The Discovery of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana...", in Richard Hakluyt, *Voyages*, Vol. 7, (1907; Dent: Everyman's Library, 1962), p. 302

(29) However, it must be acknowledged that unlike other historians like Fraser and Milleette who, in recounting the Arenal event have completely omitted the Spanish reprisals that followed the revolt, Naipaul gives the details of the spectacles of the 17th century torture (p. 120). Yet as I suggested earlier, Naipaul's detailing of the consequences of insurgency follows a pattern and this is analysed at a later point in my account. cf. L.M. Fraser, *History of Trinidad*, (London: Cass Library of West Indian Studies, 1971), Vol. II, p. 3. James Millette, *Society and Politics in Colonial Trinidad*, (1970; London: Zed Books, 1985). Fraser was, it must be noted, the commissioner of police who worked in Trinidad in the post-Emancipation period. His ambitious three volume history on Trinidad was commissioned by Trinidad the Legislature, though eventually only two volumes were published. However Fraser's own prose especially in the context of native resistance was very much affected by his (childhood) experience of the so-called (Asian) Indian mutiny, of 1857. cf., Fraser, op.cit., pp. 22, 47, 218; and also cf., Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies*, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1982), p. 369. Although Fraser put forth reservations against the institution of slavery in theory, in practice his authoritarian convictions conveniently endorsed the enslavement of negroes. cf. Goveia op.cit., pp. 125-130.

(30) Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1983), pp. 220-21. (However, it must be noted that the force of Lewis's argument is based on an active reading of the archival material and early Spanish narratives - material which was available even during the time when Naipaul wrote.) For the discussion of cognitive failure of historiography I followed Gayatri Spivak, *In Other Worlds*, op.cit., pp. 199-200.

(31) Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters*, (London: Verso, 1979), p. 252.

(32) A "shifter" is a trope or an anecdote only indirectly related to the chronology of a narrative. Yet 'shifters' have paradoxical functions in the narrative in that they disrupt the narrative progression. And the arrangement of shifters signifies the 'strategic formation' of the narrative 'events' and their 'agents' in a text. Roland Barthes, "Historical Discourse", op.cit., pp. 146-47.

(33) The case of Luisa Calderon, a mulatto girl tortured on the charge of theft, appears as a minor trope within a major narrative. What occupies the centre-stage in Naipaul's narrative is not the phenomenon of theft and its significance and consequences in the plantocracy but it subserves the epic story of Picton's fall. It was in fact Picton's trial that, as he asserts, stimulated Naipaul to explore more about the case. This interest began as a discovery of the trial in the Panther paperback of the *New Gate Calendar*. But no book could satisfy him: "Fraser was not comprehensible: Fullarton is a spiteful madman who suddenly turns up in a *peaceful* colony and begins to persecute Picton for an old, unimportant punishment of a delinquent [?] mulatto girl" (p. 382 emphasis mine). Many accounts, Naipaul points out, of the period "elide" out Picton's story as they did in the case of Berrio in the earlier period. This was another prompting to reconstruct the past. Naipaul achieves this and the tragic narrative does clear up Picton's image. Since Picton's story is the history "with dates" like that of Ralegh's and Berrio's all the other stories - insurgencies, Indian and slave worlds - serve to magnify that history and those figures and their "adventures" and "explorings": they serve as shifters.

(34) Philip D. Curtain, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850,* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 83.

(35) Gordon Lewis, op.cit., p. 187. It is puzzling that Naipaul who speaks with unusual admiration of the calypso in *The Middle Passage,* makes no mention of the genre while discussing the jokes in slave society (*MP* pp. 75-76). However, it must be noted that the calypso tradition gained its prominence in the early twentieth century though its roots can be traced to the nineteenth century.

(36) Michael Craton, op.cit., p. 35.

(37) Michael Craton, op.cit., pp. 177-78.

(38) Michael Craton, op.cit., p. 178.

(39) James Millette, op.cit., pp. 8-16, 25.

(40) Gordon Lewis, op.cit., pp. 176-77.

(41) Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), pp. 12-13.

(42) Gayatri Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," in *In Other Worlds,* op.cit., p. 200.

(43) Gordon Lewis, op.cit., pp. 175-178.

(44) Genovese. op.cit., pp. 18-20, 28, 30-33.

However, specifically referring to Trinidad, Genovese feels that since it was a commercial centre and not a plantation colony in Spanish phase Trinidad did not see rebellions; and later it was the "overwhelming" power of the British and the "prospects for peaceful emancipation" that held rebellion in check.

Genovese, in spite of his radical approach to slave history, shares something with Naipaul. Genovese emplots the history of slave-rebellion into a binary division of pre- and 'real' revolutionary movements - the dividing point being the French Revolution. Medieval peasant revolts and slave insurgencies prior to the Grand moment (1789), Genovese argues, "lacked the material base and *concomitant ideology ['historically progressive cause']* for the projection of a new and economically more advanced society" (Genovese, op.cit., pp. 82-83 emphasis mine). For Genovese, in spite of his admirable documentary work, slave revolts appear as a minor move only vindicating the unproblematised progress of the

grand narrative of Western history - modes of production: the history of slave revolts corresponds to "the transition from seigneurialism to capitalism" (p. xviii). Insurgencies prior to the Grand moment, Genovese argues, lacked coherent ideology, although they stood against "unbearable exploitation" or against the overstepping of traditional arrangements, they did not assert "human dignity and *individual autonomy*"! (p. xiii emphasis mine). Overlooking what earlier insurgencies signified Genovese puts forth the myth of individual autonomy as the radical (though "bourgeoise") ideological element. It is this linear conceptual model that undermines Genovese's otherwise admirable work, for such a model would ontologically fix insurgencies of non-European world in pre-history.

(45) Lewis, op.cit., pp. 225-26

(46) Lewis, op.cit., p. 177.

(47) For it is during Berrio's occupation of Trinidad that the encomienda system was introduced in Trinidad, which led to the disappearance (migration and death) of many Indians. cf. Arie Bonnert, op.cit., pp. 157-163.

(48) The term 'exteriority' and 'encirclement' are related ones. They are used here to indicate a certain mode of objectification or representation in which the 'self' (or representing agent) posits him/herself as being outside or rather without any collusion with the object being described. That is, what is described, even when perspectivised through a certain position, is separated with neat boundaries as if such boundaries maintain the distinction. And the position which can be located within the discourse attempts through the device of encirclement to control the reader's response. cf. Said, op.cit., pp. 20-21; and Robert Stam and Louise Spence, "Colonialism, Racism and Representation," *Screen*, vol. 24 No. 2 (March/April, 1983), p. 12.

(49) "The driving passion" that was at the back of Hakluyt's work, as Goveia argued, was his wish "to see England become a great colonizing and trading power." In conjunction with this passion were his talents which "helped to mould the events they described" (Goveia, op.cit., p. 14). Hakluyt "did more than any one to integrate and organize the disparate personalities, experiences and aspirations into a movement with a common consciousness and harnessed the horses of nationalism to the chariot of empire." cf. K.R. Andrews *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire 1480-1630,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 36.

(50) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 281.

(51) Said, op.cit., pp. 72-73.

(52) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 281.

(53) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 282.

(54) de Certeau, op.cit., p. 68.

(55) Ralegh, op.cit., pp. 286-88.

(56) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 287.

(57) Said, op.cit., p. 20.

(58) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 299.

(59) Curiously, one sees this emphasis on "observation" and "description" in the authoritative argument of John. H Elliott. Elliott argues that the observations of the seafarers, their "eye-witness" accounts were more accurate and valuable than those of learned men. One wonders whether these sea-farers - Marco Polo, Columbus, Megallan - were not "learned men". One wonders whether there can be "observers" as Elliott assumes, with an "innocent eye": "The innocent eye is more likely to be found among practical sea-faring men, *trained to observe*

accurately and report succinctly..." Captain Barlowe's account of Roanoke voyage of 1584, Elliott writes, "has all the directness of untrammelled personal observation." Whereas in Columbus's account "direct personal observation becomes overlaid by a layer of preconceptions." cf. Elliott, op.cit., p. 16). Lurking behind this argument is the empiricist bias which assumes that it is possible to describe 'reality' 'as it is' and that 'facts' described transparently provide us with access to 'reality'. This bias is an effect of the assumption that language is a neutral elemnent, just a means of communication, a vehicle for reaching 'facts'. cf. Barthes, op.cit., pp. 154-55; Derrida, op.cit., p. 162; Hayden White, op.cit., pp.

(60) Ralegh's Letter to the Reader, Ralegh, op.cit., pp. 276-77.

(61) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 347 (emphasis added).

(62) a) Ralegh's strategy to entrap the 'reader' (the Queen) is deployed even in the letter he wrote ostensibly to Lord Howard and Sir Robert Cecil. Both these addressees become a pretext to the Letter and disappear after a page and return only in the last six lines of the Letter. The main text of the Letter is addressed to the Queen.

b) The Ralegh critics' assessment of the Guiana enterprise is an interesting instance to disclose how colonial discourse can be dissimulated as a "literary" achievement. Stephen Greenblatt's book on Ralegh serves as a case in point. Assessing Ralegh as a tragic hero, combining life and letters - Greenblatt considers Ralegh's greatest achievement as "the establishment of friendly relations with the Indians" (p. 105). He too like Naipaul sees Ralegh's cataloguing of names of natives and their places as an effort to create the "aura of authenticity" stimulating the reader's imagination and evoking "the world of *epic romance*" (pp. 105-07). Greenblatt takes Ralegh's admiration for the natives at face value and analyses that discourse only in the light of academic criticism alone. (Academic criticism here implies a critical approach which assumes its task to be to make cross references to other 'literary' texts alone). In fact the more benevolent, academic critique of European expansion can be said to take Greenblatt's position.

In Greenblatt this can be seen in his critique of the concluding passage of Ralegh's text. Greenblatt agrees that Ralegh was never conscious of the "tension between his primitivism and his plans for the exploitation of Guiana." Yet, he sees a tension and locates it in "the style of the *Discoverie*". After quoting the passage he sees "something disquieting in the tone of the passage, a note of regret and dread running counter to the dominant assertion" - (the conquest of Guiana). Greenblatt rightly sees the connotation of some of the words of the passage *("sackt, turned, wrought, torne, spent, broken, puld down")* , suggesting the fantasy of "virgin land" (Greenblatt ignores, however, other connotative references, *Maydenhead, face, virtue*), [italics in the earlier line are Greenblatt's]. After recognising the sexual connotations, Greenblatt curiously dissimulates the larger narrative of expansion and *occupation* of the New World into a "literary" allusion: "The images of the virgin land... recalls Ovid's description of the Golden Age... and its image subverts the ethic of empire and aggressive capitalism." It is a mystery in Greenblatt's account how the images subvert the ethic - for indeed it is precisely in those images of rapacity and sexuality, as Edward Said had demonstrated, that the archive of Orientalism represented/ appropriated the non-European natives and their territories (in discourse). And Ralegh himself is unequivocal throughout the narrative with regard to the military strategies (which Greenblatt himself points out earlier) displace Spain and the imagined Inca empires and annex the native lands. At the end of the

disputed passage - that part which Greenblatt does not quote - Ralegh even specifies the two places where two forts can be built to safeguard the territory and from where to proceed conquering West Indies. (It is not fortuitous that two centuries later Picton should cherish this plan of conquering the West Indies by encouraging revolution in Spanish colonies). What epitomises Greenblatt's dissimulation of imperialist expansion into a literary allusion is his comment on the words just before he quotes Ralegh's tropes of sexuality: 'The words are too strong, their connotations too unpleasant to enable *us* to translate them into a positive course of action for *England!*'' (p. 112 italics added). So the complicity between imperialist narrative and narratives on imperialism (in spite of or rather because of their dissimulations) becomes clear. The moral exit becomes a convenient excluse to turn the narrative into a literary analysis. See, Stephen Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Ralegh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

c) Another effort of covering up operates in K.R. Andrew's narrativization about Elizabethan expansion. Andrews himself draws a distinction between England's Eastern and Western Atlantic ventures. In the West (Atlantic Ocean) it was manifesting in the form of militant adventurous imperialist expansion - Ralegh epitomises this adventurist drive. In the East the ventures were always "commercial" and "peaceful". Yet, Andrews considers that in the main Elizabethan-Jacobean (1560-1616) expansion was commercial. But immediately in the same section Andrews paradoxically writes: 'The government did care about the English trading interests abroad, which it took pains to protect and expand." The crown favoured the merchants, created chartered companies with monopoly rights: "It gave its official blessing in the form of letters patent, to Gilbert's and Ralegh's colonial projects and encouraged the efforts...But it does not share the notions of overseas empire or oceanic power...Queen Elizabeth was not an imperialist" (pp. 11, 14). Is it possible to "prove" a complex palimpsest projects like colonialism and imperialism simply as a result of individual motivations? Perhaps it is an aspect of *national* 'biography' that it attempts to exonerate 'individuals' on account of purity of individual motivations. (K.R. Andrews, op.cit., pp. 9-11, 34-40.

(63) It is interesting that Goveia's historiographic account has nothing at all to say about Ralegh's narratives on Guyana. It is difficult to judge what role the contribution of the Berrio-Ralegh tussle, so painstakingly evoked by Naipaul, play in the historiography of the Caribbean. If it is to balance the reputation of the figures - once dominated by Ralegh - then the measure does not seem to have been taken into account - for I have not come across any serious critical attempt so far to read this text. Naipaul remains, as I have shown in an earlier response to the text, a "literary" man. Margaret Nightingale, for instance, in her review of the book praises Naipaul's "scholarly research into archives...and [his] own translation" from Spanish records (Nightingale, p. 241). She feels that the narrative was an attempt to "order" the chaos "a way of holding the vision of chaos at bay"; it was a means of reckoning the past errors and forestalling them from recurring. Yet, after all this praise Nightingale's essay makes a surprising move which contradicts her earlier praise. For after complimenting Naipaul she goes on to say that the text "must be considered as a rather personal version of Trinidad's story, closer to *journalism than to scholarly exposition*"! Journalism! After the praise that the research was "substantial and comprehensive" the book is declared not 'scholarly'! Nightingale's essay dissimulates condescension with 'praise' (Nightingale, op.cit., pp. 239-250 emphasis mine).

However, Goveia's work is concerned more with the pattern of history-

writing/world-making that emerged during the period with which Naipaul is concerned. Such a broader perspective with its basic assumption about this relation between the discipline and the process of mapping the territory necesarily, I think, avoids a certain obssessive concern with detail and its implied message of loss (which one finds in Naipaul's work).

(64) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 316.

(65) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 316.

The native women, writes another colonial historiographer two hundred and fifty years after Ralegh, were in a "*Status naturalis*", (naked). He also points out that before these races came into contact with Europeans "the crime of adultery was unknown" nay, "perhaps, we should say, unpunished." This historian is E.L. Joseph, *History of Trinidad,* (London: Cass Library of West Indian Studies, 1971), p. 120 (emphasis added).IP (66) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 325.

(67) Hayden White, op.cit., discusses the theme of savage as fetish in the eighteenth and nineteenth century discourses. White, op.cit. cf. Goveia, op.cit., p. 27.

(68) Ralegh, op.cit., p. 318.

(69) Fernand Braudel's argument (discussed below), that if the "restless energy of the West" had not found the New World it would have gone to the Far East and Africa becomes an apt reply which European 'autobiography' would give Naipaul. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II,* tr. Sian Reynolds, (1949; London: Fontana, 1987), Vol II, p.

(70) Robert Dudley, who visits Trinidad just before Ralegh's first visit, appears in Naipaul's account as another adventurer, explorer in quest of romance. Dudley was like a knight errant "seeking out an ordained enemy...in a strange glittering forest full of dangers and wild folk" (p. 45). Dudley's voyage in Naipaul's narrative serves two purposes: one to prove the importance of scopic detail and two, to show the effect of the "enemy" on Naipaul's hero at this stage - Berrio. The account of the voyage by Dudley's associate, Captain Wyatt, Naipaul observes, "is the first that catches the excitement of an Atlantic crossing to Trinidad....Until Wyatt's narrative, in these Trinidad documents, the sea was the sea, climate was absent from the New World, and Virginia, Newfoundland, Guiana rain-forest and the Antilles were one. Landscapes were formal" (p. 45). What Naipaul looks for in Wyatt's narrative is not the pattern in which the colonial discourse develops (narrativizing about the assumptions of "'uninscribed' earth of the 'new world', and fixing the natives in narrative) but the 'romance' and the 'natural history' - the two aspects he had always privileged. Naipaul celebrates Dudley' "medieval adventure". Wyatt's response (which is also medieval) is separated from that of Berrio's for Wyatt is describing the natural world through his literary 'taste': In Wyatt's "relishing of the natural world, wonder burst[...] through his words...". In Wyatt's narrative, Naipaul points out, Berrio is seen "to be doubly imprisoned in his quest" (pp. 45-46).

(71) Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World - A Derivative Discourse,* (London: Zed Books, 1986), pp. 161-62, 168.

(72) Vilar argues that: "The union of Castile and Aragon, the fall of Granada, the expulsion of the Jews, the Inquisition against Jewish 'converts' and the forced christianization of the Muslims, which all took place around the famous date of 1492, appears to bear no relation to the question of gold. They were in fact very closely connected...Columbus's discovery was not then some chance 'extra-economic' occurrence. It was the culmination of an internal development in the Western economy, which for very conjunctural reasons was reaching out in search of gold and spices." Vilar, op.cit., pp. 60-63.

(73) Fernand Braudel, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 670. However, Braudel's narrative of the age of expansion makes it sound like a celebration of the adventurous 'autobiography' of Europe. He argues that the mines of the New World became crucial "only because Europe possessed the means of exploiting them." He goes on to suggest that even if there were no New World, or if it had become difficult to reach the mines of the New World, Europe would have gone on to the Far East or Africa: "The single decisive factor was the restless energy of the West"! (Braudel, op.cit., p. 679).

(74) Braudel, op.cit., pp. 682-83.

(75) Braudel, op.cit., p. 689.

(76) K.R. Andrews, op.cit., p. 15.

(77) Braudel points out that, it was the handing over of the "*ultramar* to private enterprise which made possible the astonishing feats of the *conquistadors*." Braudel, op.cit., p. 671.

(78) Braudel, op.cit., p. 670.

(79) V.S. Naipaul, "Indian Art and its Illusions," *New York Review of Books*, March 22, 1979, p. 10 (emphasis mine).

(80) Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), detail mislaid.

(81) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983), p. 46.

(82) Gayatri Spivak, "A Literary Representation of the Subaltern," *In Other Worlds*, op.cit., p. 245.

(83) Partha Chatterjee, op.cit., p. 21. Ranajit Guha, "Nationalism Reduced to 'Official Nationalism'", *Asian Studies Association of Australian Review*, Vol. 9, pt. I, July 1985, pp. 104-05.

(84) Partha Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 22. However, after his admirable analysis of the ideological grounding of nationalist thought, Chatterjee adds a puzzling footnote at the end of his second chapter: "But I must state that my intellectual attitude towards the relation between nationalism and the universalist claims of 'science' stems from a completely different source, namely, the cultural predicament of one whose practice of science means not only *a separation from his own people* but also invariably the intellectual legitimation of newer and even more insidious forms of domination of the few over the many" (p. 53 emphasis mine). The footnote is puzzling because it deals within the same framework which Chatterjee's thesis attempts to contest; for, it deals in binaries - his 'own people' (located in a different sphere) and himself. It could be taken as an instance of the double-bind. But the sense of guilt the passage contains seems to obscure the possibility of deploying 'knowledge' as a strategy rather than an arena for power games. (Yet, Chatterjee's own subaltern historiography practises such strategic deployment of knowledge.).

(85) Ranajit Guha, op.cit., pp. 104-06. In the post-independent era this effacing (of other struggles) continues virulently championed by a militant nationalist academia, humanists and the media (in India). (The Subaltern Studies Group meticulously narrativizes and theorises these struggles and appropriations of them under Indian nationalism presented as the result of Gandhi's efforts alone).

(86) Marthe Robert, op.cit., p. 4.

(87) Partha Chatterjee, op.cit., p. 170.

(88) *AD*, p. 211. Anderson too indulges in this violation by endorsing the 'creative', 'thoughtout' model of (Western) nationalism as the only model imitated by

Indian freedom struggle. Anderson, op.cit., pp. 86-89.

(89) Victor Ramraj sees Naipaul's refusal to use a local dialect and his criticism of "Commonwealth" writing/critics regarding their "private obssessions" (perfecting Indian English, emphasising Canadian-ness as a significant indication of Naipaul's success in transcending the "irrelevance of nationalism". This is a problematic claim. For Ramraj in endorsing Naipaul's statements about his stand, avoids examining how the discourse (of nation) operates in the Naipaul text. If at one place Naipaul seems to criticise the nationalist urge of "Commonwealth literature" and at another place points out the collusion between (black) nationalist and imperialist narratives, this is not a warrant enough to preclude one from analysing these very elements in Naipaul's own textualization of historic events. For, as I contend, Naipaul's narrativization is not free from the assumptions underlying the discourse of nation. (cf. Naipaul, "Images", in *CP*, op.cit., pp. 26-29; and *FC* p. 58.) Ramraj, searching for text-book proofs of nationalism in Naipaul's statements - urge for a 'mother tongue', 'folk culture' etc., - declares that "Naipaul tries to penetrate the *human* rather than the national in his characterization." In effect Naipaul gains, in Ramraj's reading, a "cosmopolitan, internationalist consciousness, which surveys encompassingly the *human condition...*". Victor Ramraj, "V.S. Naipaul: The Irrelevance of Nationalism", *World Literature Written in English*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1984), pp. 187-196 (emphasis mine).

(90) Indeed that's the message which the critic endorses from the text. J.H. Elliott, reviewing the book for the readers of *New York Review of Books* (where Naipaul himself appears from to time as the native informant on the third world), has this to say: "This is the underlying theme of the book - the gulf between the European vision and colonial reality... But what is Trinidad? A dim, corrupt little society, bedevilled by racialism, an accidental [!?] potpourri of nationality, caste [caste, before Emancipation?], and color, on the forgotten edge of the world." Elliott, op.cit., p. 25-27.

(91) James Millette, op.cit., pp. 44-49.

(92) John Lynch, *The Spanish-American Revolutions, 1808-1826*, (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 2.

(93) Lynch, op.cit., pp. 2-7.

(94) Salvadar Madariaga, *The Rise of Spanish American Empire*, (London: Hollis & Carter, 1947), pp. 286-299; Millette, op.cit., pp. 3-16.

(95) Lynch, op.cit., p. 8.

(96) Lynch, op.cit., p. 20.

(97) Lynch, op.cit., p. 192.

(98) Lynch, op.cit., pp. 20-21.

(99) Millette, op.cit., pp. 25-26.

(100) Lynch, op.cit., p. 192.

(101) Elsa Goveia, *The 18th Century Slave Laws of the West Indies*, (Barbados: Caribbean University Press, 1970), pp. 15-16.

James Millette's treatment of Franscico's case has paradoxical meanings. The Spanish legal system allowed the slaves to appeal to the Caracas *Audiencia* in capital cases. This, Millette argues, is an indication that the "misfortune and servitude did not deprive the slave of his essential human rights" (op.cit., p. 64). Yet, while discussing the Spanish legal system Millette says that it was a "good one" in "normal circumstances". "But circumstances were not normal in Trinidad...nor was the system solely operated by Spaniards." And the *alcaldes*

(the local judges - oligarchic powers) were so powerful that they could not be compared with any other representatives of law. Millette, op.cit., pp. 44-45. Franscisco's case proves an exception and not a rule - in fact the exception itself suggests the strength of the rule.

(102) Lynch, op.cit., p. 193.

(103) The tenor of this argument is repeated at several places in Naipaul's own text. *AD* p. 188. This also echoes in Naipaul's characterisation of the Santosh figure who remains withdrawn from the society and the set of relations in which he is located. Indeed the Santosh story "One Out of Many" is the first narrative Naipaul wrote after his historical narrative. cf. Ch. 7.

(104) I have discussed this formula about mimicry - *almost but not exactly* - in an earlier chapter. cf. Ch. 3.

(105) In his diatribe on India, *IWC* Naipaul argues the same point. *IWC*, pp. 18, 174-75.

(106) Lynch, op.cit., pp. 194-97.

(107) Lynch, op.cit., pp. 224-25.

(108) Naipaul expresses similar sentiments reflecting on his own life in England, in his narrative on India (*AD*) pp. 188, 266-67. But Naipaul traces such a response, his withdrawal from English life to putative Hindu Vedantic (religio/philosophic) beliefs.

(109) Lynch, op.cit., p. 196.

(110) Emil Ludwig, *Bolivar: The Life of an Idealist,* tr. M.H. Lindsay, (London: W.H. Allen, 1947), pp. 88-92). John Lynch, op.cit., pp. 194-98.

(111) John Lynch argues in the context of continental influence on the Spanish American Revolutions: "To suppose that the thought of Enlightenment made revolutionaries of Spanish Americans is to confuse cause and effect. Some were already dissenters; for this reason they sought in the new philosophy further inspiration for their own ideals, intellectual justification for the revolution to come." Lynch, op.cit., pp. 28-29.

(112) Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* tr. Alan Sheridan, (1975; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 3-10.

(113) Curiously, *MP* is the only text in which Naipaul makes a few remarks on the counter-insurgency discourse by comparing the torture with concentration camps: "The slave owner had less on his conscience than the concentration camp commandant: the world was divided into black and white, christian and heathen. White might conceivably be expected to show some scruples in his relations with black; but the christian had no such inhibitions in his relations with the heathens." In spite of the Fanonian manichaenism one does not find such judgments anywhere else in Naipaul's work. Naipaul finds the popularity of this text (Stedman's book on 18th century insurgency in Dutch Guiana) in the 18th century England "puzzling" - because the "story is terrifying and in its nauseous catalogue of atrocities resembles accounts of German concentration camps." Intriguingly it is the lessons of spectacles of torture that draw Naipaul's attention here and not the Berbice rebel Atta and his resistance. In spite of his remark about the "atrocities" it is even more curious to see Naipaul arguing that the book should not be dismissed as propaganda for the writer (who, incidentally, went to "Surinam to put down the slave rebellion of 1773") was only displaying the "sensibility which was admired at the time"! (It is exactly the same voice which judges Picton later as only a victim of his time).

Yet, on the heels of his Fanonian judgment, as if to balance the critique Naipaul

quotes a passage from a British colonialist text representing Dutch cruelty in Surinam: "It is felt as a terror to menace a negro with selling him to a Dutchman." Now, "In fairness to the Dutch," Naipaul adds another line from the same text which becomes an elliptical gloss: "The Dutchman, however, has a like terror in reverse, and threatens to sell his slave to a free negro." (This is like the sexist argument that men's cruelty towards women is nothing when compared to women's cruelty towards women - both deal in essences.)

(114) Gayatri Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur," op.cit., pp. 132-135.

(115) Naipaul draws a similar kind of distinction in Indian history also. He feels that the racialist imperialist shift can be located "in a period ['long after Waterloo'] which begins with the disasters of the Crimea and ends with the humiliations of South Africa, that we have a period of jingoistic militarism." He distinguishes the process of empire building from the racialist *concepts* that supported the empire; Naipaul feels that it is after the period of empire building that the *ideas* of the merchant as empire builder began (*AD* pp. 199, 195-99). The difficulty with these assertions is that they identify empire-building with literally building the railways, buildings (in short industrial-capitalism) ignoring the concomittant, supporting ideology as if the empire *building* does not imply *building the subject* also.

(116) J.A. Froude, *The English in the West Indies*, (London: Longmans, 1888), pp. 70-71, 86.

Naipaul honours these visitors as authorities in his earlier narrative, *MP*. At times reading *The Middle Passage* one feels as if Naipaul is trying to find evidence for the observations the authorities made: they are ubiquitous in the narrative and they dominate unquestioned. There is hardly any comment on their treatment of the negroes in Naipaul's narrative. The term metropolitan seems to serve as a token of validity and in effect these 'metropolitan' narratives find support in Naipaul's narrative. At least six years before Naipaul wrote *MP*, Elsa Goveia asserted that Froude's book "certainly can be demonstrated now to possess almost no soundness whatever." Goveia was by the time of Naipaul's writing vehemently challenged the authorities Naipaul depends on. Naipaul's narrative has no reference to such analysis. And one year before Naipaul finished his book Gordon Lewis's book, *The Growth of the British West Indies*, which is in consonance with Goveia's work, had come out. Naipaul makes no mention of these twentieth century contributors (with the exception of two references, in the notes, to C.L.R. James and Eric Williams). This is the measure of Naipaul's collusion with the colonial discourse. cf. Goveia, pp. 147, 151-156. Nonetheless we do find a certain caricature of Froude in Naipaul's *MM*. But the narrative, as I have shown earlier, eventually endorses Froude's sentiments through the Ralph Singh figure. There is a matching (with Froude) reflection by the Salim figure in *A Bend in the River*. While meditating on his own 'doomed' journey into an African country he remembers the slaves who moved from the centre of the continent to the coast to be transported to the Caribbean. Those slaves, Salim imagines, "were positively anxious to step into the boats and to be taken to safe homes across the sea" *ABR*, p. 10.

(117) This is precisely the view which E.P. Thompson characterized as the "spasmodic view of popular history", which cannot conceive of the common poeple as agents of history prior to the French Revolution. So popular resistances of the kind we see in the context of the Indians and slaves are treated as unorganised, indeed 'spasmodic', lacking 'ideology' until the Great Moment of the break. E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, No 50, February, 1971 pp. 76-77. In a similar

context, Ranajit Guha puts forward vehemently his critique of such spasmodic views of peasant insurgencies in pre-independent India. cf. Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, (Delhi: Oxford, 1983).

(118) Identical comments are made by an English owner of a restaurant in *FS*, pp. 172-173, 178-186; also one comes a across a similar cynicism in *BR*, pp. 71-73, 105-108.

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