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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS-ENGLISH

SEMESTER -IV

AFRICAN & CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

ELECTIVE 404

BLOCK-2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

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BLOCK 2 AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

This paper helps to understand the various aspects of the Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie : Purple Hibiscus. This module comprises of seven units related to Life and work of V. S Naipaul and Derek Walcott .It gives the understanding of The Mimic Men and Pantomime.

Unit Eight This unit help to know and understand the work of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie : Purple Hibiscus. This unit gives the summary of the Purple Hibiscus along with its analysis and critical aspect of the work.

Unit Nine This unit helps to understand the Life of V.S Naipaul. This unit gives insight about his education and his early life. A unit helps to understand how he became the part of Literature.

Units provide his understanding about various aspects of life like mythology and politics.

Unit Ten This unit help to understand the literature work of V.S Naipaul. Unit gives the insight in the underrating of the literature of V.S Naipaul. Units put the light of secularism thoughts of V.S Naipaul in his writing.

Unit eleven This unit helps discuss the Mimic Men by V.S.Naipaul. In this unit summary of The Mimic Men is discussed along with its theme and meaning. Unit describe the various characters of The Mimic Men. Its shows the narrative technique of V.S Naipaul.It provides the critical analysis of The Mimic Men.

Unit **twelve** This unit throws light on the Life of Derek Walcott. Unit gives the information about the personal life and career of Derek Walcott. Units provides insight of various achievements of Derek Walcott. Units talks about his interests in his life and work.

Unit **Thirteen** This unit help to learn about the Literature of Derek Walcott. Units notes down the various achievements. It gives the critical analysis of the literature work of Derek Walcott. Unit gives introduction to Omeros the famous work of Derek Walcott.

Unit **Fourteen** This unit help to analyze and summary of Pantomime by Derek Walcott. This unit helps to understand various characters of the play. Unit provides the theme of the play along with its background. Units give insight in the writings of Derek Walcott.

UNIT: 8 PURPLE HIBISCUS- SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

STRUCTURE

8.0 Objective

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Plot Summary

8.3 Characterization

8.4 Theme

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8.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit help to know and understand the work of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie : Purple Hibiscus. This unit gives the summary of the Purple Hibiscus along with its analysis and critical aspect of the work.
Unit helps to achieve following objective:

- **Plot Summary of Purple Hibiscus**
- **Characterization in Purple Hibiscus**
- **Theme of Purple Hibiscus**

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the best-selling Nigerian author, wants American readers to know that African writers don't just write about

Africa's problems. "When we talk about the developing world, there's this idea that everybody should be fighting for the poor," she says. Though it might seem obvious to point out, she adds, "people are diverse, and there are different things that are going on with them."

She calls it the "danger of a single story"—the idea that people living in certain areas of the world all have one kind of experience. Ms. Adichie hopes to show audiences Africa's range of stories as the co-curator of this year's PEN World Voices Festival. For the first time, the weeklong literature event, which starts Monday in New York, will have a regional focus. Along with other book-related programs, authors from Africa and its diaspora will speak about topics like how the West misunderstands African culture and the state of Africa's poetry scene.

Ms. Adichie, 37, has spent her adult life traveling between the U.S. and Nigeria. She first rose to prominence in 2003 with the publication of her first book, "Purple Hibiscus," a coming-of-age novel set in postcolonial Nigeria. She went on to write two more critically-acclaimed novels, "Half of a Yellow Sun" (2006) and "Americanah" (2013), as well as a collection of short stories. She won a MacArthur "genius" grant in 2008.

Ms. Adichie hopes that the spotlight of the PEN festival will help to win a wider audience for the African writers she's chosen, including Nigerian-American author Teju Cole and Cameroonian writer AchilleMbembe. "It was important to get people who actually live on the continent," along with those who have left, said Ms. Adichie by phone from her part-time residence in Columbia, Md. "I think the voices of the African diaspora are important too, but I think there's often a silence in our voices from the continent."

Ms. Adichie spent much of her childhood in the town of Nsukka at the University of Nigeria, where her father was a professor and her mother was an administrator. She describes the campus as a closed community, where she attended elementary school and a secondary school on the premises, and stayed for part of college.

Then Ms. Adichie decided she wanted to study in the U.S. instead. She arrived in 1998, and her first shock was finding poverty. Growing up, she had watched many American movies and TV shows, and the conditions that she saw driving through Philadelphia on her way to Drexel

University jarred her. Another surprise was her roommate's pity when Ms. Adichie told her that she had grown up in Africa.

She found that she enjoyed the freedom of the American higher education system. In Nigeria, she says, students were encouraged to focus on one discipline. "One of the things that I loved about the U.S. is that the walls could be broken down," she says. "You could take philosophy, history and biology, and that wouldn't happen in Nigeria." She transferred from Drexel to Eastern Connecticut State University, where she studied communications and political science, while writing on the side. She later earned master's degrees from Johns Hopkins University and Yale. Then she started writing full-time.

Ms. Adichie says that she felt different from other writers in at least one way: Many of them were able to draw dramatic tales from their difficult early family lives, but her upbringing had been happy. "I feel a little bit guilty for not having massive trauma in my childhood," she says.

She does, however, experience bouts of depression, "the crazy writer illness" that she thinks is common in her field. "There's something comforting about that, because you feel you're not alone," she says.

Her books have some parallels to her own experience. In "Americanah," the female protagonist leaves Nigeria to go to college in the U.S., where she faces culture shock. It won a National Book Critics Circle Award and last year, Brad Pitt announced that he would produce a film version, starring Lupita Nyong'o.

She has mixed feelings about both Nigeria and the U.S., where her husband works as a doctor in Baltimore. "I love Nigeria, but it's a very clear-eyed love," she says. "I know Nigeria has a lot of problems, but I also know that Nigeria is not about its problems." She has written about electricity outages in Lagos, for one, and thinks that the privatization of energy companies should have improved service more. The country's elections in March made Ms. Adichie more optimistic about Nigeria's prospects. "It was proof that democracy…is making progress," she says.

In the U.S., she says, she has always felt more like a visitor. (She continues to be a Nigerian citizen.) American grocery stores distress her because so many of the foods on offer are unhealthy. "Why do American supermarkets need so much sugar in everything?" she asks. "If you're this wealthy, something can be done so vegetables are cheap."

As for broader issues, she says that “race is a present thing in America, and it isn’t in Nigeria.” But gender is a problem in her homeland. She recounts how, when she recently walked into a grocery store with her brother there, the security guard at the entrance only greeted him. “I was not in a good mood, so I said, ‘This has to change. You have to greet the both of us.’” The difficulty, she says, is that “the invisibility of the female” is part of Nigerian culture.

At the TED conference in 2013, Ms. Adichie gave a now-famous talk titled, “We Should All Be Feminists.” (The singer Beyoncé quoted it in her song “Flawless.”) “My version of feminism means acknowledging that women have and continue to have gotten the bad end of things, politically and socially, all over the world,” she says. “Feminism means not only acknowledging that, but wanting to make it better.”

Known for dressing in bright, bold prints, Ms. Adichie says that her mother influenced her preference for lively attire. Also, “Nigerians are just really interested in appearance, and it cuts across class,” she says. “Lagos is the most stylish city in the world.” Ms. Adichie has most of her clothing custom-made and says that she has a notion “in my delusion” of designing her own clothing.

Meanwhile, some days she writes for 12 hours straight; other days she can’t bring herself to write at all.

“I wish I could write every day, but I don’t,” she says. “When it goes well, I ignore things like family and hygiene, but other days, when it’s not going well, I read the books I love to remind myself of how beautiful and essential and nurturing words can be, and I hope that doing that will bring my own words back.”

8.2 PLOT SUMMARY

Purple Hibiscus takes place in Enugu, a city in post-colonial Nigeria, and is narrated by the main character, KambiliAchike. Kambili lives with her older brother Jaja (ChukwukuAchike), a teenager who, like his sister, excels at school but is withdrawn and sullen. Kambili’s father, Papa (Eugene Achike) is a strict authoritarian whose strict adherence to Catholicism overshadows his paternal love. He punishes his wife, Mama

(Beatrice Achike), and his children when they fail to live up to his impossibly high standards.

The novel begins on Palm Sunday. Jaja has refused to go to church and receive communion. Because Jaja has no reasonable excuse for missing church, Papa throws his missal at his son. The book hits a shelf containing his wife's beloved figurines. This defiant act and resulting violence marks the beginning of the end of the Achike family. Kambili then explains the events leading up to Palm Sunday, detailing the seeds of rebellion that are planted in the children's minds by their liberal Aunty Ifeoma, Papa's sister.

Papa is a prominent figure in Enugu. He owns several factories and publishes the pro-democracy newspaper the Standard. He is praised by his priest, Father Benedict, and his editor, Ade Coker, for his many good works. Papa generously donates to his parish and his children's schools. His newspaper publishes articles critical of the rampant government corruption. Since the Standard tells the truth, the staff is under constant pressure from the Head of State, the military leader who assumes the presidency following a coup. When Ade Coker is arrested, Papa's bravery and position in the community help to free him.

Kambili is a quiet child. When she tries to speak, she often stutters or has a coughing fit. The rigid life that is shaped by her father renders her mute. Each day, she follows a schedule that allots only time to study, eat, sleep, pray and sit with her family. Kambili is a good student, rising to the top of her class. The girls at school assume she is a snob because she doesn't socialize and always runs straight to her father's car after class. When Kambili places second on term, Papa tells her she must excel because God expects more from her. Kambili is not a snob; she is motivated by fear, unable to create her own identity.

At Christmas, the family returns to the Papa's ancestral town, Abba. The family supervises a feast that feeds the entire umunna – extended family. Papa is celebrated for his generosity in Abba as well. However, he does not allow his children to visit with his own father, Papa-Nnukwu, for more than fifteen minutes each Christmas. Papa calls his father a "heathen" because he still follows the religious traditions of his people, the Igbo. When Aunty Ifeoma comes to visit from her University town of Nsukka, she argues with Papa about his mistreatment of their father. But

Papa is firm. He will only acknowledge and support his father if he converts. Aunty Ifeoma invites Kambili and Jaja to visit so they can go on a pilgrimage to Aokpe, site of a miraculous apparition of the Virgin Mary. Papa begrudgingly agrees.

Nsukka is a different world. The University is beset by fuel shortages, pay stoppages, strikes at medical clinics, blackouts, and rising food prices. The widowed Aunty Ifeoma successfully raises her three children, Amaka, Obiora and Chima, with what little she has. But her family is a happy one. Unlike Papa, Aunty Ifeoma encourages her children to question authority, raising them with faith but also intellectual curiosity. Amaka and Kambili are very different girls. Amaka, like Kambili's classmates, assumes her cousin is a privileged snob since she does not know how to contribute to household chores. Kambili retreats into silence even in Nsukka. Jaja, on the other hand, blossoms. He follows the example of his younger cousin Obiora, concocting his own rite of initiation out of helping his family, tending a garden and killing a chicken. Kambili begins to open up when she meets Father Amadi. A Nigerian-born priest, Father Amadi is gentle and supportive. He encourages Kambili to speak her mind. Through Father Amadi, Kambili learns that it is possible to think for oneself and yet still be devout. She even begins speaking above a whisper to Amaka, and they become closer.

Kambili and Jaja learn to be more accepting in Nsukka. When he falls ill, Aunty Ifeoma brings Papa-Nnukwu to her flat. Kambili and Jaja decide not to tell Papa that they are sharing a home with a "heathen." Kambili witnesses her grandfather's morning ritual of innocence, where he offers thanks to his gods and proclaims his good deeds. She sees the beauty in this ritual and begins to understand that the difference between herself and Papa-Nnukwu is not so great. When her father finds out that Kambili and Jaja have spent time with their grandfather, he brings them home. Amaka gives her a painting of Papa-Nnukwu to take back to Enugu. Papa punishes his children by pouring hot water over their feet for "walking into sin."

Pressure mounts on Papa. Soldiers arrest Ade Coker again and torture him, and they raid the offices of the Standard and shut down his factories for health code violations. Shortly thereafter, the government murders

Ade Coker. Tensions rise in the home too. Kambili and Jaja take comfort in the painting of Papa-Nnukwu. Papa catches them, however, and he beats Kambili so severely that she ends up in critical condition in the hospital. When she is well enough to be released, she goes to Nsukka instead of home. Her crush on Father Amadi intensifies and she begins to break out of her shell more, learning how to laugh and to join in the Igbo songs. But Aunty Ifeoma gets fired from the University and decides to go to America to teach. Kambili is floored. She is not sure what she will do without the refuge provided by her aunt and cousins. Amaka does not want to go to America either because her roots are in Nigeria.

Mama comes to Nsukka, limping out of a cab. Papa has beaten her again, causing another miscarriage. Though both Kambili and Jaja have seen this happen before, this time it is different. Aunty Ifeoma urges her not to return to Enugu. But she takes her children back with her. The following week is Palm Sunday, when Jaja refuses to go to church. In the week between Palm Sunday and Easter, Jaja grows increasingly defiant. He finally demands that he and Kambili spend Easter with their cousins. Weakened by what the children believe is stress, he allows them to go to Nsukka. A few days later, Mama calls. Papa has died. When Mama left Nsukka, she began poisoning her husband's tea. Jaja takes the blame for the crime and goes to prison.

The final chapter of the book takes place nearly three years later. Kambili and Mama visit a hardened Jaja in prison. He has faced severe punishments and miserable conditions over the course of his term. However, with the leadership in Nigeria now changing again, their lawyers are confident that Jaja will be released. Though Jaja has learned to not expect a favorable outcome, Kambili is overjoyed. She dreams that she will take Jaja to America to visit Aunty Ifeoma, together they will plant orange trees in Abba, and purple hibiscuses will bloom again.

KambiliAchike, the narrator, is a fifteen-year-old girl living in Enugu, Nigeria with her father, Eugene (Papa), mother, Beatrice (Mama), and older brother, Chukwuku (Jaja). The novel begins on Palm Sunday. Jaja refuses to receive communion at church, and Papa throws his missal, breaking Mama's beloved figurines. Kambili then explains the events leading up to this scene.

Papa, a wealthy factory owner, is an active philanthropist in public and an upstanding Catholic, but at home is a strict and violent authoritarian. He publishes a newspaper, the Standard, which is the only paper willing to criticize the new Nigerian Head of State.

Mama gets pregnant. After Mass one day the family visits Father Benedict, their white priest. Mama feels sick and doesn't want to leave the car. When they return home Papa beats Mama until she has a miscarriage. Later Kambili takes her exams and comes second in her class, disappointing Papa.

At Christmas the family goes to their home village of Abba. Papa's father, Papa-Nnukwu, lives there, but Papa doesn't speak to him because his father sticks to his traditional religion and won't become Catholic. Kambili and Jaja visit Papa-Nnukwu briefly. Aunty Ifeoma, Papa's widowed sister and a university professor, arrives in Abba as well. She seems fearless and willing to criticize both Papa and the government. Her children—Amaka, Obiora, and Chima—are precocious and outspoken.

Ifeoma takes Jaja and Kambili to an Igbo festival. On Christmas Papa feeds the whole village. The next day Papa catches Kambili breaking the "Eucharist fast" as she eats some food along with a painkiller she needs to take for menstrual cramps, and he beats her, Jaja, and Mama. Ifeoma convinces Papa to let Jaja and Kambili visit her in Nsukka.

Kambili and Jaja arrive and are surprised by Ifeoma's poverty, but also the constant laughter in her house. Jaja is fascinated by the purple hibiscuses in Ifeoma's garden. Father Amadi, a young, handsome Nigerian priest, comes to dinner.

As the days progress Jaja opens up, though Kambili remains silent and confused. Ifeoma hears that Papa-Nnukwu is sick, and she fetches him from Abba. Amaka starts painting a picture of him. Father Amadi visits often, and Kambili finds herself attracted to him. One morning Kambili observes Papa-Nnukwu's morning ritual, which is similar to Catholic confession.

Father Amadi takes Kambili to the local stadium. He makes her chase after him and tries to get her to talk. Kambili is confused by her feelings and his "unpriestly" demeanor. Papa finds out that Papa-Nnukwu is staying in the house.

The next morning the family discover that Papa-Nnukwu has died in his sleep. Papa takes Jaja and Kambili back to Enugu, and Amaka gives Kambili her painting. Papa punishes Jaja and Kambili for not telling him they were staying in the same apartment as their grandfather, a pagan, by pouring boiling water on their feet. Papa and his editor, Ade Coker, decide to run a controversial story in the Standard. Soon after, Ade Coker is assassinated with a package bomb.

One day Kambili and Jaja are looking at the painting of Papa-Nnukwu when Papa comes in. He beats Kambili severely, and she wakes up in the hospital. Papa agrees to let Jaja and Kambili return to Nsukka.

Ifeoma worries about losing her job for speaking out against the "sole administrator" appointed by the government. The university closes after a student riot. Men ransack Ifeoma's flat, trying to intimidate her. Kambili falls more deeply in love with Father Amadi, who seems attracted to her.

Mama arrives one day after being beaten into another miscarriage. Papa takes his family home, and the next day is the Palm Sunday on which the novel begins, when Jaja stands up to Papa.

After Palm Sunday there is less fear and silence in the house. Ifeoma calls to say that she has been fired and is moving to America. Jaja and Kambili return to Nsukka. Ifeoma takes them on a pilgrimage to Aokpe, where Kambili sees visions of the Virgin Mary and reaffirms her faith. Father Amadi leaves to do missionary work, and Kambili weeps and confesses her love to him. Ifeoma gets a visa and prepares to leave Nigeria.

Papa is found dead at his desk, and they all go to Enugu. When Papa's autopsy is complete, Mama says that she poisoned him. The police arrive and Jaja takes responsibility for the crime.

Three years later, Kambili and Mama visit Jaja in prison to tell him he will be released soon. Mama has grown withdrawn and rarely speaks. After the visit, Kambili feels hopeful about the future.

8.3 CHARACTARIZATION

Kambili Achieke

Kambili christened Ruth is the eldest daughter in the Achieke family and the narrator of the story. At the onset of the narrative she is fifteen years old but by the end of the narrative she is eighteen. She is very reserved but an efficient observer. Her association with Amaka, aunty Ifeoma and father Amadi has a profound influence on her being. For instance, unlike the reserved life she has known all her life, she becomes aware she can laugh and live a happy life when she goes out with father Amadi. She is a round character.

Eugene Achieke

He is affectionately called Papa by his children and titled "Omelora": the one who does for the community, by his townsmen. His daughter, the narrator, describes him as one who 'liked order" and therefore does his things 'meticulously". He believes that a well-planned life leads to success; therefore, he does not spare any of his children time to loiter. He personally prepares minute by minute schedule for them and ensures that they adhere to it.

He is the son of Papa Nnukwu. As a young man, he works as a gardener at the parish of the reverend sisters while they in turn had him educated. As a man, he is a hard working business man: one who owns several businesses including printing press and factories.

He loves his family so dearly that he provides for their total wellbeing. He takes home samples of all his products for testing by his family first before they are taken to the market. Though, he is very strict and he can be considered a loving husband who will stand by his wife against all odds. In the text, Mama tells Kambili "the members of our umunna even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else…many of them were university graduates… but your father stayed with me…" this of course is a sign of a good man or faithful husband who will want to do all possible to protect his family and make his wife happy. For this act Kambili observes that her father deserves "praise" and as a matter of fact, is incomparable to any other because Eugene her father is "different".

Eugene wants the best out of his children and encourages them to study hard at school. Once Kimbili placed second in school. He follow her all the way to her school and ones there, exhorts her to be the best in class. When Jaja places first in his class exam, he gives him a hug and pat his shoulders for a job well done.

He is described as an oblate; these are religious people who strictly adhere to the tenets of their faith. Kambili refers to him as one who is "different". Indeed he is different not because he strictly adheres to the tenets of his faith but because of the manner in which he treats the very people he claims to love. When Kambili and Jaja return from Nsukka he reveals the source of his wickedness. He relates that he sinned with his body and the reverend father he stayed with dipped his hand into boiling water. As a result, he has also grown up thinking that causing pain to one's body is a way of preventing him from sinning. This unfortunate exposure of his to those who profess Christianity and at the same time acted wickedly has profound influence on him. He has been unable to maintain balance or strike a line between good and bad or Christianity and wickedness. For these reasons, he attracts the sympathy of a close reader.

That unfortunate exposure causes him to do the following:

Firstly, he refuses to cater for his aged father and refer to him as a heathen. Not only does he refuse to cater for him financially, he has total disrespect for him. Kambili describes the money he gives his father as "impersonal, paltry" amount which is far below the allowances he gives his driver .

Secondly he stops talking to his only sister, Ifeoma, because of his maltreatment of their aged father.

Thirdly, he beats up his pregnant wife for not entering the mission house because of nausea. He gives her almost twenty strokes of caning and the sound of it the daughter compares to trying to force open a stuck door. This was not the first nor the last, Mama Beatrice complain of haven had several miscarriages all due to his torturing.When she goes to Nsukka, she reports of how he hit her six weeks old pregnancy with a coffee table. These punishments cause her to miscarry several times.Yet, the contradiction is that he has earlier prayed for her deliverance. And after the miscarriage ask his children to pray for her forgiveness.

Fourthly, he uses his belt to beat up his family because during Kambili's menstrual cycle, her mother instructs her to take a light breakfast so she can take panadol to prevent her menstrual cramps. In addition, when he finds a picture of his father with Kambili, he beats her mercilessly till she collapses.

Fifthly, he cuts off the fore finger of his only son because at age ten, he misses some few lines in his catechism class.

Finally, when he found out that his children have stayed in the same house with his own father at Nsukka, he pours boiling water on their so it that will prevent them from walking into sin. Eugene is a static character.

Mama Beatrice

She is a down-to-earth woman; one we are told who does not talk too much or does so just as a bird eats[in small amounts. She is very generous towards all who come her way. She takes time to cook for the members of a group in the church: the Our Lady of the Miraculous **Medal Prayer Group**.

She loves her children so much and does everything possible within her power to make them feel safe and happy. Kambili states mama did not mind; there was so much that she did not mind. The statement attests to the fact that mama is more than prepared to do everything possible to make her family, especially her children, happy.

To strengthen the bond between mother and daughter as motherhood dictates, Mama Beatrice takes the initiative to confide in her daughter. This is to win the confidence of her daughter so they can be best friends and not just mother and daughter. She tells her of the number of miscarriages she has had. These indeed are some of the deep things which a mother may not find the courage to discuss with anyone else save her daughter. This rapport between mother and daughter is missing between father and son. At certain times in their youth, boys become close to their fathers, yet this trait is missing between Eugene and Jaja.

That she poisons her husband in the end is very surprising indeed. This is so because in her conversation with aunty Ifeoma, she considers all of Ifeoma's thoughts on female liberation to be "your University talk" (pg.83), in other words, words that are vague or baseless and does not contain any tangible meaning. In her view marriage makes a lot of

difference in a woman's life. In addition, when she visits Ifeoma at her university apartment she resists all attempts by Ifeoma to make her stay awhile. All these are indications of a woman who will want to stay in her marriage and save it no matter how precarious it will be, hoping that someday it will get better. There were other ways she could save herself and her children from Eugene's maltreatment. For instance, reporting him to father Benedict, whom Eugene respects so much, or filing a divorce but she takes none of these options. Why then will she think of nothing else but to poison her husband to death? From a moral point of view, her act constitutes murder but from the feminist point it is liberation from patriarchal entanglement. She presents a dynamic character.

Chukwuka Achieke 'Jaja'

He is the eldest son in the Achieke family. His aunty compares him to Jaja of Opobo, a king she describes as defiant because he refused to allow the British control trade in his territory; as a result, he was later imprisoned and exiled. Surprisingly, Jaja grows up to exhibit those same qualities. He is an intelligent and bold young man. To prevent his father from maltreating his sister when they overstayed their fifteen minutes visit to their grandfather, he takes the blame. Again, when his mother directs Kambili to take corn flakes during her menstrual cramps, he takes the blame. Finally, when papa Nnukwu's picture is found on Kambili he takes ownership. To crown it all, when they return from Nsukka, he demands the key to his room from his father and later talks back at him on the issue of the communion. Worse of all, after his mother poisons their father, he takes the blame and is imprisoned. Moreover, he does not mind being sent to prison like his mentor, Jaja of Opobo. Indeed another side of the argument is that going to Nsukka and his association with Obiora and the hibiscus plants in aunty Ifeoma's garden increase his confidence. That argument can further be enhanced by stating that, Jaja's confidence is enhanced by the exposure at Nsukka. He is a dynamic character.

Aunty Ifeoma

She is the daughter of Papa Nnukwu and sister of Eugene. She is a University lecturer and a very outspoken person. She is a widow and the mother of three: Amaka, Obiora and Chima. She loves her father dearly

and strongly disagrees with her brother, Eugene at his maltreatment of their father. She displays a sense of resourcefulness and determination in bringing up her children without a husband. In addition, considering the nickname she gives Jaja and how Jaja turns out in life, one can say that she is a shrewd woman. Her discipline of Obiora shows that she is a disciplined woman, one who will not tolerate any rudeness or disobedience in her domain.

Papa - Nnukwu

The aged father of Eugene and Ifeoma, his son considers him a heathen and refuses to take care of him. Yet, Ifeoma considers him a traditionalist not pagan, as a result she provides for him as best as she can. He is an appreciative person and warmly accepts the slim notes sent him by his rich son. Though Eugene does not care about him, he prays for Eugene's wellbeing and protection. He is kind and invites his grandchildren to share in his meals though he is aware they will not eat. He also plans to buy them soft drinks out of his little means. He has a strong sense of humor and tries as much as he can to make people around him comfortable. He is a flat character.

Father Amadi

He is young and good looking. He is the parish priest of the Catholic Church at Nsukka. He is kind and considerate towards others and tries his best to make people around him comfortable. He plays a major part in helping Kambili come to a full realization of her potentials. In addition, he is enlightened and believes that the African or Nigerian language can be used in worship of God. He is a flat character and a foil to father Benedict.

Father Benedict

The narrator says of father Benedict that he has changed things at the St. Agnes parish at Enugu. He has changed things from the normal to the abnormal in the sense that, he has forbidden the use of the local language for worship. He has also limited the clapping of hands. With all the above he can be said to be an ethnocentric and pedantic character, who believes in the superiority of his culture and down plays of others. Because he believes that the European culture is superior he wants it used in a church situated in Africa. Perhaps he is one of those who have had negative influence on Eugene. Benedict forbids the use of the local

language in worship so does Eugene. He presents a character in sharp contrast with father Amadi. He is a flat character.

Amaka

She is the fifteen-year-old elder daughter of aunty Ifeoma. She is described by the narrator as one that talked with more purpose and seems older by the way she goes about things. She is very intelligent, kind and considerate towards others yet critical. Her association, in her teen years with her mom, an intelligent liberated woman had profound influence on her turn out. She exhibits that quality of boldness that few youngsters will dare. She is tactful in how she goes about commenting on her uncle's product. Though initially critical of Kambili and Jaja, she later learns to cope and accepts their difference. She is a dynamic character.

Obiora

He is the eldest son of aunty Ifeoma; he is of the same age as Jaja. He is very critical, outspoken and bold. It can be assumed that he has imparted these qualities to Jaja but that is not partly so, because Jaja has started exhibiting signs of defiance long before he met Obiora. It's rather that his contact with Obiora intensified and unleashed the boldness heaped up in Jaja's heart. For instance there are three instances in the text that Obiora's confidence surfaces.

1. When he challenge father Amadi on morality and truth.
2. When he faces and queries the guards who have come to search his mother's house
3. When he interrupts the conversation between his mother and her lecturer friend.

Chima

He is the younger son of aunty Ifeoma. Like his elder siblings he is kind, intelligent and considerate. He is emotional and weeps when his cousins are taken away by Eugene.

Sisi

She is the maid servant of the Achieke family, though very little is seen of her, she plays a very important role in the text; that of supplying the poison that was used to kill the villain. By supplying the poison she becomes the pivot on which the narrative turns.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Q1.Give the analysis of Purple Hibiscus.

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Q2. Papa uses Igbo and English at different times. Discuss what this signifies about his character.

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8.4 THEME

Theme refers to the underlying ideas or the main ideas in a literary work. It is the message that the author carries in his or her text. According to DOLT, in poetry, fiction and drama, it is the abstract concept … (pg.123). These "abstract concepts" are forces which drives the author on the direction of the narrative. Themes in Purple Hibiscus include but not limited to:

Firstly, religious extremism is deceptive and breeds sin. Eugene is described as an oblate. These are those who are obsessed with religion and are overzealous with their faith. No one can doubt the fact that Eugene has good intentions but the way he goes about them is wrong. Because he is obsessed he loses touch with reality. He seeks to lead a perfect lifestyle forgetting that in this present system of things no one can be perfect. This over enthusiasm becomes an abnormal trait causing him to do things which to normal people are sin in themselves. He sees everything around him as evil. He feels that pain should be used to coerce people to convert to Christianity. For instance, he considers his own father evil because he does not convert to Christianity. Eugene forgets that for us Africans, totally discarding our traditional ways of life and embracing a foreign way is a gradual process. He believes in perfection; therefore; during Ash Wednesdays, he presses hard on each forehead to make a perfect cross with his ash-covered thumb and slowly meaningfully enunciated every word: dust and unto dust you shall return. He also considers those who refuse communion on Sunday to be possessed and committing mortal sin. His over enthusiasm makes him believe that everyone has to be perfect as he thinks he is and it is evident

in the instance where he cuts his son's finger because the boy has missed two questions in his catechism test and is not named the best in Holy Communion class.

Secondly, the plight of the colonized African is deplorable. Africa's association with the west is one act that has profound influence on how Africans all over the world behave today. In some cases the influence is positive yet in others it is brutal and negative as we see Eugene exhibit. Eugene attracts the sympathy of the reader when he narrates his ordeal at the hands of the priest he grew up with. The Catholic Priest, whom he grew up with, someone he considers to be a representative of God on earth, has his hands dipped in boiling water because, as a young man, he has 'sinned' . How else can one who has been brought up to witness this act train and react to those around him? Is it not a fact that when a child grows up in a violent environment he grows up to exhibit violent such qualities? That is exactly what happens to Eugene; his experience with the man whom he has considered to be God incarnate, has imprinted on his mind that bodily pain is a means to spiritual transfiguration. Is it not quite surprising that after colonization, the entire continent is caught up in wars after wars and all sorts of atrocities perpetrated by Africans on fellow Africans? What has been the source of these developments? Has the African always been like that? The African seems not to be able to know his left from his right, as some people say, the whole continent is caught up in confusion. That is what Eugene represents. He symbolizes the aftermath chaotic situation in post-colonial Africa in modern times; how uncompromising one African has become towards another.

Also, an elite woman is liberated and more positioned than the semi educated yet well-resourced woman. The lives of Mama Beatrice and aunty Ifeoma present two contrasting yet critical issues worthy of analyzing. Mama Beatrice, wife of Eugene, is a house wife. Though she lives in a well-resourced house and has everything at her disposal, she has no say in anything that is decided on in her house. The final decision on everything that happens around her rests with her husband. To her, marriage is very important for every woman and no matter what happens, a woman must stick to her marriage and do well to keep it intact. She is symbolic of our womenfolk who have given up under the yoke of gender segregation, resigned to fate and have resolved to live in masochism.

Aunty Ifeoma on the other hand is a well-educated and liberated woman. Even though she is a widow, she works as a single parent to take good care of her children. She believes that marriage does not make a woman whole, and with or without marriage a woman should be able to lead a full life. She tries to impact this knowledge to Mama Beatrice yet Mama Beatrice won't have any of it. What is the impact of these two women on their dependants? As has already been discussed, the children of Mama Beatrice are constantly bullied by their autocratic father, and so are timid. Those of aunty Ifeoma are bold, confident and independent. There is no gain saying that if aunty Ifeoma were Eugene's wife, there is no way, what has happened in the case of mama Beatrice could happen to her. The conclusion is that good education of the female child is essential to development in general and a healthy family particular. It empowers the woman to contribute effectively to the progress and sustainability of humanity.

Moreover, the education of children needs more liberalism than restriction: Eugene and aunty Ifeoma's children present serious issues pertaining to the education of one's children which needs to be looked at critically. Eugene, we are told, works so hard and sends his children to one of the best schools in Nigeria. In addition, he ensures that his children excel academically. He personally prepares minute-by-minute schedules for them and ensures that they follow it. On the other hand, his sister, the widow and single mother, sends her children to the community school. She does not strictly monitor her children but allows them to explore and grow up with those in the community. It can even be said she allows them to adventure and to make mistakes, and then to correct them; that is, she allows her children to learn to be discerning naturally. On a level platform, one can see that Ifeoma's children are more discerning, bold, and more intelligent than those of Eugene. In fact, Kambili and Jaja are timid. Oppression by Papa leads to the timidity of his children and the family as a whole. Kambili for instance becomes very timid and fails to voice out her thoughts and feelings. Amaka is always furious at her cousin, Kambili, and initially fails to understand her. She is not able to do anything because of the way they are brought up. Finally, Kambili and Jaja see a clear distinction between their cousins and themselves. Aunty Ifeoma shows a level headed approach to

parenting. This conclusion points to the fact that the rote or rigid style of education does not yield positive results.

In addition, traditional religion and Christianity are both geared towards the service of God yet aspects of interpretation make the two religions look different and far apart: No in-depth analysis of this text can be done without considering the theme of conflict of belief systems. Papa Nnukwu, Eugene's aged father stands for African traditional belief while Eugene stands for the Western (Christian) belief. Papa Nnukwu does not believe in Christianity but he strongly believes in God and refers to him in Igbo as "Chineke" meaning my God, and "Chukwu" meaning high God. He recollects his interaction with one Fada John who tells him that the son of God is equal to the Father. The misunderstanding that takes place is comparable to that between Friday and Robinson in Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. Just as in real life, that equality is not possible so is it in African traditional belief. Yet the base line is that there is a belief in God. On the other hand, Eugene who represents the Christian religion and professes to hold God high, is seen nowhere in the text to refer to God as my God or even high God. In her analysis of Eugene, Osei-Boakye (2011) asserts that Eugene must be forgiven because it was his mistaken definition of Catholicism that leads him to behave the way he does. Suppose that is so, how about the Father Benedict, should he also be forgiven for his uncompromising stance on religion?

Finally, corruption breeds political instability: corruption in an unstable government as a theme is evident in the story when Mama and Kambili gives huge cheques to their lawyers who know the right people to bribe, such as the judges who rules over the case of Jaja, policemen and a doctor who is also bribed to treat Jaja after he has being flogged, for spitting on a guard. Again, the cell guard is bribed so his mum and sister can give him food and have quality time with him; a treatment that is not given to other prisoners. Kambili also recalls an instance where papa tells them that there are huge sums of money in foreign bank accounts by cabinet ministers. These monies are meant for paying teachers' salaries and building roads. Also, Ade Coker is assassinated in a bomb blast for exposing the wrong doings of government in the newspaper, the standard, where he is an editor. Moreover, the military government does not allow the university staff to elect their own administrator and this

leads to a protest. All the above create a condition of silence in Nigeria; where everyone refuse to air the mishaps in the community excerpt the Standard New Paper.

In conclusion, we can say Purple Hibiscus as a post-colonial text has projected the diminishing of African Culture as a result of the introduction of foreign culture on the continent.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Discuss the theme of Purple Hibicus.

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Q2. Religion is a crucial theme in Purple Hibiscus. Discuss how religion influences the characters

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8.5 LET'S SUM UP

The art exhibited in Purple Hibiscus is beyond comprehension. This work set out to analyse the plot, characters, themes, setting, conflict, language use, style of writing etc. There is no doubt that all these aspects of the novel has been thoroughly explored in this piece. It is hoped that this work will be an invaluable assert to future researchers on the novel under consideration. The beauty of the text lies in the fact that one is able to return to it overly and enjoy at each time. No wonder the writer has had so much acclamations and awards.

8.6 KEYWORDS

1. Grimace: to make a expression of pain, annoyance which makes the face look unnaturally twisted
2. Unction: the act of putting oil on a person as a religious ceremony, especially in the Catholic Church at the end of life.
3. Communion: - A group of people or religious organization having the same religious beliefs.

4. Holy Communion: refer to the religious service in protestant churches in which bread and wine are shared in a solemn ceremony as a sign of Christ body and blood in remembrance of his death; the Eucharist.
5. Mass: a piece of music written specially for all the main parts of the mass i.e. Christian religious services as used in catholic and orthodox churches.
6. Wafer: flour, sugar etc. cooked in the form of a very thin cake used in the Christian religious ceremony if holy communion.
7. Missal: a book containing the complete religious service during the year for mass used in the Roman Catholic Church
8. Figurines: a small ornamental human figure made of baked clay or cut stone.
9. Sequin (+ or - ed): a very small flat round shiny ornament of metal or plastic used for sewing onto a piece of clothing (often over a large area) for ornament.
10. Credo: the third part of the Christian religious service called the mass, especially when performed with music.
11. Kyrie: a prayer for God's mercy, which is the first part of the religious service called the Mass

8.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What does the purple hibiscus represent?
2. Kambili describes in detail many different aspects of nature, including plants, insects and weather. How does the environment relate to the narrative?
3. Compare the relationship between Amaka and Obiora to the relationship between Kambili and Jaja.
4. Kambili describes in detail several dreams. Why are they important?
5. Purple Hibiscus charts the coming of age of both Kambili and Jaja. Discuss how each Achike sibling matures over the course of the novel.
6. Why does Mama poison Papa?
7. Discuss how the political unrest in Nigeria affects the Achike family.
8. Discuss the significance of Kambili's crush on Father Amadi.

8.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 8.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 8.3

Check Your Progress Ii:

Answer 1 : Check Section 8.4

Answer 2 : Check Section 8.4

UNIT: 9 INTRODUCTION TO LIFE OF V.S NAIPAUL

STRUCTURE

9.0 Objective

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Negotiating The Periphery

9.3 Extra Regional English Subjects

9.4 The Political Fray Of The 1960s

9.5 Mythologizing A 'Universal Civilization'

9.6 Let's Sum Up

9.7 Keywords

9.8 Questions For Review

9.9 Suggested Readings And References

9.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit helps to understand the Life of V.S Naipaul. This unit gives insight about his education and his early life. A unit helps to understand how he became the part of Literature. Units provide his understanding about various aspects of life like mythology and politics.

Unit helps to achieve following objective:

- **Introduction to the VS Naipaul's life**
- **His understanding for Politics**
- **His mythological thinking**

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Vidiadhur Surajprasad Naipaul's narratives of arrival in England return repeatedly to his father Seepersad's nurturing of his artistic ambition in Trinidad, and his early prescience that the 'idea of the writing vocation' given him by a colonial acculturation could be realised and practised in England.

In making himself a writer, he has abjured being categorised as West Indian, most famously in withdrawing the manuscript of Guerillas (1975) from publisher Secker and Warburg after being described in a catalogue as 'the West Indian novelist'. His career as a determinedly 'extraregional' writer of fiction, travel books and memoir has been both stellar and controversial. In 1990 he was awarded Trinidad's Trinity Cross and knighted by British monarch Elizabeth II. The biographical note in his latest novel Half a Life (2001) rather acerbically states that '[h]e has won every major literary award bar the Nobel'. Cited by the Swedish Academy as a 'British writer, born in Trinidad', he finally did win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001 'for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories . . . Naipaul is Conrad's heir as the annalist of the destinies of empires in the moral sense: what they do to human beings. His authority as a narrator is grounded in the memory of what others have forgotten, the history of the vanquished'.Naipaul's work is praised here as being faithful to history and a historical constituency of the oppressed, his interpretation of them being motivated by moral rigour and truth, rather than by cultural and artistic values which have ideological and political groundings. Given the controversies generated by his writing and his public persona the claim is extraordinary. His stances on and representations of the politics of decolonisation are frequently denounced as reactionary. Edward Said, for instance, has decried Naipaul as 'immoral', a pedlar of 'the tritest, the cheapest and the easiest of colonial mythologies about wogs and darkies' and comforting imperialist theses concerning the 'self-inflicted wounds' of the colonised. The relation of Naipaul and his work to the post-imperial encounter in Britain is, however, more complicated than such denunciations suggest. Exacting anxieties have haunted his witness of his journey from the 'exotic' periphery to the centre of English culture

through the practice of a vocation he idealises and conceptualises with such rigid conservatism.

9.2 NEGOTIATING THE PERIPHERY

In 1958, on the eve of the Notting Hill riots, Naipaul saw himself as an 'exotic writer', 'liv[ing] in England and depend[ing] on an English audience'.Born in Chaguanas in 1932, Naipaul had arrived in England in 1950 to study English at Oxford University, after a long period in Port of Spain 'spent in a blind, driven kind of colonial studying' to win his schol- arship. Explaining his decision not to return to Trinidad to his mother Droapati in 1954, he writes: 'The place is too small, the values are all wrong, and the people are petty . . . This country [England] is hot with racial prejudices, and I certainly don't wish to stay here.' He was then in the process of identifying his early subject matter: social comedies set in Trinidad, focusing on local 'characters', 'easy material for the writer'. This would be the metier of his first four books of fiction, including his highly acclaimed A House for Mr Biswas (1961), the protagonist of which is based loosely on his beloved father. Coming from the 'enclosed life' of an extended rural Indo-Trinidadian family, 'the disintegrating world of a remembered India', Naipaul 'never ceased to feel a stranger' in Port of Spain after his family's move there. His sense of living on the periphery of a dominant black colonial culture in Port of Spain and later of a dominant white English culture is figured as inhabiting a 'kind of limbo', as an existential homelessness in relation to elusive community.12 In this English 'limbo' 'he suffered periods of deep depression and anxiety, even once attempting to gas himself'.'I saw people of other groups from the outside; school friendships were lefi behind at school or in the street. I had no proper understanding of where I was, and really never had the time to find out', he writes of Port of Spain. Black characters, for instance, Man-man or B. Wordsworth in Miguel Street (1959), are part of the theatricality of communal street life.

To achieve mass appeal with an English audience as a regional West Indian writer, Naipaul suggests in 1958, he would need to supplement writing skill with a few thematic and structural 'devices': 'Sex'; writing a narrative around 'an English or American character' in a Caribbean

setting; and ‘Race’. His horror at being categorised as the ‘West Indian’ author of Guerillas might be related to the fact that it does have these stock narrative motors of the popular fiction he so despises, including a ‘quick-to-strip’ female protagonist. While anathematising all of these mechanisms, Naipaul deals with ‘Race’ in most detail. He finds ‘the race issue is too complicated to be dealt with at best-seller, black-and-white level’, especially after his time in England. He worries that such ‘stories of oppression and humiliation’ with their mandatory ‘clear oppressors and clear oppressed’ may pander to an audience’s ‘sadistic pleasure’, its ‘vicarious sense of power’. He usefully raises the question whether a British tabloid audience of the 1950s would necessarily identify with the victim rather than the perpetrator of racial discrimination. His own point of identification is problematic, he states, because of his Indian heritage, his origins in ‘an easy-going multi-racial society’, and his awareness that racialised conflict can also take the form of black-on- black violence as in the persecution of Tamil people in the then Ceylon. In The Enigma of Arrival (1987), the narrator of which Naipaul acknowledges to be an autobiographical figure, he points to a more primal character formation which has shaped his handling of conflict: ‘The fear of extinction which I had developed as a child had partly to do with this: the fear of being swallowed up or extinguished by the simplicity of one side or the other, my side or the side that wasn’t mine’. Naipaul’s use of evolutionary discourse, here, is telling: it implies a belief that he can make himself fitter in relation to this threat by transcending clear-cut loyalties and causes. Naipaul’s unwillingness to hone his sense of imperialism as an analytic category is related, he suggests in 1998, to his resistance to simplifications: he ‘grew up with this idea that it was important to look inwards and not always define an external enemy. .

‘Tell me who to kill’ in In a Free State (1971) might be read as a story à thèse about Naipaul’s sense of the complicatedness of the ‘race issue’ in England of the 1950s and 1960s. The unnamed first-person narrator of the story, a Hindu from a West Indian island, attends the wedding of his brother Dayo and a white woman. He has lived in England for eight years. Three years before the wedding he has apparently had a breakdown and responded to racist bullying by ‘young English louts’ in his roti-and-curry shop, possibly killing one or some of them. He attends

the wedding with a white friend Frank, a protector figure. Frank wants always to draw the narrator out about the racial discrimination he has experienced from white people, reducing his experience of England to a series of insults culminating in the breakdown, and his humanity to the fact of racialised difference, 'dark- ness'.For Frank the narrator's life before his arrival in England is a tabula rasa; the narrator's enemy is external. The narrator, reflecting on his life, realises that Frank's positioning of him as a 'weak' victim allows him the pleasure and strength of the homoerotically charged protector role. For Frank the role is the site of his spiritual war against English racism.

The narrator's description of himself as having 'work[ed] like a man in blinkers' in England to support his brother and draw strength from his savings has a wider application to his experience. He has characteristically repressed his anger and humiliation at discrimination, because to focus on this would be 'opening up manholes for' him 'to fall in'.The metaphor implies castration anxiety. His breakdown has also been scripted by a series of humiliations dating back to the extended family dynamics of his childhood in the West Indies, the protector role he has assumed in relation to his brother (and his brother's abuse of it), a fetishisation of the prospect of Dayo's move via education into a professional class, growing out of touch with his own human needs while, 'donkey'-like, working two jobs,a poor business decision in opening the shop, and anxieties around changed financial status. It illustrates in part Naipaul's more general proposition that 'the colonial setting . . . reduces people to work machines, encourages them to compete as such, strips them of personality'. England becomes for the narrator a space of decay and death, and he can only read Dayo's marriage to a white woman as a social death. Hollywood B-movies consumed while growing up in the West Indies are a crucial reference point for the narrator. In The Middle Passage Naipaul associates this kind of 'second-rate' cinematic influence with 'minds' that 'are rigidly closed'; this is, for him, a critical sign of 'modernity' in Trinidad. A template drawn from a scene in Alfred Hitchcock's film Rope (1948) continues to function for the nar- rator as a screen memory for the scene of his violence in his shop.

Naipaul's authorial voice in 'Tell me who to kill' is compassionate towards the narrator and his dilemma that he cannot identify a clear- cut enemy responsible for his despair; the sympathy is also grounded in a protective rescue of the narrator from Frank's kind of simplicities. The narrator's stylised patois enriches his humanity; elsewhere, as in The Middle Passage and Guerillas, Naipaul's citation of ungrammatical English and patois serves a mocking function.

In the early stages of his career Naipaul is resistant to his sense of how the 'West Indian writer' is recognised in Britain and restrictive expectations of his or her work and approaches to sex, the exotic, and race relations. He refuses to commodify his writing to meet these expectations, grounded as they are in porno-tropic fantasies of the colo-nial and ex-colonial world as a site on which 'forbidden sexual desires and fears' might be projected,and, as he strives to demonstrate, in reductive understandings of the complexity of race relations and of the humanity of the victims of racism.

9.3 EXTRAREGIONAL ENGLISH SUBJECTS

In Reading & Writing (2000) Naipaul acknowledges that in his early years he had not found the 'imaginative key', what he calls elsewhere the 'human experience, the literary experience'to comprehend fully 'English and European fiction'. In 'London' he writes that he knew 'little about England', the intricacies of life there being kept 'behind closed doors'. 'I have met many people but I know them only in official attitudes – the drink, the interview, the meal. I have a few friends. But this gives me only a superficial knowledge of the country and in order to write fiction it is necessary to know so much: we are not all broth- ers under the skin.' The public/private dichotomy in English culture, and in London specifically, operates as a barrier to 'communal pleasures' and interaction, a 'barrier of self-consciousness'. This threatens 'sterility' for him. His sense of vulnerability is perhaps heightened by his growing sense that he could not 'make a living' as a writer 'by being regional'.In The Enigma of Arrival the narrator notes with some chagrin that he had in the 1950s passed up an important theme, the 'flotsam of Europe' in

London boarding houses after the war, ‘the beginning of that great movement of peoples that was to take place in the second half of the twentieth century . . . These people’s principal pos- sessions were their stories, and their stories spilled easily out of them. But I noted nothing down. I asked no questions. I took them all for granted, looked beyond them’. ‘Fiction works best in a confined moral and cultural area, where the rules are generally known; and in that confined area it deals best with things – emotions, impulses, moral anxieties – that would be unseizable or incomplete in other literary forms’, Naipaul insists. He would return in his fiction set in England or containing sojourns in England on the parts of his protagonists to such confined areas: the communal intimacies and shifting loyalties of boarding houses; England in the late 1940s and 1950s; little Englandism; the making of the black prophet in the 1960s and 1970s; the constrained lives of male immigrants whose search for community, acceptance and masculine reassurance resolves itself illusively and elusively into sex; the country manor and cottage; and the vocation of writing. The first of Naipaul’s novels with an English setting and English characters is Mr Stone and the Knights Companion (1964), usually regarded as his ‘attempt to escape from being regarded as a regional writer’. Naipaul develops a searching critique of little Englandism. The librarian protagonist Mr Stone is the epitome of a little Englandism nearing the end of its working life, and reflecting anxiously on its achievements. His anxieties are shaped by pressures on his everyday white masculinity. Alison Light argues that inter-war little Englandism was a ‘conservative modernity’, characterised by ‘a move away from formerly heroic and officially masculine public rhetorics of national destiny and from a dynamic and missionary view of the Victorian and Edwardian middle classes in “Great Britain” to an Englishness at once less imperial and more inward-looking, more domestic and more private’.

It valued ‘the quiet life’, the ‘known and the familiar’, the ‘nice, decent’. At the opening of the novel Mr Stone’s domestic territorialism, and his familiar comfort with ‘slow decay’ and ‘bulky nine- teen-thirty furniture’, is affronted by the presence of a black tomcat in his garden and home. Mr Stone is fixated on traces of its ‘obscene scuttlings and dredgings and buryings’. Business involving the cat, associated with

newcomers to the neighbourhood, may be read as a sign of bachelor Mr Stone's sexual anxiety as he approaches retirement age. It might also, however, be read as a sign of his anxiety about the permissive encroachment of the foreign in his corner of England.

He seeks to manage his sexual anxiety through a prospect of white regeneration, which is, however, short-lived. He marries Margaret Springer, when, symbolically, a tree in view of his back window has 'swollen' buds and 'in sunshine were like points of white'. Margaret introduces a 'new and alien mustiness' into his home and a tigerskin, seemingly a family heirloom, which exacerbate his sense of masculine inadequacy. 'The "odor di femina" becomes odious, nauseous', Michèle Montrelay argues, 'because it threatens to undo the achievements of repression and sublimation, threatens to return the subject to the power-lessness, intensity and anxiety of an immediate, unmediated connection with the body of the mother.' The tigerskin is a trophy of imperial masculinity, signalled in the photograph of an 'English cavalry officer', with 'one hand caressing a rifle laid neatly across his thighs', and a 'highly polished boot' on the chest of a dead tiger. In the background are 'three sor- rowful, top-heavily turbanned Indians, beaters or bearers or whatever they were'.

On a belated honeymoon in Cornwall Mr Stone experiences a shattering and emasculating moment of 'white void', 'enveloped' in smoke which robbed him and Margaret 'of earth and reality', him of 'judgment, of the will to act'. The experience prompts him to develop a welfare scheme for retired employees of his company Excal which will rescue them from an effeminising passivity in retirement and the unremitting 'confinement of family relationships', that is, by women. While in the days of the Knights Companion scheme he does accommodate himself to the cat's presence in the neighbourhood and its symbolic promise of spring, it is as observer, a distance which comes to signify to him 'his emptiness and the darkness to come'.

Stone's foil is the younger Mr Whymper, the Public Relations Officer at Excal, who represents the more aggressive and dynamic masculinity of late 1950s and early 1960s British consumer capitalism. The medieval trappings Whymper gives Stone's welfare scheme mask its efficacy as a contemporary vehicle for marketing and for the enmeshing of

Whymper's masculine individualism with consumer capitalism. Whymper is more overtly and casually xenophobic, racist and misognistic than Stone. In general non-white people in England register in Stone's consciousness as faces in crowds in localised parts of London (Earl's Court, the streets around the city office, Brixton) and as objects of racist address, for example, by street campaigners for the British National Party. Whymper's sexual adventurousness marks him as a member of a newer permissive generation. His name implies, through allusion to T. S. Eliot's 'The hollow men', that his values will be 'the way the world ends'. Stone's illumination at the end of the novel that all is flesh, 'man's own frailty and corruptibility', and that triumph over this mocking, feminised nature lies in 'destruction' – the imposition of masculinised will on it – is undercut by his reaction to a young black cat. After exhilaratingly re-energising his sense of masculinity with this 'possibility' of triumph, he realises when his response to the presence of the cat in his home shifts from 'fear' through 'guilt into love' that he was 'no destroyer'. 'Between the idea/And the reality', 'Between the potency/ and the existence' falls the shadow of his desire for the 'calm' of little Englandism's 'sexual and social economies'. Appeasing this desire has become habitual.

Becoming 'extraregional' for Naipaul has entailed not just a broaden- ing of his range of literary subjects as in Mr Stone and the Knights Companion; it has also involved a more active dissociation of himself from West Indian communities in England and social and political developments within them. Winston James has highlighted the ways in which racial categorisation in Britain after 1945 operated on a black/white binary, and non-white West Indian immigrants from cultures with a more elaborate and graduated 'pigmentocracy' or shade hierarchy would find themselves interpellated as black. Indo-Caribbeans would also be called black. James argues that this epistemic violence has had a pro- ductive political effect in developing a pan-black consciousness that might be mobilised against the racism of the dominant culture. He draws attention, too, to a process of Pan-Caribbeanisation: the development of a sense of a regional rather than island or national identity. He attributes this, in part, to British indifference to diversity of colonial or national origins (West Indians generally being homogenised as Jamaican) and

island chauvinism, as well as to community-building abroad. Naipaul isscathing about a pigmentocracy among black people which he reads as a sign of internalised racial inferiority that keeps whiteness as a desired norm: 'Pursuing the Christian-Hellenic tradition, the West Indian accepted his blackness as his guilt, and divided people into the white, fusty, musty, dusty, tea, coffee, cocoa, light black, black, dark black'. Naipaul has resisted the process of Pan-Caribbeanisation. 'I have nothing in common with people from Jamaica', he comments in 1968. 'Or the other islands for that matter.' More pointedly he has abjured being interpellated as black (preferring the terms Indian or Asiatic).

This move has two historical dimensions. First, he is refusing the black/white binary of British racism that will not accommodate his West Indian Indian heritage. Kobena Mercer explains, too, that especially in the 1980s, the derogatory sign black 'was dis-articulated out of its natural- ised [racist] meaning and reference, and re-articulated into an alternative chain of signification in which it became a sign of solidarity among Asian, African and Caribbean peoples. As a sign of political rather than genetic identity, blackness was reappropriated out of one discursive system and rearticulated into another.' In distancing himself from this emerging solidarity, Naipaul reclaims a genetic identity.

Naipaul also points out in 1968 that he was not part of a community of West Indian writers in London: 'We don't have anything in common, you see'. 'I used to read a lot of West Indian novels until 1956. Since then I have stopped really. This is because they have stopped feeding me. It is really hard to read books that don't feed me.' This, of course, feeds his fantasy of being a self-made writer; again, as in double-edged comments like 'I have grown out of Trinidad', his acerbic relation to the West Indies is represented as a sign of maturity. Naipaul tends to praise in West Indian novels what confirms his world-view and to inter- pret them through it. For instance, his assessment of Jean Rhys in 1971, important for placing her as West Indian, emphasises the senses of exile and the psychological shipwreck of 'dependence and defeat', the 'woman's half-world' of her protagonists. He commends Rhys for being 'above causes'.

He responds appreciatively in her work to what is a major thematic in his own writing – the displaced colonial subject in England – handled by

him in both deeply empathetic and satirical ways. The fear of ship- wreck and a sense of being adrift had been leitmotifs of The Mimic Men (1967). Ralph Singh's journeys from the fictive West Indian island of Isabella to London, energised at first by colonial myths of place, are journeys to two-dimensionality – the parts of 'the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent to scholarship' and of the sexualised child to Lady Stella – which like his sexual adventures with 'anonymous flesh' take him 'deeper into emptiness'. In England he finds himself injured intofeeling 'spectral, disintegrating, pointless, fluid'. Naipaul reinflects aspects of this topos in Half a Life. Willie Chandran's journey from India to London to an unnamed African colony (recognisably Mozambique) is also a progressive movement to dependence and defeat. His anxieties centre on emasculation and inauthenticity. His 'half' life is one characterised by hiding. For example, as a child he revises European stories movingly, yet obliquely, to accuse his parents of emotional neglect and violence. Pursuing a writing career in England he manufactures fiction from European sources, and because of his skin colour and Indian name, his work is assumed to be authentically Indian.

Naipaul's decision in the 1960s to embrace an extraregional identity as a writer was produced by economic considerations, a determination in the face of interpretative difficulties to broaden his range to include stringent treatments of England and the English, and a pointed disssociation of himself from forms of racist address and racial and Pan- Caribbean solidarity. As a writer of fiction and criticism he is, though, appreciative of the personal and psychological costs of displacement and exile from community for colonial subjects in England.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Q1.Discuss the early life of V.S Naipaul.

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Q2. How V.S Naipaul took up Extra regional English subjects?

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9.4 THE POLITICAL FRAY OF THE 1960S

Naipaul observes of himself in 1958: 'after eight years here I find I have, without effort, achieved the Buddhist ideal of non-attachment. I am never disturbed by national or international issues. I do not sign peti- tions. I do not vote. I do not march. And I never cease to feel that this lack of interest is all wrong. I want to be involved, to be touched even by some of the prevailing anger.' In An Area of Darkness (1964) he attributes this to an Indian 'philosophy of despair, leading to passivity, detachment, acceptance' which had allowed him to 'withdraw com- pletely from nationality and loyalties except to persons; it had made me content to be myself alone, my work, my name (the last two so very dif- ferent from the first); it had convinced me that every man was an island, and taught me to shield all that I knew to be good and pure within myself from the corruption of causes'. By the mid-1960s, however, Naipaul is 'touched' by his 'anger' at social change.

Naipaul's metaphor for social change in Trinidad and England becomes the proletariat; his well-known attack in 2000 on Tony Blair's Labour government and what he perceives to be its anti-elitist pro- gramme uses a similar metaphor of the plebeian, which perhaps carries more connotations of vulgarity. He insists to Derek Walcott in 1964 that a 'sinister' process of proletarianisation has eroded structures of 'aspiration' and the animation of culture by the spirit. In Trinidad 'aspi- ration has been dropped . . . the manners of the proletariat have infil- trated the rest of society'. In England the rise of popular racism mani- fested in Conservative Peter Griffiths's electoral win in Smethwick in 1964 is a key sign of proletarianisation. Stuart Hall argues that Griffiths's victory was 'a turning point in the history of British racism': 'the first moment when racism is appropriated into the official policy and programme of a major political party and legitimated as the basis of an electoral appeal, specifically addressed to the popular white classes. Here is the beginning of racism as an element in the official politics of British populism – racism in a structured and "legitimate" form'. Institutionalised popular racism, Naipaul insists, 'is how a civilisation dies'. Anti-Nazism and anti-apartheid, he declares, are 'good causes', even if organised political activism is anathema to him personally.

Ethnocentrism as a practice of pervasive racism is not targetted by Naipaul in the same vein.

In his essay 'What's wrong with being a snob?' (1967) Naipaul links the degrading proletarianisation of England – emblematically the 'mini- man in his mini-car' – with a crisis of liberalism. Naipaul attacks under the umbrella of proletarianisation the discourse of classlessness, the rise of the welfare state, changing men's fashions, pop musicians as a 'cause for national pride', capitalist consumerism, popular racism, failure of political leadership on the issue of racism, and in the field of the novel 'pretentious pornography and sadism'. 'In the hysteria of self-congratulation, the new greed [of "a booming capitalist society"] expressed itself most hideously', he angrily laments, 'in the persecution of immigrants from the former Empire. Yesterday's slogan on the wall – SEND NIGGERS HOME – was embodied in today's White Paper on limiting immigration.' This is a pointed attack on the repatriation provisions of the August 1965 White Paper issued by the Labour Government; it might also extend to the proposed cut in work-vouchers and stricter con- trols on dependent relatives. In depicting Naipaul as an anglophile 'patriotic' racist Rob Nixon overlooks his critiques of the institutional- isation of racism both in this essay and elsewhere. Naipaul urges that the 'romance of the "classless" new society is' being 'ceaselessly offered as compensation' for 'social' and 'economic' 'decay'. He advocates a snobbish 'recognition' of personal and cultural 'difference' from the 'low' as a basis for a renovated civilising mission. As liberalism is brought into 'disrepute' through an unthinking endorsement of a universal humanity, he worries that, 'in the confusion, the liberal principle itself might be totally submerged in weakness, defeat. And fear'.

There is incoherence in Naipaul's panic over the decay he attributes to the proletarianisation that is at its most visible in the metropolis. It is perhaps for him an unmanageably diffuse area for fictional scrutiny. His most compelling meditation on decay is The Enigma of Arrival,a novelwhich Frank Kermode notes 'is set in a part of rural England that doesn't count racism or colonialism among its most pressing problems'.

As well as proletarianisation, the rise of black consciousness and Black Power movements during the 1960s disturbed Naipaul. Implicitly assigning himself rationality and authentic knowledge, he interprets both

as symptoms of racial hysteria and inauthenticity. For Naipaul Black Power is an 'infection' carried from the United States,characterised by catchcries and '[b]orrowed words'. The critiques of the materiality of the lives of black people made by 'the spokesmen for Black Power' offer 'sharp analysis of black degradation'; Naipaul is more scathing about 'Black Power as rage, drama and style', his percep- tion of its 'undermining' of multi-racial politics, and its appeal to popular 'apocalyptic' expectations. In 'Michael X and the Black Power killings in Trinidad' Naipaul asserts that Michael de Freitas, also known as Michael X and Michael Abdul Malik, 'passed' as 'a Negro' in London. Naipaul draws on 'local knowledge' to fix Malik as a 'red', a person of mixed African and Portuguese ancestry, and hence a com- modified fraud: 'Malik's Negro was, in fact, a grotesque: not American, not West Indian, but an American caricatured by a red man from Trinidad for a British audience'. Naipaul seems to take a grim pleas- ure in repeating sexist insults relating to miscegenation reportedly levelled at Malik's mother. Malik would become the basis for Jimmy Ahmed in Guerillas; aspects of Percy Cato's career in Half a Life also replicate an early phase of de Freitas's life in England.

Naipaul is harshly critical in Guerillas of the sectors of English society responsible for the making of Jimmy Ahmed: liberals for whom the demonstration and the political meeting are a diversion before tea; those on 'Right and Lefi' for whom 'race' is a 'topic of entertainment'; women who use a black man as a 'plaything', a 'playboy'; the sexually permissive woman, 'adrifi, enervated, her dissatisfactions vague'. Jimmy's writing of his desire for Englishwoman Jane, the type of the permissive woman, in the idiom of romance fiction demonstrates his psychic dependency on the presumption of the middle-class white woman's fetishisation of his Hakwai (black and Chinese) masculinity. Naipaul, though, is at his most punitive in his representation of Jane, 'white rat', 'rotten meat', and implicitly a succubus.Authorial horror at her is also expressed in her crossing sexually into masculine pos- tures, Jimmy's anal rape of her and her murder.

Naipaul's comment about West Indian books no longer feeding him resonates in the context of his representation of C. L. R. James as flawed prodigy Lebrun in 'On the run', part of his sequence A Way in the World

(1994), '"a settling of accounts" . . . for what he regards as errors of artistic judgment'. In a 1963 review he had praised James's Beyond aBoundary as 'one of the finest and most finished books to come out of the West Indies, important to England, important to the West Indies'. He concedes there that 'Mr James's career is of particular interest' to him as much for the dissimilarity of their 'backgrounds', as for them both 'speaking the same language' and having 'charmed' themselves 'away from Trinidad'. The fictive Lebrun, after writing a book that is recognisably The Black Jacobins, has spent a life as a marxist 'revolutionary . . . on the run'. He is 'discovered' in 'extreme old age' in England 'as one of the prophets of black revolution, a man whose name didn't appear in the history books, but who for years had worked patiently, had been behind the liberation movements of Africa and the Caribbean'. This 'idea of himself . . . had anchored him, had been a kind of livelihood', which eventually 'began to feed on itself'. Naipaul's story feeds on his earlier work – most pointedly his travel narrative 'The crocodiles of Yamoussoukro' – in ways which caution against any easy identification of the narrator as an autobiographical Naipaul figure.

The narrator of the story, a writer by profession, thinks Lebrun is a 'prodigy' of 'rhetoric' and erudition, and is seemingly haunted by the question, 'How, considering where he was born, had he become the man he was?' The narrator comes to appreciate that Lebrun's marxism, his 'political resolution', is an effort 'to submerge his racial feelings in the universality of his political beliefs', to 'shed one smarting skin' to be 'reborn in another', and that his role as 'black prophet' works to undermine some of his equanimity. His developing double consciousness of himself as black and British is politically but not personally empowering; instead it returns him to the 'rawness of sensibility' which Naipaul associates with the colonial stranger. Lebrun becomes more suscepti- ble to the shame of a family heritage that includes an Uncle Tom figure, to anger about cross-racial sex on the part of black women, and to the 'hysteria' of the West Indies, 'expressed most usually in self-satire, jokeyness, fantasy, religious excess, sudden spasms of cruelty' Lebrun's patronym (which means dark man or boy in French) essentialises the anxieties that structure his career in his racial ancestry.

The narrator's refusal of assumptions of political community, his resistance to being seen as 'part of Lebrun's revolution', 'an expression of Lebrun's will',is realised in his inability to eat the food served to him among Lebrun's admirers. The narrator's ultimate emblem of Lebrun's disillusioning failure to denounce 'a black racial regime' becomes the 'black diet' – imprisonment without sustenance until death – that the president of Guinea imposes on political enemies iden- tified by Lebrun. As a symbol of savagery it is linked with another alleged local atrocity: human sacrifice to perform a foot-washing cere- mony. The narrator asserts that as 'a revolutionary without a base'.

Lebrun is 'always a failure in one way, in another way fortunate, never having to live with the consequences of his action'.

During the 1960s two major strands of Naipaul's response to institutionalised racism and to the rise of black consciousness, as a form of resistance to racial subordination, begin to emerge. Both are historical signs of processes of decolonisation and the diasporic manifestations of it. Naipaul interprets institutionalised racism in England and its former settler colonies as a sign of degenerate proletarianisation and failure of moral leadership, although his comments on this are sparse. In essays and fiction he excoriates aspects of the black consciousness and Black Power movements and the political and social forces in England that abetted their rise there. Naipaul's fictive representation of C. L. R. James as Lebrun in 'On the run' emphasises what he perceives to be the deleterious psychological consequences of racial self-consciousness and the manner in which political investment in pan-black nationalism may undermine the universality of the application of moral standards.

9.5 MYTHOLOGISING A 'UNIVERSAL CIVILIZATION'

Naipaul's charge that Lebrun/James was able fortunately to escape measures of responsibility for his acts might in turn be levelled at himself, an eloquent conservative who embraces a sense of existential national homelessness, travelling with or able to purchase a return ticket home to England. He never has to live fully with the everyday consequences or implications of his acts of representation. The negativity

of his commentary on travel destinations and cultures outside what is often termed the First World can feed the prejudices of and recircu- late stereotypes for his readers. In a 1979 interview with Elizabeth Hardwick Naipaul says, for instance: 'I do not write for Indians . . . who in any case do not read. My work is only possible in a liberal, civilized Western country. It is not possible in primitive societies.' To Tarun J. Tejpal in 1998 he speaks casually of 'writing from India or other retarded or former colonies'. One thinks here, too, of his famous dismissal of the West Indies in The Middle Passage – 'History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies'. As with Black Power, Naipaul represents multiculturalism as a neocolonising import from the United States to Britain. Yet, too, in terms of the clash of civilisations theory through which Naipaul cur- rently interprets world history, it is a policy 'fostered by Islamic groups'. In 2001 he mocks the policy as 'multi-culti', mobilising again, as with his denunciation of Black Power politics, a belittling discourse of redemptive desire and unreason, and treats it as a contributing factor to England's current 'cultural mess'. For him the key sign of the deficiency of the policy is the 'cover[ed]' up Islamic woman. She represents 'oppressive regimes', an 'oppressive faith' which 'hates humanity', 'old customs' which have 'kept' her community 'down'. Her veil becomes a site of cross-generational contagion: her children are bearers of religious fundamentalism. Some, Naipaul insists, despite being British nationals, 'become terrorists in foreign lands' – Yemen, Bosnia, Kashmir, 'places like that'. The stubborn spectacle of the veiled woman in Britain is a symbol of missionary inertia on the part of the more enlightened.90 The tone of such judgements amply exhibits the 'authorial absolutism' which HomiBhabha discerns in Naipaul's 'large-scale civilizational arguments' of the variety 'Certain societies are quite limited. It is difficult anyhow to be profound about them.' It is more often in the imaginative reaches afforded by fiction that Naipaul is able to transcend the simplicities of his side.

Naipaul might define his more recent work as an elaboration of the value of a 'universal civilization', a concept that he begins to articulate explicitly around 1980: 'the idea of the individual, responsibility, choice, the life of the intellect, the idea of vocation and perfectibility and

achievement'. 'It is the civilization, first of all, which gave me the idea of the writing vocation', he explains. 'It is the civilization in which I have been able to practice my vocation as a writer . . . [M]y movement within this civilization has been from the periphery to the centre.' This civilisation is not synonymous with the colonialism of his upbringing, but rather, he insists in 1991, a liberal, evolutionary development of it, which is in the process of transcending 'racialism' and working 'to accommodate the rest of the world, and all the currents of that world's thought'.

This accommodation involves in Britain a respect for 'human rights and human needs'. As Jan Pettman points out, 'Human rights have long been associated with a western, liberal and individual- istic approach to rights'. Naipaul consciously represents his ideal of the individual as being grounded in 'metropolitan assumptions about society: the availability of a wider learning, an idea of history, a concern with self-knowledge'.

Naipaul writes of Conrad that rather than 'discover' himself and his 'world' through writing, his 'character had been formed' before he 'settled down to write'. He implicitly associates this with Conrad's propensity to cite 'portable truths, as it were, that can sometimes be rendered as aphor- isms – and work through to their demonstration'. Giving Conrad's story 'The return' as an example of the method, he notes that 'the people remain abstractions'.96 Naipaul's discourse of civilisation is replete with 'portable truths', a vocabulary of the '"barbarous", "primitive", "tribal", "static", and "simple" societies, "world civilization", "bush", "philis- tine", the "colonial", the "whole man", "security", "sentimentality","parasitic", "borrowed culture", and "mimicry". Reiteratively, and in combination', as Nixon notes, 'these terms of reference become a com- pressed expression of Naipaul's Weltanschauung'. These 'truths' pro- foundly reduce the humanity of the people and characters about whom Naipaul writes, producing them as abstractions, bearers of cultural and often racialised essences. The method is one that justifies AkeelBilgrami's observation that Naipaul's 'cultural commentary' on the non- West 'typically combined an effortless contempt with a cultivated ignorance of the historical and the institutional sources of a culture's surface presentation'. The

meticulousness of Naipaul's detailing of that pres- entation – 'the sketches of fellow travellers, of the daily routines, the vessels, living quarters and facilities, food, drink, recreations, chance and deliberate encounters, conversations engaged in or, just as often, over- heard' – nonetheless, as Mustafa suggests, 'establishes an aura of verisimilitude'. The specificity of local detail belies the grounding of his broader cultural observations in formulaic, portable truths.

Naipaul's travel writing, advocacy of the standards of a universal civ- ilisation, and casual cultural commentary in interviews illustrate amply the reactionary conservatism of his politics of decolonisation. His view of historical progress is more pessimistic than that of C. L. R. James, whose position is outlined by Bill Schwarz and Catherine Hall in this volume. Naipaul's attitude to a lived British liberalism is markedly ambivalent. He is fierce both in his denunciations of liberal support for Black Power during the 1960s and 1970s and for multiculturalism as a policy of national belonging since the 1980s, and in his defence of the liberal principles integral to his ideal of a universal civilisation.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Discuss how V.S Naipaul was the part of political fray of the 1960s

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Q2. How V.S naipaul was under 'universal civilization'

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9.6 LET'S SUM UP

Sir VidiadharSurajprasad Naipaul TC 17 August 1932 – 11 August 2018), most commonly known as V. S. Naipaul, and informally, Vidia Naipaul, was a Trinidadian and Tobagonian British writer of works of fiction and nonfiction in English. He is known for his comic early novels set in Trinidad, his bleaker novels of alienation in the wider world, and his vigilant chronicles of life and travels. He wrote in prose that was

widely admired, but his views sometimes aroused controversy. He published more than thirty books over fifiy years.

Naipaul won the Booker Prize in 1971 for his novel In a Free State. In 1989, he was awarded the Trinity Cross, Trinidad and Tobago's highest national honour. He received a knighthood in Britain in 1990, and in 2001, the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In the late 19th century, Naipaul's grandparents had emigrated from India to work in Trinidad's plantations as indentured servants. His breakthrough novel A House for Mr Biswas was published in 1961. On the fifiieth anniversary of its publication, he dedicated it to Patricia Anne Hale, to whom he was married from 1955 until her death in 1996, and who had served as first reader, editor, and critic of his writings.

9.7 KEYWORDS

1. **Proletarianization** is the social process whereby people move from being either an employer, unemployed or self-employed, to being employed as wage labor by an employer
2. A **missionary** is a member of a religious group sent into an area to promote their faith or perform ministries of service, such as education, literacy, social justice, health care, and economic development.
3. **Catchcry**. : a distinctive word or expression (as a catchword or slogan) serving to attract attention or rally support.
4. A **protagonist** is the main character of a story.
5. **Susceptible**: likely or liable to be influenced or harmed by a particular thing."patients with liver disease may be susceptible to infection"
6. **Civilization**:the stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced.

9.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

a) What does “Extra regional” word describe about VS Naipaul?
b) What is VS Naipaul’s political understanding?

c) ‘The place is too small, the values are all wrong, and the people are petty’, Explain?

9.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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3. Diana Athill, Stet: a memoir (London: Granta, 2000), p. 232.
4. Mel Gussow, 'V. S. Naipaul: "It is out of this violence I've always written"', New York Times, 16 September 1984.
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13. Stephanie Bunbury, 'An audience with Sir Vidia', Age (Melbourne), 18 August 2001,p. 4.
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16. Naipaul, 'London', pp. 11-12.
17. 'The writer, the observer, that is scrupulously myself. The minute other people are in the picture, that is where the fictive element

comes in', Naipaul comments in an interview with Mel Gussow, 'The enigma of V. S. Naipaul's search for himself in writing', New York Times, 25 April 1987.

18. Naipaul, The Enigma of Arrival: a novel in five sections (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 140.
19. Tarun J. Tejpal, 'Arrivals and other enigmas: V. S. Naipaul's way in the world', at random magazine, (1998), www.stanford.edu.au/~amitm/naipaul/tejpal.html, p. 3 (accessed August 2001)

9.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 9.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 9.3

Check Your Progress Ii :

Answer 1 : Check Section 9.4

Answer 2 : Check Section 9.5

UNIT: 10 LITERATURE OF VS NAIPAUL

STRUCTURE

10.0 Objective

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Literature Review

10.3 Diasporic Consciousness And V. S. Naipaul

10.4 Secularism In A Sentence: Naipaul's Writer lines

10.5 Let's Sum Up

10.6 Keywords

10.7 Questions for Review

10.8 Suggested Readings and References

10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit help to understand the literature work of V.S Naipaul. Unit gives the insight in the underrating of the literature of V.S Naipaul. Units put the light of secularism thoughts of V.S Naipaul in his writing.
Unit helps to achieve following objective:

- **Literature Review of V. S Naipaul**
- **Diasporic Consciousness And V. S. Naipaul**
- **His understanding to Literature**
- **His Secularism thoughts**

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The 20th century witness's dramatic changes in the world: the two World Wars, the withdrawal of colonial mandates, the economic liberalization and the social and cultural transformation associated with globalization.

Owing to these, a vast number of people are attracted to leave their homeland and emigrate to other countries. As various races and cultures begin to mix, confrontation with the existing cultural structure and ideologies always causes people's sense of alienation and otherness, which ultimately throw them into the dilemma of identity crisis. Therefore, identity issue — both individual and collective — has become ceaselessly salient during the process of cultural alienation, adaptation and assimilation for the exiled intellectuals, among which V. S. Naipaul is a typical and significant one. Naipaul is an Indian by blood, a Trinidadian by birth and a Briton by citizenship. His literary works, which spans half a century, are generally based on postcolonial contexts and multicultural locations. His growing awareness of the complexities and difficulties of cultural differences, which is exhibited in his literature, leads to his perplexity of identity. To a large extent, his works can be seen as the result of the worldwide political, cultural and economic changes of the 20th century. Therefore, meticulous interpretation and analysis of his works may shed light upon how to communicate with other cultures, how to deal with one's identity crisis and how to maintain a balanced self among various cultures.

10.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The Research Background of Literature

Naipaul's great literature achievement has brought him into widespread public and critical scrutiny. Critical response in the Western world has almost been at pace with his publications and by now it has made remarkable achievement, especially in the English-speaking West and India. In Yang Zhongju's monologue on Naipaul's works, he divides Naipaul's literary creation into three periods: 1950-1970, 1970-2000, after 2000. I agree and adopt his division.

During 1950 to 1970, Naipaul has published three books, namely The Mystic Masseur (1957), The Suffrage of Elvira (1958) and Miguel Street (1959), among which The Mystic Masseur has received the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize. During 1950 to 1970, for Naipaul, the world just took notice of him instead of recognizing him. Therefore, there is hardly any in-depth study on Naipaul's works during this period.

Only a few brief book reviews could be found, which aim to introduce and summarize rather than interpret and analyze his works. For example, Harrington (2003) presents the biographical information on Naipaul and introduces his early books The Mystic Masseur and Miguel Street in his essay NAIPAUL, [Sir] V [idiadhar] S [urajprasad].

In the second period from 1970 to 2000, with the advancement of Naipaul's other works, Naipaul's literary writings as well as his life experience have gradually come to the fore of the reader's and critic's attention. The earliest monograph on V. S. Naipaul is probably an American critic Paul Theroux' V. S. Naipaul: An Introduction to His Works, which is published in London in 1972. This book makes a comparatively comprehensive introduction to Naipaul's life and his works, which could be seen as one of the pioneer works in the study of Naipaul. Later, other researchers have gradually added their own interpretations to the analysis of Naipaul. One of the important monologues is Bruce King's first edition of V.S. Naipaul in 1993. In his book V. S. Naipaul, Bruce King gives high praise to Naipaul's literary accomplishment and analyzes the synthesis of cultures embodied in Naipaul's writings. Other monologues have also come out in succession, such as Michael Thorpe's V. S. Naipaul in 1976, Selwyn Reginald Cudjoe's V. S. Naipaul: A Material Reading in 1988. Meanwhile, a series of journal criticism rose. For example, in 1998, an article entitled The House that Jack Did not Build: Textual Strategies in V.S. Naipaul's "The Enigma of Arrival Tarantino", by Tarantino, examines how the landscapes and events described in Naipaul's "The Enigma of Arrival" are used to create "moral tension" and also explores the direct and indirect ways of expression reflected in Naipaul's works (Tarantino, 1998, p. 169).

While being well acclaimed, Naipaul and his works have stimulated disagreement at the same time. From 1970 to 2000, Naipaul and his works has been the target of acrimonious criticism. Some critics excoriate him for being "a despicable lackey of neo-colonialism" (Wee, 2003, p. 155) and "a cold and sneering prophet" (Ramphal, 2003, p. 30). The disagreeable voices generally come from the Third World. However, in the eyes of Western critics, Naipaul's depictions of the society and people of the Third World are trustworthy and objective.

In the third period, after 2000, especially in the light of the Nobel Prized for Literature in 2001, Naipaul has received worldwide recognition and been acknowledged as an outstanding writer of great talent and statue. Therefore, more and more critics participate in the study of Naipaul and his works from varying theoretical perspectives and diversified orientations.

Many critics explore Naipaul's life experience and his works mainly from the post-colonial perspective. In 2003, Bruce King's second edition of V.S. Naipaul came out. Inspired by his first edition of V. S. Naipaul, King takes a further analysis on Naipaul's novels covering the years from 1959 to 2001. The book delineates the bicultural or multicultural features embodied in the postcolonial contexts on which Naipaul's works are based. King (2003) also illustrates that Naipaul focuses on "Individual in colonial societies" while many postcolonial writers appear mostly "concerned with ideas and groups" (p. 28).Taking King's ideas a step further in his book Naipaul's Strangers, Dagmar Barnouw (2003) continues to discuss the "cultural plurality" and "cultural values" in Naipaul's works, which is, argues by the author, "the most important and difficult challenge to the late modernity" (p. 1). One of the latest monographs that touch upon duality, identity and culture in Naipaul's works goes to D.N. Ganjewar's Philosophic Vision in the Novels of V.S. Naipaul, which is first published in 2008. Ganjewar (2008) makes a detail analysis of a varied range of Naipaul's "philosophic visions" embedded in his works and claims that Naipaul is "one of the most pessimistic and bleak visions among the contemporary writers" (p. 26).

Narrative strategy employed in Naipaul's writing to strengthen his literary power is another topic that has been frequently discussed by critics. For instance, ImraanCoovadia's Authority and Authorship in V.S. Naipaul published in 2009 centers on the rhetorical features involved in Naipual's works. ImraanCoovadia elaborates in his monologue that the rhetorical features, namely the patterns of Virgilian allusion and misquotation, the "cold jokes", the use of motifs, the Naipaulianekphrasis, and the sensory intensity of Naipaulian description, are essential to the Novelist's literary power. Based on the detail analysis, ImraanCoovadia (2009) attempts to explore the authority and

authorship in Naipaul's works and how the "Naipaulian rhetoric" constructs "his authority" (p. 4).

In addition to the monologues stated above, a great number of journal articles also contribute to the study of Naipaul and his works, among which some are valuable and will be enumerated as follows. In 2008,V. S. Naipaul: Childhood and Memory written by Mahabir was published in Journal of Caribbean Literatures. It demonstrates that Naipaul's relation with his father and his childhood experience is of significance on his "escape motif", which becomes the main part of Naipaul's literary endeavors and "continues in the rest of his works" (Mahabir, 2008, p. 16).Some recent journal articles concentrate on the comparison between Naipaul and other postcolonial writers like Catherine Lanone's Negotiating Colonial Contradition: E.M. Foster's and V.S. Naipaul's Negative Landscapes publiched in 2011 and WeihsinGui's Post-heritage narratives: Migrancy and travelling theory in V.S. Naipaul's The Enigma of Arrival and Andrea Levy's Fruit of the Lemon in 2012. As suggested by these titles, comparative studies between Naipaul and other writers such as E. M. Forster, Andrea Levy and so on have been conducted by different critics.

As is shown above, critical study on Naipaul and his works has shown diversified orientations and adopted varying analytical perspectives in the West. However, compared to the studies abroad, the domestic critical study on Naipaul's work in China started much later.

Compared to the studies abroad, the Chinese study on Naipaul is much limited. According to professor Yang Zhongju (2009), the researches on Naipaul's works in China are divided into two periods: before 2000 and after 2000

Before 2000, Naipaul and his work are almost unnoticed in China. Only one of Naipaul's novels, Miguel Street, was published in 1992. And few in-depth criticisms in regard to Naipaul and his work could be found before 2000. There are only some brief book reviews on Naipaul and his work in the journals like Foreign Literature and Recent Developments. The earliest book review that could be found on Naipaul's works is an article, by Zhang Zhongzai (1986), entitled Looking for Truth and Beauty — a Reading of V. S. Naipaul's A House for Mr. Biswas, which is published in Foreign Literature in 1986. This article makes a brief

introduction to the story of a man's pursuit of a house in A House for Mr. Biswas.

After 2000, Naipaul's work gradually became a hot topic in China. According to a rough

estimation, by the end of 2011, seven of Naipaul's novels, his Indian trilogy and his two autobiographical books consisting of Letters Between A Father and Son and A Writer's People have been published in China. Chinese scholars are showing increasing interests in Naipaul's work. In the mainland of China, by the end of 2011, there have been about three monologues on Naipaul and his works, and over nine doctoral dissertations and 43 master theses devoted to the study of Naipaul. Likewise, in these monologues and academic theses, Chinese scholars and graduates have demonstrated different attitudes and approaches towards Naipaul's literary works.

One of the important books is Zhou Min's monologue Postcolonial Identi/ties: A Study of V. S. Naipaul's Major Novels, which is based on her Ph. D. dissertation. Drawing on postcolonial theories as well as contemporary cultural theories, Zhou Min has done a thorough research on Naipaul's major novels at different periods consisting of A House for Mr. Biswas, The Mimic Men, The Enigma of Arrival and A Way in the World. Zhou Min (2011) attempts to analyze, critically and creatively, the reasons why Naipaul's work is so much "praised" and yet suffered so much "diatribe" at the same time (p. i). Her acute observation hits the nail on the head and it is of great value for this thesis writing. Apart from Zhoumin's great endeavor, many other scholars also devote to the identity issues in Naipaul's work like Lei Yanni. Grounded in the postcolonial context, her Ph. D. dissertation Empire Inclination and Nativism Consciousness: A Case Study on Naipaul and his works (2010)is to show the duality, hybridity, cultural conflicts and confrontation, implicitly and explicitly, embodied in Naipaul's works.

Diasporic motif in Naipaul's works is also a hot topic of the criticism. Examples can be found in Du Weiping's dissertation. In her Ph. D. dissertation, Du Weiping (2004) makes a detail analysis on Naipaul's works from the perspective of "disapora", mainly based on the "post-colonialism", "spatial theory" and "the third space theory" (p. 1).There are other critics who discuss the diasporic motif in Naipaul's works such

as Wang Gang. He explores both the similarities and dissimilarities of diasporic features in Naipaul's nine works relating to India in his Ph. D. dissertation Floating Around Reality and Illusion — Research into Diasporic Features of Naipaul's Writing Concerning India.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Q1.Discuss on which basis or locations the work of V.S Naipaul was based.

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…….

Q2. Give the literature review of work of V.S Naipaul.

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10.3 DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND V. S. NAIPAUL

Of late, expatriate writings have become an emerging feature and engaging subject of critical discussion in the backdrop of postcolonial studies. There is no denying the fact that during the post- II World War period, the colonized countries encountered new dimensions of thought and that under the impact of globalization, advancement of technology, new modes of transport, commercial and cultural transaction, people from third world nations were fascinated to utilize their potential for social stability and secured identity. On the one hand, globalization fascinated migration and the flourish of immigrant sensibility by exercising decided influence on intellectuals, ambitious people of third world nations to go in search of better fortune and economic stability in alien countries. V. S. Naipaul is one of those expatriate writers who tended to develop his diasporic sensibility by encountering a new world of memory and hope, culture shock and desire for a settled and secured identity.

Diasporic consciousness is as such grounded upon the rise and growth of expatriate experience and immigrant sensibility which can be defined in the light of Safron's observation (1991:83) that the feeling of alienation

after dispersal from his/her homeland constitutes the core of diasporic sensibility. At the same time, Safron maintains that the immigrant consciousness of diasporic person is enriched through an imaginary relation with homeland which the diasporic writers idealize and imaginatively reconstruct the place constantly desired to return for. It is this expatriate sensibility that prompted V. S. Naipaul to make a significant remark that "Most of the
imaginative writers discovered themselves and their world through their works" (REP, 1981: 21). These imaginative writers tend to mirror the condition of the immigrants and more predominantly their incessant travel and displacement, homelessness, trauma and cultural shock despite their desperate attempt to acclimatize themselves to the alien cultural condition.

Diaspora consciousness as a dominant phenomenon in world literature also encompasses the mental flight of diasporans who constantly try to reconstruct their present on the basis of their past that haunts them to a frozen and fractured consciousness – a state of mind in which they search for locating and relocating their identity. Their quest for the past and their bitter realization of dislocation and marginalization in the alien land and the assimilation into the culture of adopted country posits the conflicting state of 'ambivalence'. In the words of VineyKirpal, the marginality experienced by an expatriate is itself the "result of his race, region and history" (1993:76) and Naipaul writes with this realization in his bone.

The diasporic sensibility of V. S. Naipaul, the person and the writer can be situated in the light of the remarks of Kripal and the concept 'diasporic ambivalence' articulated through such critical terms as 'liminal space','in-betweenness' and dilemmas of colonial natives and expatriation. Moreover, the immigrant suffers from discrimination and prejudices on account of various psychological factors that affect them and even affect the host society. These very often lead to create group favoritism in search of social identity and social influences like mass media. Their psychological effect of discrimination Allport (1954) divided as "blaming oneself" that is moving
towards the oppressor through integration and "blaming others" that is moving against the oppressor by fighting back. Their integration resulted

in the stigmatization of non- Western and fails to eliminate their discrimination.

In the postcolonial era, the writers who live as expatriates in metropolitan countries and contribute to the literature, show their exile status, incessant travels, displacement, rootlessness and homelessness. Their diasporic consciousness forces them to experience the cultural and social disorder even though they acquire citizenship and home in abroad. This condition is true to VidiadharSurajprasad Naipaul who inherited the seeds of diasporic ambivalence from his birth.

V. S. Naipaul was one of the most acknowledged literary figures of the contemporary world who had experienced for long life in terms of an 'exilic'. Nanda Kishor Mishra, in his article "Trajectory of Displacement: Expatriate Sensibility of V.

S. Naipaul" maintains that in establishing a sturdy link between exile as a literary theme and his personal history, Naipaul has emerged as a rare individual writer with a self- autonomy as measure of his ostracism (Mohit K.Rayed, 2005:147). Naipaul took writing as his sole profession and his creative writings become the live record of his progress as a writer. His sensibility is increasingly enriched by his personal experiences as a displaced and exile person.

Born in Changunas, Trinidad (1932) where his maternal grandfather had built an Indian- style large house which provided him the first link with his Indian origin, Naipaul was the seventh son of an orthodox Brahmin family, whose ancestral root was in Gorakhpur, a village in Uttar Pradesh, India. In Finding the Centre (1985: 53)

Naipaul asserts that for him India was a far off dream because he knew nothing about his ancestral roots. But later he came to know about his family history. His grandfather came to Trinidad as a child with his mother who was an indenture labourer in the sugar cane fields in Trinidad and he was trained to be a Pundit so as to follow the family tradition. Naipaul's father Seepersad Naipaul was also trained to be a Pundit, but he never wished to be a pundit and therefore he took a job of sign painting at the beginning of his carrier. This job took him to the Lion- House at Chaguanas where he met Droaptie, whom he married and settled down with her family. Later he became a journalist and wrote articles to the 'Trinidad Guardian'. After the birth of V.S. Naipaul he left

'Trinidad Guardian' and did various jobs here and there, staying in his wife's family or with his uncle who was a rich man. He himself being a poor, belonged to the agricultural labour class, lived and changed his life in half-independence and half- esteem between these two powerful families. Naipaul writes:

Chaguanas was in the heart of the sugar area and the Indian area of Trinidad. It was where my mother's family was established. Contract labour was far behind them; they were big landowners (FC, 1985:34).

In 1935, Naipaul's father joined in 'Guardian' as a city reporter. At that time they moved to Port of Spain and lived in a house owned by Naipaul's grandmother. There, most of the time Naipaul's father kept himself away from home. The life and the personality of his father remained mysterious to Naipaul. He admits this situation in the following lines:

I have lived before them in my mother's family house in Chaguanas. I knew I had a father, but I also knew and accepted that like the fathers of others of my cousins he was not present (1985:34-35).

Though Naipaul's father wanted him to be a writer, he realized that their colonial land could not be able to provide him this opportunity. Therefore, he moved from Trinidad to Oxford on a scholarship and actively engaged there with his literary writings.

Naipaul utilized his formative years in England for rigorous study and for inculcating his own literary practices. After the B.A. degree in literature from the Oxford University, Naipaul took broadcasting as a career. At that time he was engaged in several activities such as editing a literary programme for B.B.C.; publishing book reviews; wrote features for several magazines and journals. Without these professional assignments Naipaul would not find peace because there was a deep agony within him to find his own literary voice and his own identity as a writer. He again emphasizes his determination to become a writer as no other occupation could make him free from his traumatic condition. His state of mind and his search for identity find a candid expression in In Finding the Center:

On this floor, the B.B.C. had set aside a room for people like me ' freelancers'- to me then not a word suggesting freedom and velour, but suggesting only people on the fringe of mighty enterprise, depressed and suppliant class (1985:143).

With this enigma in his mind he arrived in London and got on to a real take off as a writer. In its freelancers' room, working to the rhythm of his typewriter, he launched on his writing that pursuit his numerous memories back home in Port of Spain. However, his problem was not solved because the reviewers had regarded his writings as weird and fantasies when all the time he thought he was realistic in his description of Trinidad. The greatest hurdle for him was that he was from colonial background and no one considered him as British.

His problem as a colonial writer in an alien land however made him a genuine writer because of his thematic aspect that created an impression of its being 'exotic' and became a full time writer and during the span of his 60 years he had produced fiction, nonfiction, travelogues and autobiographical essays. His literary works have been well known worldwide as he has won several awards and has received unambiguous praise from literary critics for the high excellence achieved in his fiction. In exploring the societies and culture, Naipaul is able to build a place for himself in the postcolonial English literary spare. His deep understanding of the situation facilitates him to present his diasporic ambivalence not only in his fiction but also in his travel writings.

As a writer Naipaul has a splendid vision and voice that arise from his rootless, fluid and insecure socio-cultural background. He was never at ease with the subjugated identity and his agony and restlessness is quite obvious when he narrates his childhood memories through his works like Finding the Centre, A House for Mr. Biswas. His belongingness to an uprooted traditional Hindu family indentured by the colonial power puts him to an odd indefinable situation where all the immigrants live in a predicament

of rootlessness and homelessness. The geographical separation in the countryside of Trinidad brings these Indian immigrants in such a position that they could hardly come in contact with the outside world. Their ancestral homeland also became a distant illusion for the new generation and gradually the mixed culture of Trinidad led them to HomiBhabha's concept of 'cultural hybridization' (1994: 235).

It became impossible for the West Indians to preserve their socio-cultural identity because they were bound to the influences of overpowering heterogeneous culture which brought them away from their past. To

Naipaul this exposure marks a departure but not arrival and it is a perpetual journey in time and space. Moreover, as a stranded Indian born in exile, Naipaul was bound to create literature in order to forge alternative identity for those stranded migrants. In such agonizing situation, Naipaul was desperate for his own identity and an indefinite fear hunted him from the very beginning of his life. For him the historical past of his family and community became a part of darkness and also an "imaginary homeland" (Salman Rushdie, 1991).

There is no denying the fact that Naipaul's creativity has flourished voluminously to the mainstream of British fiction. For him, London remained the land of his literary practices, but on the other hand it is his journey through various countries including India and Trinidad which provide him sources for his literary writings. His literature originated from his own odd situations experienced in different countries such as Caribbean Island, England, Africa, Europe, Pakistan and other Islamic countries while being separated from his family and he constantly challenged the received wisdom of time with the problems of the people who belong to the marginalized societies,

reflecting the background of the Caribbean island from where he has departed and shifted to live in the cosmopolitan country. His literary trajectory is never restricted by national boundaries and his freedom is emphasized by his existential status as an exile.

Carrying with him three conflicting identity- Indian, Trinidian and British, Naipaul never stopped to have his association with India, the ancestral homeland and Trinidad, his birth place even though there is no yearning for return. At the same time his multiple heritages allow him to present the experiences of living with multiple culture and identity. After departing from the feeling of being unhoused, displaced and alienated in Trinidad, even in England, Naipaul was not free from the existential despair and felt lonely and miserable. His flight to England was a sort of 'escape' from Trinidad and therefore, a deep sense of alienation even followed him in England. As a diasporic writer he asserts this feeling of alienation as:

I had dreamed of coming to England. But my life in England had been savourless and much of it mean….. And just as once at home I had

dreamed of being in England, so for years in England, I had dreamed of leaving England (EOA, 1987: 220).

The mixed society of Trinidad made Naipaul uncomfortable and he keeps returning to this society of Trinidad through his fiction which is well known to him. Both Trinidad and Trinidadian Hindu family have become irrelevant and meaningless for him even though he appreciates his father. His father stood in front of him as a guide, mentor and a source of inspiration. It was his father who aroused in Naipaul the first interest to write stories on colonial and marginalized life of the people of Trinidad.

While expressing his love–hate relationship with Trinidad in The Middle Passage (1962: 43) Naipaul observes that Trinidad is unimportant and uncreative and that it is a place where the stories are not stories of success but of failure. But he positively observes about Trinidad in an interview with Derek Walcott: "I have grown out of Trinidad and in a way I am grateful to the Trinidad I knew as a boy for making me what I am" (1965:5). These quoted lines succinctly show that Naipaul aversely and rather frankly acknowledges the impact of Trinidad that has sharpened his sensibility, a sensibility that has been enriched by the experiences of an exile.

Though Naipaul was born and brought up in Trinidadian ethos, his ancestral root in and from India cannot be undermined. Moreover, his father's inspiration reveals that the problem of rootlessness experienced by him in Trinidad and for that matter in England reminds the reader of his ancestral root in India which looms large in his sub- conscience. As his original home, Naipaul dreamt of India but after his visit he was somewhat disgusted with superstitious and irrational believes, practices that he found in India and remains alien. As an immigrant Trinidadian with strange and nostalgic feeling of Hindu originality, he visited India and very soon realized that his diasporic sensibility was twice removed from India.

Naipaul's Indian background is submerged in a mixed culture along with other components which are equally threatened. This turbulent relationship finds expression in his passionate concern for the land of his ancestors. His vision being coloured by the diasporic consciousness gave birth to his quest to encounter India which was the

background of his childhood memories and "historical darkness" (Literary Occasions, 2003: 89), a mythical imaginary land from where his ancestors had come.

Naipaul has gone through a proper sense of disillusion at the time of his stay in England because of his detachment with Trinidad and India and this sense of detachment can be understood in the context of his conditions which were almost a second diaspora in his life. There he experienced exile life and struggled to establish a connection with Trinidad and India. His colonial experience forced him to live with such circumstances that exposed him to three societies and yet left him with a deep sense of homelessness. He was not able to make himself free from the problems of rootlessness and enigma of colonial subjects and therefore, tried to portray the condition of the people of his homeland and other Third World societies through his works. In this regards he was inspired by his first hand encounters with these societies, his keen observation and an objective reaction to this colonial experiences. Naipaul tried to understand the people of those countries which were under the cultural backdrop and had engaged in constant search for the roots both in India and Trinidad. Born as an exile and separated from his roots he experiences another exile life in England. Thus one can understand his diaspora condition from his constant movement from one country to another country.

Naipaul's marginalized existence directly effects his diasporic sensibility that his sense of alienation counts his emotional adjustment with the race and allows him to live with "willed homelessness" (Mishra, 1996: 148) and there is no possibility to return to Trinidad. Paul Theroux echoes Naipaul's rhetoric of displacement by emphasizing

that transplanted people can claim no country as their own. He observes them as follows:

They travel because they belong nowhere, they are constantly moving- in a sense they never arrive- and much of their travel is flight. Rootlessness is their condition; it is opposite of those for whom being metropolitan is a condition. The homeless are not calm; their homelessness is a source of particular pain, for as with all travelers, they are asked, "Where are you from?" and no simple answer is possible: all landscapes are alien (1972:76).

The above observation of Paul Theroux emphasizes that Naipaul always occupied the 'no man's land' because he belongs to neither India nor Trinidad and nor even England. Travel gives him refreshment and proves to be an important stimulus for the development of his literary art.

Naipaul's commencement as a writer was not an easy task because he started writing without a tradition. He himself asserts that his material has not been 'hallowed by a tradition' and reflecting this situation Naipaul tells the truth: "all the time that every writer is, on the long run, on his own; but it helps in the most practical way, to have a tradition. The English language was mine but the tradition was not" (OB, 1984: 28-32). Thus, without a tradition Naipaul promotes his literary writings and he stands alone authentically because of his postcolonial background. His literary works achieve universal fame as he experiences different cultures by reflecting the idea that alienation is the universal predicament of the contemporary world. Naipaul's basic concern is with the displaced individual of postcolonial societies, but obviously it becomes one of the aspects of modern man too. It was Trinidad that made Naipaul a sensitive diasporic writer with its diverse races, cultures and religions. All the heterogeneous people lived in this land, have sharing common characteristics of diaspora. They live in the dilemma of uncertain affiliation. Mel Gussow rightly observes: "Wherever he goes, it is a foreign country. For Naipaul home has lost its meaning… wherever he has gone, he has been an outsider (1976: 8-9). Mel Gussow's observation makes it clear that Naipaul belongs to new version of Indians, a British like immigrant Hindu in West Indies. However, in England he remains an 'outsider' because of his cultural difference.

Naipaul's literary career can be classified into five successive stages. The first phase is the Caribbean where Naipaul envisages novels on the basis of his Trinidad memories and analyses the postcolonial scenario on the island. This Caribbean phase is characterized by his own experiences and therefore, the Caribbean roots, culture and experience define the central thrust of some of his novels such as The Mystic Masseur (1957), Miguel Street (1959), The Suffrage of Elvira (1958) and A House for Mr. Biswas (1961). Through these works Naipaul brought about the culmination of the first phase of his artistic development as a man of letters.

10.4 SECULARISM IN A SENTENCE: NAIPAUL'S WRITERLINESS

As I have suggested, Naipaul's early non-fiction autobiographical engagements with Hinduism paint a rather more complex portrait of his relationship to Hinduism than his chauvinistic comments might lead us to expect. We could just as easily turn to one of the autobiographical fictions (such as A House for Mr. Biswas), since the line between 17 Ibid., 210. fiction and autobiography is frequently arguable: so many of the plots revolve around events like the discovery of literacy, the hunger for education, the explosion of printculture, father-son conflicts, and of course the moment of departure from the marginal society for the metropolitan center. But for the purposes of simplicity, it might make sense to stay with a text that is clearly marked as autobiographical, Naipaul's 1982 "Prologue to an Autobiography." And within that text, which is roughly about 70 pages in length, I'll focus on the question of religion through Naipaul's concept of the sentence. For Naipaul, it is the sentence that is the key to the existence of the writer, the entity that defines him over anything else. I'll examine just a few carefully crafted but telling sentences where Naipaul foregrounds this atomistic core of writerly effort, with an eye to the growing incursion of the Hindu background into the scene of writing. The first sentence describes Naipaul's situation as he wrote the very first sentence of his first book, Miguel Street, in the early 1950s: It is now nearly thirty years since, in a BBC room in London, on an old BBC typewriter, and on smooth, 'non-rustle' BBC script paper, I wrote the first sentence of my first publishable book.18 By placing himself so pronouncedly at the BBC, Naipaul establishes himself at one of the great centers of the modern media, and as completely separate from his Trinidad background. Note how often he repeats the acronym in the sentence above: "BBC room" (secular space), "BBC typewriter" (secular equipment, modern technology), and "BBC script paper" (modern medium). The BBCentrism of this passage raises a question about authorship—did the BBC write the novel, or did Naipaul? The sentence itself answers, with its turn to the declarative: "…I wrote the first sentence." But context returns subtly—it's not the first sentence of his first short story ever, but the first sentence of his first publishable

book. This first sentence of Naipaul's ―Prologue to an Autobiography‖ isn't the beginning of Naipaul's story, so much as it is the beginning—or prologue—to a publication history. Even though it is evidently the BBC that makes Naipaul's jump into a career as a writer possible, the actual act of writing requires the implication of oneself in one's own history. As Naipaul writes later in the same essay (the theme is echoed often), ―To become a writer, that noble thing, I had thought it necessary to leave. Actually to write, it was necessary to go back. It was the beginning of self-knowledge‖ .It turns out that the key to self-knowledge for Naipaul here as elsewhere is his father, and as the "Prologue" moves forward it comes to feel more like a post-script to his father's career than as the prologue to his own. It is Naipaul's father who transmits the "vocation" of writing to his son. And it is his father's failure as a writer that is the core of the story here, just as it is in A House for Mr. Biswas. The reasons for failure aremultiple and somewhat overdetermined—a mix of colonial marginality, lack of formal education, and the pressures of Hindu family life. What is not mentioned is how the son, who inherited his father's vocation, managed to avert his father's fate. What is striking in all of this is the importance of the Hindu religious and social framework to Naipaul despite his avowed distance from the religion. To begin with, Naipaul's father was expected to become a Pandit, and his turn to writing seems to be marked as an only partial escape from that calling: "It was a version of the pundit's vocation" . Writing, as a form of solitary and detached work that nevertheless carries the burden of representation for an entire community, does seem to be a possibly secularized version of a priesthood. But how secular is it? Naipaul's father signs his weekly column with the Trinidad Guardian with the byline, ―The Pandit,‖ and writes more or less consistently about the Hindu community in Chaguanas. Naipaul also repeatedly describes his father's career in terms of a kind of spiritual quest, which is in some sense continued in Naipaul: From the earliest stories and bits of stories my father read to me, before the upheaval of the move, 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. To be a writer as O. Henry was, to die in mid-sentence, was to triumph over

darkness. And like a wild religious faith that hardens in adversity, this wish to be a writer, this refusal to be extinguished, this wish to seek at some future time for justice, strengthened as our conditions grew worse in the house on the street. It can‘t be an accident that Naipaul‘s metaphor for the desire to be a writer he cultivated in the wake of his father‘s failure is of ―wild religious faith that hardens in adversity.‖ Writing is for Naipaul the surest means of asserting his individualism and leaving a mark upon the world, but in some ways the desire for it follows the contour of profound religious faith. The root of Naipaul‘s father‘s failure, in this account, is his incomplete disavowal of his religious identity as a Pandit. Some of the passages in the ―Prologue‖ describing his father‘s relationship to religion resemble the sections of A House for Mr. Biswas above, in that they describe the tension between a reformer affiliated with the Arya Samaj and his orthodox family: The family, with all its pundits, were defenders of the orthodox Hindu faith. My father wasn't. Later-- just ten years later-- when we were living in Port of Spain and our Hindu world was breaking up, my father was to write lyrically about Hindu rituals and Indian village life. . . . He belonged, or was sympathetic, to the reforming movement known as the Arya Samaj, which sought to make of Hinduism a pure philosophical faith. The Arya Samaj was against caste, pundits, animistic ritual. It was against child marriage; it was for the education of girls. (―Prologue,‖ Finding the Center, 66)

But as with Mr. Biswas in Naipaul‘s semi-autobiographical novel (and as with Gora in Tagore‘s novel), reformers must eventually decide on which side of the fence they stand. In Tagore‘s Gora, the protagonist is forced to leave the fold of his conservative milieu once his heritage is revealed, but in Naipaul‘s father‘s case, what follows is humiliation that leads to psychic dissolution. In the ―Prologue,‖ the key moment for his father Seepersad Naipaul‘s struggle with his identity comes when his father begins to be pressured to participate in a goat sacrifice. Initially he responds lightly, and goes so far as to publish a satirical story on the trend of Trinidadian villagers to sacrifice goats in response to paralytic rabies, rather than have their cattle vaccinated. But then he receives a threatening letter from family members demanding that he participate in the ceremony, and quietly gives in. The ritual sacrifice in which he

participates draws him into the world he had tried to reject against his will: My father. . . is, it might be said, a little to one side: a man who (unknown to Rodin) had been intended by his grandmother and mother to be a pandit, now for the first time going through the priestly rites; a man in white, garlanded like the goat with hibiscus, offering sacrificial clove-scented fire to the image of the goddess, to the still living goat, to the onlookers, and then offering the severed goat's head on a brass plate. Here Naipaul's father is ostensibly being honored for his participation—he is garlanded like a pandit. But beneath the screen of white, the aspiring journalist is roughly in the position of the goat, forced to acknowledge the authority of a power outside of himself. The authority can be described as Kali, as his patriarchal family hierarchy—or, in a Durkheimian reading, as bot. In a way it's not the goat whose sacrifice is being foregrounded here, but his own. In Naipaul's version of the event, the embarrassment of primitive ritual linked to the slaughter of the goat becomes simply a side-story to his father's failure to insist upon his right to be modern, to define himself separately from the expectation of the Hindu social structure. Needless to say, within Naipaul's nuclear family the incident is entirely suppressed; Vidia Naipaul, the son, only finds out about it when an American journalist sends him a clipping many years later. This incident, central to Naipaul's ―Prologue,‖ demonstrates the repeated marginalizations of the subject from his own narrative. This marginalization consists at one level of Seeparsad Naipaul forced to participate in a Hindu ritual, to be Hindu against his wishes and contrary to his idea of himself as free from religion. But it is also echoed formally in the grammar of the text as a whole, from the title (―Prologue to an Autobiography‖) to the character that is at its center (Naipaul's father takes over the text of the autobiography). Seeparsad's marginalization in life seems to prefigure Naipaul's marginalization in narrative.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1. Naipaul’s literary career can be classified into five successive stages. What are those stages?

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Q2. How Secularism was the part of V.S Naipaul writing.

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10.5 LET'S SUM UP

. Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul (1932-), one of the most prominent and prolific contemporary writers, has bagged various prestigious prizes during his more than forty years of writing, among which the most glorious is the 2001 Nobel Laureate in Literature for "having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories" (as cited in Thomas, 2003, p. 228). Being regarded as a typical and significant postcolonial writer, Naipaul takes a strong interest in the exploration of colonial problems and confusions resulted from the withdrawal of imperial order.

10.6 KEYWORDS

1. **Proletarianization** is the social process whereby people move from being either an employer, unemployed or self-employed, to being employed as wage labor by an employer
2. A **missionary** is a member of a religious group sent into an area to promote their faith or perform ministries of service, such as education, literacy, social justice, health care, and economic development.
3. **Catchcry**. : a distinctive word or expression (as a catchword or slogan) serving to attract attention or rally support.
4. A **protagonist** is the main character of a story.
5. **Susceptible**: likely or liable to be influenced or harmed by a particular thing."patients with liver disease may be susceptible to infection"
6. **Civilization**:the stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced.

10.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

d) Give the critical view on writings of V.S Naipaul

e) How ritings of V.S Naipaul was assisted with ecular ideas.

f) Give insght of Literary work of V.S Naipaul.

g) What were the achievement received by V.S Naipaul.

10.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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3. Diana Athill, Stet: a memoir (London: Granta, 2000), p. 232.
4. Mel Gussow, 'V. S. Naipaul: "It is out of this violence I've always written"', New York Times, 16 September 1984.
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6. 'Nobel Prize for Literature 2001 - Press Release'.
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8. V. S. Naipaul, 'London' (1958), in his The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; ftrst published 1972), p. 9.
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11. Naipaul, 'London', p. 10.
12. Naipaul, Reading & Writing, p. 13; 'Without a place: V. S. Naipaul in conversation with Ian Hamilton', Times Literary Supplement, 30 July 1971, in FerozaJussawalla (ed.), Conversations with V. S. Naipaul (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), p. 15.
13. Stephanie Bunbury, 'An audience with Sir Vidia', Age (Melbourne), 18 August 2001,

    p. 4. Naipaul, Reading & Writing, pp. 13-15.
14. V. S. Naipaul, Miguel Street (London: André Deutsch, 1959).Naipaul, 'London', pp. 11-12.

15. 'The writer, the observer, that is scrupulously myself. The minute other people are in the picture, that is where the ftctive element comes in', Naipaul comments in an interview with Mel Gussow, 'The enigma of V. S. Naipaul's search for himself in writing', New York Times, 25 April 1987.
16. Naipaul, The Enigma of Arrival: a novel in five sections (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 140.
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10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 10.1

Answer 2 : Check Section 10.2

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Answer 1 : Check Section 10.3

Answer 2 : Check Section 10.4

UNIT: 11 V.S.NAIPAUL- THE MIMIC MEN

STRUCTURE

11.0 Objective

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Summary

11.3 The Characters

11.4 Themes And Meanings

11.5 Setting

11.6 Narrative Technique

11.7 Critical Analysis

11.8 Let's Sum Up

11.9 Keywords

11.10 Questions For Review

11.11 Suggested Readings And References

11.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit helps discuss the Mimic Men by V.S.Naipaul. In this unit summary of The Mimic Men is discussed along with its theme and meaning. Unit describe the various characters of The Mimic Men. Its shows the narrative technique of V.S Naipaul.It provides the critical analysis of The Mimic Men.

Unit helps to achieve following objective:

- **Summary of The Mimic Men.**
- **The Characters of The Mimic Men.**
- **Themes And Meanings of The Mimic Men.**

- **Setting of The Mimic Men.**
- **Narrative Technique of The Mimic Men.**
- **Critical Analysis of The Mimic Men.**

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Not long after finishing A Flag on the Island, Naipaul began work on the novel The Mimic Men, though for almost a year he did not make significant progress. At the end of this period, he was offered a Writer-in-Residence fellowship at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. There, in early 1966, Naipaul began to rewrite his material, and went on to complete the novel quickly. The finished novel broke new ground for him. Unlike his earlier fiction, it is not comic. It does not unfold chronologically. Its language is allusive and ironic, and its overall structure is whimsical. It has strands of both fiction and non-fiction, a precursor of Naipaul's approach in later novels. It is intermittently dense, even obscure, but it also has beautiful passages, especially in the descriptions of the fictional tropical island of Isabella. The subject of sex appears explicitly for the first time in Naipaul's work.

11.2 SUMMARY

In The Mimic Men, V. S. Naipaul, employing the confessional narrative method, follows the career of Ralph Singh, a colonial official exiled from the small Caribbean island of Isabella.

The story is divided into three parts, the first of which begins with Singh, already disgraced in exile, sitting in his room at a London boarding house. At forty, he reflects upon the events of his career, contemplating “the shipwreck which all my life I had sought to avoid.” Chronologically, Singh’s remembrances are untidy, beginning as they do with his years as a young man in London. Before his public, Singh deliberately takes on the role of an affluent colonial dandy; inwardly, he is anxious and aimless. Following many frivolous affairs, he meets and marries Sandra, a woman disappointed owing to her humble origins and her failure to win a university scholarship. Singh returns to Isabella with Sandra, using his inheritance to build Kripalville, a posh suburb. Success and riches do not

prevent the resurrection of old anxieties about life on an obscure island composed of the sons of slaves. Both Singh and Sandra sense the shapelessness of Isabellan society and experience "a feeling of having been flung off the world."

The second part of the novel, which describes Singh's childhood, exposes the source of the aimlessness which torments his family. At home, Singh lives under the shadow of a disaffected father, whose career as a schoolteacher leaves him unfulfilled. His father also recognizes that, as an Asian, he is detached from his country of origin, condemned, in a sense, to being "shipwrecked" on a tiny Caribbean island. Eventually, Singh's father seeks out the island's lowly, disenchanted black workers and leads them away from the miseries of the city to the pristine reaches of the Isabellan forests. His messianic message makes him famous, even in England. The movement, however, soon fades; the blacks filter back to the city, while their Asian deliverer, yellow-robed, remains in the forest as a Hindu holy man.

It is at school that Singh meets Ethelbert Browne, a black student on scholarship. Their strained and nervous friendship is important to the story, for later, Browne will draw Singh into the unpredictable world of Isabella politics.

At the beginning of part 3, Singh, divorced and unhappy, joins Browne; together they are the new men who challenge the government. Editing a paper called The Socialist, Browne organizes a political movement of the dispossessed which ultimately sweeps the election. Browne is elevated to the status of folk-leader, with suggestions of a cult of personality, and Singh is given an important position in government. After four years, however, Singh dramatically falls from power when his negotiations to nationalize the sugarcane industry end in failure. At forty years of age, Singh is forced into exile to live out his days in private reflection.

The Mimic Men is a novel by British-Trinidadian author V.S. Naipaul, first published in 1967. Combining elements of both fiction and nonfiction and completed while Naipaul was writer-in-residence at Uganda's Makerere University, it is considered one of Naipaul's most serious and poetic novels. It centers on Ranjit "Ralph" Singh, an politician of both East and West Indian origin in exile living in London as he attempts to write his memoirs. The novel flashes back to his time in

power, as he struggles to balance his personal life with his political ambitions and at times, seems to abandon his goals. Exploring themes of cultural differences between Europe and the Caribbean, colonialism, love, and the politics and economics of the Caribbean, The Mimic Men received overall positive reviews, although it was controversial for its depiction of West Indians as trying to mimic European behavior.

Ranjit Kripal Singh is a 40-year-old man of Indian heritage born on the fictional Caribbean island of Isabella in the 1920s. Isabella is a British colony, and Sigh is a British citizen, which allows him to immigrate to the UK after his fall from government power in Isabella and subsequent exile . He writes his memoirs in a suburban London hotel, beginning with his university years in London. While living in a boarding house, he met a young Maltese woman named Lieni, who introduced him to many friends, all from countries colonized by the British empire. At university, Singh meets a British woman and fellow student named Sandra. He soon falls in love with the younger woman, but after he graduates, she fails out of university and is left with no real job prospects. Singh agrees to marry her, and she decides to move with him to Isabella. Singh's paternal grandparents own the island's bottling factory, and Singh is willed a substantial amount of land and money. Renting his land out for development, he becomes one of the most successful men on the island. However, he feels little fulfilment with his success, and his marriage is largely loveless.

The memoirs then flash back to his childhood growing up on Isabella. His father is a schoolteacher, while his mother is set to inherit the island's bottling factory. His uncle Cecil is only a few years older than Singh, and had a tense rivalry with Singh's father. An arrogant, rich young man, Cecil has little respect for his elders. Singh attends the British school Isabella Imperial, and makes many friends there. He is close with his father, and recalls a time in his childhood when his father took the whole family for a drive around the island. There, he sees the poor neighborhoods largely filled with black residents. He recalls feeling contempt for them due to their poverty. His school friend Browne is deeply affected by the poverty around them, and began to advocate on behalf of the island's poor. This leads to the end of his friendship with Singh. Singh's father eventually quits his teaching job and becomes a

spiritual leader and social activist, living in the forest with poor people. The government tries to break up this movement, but it eventually ends on its own. During World War II, Singh's father is placed in an internment camp. Cecil inherits the bottling factory, but his youth and arrogance led him to run it into the ground. When his father is released, he and Singh are reunited before Singh goes abroad to study in London. There, he got word that his father had been shot and killed by Cecil.

The final section of the memoir takes the reader back to Singh's life on Isabella as an adult. He is reunited with Browne, who is now a socialist activist and newspaper editor. He wants to work with Singh, and Singh signs on, helping to build up a strong following for the newspaper. Singh and Cecil (who has been cleared of all charges) use this momentum to run for office in Isabella, and Cecil is eventually elected Chief Minister. Politics in Isabella turn out to be very messy, and Singh's attempt to travel abroad to get support for Isabella's independence fails. When he returns to Isabella, his marriage falls apart and he is ousted from Isabella's government. Finding himself ostracized, he leaves the island and moves to London at the age of 40. There, he begins to compose his memoirs, using the writing process as a way of coming to terms with the complex events of his life.

V.S. Naipaul is a British author from Trinidad and Tobago, the winner of the Man Booker Prize in 1971 for In a Free State and the 2001 Nobel Prize for Literature. He wrote over thirty books in his life, both fiction and nonfiction, and based many of his works on his personal experiences growing up in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as his later world travels.

11.3 THE CHARACTERS

In an age when so many politicians write their memoirs, Ralph Singh, as a character, comes to life easily from Naipaul's imagination. The chief difference is that most political figures write to defend their policies—which can make for tiresome reading—whereas Singh writes, not to defend, but to understand himself. A desire for self-knowledge motivates him, and such a private, personal struggle, rare as it is, is poignant.

The youthful Singh is burdened by secrets. At school, he discards his first name, Ranjit, in favor of Ralph, ostensibly in order to integrate

himself into his surroundings. Linguistically, by word magic, the boy seeks to bridge a chasm separating races and cultures. It is a child's response to a profound problem. Despite his efforts, Singh experiences recurring dreams, imagining himself an Asian horseman, riding onto a snowy, forbidding, endless landscape, which suggest a longing for his ancestral home. The dramatic tension between where he is and where he ought to be remains with him throughout his life, poisoning his childhood, his marriage, and his career.

Singh's family has endured its own problems. His father's failure is all the more painful to him since his wife's family is so rich, owning the Bella Bella Bottling Works. Perhaps rejection of conventional life is rooted in the shame of his own failure. Having failed again in his efforts to lead a movement against human indignity, Singh's father is interned for six years during the war and released only to be assassinated.

Of all Singh's friends, Ethelbert Browne is the most intriguing. Browne, named after an Anglo-Saxon king, is viewed by family and friends early in his life as a comedian. He dances and sings ("Oh, I'm a happy little nigger"), but the comic face disguises the humiliation Browne feels. Following a period in London, Browne returns to Isabella to begin his fateful quest for power.

11.4 THEMES AND MEANINGS

A native of Trinidad, Naipaul in The Mimic Men is working through many of his own experiences. When Singh remarks that to be born on "an obscure New World transplantation, second-hand and barbarous, was to be born to disorder," he is voicing one of Naipaul's most powerful themes. There is a restlessness which comes from being a part of an unmade society, groping for identity, and such a feeling lies at the heart of The Mimic Men.

Singh moves to London in search of order; lacking a meaningful identity, however, he becomes merely what he sees of himself in other people. Without true identity or freedom, he imitates and mimics others.

Singh's entry into politics and his insights into Browne's character reveal Naipaul's skepticism concerning the politics of independence. For Singh, politics is a game, and he wonders why no one bothers to call his bluff.

The new political men are unpolished; they preach the politics of bitterness. Browne and his court have no knowledge; they have few gifts to offer. They are manipulators; all they can give to their admiring public is a sense of drama.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Give the brief summary of The Mimic Men.

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Q2.Give the Themes and Meanings of The Mimic Men.

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11.5 SETTING

Naipaul's novel is peopled by quite singular characters who dwell on a street with universal boundaries. He transmutes the vagaries and quotidian confusions of modern antiheroes into energetic, universalized fiction in the precisely phrased, deftly ironic novel.

Because his novel is set wholly or partly in Trinidad, and he has written two nonfiction books about the Caribbean area, he has gained some reputation as a West Indian writer. Yet Naipaul does not see himself as one. He objects to West Indian writers as inclined to choose "too special" situations, meaningful only to compatriots: any other reader "is excluded; he is invited to witness; he cannot participate."…

Granted the particularity of Naipaul's Caribbean descriptions and the vitality of his dialect, seeing him only as a skillful local colorist or regional sociologist underestimate him. Naipaul's novel is about contemporary man and how he manages to survive and sometimes almost flourish. His book is not confined within their local settings nor, for all their explicitly precise detail, are they tied to literal realism: he finds metaphor more expressive. The local settings are convenient to his ideational purposes. As a society "continually growing and changing, never settling into any pattern" …, Trinidad invites themes of instability

and flux, and as a colonial and emergent nation it provides a good setting for problems of dependency and freedom. The narrator of Mimic Men aptly says, "It has happened in twenty countries."… The dominant pressures in Naipaul's fictional world derive from man's precarious existence. He has not only to contend with psychic conflict and cultural fragmentation but to exist in a hard world within an indifferent universe…. At their best, Naipaul's characters are resilient, managing to transcend nonentity by their stubbornness. Naipaul may not willingly suffer people's pretensions, deceptions, and illogicalities, but he can admire their refusal to be the counters of fate or circumstance….

11.6 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

The elusive narrator of The Mimic Men, whose opinions keep changing under the pressure of his recapturing the past, is a more intellectually and emotionally sophisticated character than Naipaul has created before. His account is not a simple flashback but a process of sorting and regrouping the psychic freight of roughly five periods in his life…. Naipaul thus asks far more of his reader with this book than with earlier ones. Singh [the protagonist] being essentially a humorless man, he also dispenses with truly comic effects (in any case, these were diminishing with each succeeding book). Yet one recognizes a familiar Naipaul….

Singh accepts essentially Naipaul's perspective, according to which we neither come from nor return to a universal scheme of wholeness and harmony and should not plan on finding restorative magical light anywhere. We cannot pretend to any sort of mythic consciousness; its time has long since passed. On the other hand, individual cells can and do clump. Even men in cities, as Singh discovers …, manage to form meaningful units and, more important, manage to grow into operatively unitary personalities, assimilating change as it comes. Real men, Naipaul says once again, can manage with what is given…. Pursuing illusions of a better world on earth is a game for mimic men. One may take an insistence on confronting reality as (provisionally) Naipaul's final stand as a novelist. It does accord with his belief in, and skillful practice of, the novel as an expression of "concern with the condition of men" and "a response to the here and now."…

11.7 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

In The Mimic Men, Ralph Singh shows different aspects that reflect the nature of a "prototypical colonial character", quite commonly confused with the biased and pluralistic society he has inhaled. For Ralph, identity is a core issue, depicted by his mimicry of European or Western views on different aspects of life. His self-identification is in great conflict with how, generally, the Western world views him. In following the footsteps of colonialists, he has abandoned his home, family, and self-identity. He has married an Englishwoman and has been formally educated in the West. His embodiment of Western culture has had a detrimental impact on his life; it has alienated him from his cultural origins, thereby defying the traditional values set forth by his ancestors. The alienation of his identity has resulted in the scattering of his personal being, resulting in the vulnerability and corruption of his inner self.

Similarly to Naipaul, Fanon and, later, Said have strong beliefs on colonial mimicry, which originated in the disruptive "clear-cut authority of colonial dominance". The representation of this mimicry can be viewed in the character of Ralph, and the creation of his identity and reality, by accepting colonial language as part of his culture and traditions. Naipaul has imitated the English language by contrasting it with the Hindi language. Words from Hindi language, local reality, and cultural alteration vividly describe the alienation of Ralph‟s identity and, most importantly, show his resistance in uprooting his origins, thereby accepting the dominance and authenticity of the English language.

Both Fanon and Said, in their arguments—and Naipaul in his novel—reflect a similar understanding of the acceptance of an alien (colonial) culture. They have warned us of the consequences of the colonized adopting and subsequently accepting the culture of West. Naipaul has deemed this act as an that of "demoralizing their souls", yet he has urged paving new paths for different generations of the complacent state, thus recreating their identity in the complex of the postcolonial era. For this, Naipaul also prefers to communicate in the medium of English, transmitting the colonized person‟s feelings and thoughts. Moreover, literary English has been viewed as introducing colonized identity and culture to the world .

Hybridity, another kind challenge resulting from colonialism, implies the mixing of discrete and separate modes of living . In multicultural and complex societies, or idealized cultural settings, hybridization of societal aspects occurs quite commonly on the grassroots level, based on mutual respect, equality, and open-mindedness. Most postcolonial writers, including Fanon, Said, and Naipaul, have showcased diversity as an anti-colonial tool of cultural identity and "language shock," which natives face during the transition phase. Ashcroft et al. have translated this effect as the breaking down of strict imperialistic polarization. This is regarded as the mutual transcultural activities in relation to both colonized and colonials in general.

Hybridity is also referred to as the assimilation of policies that defy the inequality and imbalance of power relations, thereby masking cultural differences. However, the ideal construct of mutual rather than an equal exchange of cultural diasporas is a part of a colonized community. For Naipaul, Ralph is merely a depiction of someone who has faced severe psychic trauma on the realization that he will never attain the attributes of the colonials he admires. The most significant feature of this trauma includes the impossibility of attaining the whiteness of the colonial imperialist.

For Said, the analysis of colonial vs. colonized relationship, along with their mutual and independent constructions of various subjectivities, is entirely based on the core view of cultural diversity, described as, "No one today is purely one thing". However, Said and Naipaul consider all cultural systems and statements as part of a space, which HomiBhabha calls the "third space of enunciation". Moreover, cultural identity stems out of ambivalence and contradictory space. Thus, Said shares the view that purity of cultural hierarchy is not possible. We might view his Culture and Imperialism (1994) as his strongly held views of the importance of useful capacities within the connected space between cultures having both colonial as well as postcolonial provenance.

Considering the notion of estrangement (or alienation) Said (1993) noted the willingness to descend into this area of conflict ("alien territory"), and that this may open the pathway toward international culture conceptualization. Said‟s contention about liberation shows its revelation of the contrapuntal nature of identity in the exilic area;

Liberation as an intellectual mission, born in the resistance and opposition to the confinements and ravages of imperialism, has now shifted from the settled, established, and domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentred, and exilic energies, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant, and whose conciousness is that of the intellectual and artist in exile, the political figure between domains, between forms, between homes, and between languages. From this perspective then all things are indeed counter, original, spare, strange.

This might also be purely dependent not on the "exotism of multiculturalism" … "but [also] on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity , .

Proceeding with Said‟s interpretation of cultural diversity, and that "Survival in fact is about the connections between things," Ashcroft et al. have noticed that this notion derives from the "in- between space" that encompasses its meaning and, most importantly, it also includes the "cultural burden" that actually enhances the perception of mixed cultures.

Naipaul shares some views with Said. In The Mimic Men, Naipaul has presented a fictional character of Indian Brahmin origins, who has been subjected to alienation from colonial culture during the early 1840s. Rather than accepting the cultural notions and the mechanics of cultural diversity, Naipaul has showed intense dislike for hybridity. He has also shown great discomfort in the intermingling of things. For Naipaul, origin, purity, and essences are everything. Culhaoglu has described Naipaul‟s view of hybridity as an obsession for purity[15]. Naipaul is convinced that the cultural shock faced by Trinidad and other former colonies is a violation that includes intermingling of cultures that destroys the cultural fabric of that specific society. Naipaul is surely no idealist and knows that the society can never attain a complete and utter degree of cultural purity; however, he incorporates a desire for the attainment of the supreme level of purity through his characters‟ psyches, along with the awareness that the characters can never attain their original identities and original values. For Naipaul, the question of adjusting within a hybrid societal setting has never been a good idea, and is quite commonly about criticizing the change as part of colonization in post-colonized societies.

Said argues the notion of cultural diversity and identity as part of colonial presence, always, on the one hand, ambivalent and fragmented between its outward appearance as authoritative and original and, on the other hand, its enunciation as different and repetitive. Bearing that in mind, Said has argued that colonial discourse does not commonly demarcate between “self,” “a home culture,” and more importantly, “an alien culture”; nevertheless, it is about “self,” ”us” and “other.” As he states, “Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or Western, or Oriental”. The construct of defining a mother culture and its bastards is a rather strong stance that props up the arguments presented by Naipaul in The Mimic Men. These writers interpret similarly diversity and its association with cultural imbalance in colonial societies.

As previously illustrated, Fanon‟s perspective includes repetition as a strong force that connects mimicry to slavery. In most postcolonial societies that have evolved out of exploitation and slavery, hybridity usually transforms itself into mimicry of an alien culture. As described in Ferdous, mimicry is the strategy for attaining colonial knowledge and power.” In Said‟s view, colonial mimicry is the strong urge and desire for attaining recognizable and reformed identity; rather than reflecting the other. Thus, Ralph‟s assertion that he was fascinated quite less by the act and the labor as compared to the order and calm, that the act might have implied. It is evident that colonial discourse encourages colonized subjects like Ralph to mimic the cultural habits, institutions, assumptions and values of the colonizer by following his footsteps.

Ashcroft et al. (describe mimicry as the blurred copying of the traits that threaten individual identity. Mixing cultures is a mere introduction of synthetic positioning and cultural relativism that includes the resolution of two cultural dialects. It also incorporates a form of “colonial authority, together with its content that has somehow „terrorized‟ authority with the deception of identification, along with mockery as well as mimicry".

These definitions also describe the complicated relationship between the colonized and colonizer. But the ambivalence of these two diverse powers describes the fluctuating relationship between mockery and

mimicry. Mimicry is an ambivalent condition because it requires different similar and dissimilar aspects. Furthermore, it is also related to the perception of an incomplete as well as "partial transformation of colonized to colonizer"; however, it also includes remaining different under the microscope of Naipaul's creation of Ralph, educated in an alien culture and subsequently married to blend in with colonial society.

Thus, The Mimic Men describes a shifting political dynamic of a colonized society. More importantly, it is the story of Singh, a victim of ignorance, poverty, and who lacks natural talent. He has enjoyed great public eminence and materialistic success in his life as compared to otherwise similar literary characters. As part of his foreign education in London, he recognizes and later articulates the various wrong-doings of his alien and sophisticated society. However, regardless of his acute consciousness and superior nature, he is no less immune to the cultural shock or alienation because of his confusing and, most importantly, fragmented past. In reality, this has enhanced his alienation to the colonized environment rather than helping him blend into the colonized society.

There was no one to link my present with my past, no one to note my consistencies or inconsistencies. It was up to me to choose my character, and I chose the character that was easiest and most attractive. I was the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent.

Naipaul, as Ralph Singh, has also exhibited his West Indian experience, one that is surely a vivid elaboration of the West and East Indian psyche, along with the common reactions of these different and conflicting Creole, English, and Indian cultures. Naipaul as Singh, the confessor, narrator, and visionary, comments on different aspects of postcolonial societies that include politics, power, and racial and social interactions between colonized and colonial beings. In Singh's experience considering the life of London, he soon comes to a realization that a great deal of relentlessness characterizes his life in his fantasy city. During his stay in his landlord Mr. Shylock's house, he has encountered the same feelings of discomfort of other immigrants experiencing psychic trauma. He describes the house as “a conglomeration of private cells. In the city as nowhere else we are reminded that we are individuals, units” .

The suffering of Lieni, the Maltese housekeeper with an illegitimate son, has also inspired Singh to handle harsh environments while realizing that "We become what we see of ourselves in the eyes of others" (Naipaul 1967, p. 20). Leini‟s predicament forces him to see that he has paid little or no attention to his physical looks, always having reassured himself that he is "no monster" (p. 20). However, the development of his mimicry, considering the colonial environment, has allowed him to move further and to develop an attraction to his home on the island Isabella .

Said has mentioned this uneasiness in the characters who reflect colonial discourse, quite commonly compelled by the ambivalence of environment and interactions between the colonial and the colonized. The core reason behind this is that colonial subjects cannot completely create what Ashcroft et al. (2004,p. 13) describe as the "replica" of different traits and social aspects of an ideal colonizer. Said (1984) has also argued that the detrimental aspect of mimicking a foreigner is the "double vision," or "they are aware of at least two cultures" so that greatly revealing of "the ambivalence of colonial discourse," but also hindering with its authority (p. 148.). Moreover, this double vision also accounts for a provision for resistance that unsettles the foundations of colonial centrality and subjectivity.

A follow-up of Said's arguments of post colonialism, Naipaul has further explained the problems faced as part of Ralph's split identity in The Mimic Men. Regarding this phenomenon, Naipaul has taken the position that there exists no alternative that can stop a colonized person from becoming a mimic man, within the mere depiction of centralized colonial power. This analysis clearly shows his perception of cultural power in literature. Naipaul's approach to mimicry has a somewhat striking resemblance to Said‟s views, for example, "exile is never the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure" (Said 1984, p. 148), thus "the performance of mimicry is masked by ambivalence" (Ferdous 2015, p. 4). For the multilayered and ambivalent idea of mimicry in The Mimic Men, depicting the complex nature of mimicry, Naipaul, as Singh, says,

I paid Mr. Shylock three guineas a week for a tall, multi-mirrored, book shape room with a coffin-like wardrobe . . . I thought Mr. Shylock looked distinguished like a lawyer or business person or politicians. He had the

habit of strolling the bot of his ear inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copy it. (Naipaul 1967, p. 7)

This passage elaborately depicts the layers and complex nature of mimicry. It reflects not only Singh copying the traits of his landlord but touches on the remorse of post-war Europe regarding the Jews, the guilt embedded in the name Shylock. As a narrator, Ralph has been encouraged to follow the footsteps of a person who has exploited him. The mockery that has been presented as a quiescent version, surely; it is not Shylock's mockery that forms a part of narrator's mimicry but the process of colonization incorporated as part of cultural understanding. Considering the above example, Ralph's character finely depicts an object of the colonial chain; however, it is also an appropriate colonized subject.

The Mimic Men is not simply a novel; rather, it is an attempt to magnify the conditions and surroundings of displaced expatriates within a colonized world. In his novels, Naipaul has used to great degree a confessional tone as part of his exploration, together with in-depth analysis of problems and woes faced by expatriates. They are fine examples of authenticity and the genuine, emphasizing the protagonist's sense of discontent, alienation and, most importantly, the search for stable values and rooted identity. In The Mimic Men he has presented a profound understanding of alienation within three different cultures. Singh has neither rejected his previous values and traditions of Indian origin, nor has he completely adjusted to the Caribbean culture. Finally, Naipaul's protagonist character has failed to become a part of London and, more precisely, the colonial empire. His failure to do so has turned him into a deracinated individual with an uprooted identity.

The vision of a three-time exile and his alienation has brought Singh into a newly formed dimension, as reflected in The Mimic Men. Singh has acquired success, money, and power following the easiest way. Like any other pragmatic politician, he decries dishonesty, but hides his feelings, making him a mimic man and a character who has identity issues. He presents the picture of a person with a pretentious nature concealed behind the face of intellectual sophistry, having shallow or a lack of values in his character. Nevertheless, Singh is also quite aware of his mimicry in life. Surely, he has little or no affection and commitment to

society or to his life. Defining his mimic obsession he says, "We pretend to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New world, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the news". The fragility and uncertainty of his character clearly reflect the corruption of the human soul.

It is worthwhile to note that the educational system also constitutes what is called a "privileged instrument", which allows colonized individuals to follow the same cultural steps as the colonialist, playing their roles as if colonials. This implies wearing masks that do not fit in any way,

Considering the characters" daily lives in the empire. However, problems start arising whenever the colonized individual starts believing the roles and characters he imitates. This mimicry and imitation, following both Said and Naipaul, achieves the goal of the imperial strategy. Said, in Reflections on Exile, recalled that mimicry of colonial culture is the desire to attain recognition and be reformed; however, the differences between the colonized and the colonizer are quite similar but not the same in all contexts. This idea of not attaining the level of perfection, and the impossibility of becoming the same, also highlights the alienated nature of the colonized. On the other hand, it also pronounces the degree of the cultural ambivalence of colonized people, considering their struggle for an authentic identity they strive to attain for the rest of their lives. On one end, the complexity and demarcation of mimicry and hybridity are quite difficult to define; on the other, some cases define the extent to which mimicry has an impact on diversity.

Through examination of Naipaul's novel, it is well evident that the discourses of slavery and subordination are quite fickle among colonized people in both colonial and metropolitan settings. Apart from that, the significant impact of education appears, along with other degrees of mimicry on some colonized subjects' mimicry and their identity diasporas within the postcolonial period. This is reflected in Naipaul's protagonist Singh. He has tried to mimic and make himself into a colonizer since his childhood, which has hindered his ability to assess his behaviors and to create an authentic identity until his early forties.

Most of the negative outcomes of Ralph's mimicry have stemmed from the deconstructive representation he has formed on Isabella. He has spent

most of his life on little more than this island, on which he forms, or is formed with, an outlook for achieving the colonialist dream. His family links with Coca-Cola business owners give him some measure of social prestige. Otherwise, the island is a place with a severe lack of opportunity, deprivation, and homelessness. Thus, his origins there amount to a self-created prison from which he eagerly escapes by creating a sphere outside it, thinking about his glorious ancestors. He has also done so by changing his name, without telling his parents, and has tried to identify himself with wealthy relatives. Moreover, he has also detested his father's actions and behavior toward his maternal family, mainly because of its higher social status within colonial society.

Thus Ralph has imagines himself as a fictional character to aid him in coping with the homelessness and origins he has felt quite ashamed of since the beginning of his story. In conjunction with the negative images of island, he has faced quite the opposite and yet aggrandized reality. For this reason he has not realized any ridicule behind most of his attitudes. He has instead showed a level of imitation when on his first trip to London, he copies Mr. Shylock's habit, for example, of stroking his ear lobe and then inclining forward to listen.

At the outset of the novel Singh has started to express his fragmented feelings using pen and paper. He describes his experience in the boarding house as a way to bring about some meaning in his life, moreover, for overcoming or finding a way of redemption for the crisis he faced as a child. The deepest feelings of his life are his loneliness and his sense of being adrift, also experienced by his father, but in a more diverse perspective. With the narration of Ralph's life in flashback, he shows his disorganized memories, depicting his father as a figure idealized by various missionaries who have dwelled on Isabella. For instance, a missionary lady describes his father as the person who "had the marks of grace" and someone who has never "hesitated for the protection of missionaries" so that most of the people could "receive the Gospel of grace" . Thus, Ralph has not much to rely on in terms of grace; he must continue building an identity from something besides his memories.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Give the critical analysis of The Mimic Men

……

……

…….

Q2. What are the 3 main narrative techniques used in this novel?

……

……

……**……**

11.8 LET'S SUM UP

In conclusion, the inception of Naipaul‟s Ralph Singh brings forward different outlooks of an alienated life under colonial dominance. From the very outlooks of mimicry to complete loss of identity; Ralph has gone through different phases in his life. His early life as a Ranjit Singh along with his transformation as Ralph Singh has brought forward different aspects of the identity crisis, ambivalence and hybridity. The character‟s sense of mimicry and identity issues was not present at the very beginning. His early life education in English school has alienated him from his very Indian roots and ancestral culture and tradition. The development of such diversified outlook has left in complete despair and turmoil. Bhabha theory also strongly adheres to Naipaul‟s outlook for an alien – a person who mimics foreign culture with no cultural background left him. V.S. Naipaul's identity formation and its crisis of a postcolonial subject.

11.9 KEYWORDS

1. **Proletarianization** is the social process whereby people move from being either an employer, unemployed or self-employed, to being employed as wage labor by an employer
2. A **missionary** is a member of a religious group sent into an area to promote their faith or perform ministries of service, such as education, literacy, social justice, health care, and economic development.
3. **Catchcry**. : a distinctive word or expression (as a catchword or slogan) serving to attract attention or rally support.

4. A **protagonist** is the main character of a story.
5. **Susceptible**: likely or liable to be influenced or harmed by a particular thing."patients with liver disease may be susceptible to infection"
6. **Civilization**:the stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced.

11.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

h) What was the Main character's best quality in the mimic men?
i) What you understand by "scepticism" here?
j) Explain, "singular characters who dwell on a street with universal boundaries"?
k) What is the Central idea behind The Mimic Men.

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11.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 11.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 11.4

Check Your Progress Ii :

Answer 1 : Check Section 11.7

Answer 2 : Check Section 11.6

UNIT: 12 INTRODUCTION TO LIFE OF DEREK WALCOTT

STRUCTURE

12.0 Objective

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Early Life And Careers

12.3 Career

12.4 Writing

12.5 A New Caribbean Voice

12.6 Let's Sum Up

12.7 Keywords

12.8 Questions For Review

12.9 Suggested Readings And References

12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit throws light on the Life of Derek Walcott. Unit gives the information about the personal life and career of Derek Walcott. Units provides insight of various achievements of Derek Walcott. Units talks about his interests in his life and work.

Unit helps to achieve following objective:

- **Early Life And Careers of Derek Walcott**
- **Career of Derek Walcott**
- **Writing of Derek Walcott**

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Notes

Sir Derek Alton Walcott, KCSL, OBE, OCC (23 January 1930 – 17 March 2017) was a Saint Lucian poet and playwright. He received the 1992 Nobel Prize in Literature. He was the University of Alberta's first distinguished scholar in residence, where he taught undergraduate and graduate writing courses.

He also served as Professor of Poetry at the University of Essex from 2010 to 2013. His works include the Homeric epic poem Omeros (1990), which many critics view "as Walcott's major achievement." In addition to winning the Nobel Prize, Walcott received many literary awards over the course of his career, including an Obie Award in 1971 for his play Dream on Monkey Mountain, a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award, a Royal Society of Literature Award, the Queen's Medal for Poetry, the inaugural OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, the 2011 T. S. Eliot Prize for his book of poetry White Egrets and the Griffin Trust For Excellence in Poetry Lifetime Recognition Award in 2015.

Caribbean poet Derek Walcott is the recipient of the 1992 Nobel Prize for literature, one the world's most prestigious awards. Walcott won the prize on the strength of his many works of poetry and his plays about island life in a post-colonial era. He is the first native Caribbean writer ever to win a Nobel for literature. His poetry confronts his own mixed ethnic legacy—Walcott is of African, Dutch, and English descent—as well as the multi-ethnic character of the West Indies in general. In the 1981 biography Derek Walcott, Robert D. Hamner wrote: "Nurtured on oral tales of gods, devils, and cunning tricksters passed down by generations of slaves, Walcott should retell folk stories; and he does. On the other hand, since he has an affinity for and is educated in Western classics, he should retell the traditional themes of European experience; and he does. As inheritor of two vitally rich cultures, he utilizes one, then the other, and finally creates out of the two his own personal style."

Walcott's central preoccupation has concerned the union between two racial and social strains that has produced the unique Caribbean culture. He has worked from the "schizophrenic" point of view of an islander raised to respect and appreciate the culture of an enslaving colonial force. Hamner noted that Walcott "is a living example of the divided loyalties and hatreds that keep his society suspended between two worlds." Likewise, New Yorker correspondent Jervis Anderson claimed that in

ancestry and cultural heritage, Walcott "epitomized the composite New World culture in the Caribbean—roughly half black and half white—and he had no desire to elevate one component above the other. The two were reconciled in his view of himself as an artist and a 'divided child.'" In one of his best-known poems, Walcott perhaps spoke for himself when he wrote: "I'm just a red nigger who love the sea, /… I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me, / and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation."

Walcott and his twin brother, Roderick, were born January 23, 1930, in Castries, a colonial town on the small eastern Caribbean island of St. Lucia. At the time of Walcott's birth, St. Lucia was part of the British protectorate, but its past as a French colony was evident in the creole dialect and religious practice of its citizens. Both of Walcott's parents were schoolteachers. His father died when Walcott was only a year old, but his mother compensated for the loss by nurturing her two sons' love of reading and study. She surrounded her children with English literary classics, recited Shakespeare to them, and encouraged them to appreciate poetry and drama.

Born Derek Alton Walcott, January 23, 1930, on Castries, St. Lucia, West Indies; immigrated to United States, late 1950s; son of Warwick (a civil servant and teacher) and Alix (a teacher) Walcott; married Fay Moston, 1954 (divorced, 1959); married Margaret Ruth Maillard, 1962 (divorced); married NorlineMetivier (actress and dancer; divorced); children: one son, three daughters. Education: University of the West Indies, B.A., 1953.

Poet and playwright, 1953—. Founding director of Trinidad Theatre Workshop, 1959; visiting professor at Columbia University, 1981, Harvard University, 1982, and Boston University, 1985—. Has given lectures and readings at numerous colleges in the United States and abroad; fund-raiser for international center devoted to the arts and the study of economics, to be based in the Caribbean.

Selected awards: Rockefeller Foundation grant, 1957-58; Obie Award, 1971, for Dream on Monkey Mountain; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation grant, 1981; Nobel Prize for literature, 1992.

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In those days Castries was a picturesque town with large, omate Victorian homes nestled among bright tropical gardens. Anderson noted that, as a youth, Walcott spent little time admiring the displays of affluence in the city. “His attention was drawn more strongly to the shanties of the poor, in Castries and elsewhere on the island, occupied by fascinating characters, some of whom later appeared in his book-length autobiographical poem, ‘Another, Life,’” Anderson commented. “Beyond the sociology of the land, young Walcott’s imagination was transfixed by the sea: its sounds; its fishermen and schooner men; its far horizon of limits and possibilities; the dangerous seductions of its calm and stormy moods; its record of local drownings; its legends of shipwreck and isolation.” This youthful fascination with St. Lucia’s seafaring class would one day be translated into powerful poetry in the Homeric tradition. Walcott told the New Yorker: “Islands are great places to live in because the sea is close and there is the elemental feeling of things that are bigger than you are.”

12.2 EARLY LIFE AND CAREERS

Walcott was born and raised in Castries, Saint Lucia, in the West Indies, the son of Alix (Maarlin) and Warwick Walcott. He had a twin brother, the playwright Roderick Walcott, and a sister, Pamela Walcott. His family is of English, Dutch and African descent, reflecting the complex colonial history of the island that he explores in his poetry. His mother, a teacher, loved the arts and often recited poetry around the house. His father was a civil servant and a talented painter. He died when Walcott and his brother were one year old, and were left to be raised by their mother. Walcott was brought up in Methodist schools. His mother, who was a teacher at a Methodist elementary school, provided her children with an environment where their talents could be nurtured. Walcott's family was part of a minority Methodist community, who felt overshadowed by the dominant Catholic culture of the island established during French colonial rule.

As a young man Walcott trained as a painter, mentored by Harold Simmons, whose life as a professional artist provided an inspiring example for him. Walcott greatly admired Cézanne and Giorgione and

sought to learn from them. Walcott's painting was later exhibited at the Anita Shapolsky Gallery in New York City, along with the art of other writers, in a 2007 exhibition named "The Writer's Brush: Paintings and Drawing by Writers".

He studied as a writer, becoming "an elated, exuberant poet madly in love with English" and strongly influenced by modernist poets such as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Walcott had an early sense of a vocation as a writer. In the poem "Midsummer" (1984), he wrote:

Forty years gone, in my island childhood, I felt that
the gift of poetry had made me one of the chosen,
that all experience was kindling to the fire of the Muse.

At 14, Walcott published his first poem, a Miltonic, religious poem, in the newspaper The Voice of St Lucia. An English Catholic priest condemned the Methodist-inspired poem as blasphemous in a response printed in the newspaper. By 19, Walcott had self-published his first two collections with the aid of his mother, who paid for the printing: 25 Poems (1948) and Epitaph for the Young: XII Cantos (1949). He sold copies to his friends and covered the costs. He later commented:

I went to my mother and said, "I'd like to publish a book of poems, and I think it's going to cost me two hundred dollars." She was just a seamstress and a schoolteacher, and I remember her being very upset because she wanted to do it. Somehow she got it—a lot of money for a woman to have found on her salary. She gave it to me, and I sent off to Trinidad and had the book printed. When the books came back I would sell them to friends. I made the money back.

The influential Bajan poet Frank Collymore critically supported Walcott's early work.After getting his high school education from St. Mary's College, he received a scholarship to study at the University College of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica.

12.3 CAREER

After graduation, Walcott moved to Trinidad in 1953, where he became a critic, teacher and journalist. He founded the Trinidad Theatre Workshop in 1959 and remained active with its board of directors.

Exploring the Caribbean and its history in a colonialist and post-colonialist context, his collection In a Green Night: Poems 1948–1960 (1962) attracted international attention. His play Dream on Monkey Mountain (1970) was produced on NBC-TV in the United States the year it was published. Makak is the protagonist in this play; and "Makak"s condition represents the condition of the colonized natives under the oppressive forces of the powerful colonizers". In 1971 it was produced by the Negro Ensemble Company off-Broadway in New York City; it won an Obie Award that year for "Best Foreign Play". The following year, Walcott won an OBE from the British government for his work.

He was hired as a teacher by Boston University in the United States, where he founded the Boston Playwrights' Theatre in 1981. That year he also received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in the United States. Walcott taught literature and writing at Boston University for more than two decades, publishing new books of poetry and plays on a regular basis. Walcott retired from his position at Boston University in 2007. He became friends with other poets, including the Russian expatriate Joseph Brodsky, who lived and worked in the U.S. after being exiled in the 1970s, and the Irishman Seamus Heaney, who also taught in Boston.

His epic poem Omeros (1990), which loosely echoes and refers to characters from the Iliad, has been critically praised "as Walcott's major achievement." The book received praise from publications such as The Washington Post and The New York Times Book Review, which chose Omeros as one of its "Best Books of 1990".

Walcott was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992, the second Caribbean writer to receive the honour after Saint-John Perse, who was born in Guadeloupe, received the award in 1960. The Nobel committee described Walcott's work as "a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment". He won an Anisfield-Wolf Book Award[19] for Lifetime Achievement in 2004.

His later poetry collections include Tiepolo's Hound (2000), illustrated with copies of his watercolors; The Prodigal (2004), and White Egrets (2010), which received the T.S. Eliot Prize and the 2011 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature.

In 2009, Walcott began a three-year distinguished scholar-in-residence position at the University of Alberta. In 2010, he became Professor of Poetry at the University of Essex.

As a part of St Lucia's Independence Day celebrations, in February 2016, he became one of the first knights of the Order of Saint Lucia.

Controversy over allegations of sexual harassment

In 1982 a Harvard sophomore accused Walcott of sexual harassment in September 1981. She alleged that after she refused a sexual advance from him, she was given the only C in the class. In 1996 a student at Boston University sued Walcott for sexual harassment and "offensive sexual physical contact". The two reached a settlement.

In 2009, Walcott was a leading candidate for the position of Oxford Professor of Poetry. He withdrew his candidacy after reports of the accusations against him of sexual harassment from 1981 and 1996.

When the media learned that pages from an American book on the topic were sent anonymously to a number of Oxford academics, this aroused their interest in the university decisions.

Ruth Padel, also a leading candidate, was elected to the post. Within days, The Daily Telegraph reported that she had alerted journalists to the harassment cases.[29][30] Under severe media and academic pressure, Padel resigned.Padel was the first woman to be elected to the Oxford post, and some journalists attributed the criticism of her to misogyny and a gender war at Oxford. They said that a male poet would not have been so criticized, as she had reported published information, not rumour.

Numerous respected poets, including Seamus Heaney and Al Alvarez, published a letter of support for Walcott in The Times Literary Supplement, and criticized the press furore. Other commentators suggested that both poets were casualties of the media interest in an internal university affair, because the story "had everything, from sex claims to allegations of character assassination". Simon Armitage and other poets expressed regret at Padel's resignation

His early struggle were:

- In 1953, Derek Walcott began his career as a theatre and art critic in Trinidad. But some biographers are of the opinion that he first

returned to Castries, where he taught at St. Mary's College for a year, before moving to Trinidad.

- Whichever version is true, it is universally accepted that by 1954, he was well-established at Trinidad because in the mid-1950s he had two of his plays. 'The Sea at Dauphin' and 'Ione' premiered here. Soon he decided to establish a resident theatre project on the island.
- In 1958, on earning a Rockefeller Foundation grant with his play, 'Drums and Colours' Walcott moved to New York City with the aim of working with off-Broadway directors. He wanted to learn the skills that would help him to establish a repertory group in Trinidad. But he was sorely disappointed.
- He soon realized that he wanted to create something different and neither the Off-Broadway nor the Broadway was the right model for that. Therefore, he returned to Trinidad and in 1959, founded Trinidad Theatre Workshop along with his brother Roderick in Port of Spain, the capital city of the island.
- Derek Walcott remained the founder director of the Workshop till 1971. Concurrently, from 1960 to 1968, he also worked as a reporter of 'Trinidad Guardian' and covered local news for the paper.
- At the same time, he continued to explore the history as well as myths, rituals and even the superstitions prevalent in the Caribbean and wrote a number of plays on these subjects, which were staged by his group. He also wrote a number of poems; but the readership was largely confined to Caribbean.

His international acclaims:

In 1962, Derek Walcott's poems gained the attention of the editors at the British publisher Jonathan Cape's publication house. In the same year, the publisher released Walcott's first major collection of poems, 'In a Green Night: Poems 1948–1960'. The book was well received and very soon he was established as a poet.

One of his admirers was poet Robert Lowell, who came to Trinidad to meet Walcott. It was largely through his effort that publisher Farrar, Straus and Giroux (FSG) signed him as their new writer.

- His subsequent publications, 'Selected Poems' (1964), 'The Castaway' (1965), and 'The Gulf' (1969), were hailed for their rich language and complicated rhyme. But more importantly, they expressed his feelings of being caught between his Caribbean traditions as well as beliefs and the European culture in which he had been oriented.
- From the early 1970s, Walcott started spending more time in the USA, teaching creative writing at well-known universities like Harvard and Columbia. Concurrently, he continued publishing books like 'Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays' (1970), 'The Gulf' (1970),' Another Life' (1973), 'Sea Grapes' (1976) , and 'The Star-Apple Kingdom' (1979).
- In 1981, he joined Boston University, where he taught literature and creative writing. In the same year, he established Boston Playwrights' Theatre to promote new plays. Concurrently, he continued to publish poems and plays on a regular basis. He retired from the university in 2007.
- Among the works published in 1980s, 'The Fortunate Traveller' (1981) and 'Midsummer' (1984) explore his situation as a black writer in America. However, 'Omeros', published in 1990, is said to be his best.
- In 2009, Walcott applied for the post of Oxford Professor of Poetry, but withdrew his candidature after an allegation of sexual harassment was raised against him. Instead, he took up the position of scholar-in-residence at the University of Alberta Canada, for three years.
- Concurrently from 2010, he became the Visiting Professor of Poetry at the University of Essex. Also in the same year, he had his 'White Egret', a book of poems, published. This is his last major publication.

Scale has been a prominent feature of Walcott's poetry since Another Life (1973); his later career has seen a succession of major projects – Omeros (1990), Tiepolo's Hound (2000) and The Prodigal (2005). His work is conceived on an oceanic scale and one of its fundamental concerns is to give an account of the simultaneous unity and division created by the ocean and by human dealings with it.

An early poem, 'A Sea-Chantey' from In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960 (1962), offers both a reverent appeasement of the waters and, in its

litany of placenames, a declaration of love for the Caribbean world, bitter though its history may be:

'The litany of islands,
The rosary of archipelagoes,
Anguilla, Antigua,
Virgin of Guadeloupe,
And stone-white Grenada
Of sunlight and pigeons,
The amen of calm waters …'

The title of a poem from The Star-Apple Kingdom (1980 might sum up Walcott's whole oeuvre: 'The Sea is History'. A riposte to those who ask what monuments and artistic masterpieces can be boasted by those descended from slaves brought from Africa to the Caribbean, 'The Sea is History' discloses two interwoven themes in Walcott's work – the exploitation of Africa and the New World by Europe; and the glory of European culture, which Walcott has learned not only to possess but also to amend:

'but where is your Renaissance?

Sir, it is locked in them sea-sands
out there past the reef's moiling shelf,
where the men-o'-war floated down;

strop [sic] on these goggles, I'll guide you there myself.
It's all subtle and submarine,
through colonnades of coral,

past the gothic windows of sea-fans
to where the crusty grouper, onyx-eyed,
blinks, weighted by its jewels, like a bald queen …'

This underwater phantasmagoria recalls the uneasy dreams of Clarence in Richard III and of Richard II ; at moments, indeed, the poem exudes a

kind of amiable, teasing menace, as though to remind the questioner of the fate of those aristocrats. At the same time, Walcott's characteristically luxuriant and visually exact language (he is also a painter) is creating the very history and literature which the questioner declares is not to be found. The poet of course, is not only the dramatist of the occasion but also both the speakers. The poem serves both as an affirmation and a beginning: it is 'the sound / like a rumour without any echo // of History, really beginning.' The task of imagination is to animate and substantiate its mother, memory.

From his precocious beginning, Walcott has immersed himself in poetic tradition: the Jacobeans and Wordsworth are presiding presences; so too are Yeats and Lowell, as is Homer. Walcott's embrace of these figures is a dramatic example of post-colonial aesthetics, an act of possession as sweeping in its way as the imperialism which went before it. Unlike his contemporary, Kamau Brathwaite, Walcott's poems are written mostly in standard English (the speaker of The Schooner Flight is an important exception), which has significant political as well as literary implications. A detractor might see it as a sign of defeat, but the thrust of Walcott's writing indicates that he views himself as the true inheritor of tradition, one who will as T.S. Eliot suggested, alter tradition by adding to it, able to turn its powers to the task of reparation and accurate representation. There are obvious comparisons to be made with the work of Walcott's fellow Nobel Laureate, Seamus Heaney, whose absorption in the tradition of English nature poetry, particularly Wordsworth, has been placed in the service of a distinctively Irish vision. The result, like Yeats's argument with the self, is a productive friction; indeed, it might be argued that without such friction the poet is condemned to parochial status. Walcott is faithful to his origins while speaking to the world.

The fact that Walcott has worked with such freedom and assurance, absorbing many elements into his own distinctive practice, does not deny the difficulty of writing, to which he has referred as a prison. Nor does he attempt to disguise the continuing conflict in himself between the artistic impulse and knowledge of what has been done in the name of the civilization against whose artists he measures himself. This is no less the case now than 50 years ago. There is by no means a simple division of loyalties between the local and familiar on the one hand and the remote

authority on the other: what Walcott registers is an anxiety hardly separable from the survival of the imagination itself. In The Prodigal (2005), a work of sober assessment and retrospection as well as lyric power, he asks whether he made the right choice:

'Is every noun: breakwater, headland, haze,
seen through a gauze of English, a bright scrim,
a mesh in which light now defines the wires
and not its natural language. Were your life and work
simply a good translation?'

Patrick Kavanagh's line from 'Epic' states: 'Gods make their own importance.' In their absence, the task falls to poets. Walcott's most ambitious work to date is Omeros, which re-tells Homeric legend in the Caribbean context, locating Homeric characters – Achille, Helen, Philoctete – among island fishermen, in an effort to touch every aspect of Caribbean experience. Running in parallel in Walcott's writing is the concern with art itself - its meaning and importance and the nature of an artistic vocation. This preoccupation is characteristic of Walcott's modernist predecessors, but the treatment of 'the growth of the poet's mind', as in Tiepolo's Hound, also calls to mind the Wordsworth of The Prelude, whose grounding theme was the authentic, shaping power of the home landscape. With The Prodigal, Walcott gives new emphasis to exile, including the far-travelled poet and teacher's sense, in old age, that 'frequent exile turns into treachery.' The longing for home is part of a pattern of conflict, in that home is known most sharply through absence.

Formal diversity, sensual richness and a three-dimensional sense of argument are enduring features of Walcott's work, as is a swagger of command which at times risks grandiloquence. Perhaps Walcott's true masterpiece belongs to a slightly earlier date: 'The Schooner Flight' appeared in the 1979 volume, The Star-Apple Kingdom. The poem tells the story of the sailor Shabine's return to the sea, opening with a passage whose understatement and enigmatic musical power are the work of a writer with no one to impress:

'In idle August, while the sea soft,

and leaves of brown islands stick to the rim
of this Caribbean, I blow out the light
by the dreamless face of Maria Concepcion
to ship as a seaman on the schooner Flight.
Out in the yard turning grey in the dawn,
I stood like a stone and nothing else move
but the cold sea rippling like galvanize
and the nail holes of stars in the sky roof'
Sean O'Brien, 2005

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Q1.Discuss the early life of Derek Walcot

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Q2. Give a brief about various national and international acclaims received by Derek Walcot.

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12.4 WRITING

Themes

Methodism and spirituality have played a significant role from the beginning in Walcott's work. He commented, "I have never separated the writing of poetry from prayer. I have grown up believing it is a vocation, a religious vocation." Describing his writing process, he wrote, "the body feels it is melting into what it has seen… the 'I' not being important. That is the ecstasy...Ultimately, it's what Yeats says: 'Such a sweetness flows into the breast that we laugh at everything and everything we look upon is blessed.' That's always there. It's a benediction, a transference. It's gratitude, really. The more of that a poet keeps, the more genuine his nature." He also notes, "if one thinks a poem is coming on...you do make a retreat, a withdrawal into some kind of silence that cuts out everything

around you. What you're taking on is really not a renewal of your identity but actually a renewal of your anonymity."

Influences

Walcott said his writing was influenced by the work of the American poets, Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop, who were also friends.

Playwriting

He published more than twenty plays, the majority of which have been produced by the Trinidad Theatre Workshop and have also been widely staged elsewhere. Many of them address, either directly or indirectly, the liminal status of the West Indies in the post-colonial period. Through poetry he also explores the paradoxes and complexities of this legacy.

Essays

In his 1970 essay "What the Twilight Says: An Overture", discussing art and theatre in his native region (from Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays), Walcott reflects on the West Indies as colonized space. He discusses the problems for an artist of a region with little in the way of truly indigenous forms, and with little national or nationalist identity. He states: "We are all strangers here... Our bodies think in one language and move in another". The epistemological effects of colonization inform plays such as Ti-Jean and his Brothers. Mi-Jean, one of the eponymous brothers, is shown to have much information, but to truly know nothing. Every line Mi-Jean recites is rote knowledge gained from the coloniser; he is unable to synthesize it or apply it to his life as a colonised person.

Walcott notes of growing up in West Indian culture:

What we were deprived of was also our privilege. There was a great joy in making a world that so far, up to then, had been undefined... My generation of West Indian writers has felt such a powerful elation at having the privilege of writing about places and people for the first time and, simultaneously, having behind them the tradition of knowing how well it can be done—by a Defoe, a Dickens, a Richardson.

Walcott identified as "absolutely a Caribbean writer", a pioneer, helping to make sense of the legacy of deep colonial damage. In such poems as "The Castaway" (1965) and in the play Pantomime (1978), he uses the metaphors of shipwreck and Crusoe to describe the culture and what is

required of artists after colonialism and slavery: both the freedom and the challenge to begin again, salvage the best of other cultures and make something new. These images recur in later work as well. He writes: "If we continue to sulk and say, Look at what the slave-owner did, and so forth, we will never mature. While we sit moping or writing morose poems and novels that glorify a non-existent past, then time passes us by."

Poet

When Walcott was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992 the Swedish Academy made a special mention of his epic poem Omeros. Regarded as his magnun? opus this poem transposes Homeric characters to a St. Lucian setting to make the epic reflect Caribbean reality. Walcott has never been reticent ahout Derek Walcott-I Caribbean Poetry acknowledging that the major influences on his poetic career have been European and American .4mong the poets he most enjoys reading are Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes and t;dward Thomas, He admits to have written poems in the manner of Eliot and Auden at the beginning of his poetic career.

That his acknowledgement of influence might lead to the charge of imitation or non-originality is a danger Walcott is well aware of. His self-confidence in such acknowledgements stems from what he calls a "tribal accent." He believes that people in many of the erstwhile colonies who "grow up speaking the English language" experience no "alienation" from it and hence their clairn that the langitage belongs to them is justified. Imitation arises only when these speakers forget their "tribal accent" and try to speak in imitation of the accent of the original tongue.

To this end he has never thought of himself as an English writer but has let native rhythms permeate his work so that it is not one particular writer which has influenced him but rather "Literature" in general (Brown and Johnson, 176-77). Walcott's early poetry is full of echoes from canonical texts of European lierature. This is especially evident in collections like In A Green Night (1962) where the title poem refers to Mawell, The Castaway and Other Poems (1 965) and The Gzrlf(1970). In his later poetry the work of New World poets like St. John Perse from Gaudelope, AimeCesaire from Martinique and Pablo Neruda from Chile is often

acknowledged as providing poetic models. Walcott's friendship with contemporary poets like Joseph Brodsky, Seamus Heaney, Robert Lowell and Ted Hughes has also played a part in his poetic development. Through Brodsky he links himself to the Russian poet Mandelstam and through Lowell to the idea of America evinced in his later poetry.

I point out all these varied influences to counter Walcott's appropriation as an English poet in recent critical scholarship on the one hand and his dismissal on grounds of r~noriginality on the other. Like T.S. Eliot's idea of tradition and the individual talent, Walcott's formulations about a poetic tradition emphasise its continuity: '"The new poet enters a flux and withdraws, as the weaver continues the pattern, hand to hand and mouth to mouth, as the rock-pile convict passes the sledge" ("The Muse of History," henceforth "MH). This last comparison between the poet and the convict links the exercise of the poetic craft to the idea of a continuity of enforced labour.

The way Walcott perceives poetry it becomes a laborious exercise with the poet being chained to his craft much like a convict. Given the history of slavery and enforced labour in the Caribbean this seems to me a particularly apt metaphor for describing his postcolonial poetics.

Painter

Walcott's artistic development has been strongly imprinted by his father's work as a painter. Although Warwick Walcott died when Walcott was an infant, he left behind water colour paintings which, in the author's own words, "gave me a kind of impetus and a strong sense of cotltiliuity. I felt that what had been cut off in him somehow was an extension that I was continuing." For a long time Walcott veered between painting and poetry. He has continued painting over the years and has had important resationships with the painters Harry Simmons and Dunstan St. Omer, a childhood friend, to whom some of his poems are dedicated. In Chapter 9 of AnotherLSfe Walcott speaks of abandoning his painterly ambitions for poetry: I hoped that both disciplines might by painful accretion cohere and finally ignite, but T lived in a different gift, its element metaphor. Nevertheless, as Rei Terada has observed, his poetry "often considers the arts' interrelations" and his poems "quietly merge the verbal with the visual" (I 19).

The evanescence of both painting and poetry is a theme often expressed in his work. It is from his interest in the visual arts that the landscape descriptions in his poetry draw their concreteness and detail. Visual extravagance in Caribbean art and literature is Derek Walcott-1 something he defends with reference to Greek art. According to him the Greek sculptures were painted very brightly unlike the bleached out quality they're now associated with: "All the purple and gold . . . is very Caribbean, that same vigor and elation of an earlier Greece, not a later Greece . . ." (Brown and Johnson 183). With such correspondences in mind it is easy to see why Walcott chose I-lomer's Greek epic as the model for his Caribbean epic Omeros. 2.2.3

Dramatist

In "What The Twilight Says: An Overture," the essay which forms the introduction to a selection of Walcon's early plays, he describes "two pale children" watching the drama being enacted on the streets from an upstairs window. Reading this account about how these children created their "little theatre" of men made from twigs it is easy to conceive how Derek and his twin brother Roderick Walcott grew up to be the most significant Caribbean playwrights of this century. In 1950 Walcott along with Maurice Mason founded the Arts Guild of St. Lucia. When he left the island to take up a scholarship at the University of West Indies the leadership ofthe Guild was taken over by Roderick. It was in Trinidad that Walcott's plays The Sen at Dazqhin and Henri Christophe were first staged in the 1950s. In 1958 the highpoint of the celebrations to herald the inauguration of the West Indies Federation was an open air production of the epic drama written by Walcott.titledDrunzs and Co/our.v. In 1959 Walcott formed the Trinidad Theatre Workshop, one of the most influential groups working in theatre at that time. In his essays and interviews Walcott has described his twenty year struggle to form a professional theatre company and the sense of failure which he felt at its break up. The note of despondency is summed up succinctly in the statement: "In these new nations art is a luxury, and the theatre the most superfluous of amenities" ("WTS" 7). Over the years many of Walcott's plays have drawn upon folklore for source material. In the fifties and sixties the plays Ti-Jean and His Brothers and Dream on a

Monkey Mountain drew upon folk tales and legends. Versions of European classics include The Joker of SeviIle and an adaptation of Homer's Odyssey for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Walcott is an extremely prolific playwright whose plays have been performed all over the world. For many of his plays he draws upon the traditions of popular culture in the Caribbean specially the Carnival which has been called theatre on the streets. Coming from a region of the world where the theatre is all around "in the streets at lampfall in the kitchen doorway," it is no wonder that the region's most famous poet should also be its best known playwright

12.5 A NEW CARIBBEAN VOICE

Walcott lost little time in making his own contribution to Caribbean arts. His first play, Henri Christophe: A Chronicle, was written and produced in St. Lucia while he was still an undergraduate. Another piece, Henri Dernier, played on radio in 1950. He also began to publish poetry, art criticism, and essays in periodicals such as the Trinidad Guardian and Jamaica's Public Opinion. After earning his bachelor's degree in 1953, he returned to St. Lucia to teach at St. Mary's College, the high school he had attended.

By 1954 Walcott was spending substantial time in Trinidad. His plays The Sea at Dauphin and Ione premiered there in the mid-fifties, and he became deeply involved with the establishment of a resident theater project on the island. In 1957 he received a Rockefeller Foundation grant to study theater arts in New York City. There he worked with Off-Broadway directors and companies, appropriating the skills he would need to establish a repertory group in Trinidad. "The New York experience was an unhappy one for Walcott," claimed Anderson. "He felt terribly alone in the city, an alien in its racial and theatrical communities—repelled, almost, by its segregated sensibilities. Neither Broadway nor Off-Broadway seemed the right model for the kind of theatre he had envisioned for the West Indies."

Walcott returned to Trinidad and founded the Trinidad Theatre Workshop in the capital city of Port of Spain. The group performed some of Walcott's plays and others that explored the myths, rituals, and

superstitions of West Indian folk life. The workshop eventually folded, but Walcott found an audience for his plays in New York City at the Off-Broadway Public Theatre. There, in 1971, his most famous drama, Dream on Monkey Mountain, drew enthusiastic reviews and an Obie Award as best foreign play of the year.

Poetry drew more and more of the writer's energies as the 1960s began. At first he published primarily in magazines, but in 1962 his verse came to the attention of editors at the British publisher Jonathan Cape. Cape released Walcott's first major collection, In a Green Night, in 1962. The volume was well received; in fact, poet Robert Lowell was so impressed that he visited Trinidad to meet Walcott. "I remember sitting on the living-room floor while Lowell showed me some of the poems he was working on," Walcott told the New Yorker. "I was so flattered to hear this great writer asking me what I thought of his work. When he returned to New York, he called up Roger Straus and urged him to sign me on as a new writer. I've been with [publisher Farrar, Straus] ever since."

Having found a congenial publisher, Walcott turned out numerous books of verse. His work was hailed for its expressive language—"an old-fashioned love of eloquence, an Elizabethan richness of words and a penchant for complicated, formal rhymes," to quote New York Times reviewer Michiko Kakutani. Critics also commended Walcott for his brave exploration of the question of cultural ancestry. In the New York Review of Books, poet Joseph Brodsky called the Caribbean "the place discovered by Columbus, colonized by the British, and immortalized by Walcott."

In the early 1970s Walcott began to spend part of the year in the United States, teaching creative writing at universities such as Columbia, Rutgers, Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. Farrar, Straus published volumes of his poetry regularly, including The Gulf (1970), Another Life (1973), Sea Grapes (1976), The Star-Apple Kingdom (1979), The Fortunate Traveller (1981), Collected Poems (1986), The Arkansas Testament (1987), and Omeros (1990). In 1981 Walcott received a sizeable sum of money from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation—a no-strings-attached award that has come to be called the "genius grant."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Discuss various writings of Derek Walcott

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Q2. Why Derek Walcott was considered as a Caribbean voive?

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12.6 LET'S SUM UP

Born on the island of Saint Lucia, a former British colony in the West Indies, poet and playwright Derek Walcott was trained as a painter but turned to writing as a young man. He published his first poem in the local newspaper at the age of 14. Five years later, he borrowed $200 to print his first collection, 25 Poems, which he distributed on street corners. Walcott's major breakthrough came with the collection In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960 (1962), a book which celebrates the Caribbean and its history as well as investigates the scars of colonialism. Throughout a long and distinguished career, Walcott returned to those same themes of language, power, and place. His later collections include Tiepolo's Hound (2000), The Prodigal (2004), Selected Poems (2007), White Egrets (2010), and Morning, Paramin (2016). In 1992, Walcott won the Nobel Prize in Literature. The Nobel committee described his work as "a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment."

Since the 1950s Walcott divided his time between Boston, New York, and Saint Lucia. His work resonates with Western canon and Island influences, shifting between Caribbean patois and English, and often addressing his English and West Indian ancestry. According to Los Angeles Times Book Review contributor Arthur Vogelsang, "These continuing polarities shoot an electricity to each other which is questioning and beautiful and which helps form a vision altogether Caribbean and international, personal (him to you, you to him), independent, and essential for readers of contemporary literature on all the continents." Known for his technical control, erudition, and large canvases, Walcott was, according to poet and critic Sean O'Brien, "one

of the handful of poets currently at work in English who are capable of making a convincing attempt to write an epic … His work is conceived on an oceanic scale and one of its fundamental concerns is to give an account of the simultaneous unity and division created by the ocean and by human dealings with it."

Many readers and critics point to Omeros (1990), an epic poem reimagining the Trojan War as a Caribbean fishermen's fight, as Walcott's major achievement. The book is "an effort to touch every aspect of Caribbean experience," according to O'Brien who also described it as an arspoetica, concerned "with art itself—its meaning and importance and the nature of an artistic vocation." In reviewing Walcott's Selected Poems (2007), poet Glyn Maxwell ascribes Walcott's power as a poet not so much to his themes as to his ear: "The verse is constantly trembling with a sense of the body in time, the self-slung across metre, whether metre is steps, or nights, or breath, whether lines are days, or years, or tides."

Walcott was also a renowned playwright. In 1971 he won an Obie Award for his play Dream on Monkey Mountain, which the New Yorker described as "a poem in dramatic form." Walcott's plays generally treat aspects of the West Indian experience, often dealing with the socio-political and epistemological implications of post-colonialism and drawing upon various genres such as the fable, allegory, folk, and morality play. With his twin brother, he cofounded the Trinidad Theater Workshop in 1950; in 1981, while teaching at Boston University, he founded the Boston Playwrights' Theatre. He also taught at Columbia University, Yale University, Rutgers University, and Essex University in England.

In addition to his Nobel Prize, Walcott's honors included a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award, a Royal Society of Literature Award, and, in 1988, the Queen's Medal for Poetry. He was an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He died in 2017.

12.7 KEYWORDS

1. **Iconography:**the visual images and symbols used in a work of art or the study or interpretation of these.
2. **Metonymy:**the substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant, for example suit for business executive, or the turf for horse racing.
3. **Synecdochic**: a figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole or the whole for a part, the special for the general or the general for the special, as in ten sail for ten ships or a Croesus for a rich man.
4. **Trophe**: something gained or given in victory or conquest especially when preserved or mounted as a memorial.
5. **Eurocentrism** refers to a discursive tendency to interpret the histories and cultures of non-European societies from a European (or Western) perspective.

12.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

a. What is the Poetic character of Derek Walcott?
b. Describe any of his best paintings?
c. His work was influenced by whom?
d. Discuss works of Derek Walcott.

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12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 12.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 12.3

Check Your Progress Ii :

Answer 1 : Check Section 12.4

Answer 2 : Check Section 12.5

UNIT: 13LITERATURE OF DEREK WALCOTT

STRUCTURE

13.0 Objective

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Caribbean Hybrid Society And Its Relation With The Environment Nobel Laureate

13.3 Wounded Identities In Walcott's Omeros

13.4 The Awakening Of Nature And The Beginning Of The Epic

13.5 Healing Identities Through The Sacred Power Of Nature

13.6 Omeros

13.7 Let's Sum Up

13.8 Keywords

13.9 Questions For Review

13.10 Suggested Readings And References

13.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit help to learn about the Literature of Derek Walcott. Units notes down the various achievements. It gives the critical analysis of the literature work of Derek Walcott. Unit gives introduction to Omeros the famous work of Derek Walcott.

Unit helps to achieve following objective:

- **Literature work**
- **achievements of Derek Walcott**
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13.1 INTRODUCTION

Derek Walcott is a twentieth-century poet, who was born on the island of Saint Lucia, in the Lesser Antilles, on January 23, 1930. He was born a twin. His father, a civil servant who painted and wrote poetry, died when Derek and his twin brother were one year old.

Consequently,Walcott never knew his father except for the stories his family told of him. His mother was a teacher who had a love of the arts and she would often recite poetry to her children. Throughout the early stages of his life, Walcott learned of, harsh situations his family members faced, and went through a few himself.

A select few of these hardships became inspiration and material, for some of his poems. In particular, Walcott's grandmothers had lived through the era of slavery, and the topic of slavery would be something he touched on multiple times in his works. His mother was involved in leading the local Methodist church, but the family felt overshadowed by the predominantly Catholic culture of the island.. . Being raised in the Caribbean also had a significant impact on the poetry he would go on to write, as well as his life in general. Walcott's education was the spark of his career in the arts. His time at St. Mary's college, located on the very island he was raised, and the University of the West Indies proved to be inspiring for him as an artist. This passion for art lead him to move to Trinidad in 1953 to take on a job as a theatre and art critic.

His first major literary achievement would come at the age of 18, when he borrowed money from his mother and self-published 25 Poems (1948) and Epitaph for the Young: XII Cantos (1949). After living in Trinidad for about six years, Walcott established the Trinidad Theatre Workshop. It would be this complex that would manufacture a majority of his plays. After this, Walcott spent much of his time travelling the world and becoming a culturist for Caribbean literature and life. He also spent time instructing as a professor of literature at Boston University. Many view his greatest accomplishment to date as his receiving of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992.

Notes

"The English language is nobody's special property," Derek Walcott said in an interview with The Paris Review in 1985. "It is the property of the imagination: it is the property of the language itself. I have never felt inhibited in trying to write as well as the greatest English poets." In an earlier famous essay on the theater and the Caribbean, "What the Twilight Says," Walcott had expanded upon this idea of inhibition, an idea those of us who grew up amidst the chiaroscuro contradictions of colonialism know well, even when we do not have the language for it.

"Colonials," he wrote after contrasting the immense artificial lights of big cities to the dimness and rust and rot of our own towns, "we began with this malarial enervation: that nothing could ever be built among these rotting shacks, barefooted backyards and moulting shingles; that being poor, we already had the theater of our lives. In that simple schizophrenic boyhood one could lead two lives: the interior life of poetry, and the outward life of action and dialect." The twilight says much about our islands: it is beautiful yet forgettable, a transition between day and night, a space not quite one thing or the other, like the sea's phosphorescence. The twilight is a sublime contradiction, which means it is closest to describing reality—for Caribbean and cosmos alike, to be sure, but certainly for Caribbean.

I knew the twilight's language well. It was much the same in Dominica, where I grew up. We had technology, yet the idea that we would be known for it across the world seemed ludicrous; we had gained our independence from the British, yet we retained their political systems and language and even, albeit more for certain older family members, a romanticized notion of the "Mother Country" (replaced, for my generation, more with America); we created art, indeed the Caribbean as a whole had some of the world's best poets and novelists, yet few who were not artists believed we could actually create art; we were beautiful, yet almost no one in the world even seemed to know we were not the Dominican Republic, could not, indeed, differentiate Jamaica from the rest of the archipelago; if someone said he would do what Icarus did, we would gather around in a big crowd and joke and amidst the people saying he was crazy some would tell him to fly, even as many of us would not know who Icarus was or would not believe he could even get his wings off the ground, much less reach a star. We would dream, then

fail, then dream, then, then, in the silly-sad way our government makes big claims, yet can rarely fix the road's potholes for more than a month.

My mother had a book of Walcott's on a shelf, which she had told me Walcott gave her many years ago when she used to work in St. Lucia. It was his Collected Poems. In some ways, it saved me, or, better, saved me from needing saving. As a child in the 1990s, all the books I read seemed to take place in America, Europe, or in worlds that did not exist; I remember sitting on my bed one day, a tattered novel from my father's collection before me, and thinking I would need to learn the names of streets in New York or London to write a story. A book, I had been taught without anyone teaching it to me, could take place anywhere but my own island, even somewhere unreal. It was farcically naïve, yet it is hardly an uncommon story for those of us, around the world, who have grown up in countries once belonging to a European empire; we often begin growing up reading more about the art of the countries that colonized us than about our own artistic achievements, and we might even begin to think that our own nations are somehow less worthy of being written about. And if we are less worthy of a page, we seem less worthy of life.

13.2 CARIBBEAN HYBRID SOCIETY AND ITS RELATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT NOBEL LAUREATE

Derek Walcott is a prolific writer from St. Lucia, a tiny island located in the heart of the Caribbean Sea and mostly inhabited by ethnically divided groups of peoples and communities. Even though the region was firstly 'discovered' by Spanish explorers, it rapidly became the privileged stage of recurrent disputes between the imperialistic powers of England and France, which wanted to take control of its strategic military position. As Treves recounts in his West-Indian historical chronicles, St. Lucia "was held [seven times] by the English, and seven times by the French" (Treves 1928: 109), before it eventually be- came part of the British empire in 1814. European settlers transported black labour slaves from Africa to the islands and forced them to live and work in the sugar-cane plantations established all over the Caribbean colonies.

As a consequence of this historical legacy, to- day's St. Lucians are mostly individuals coming from different ethnical and social-cultural backgrounds and share the same feature of being confined in a sort of "hybrid" and continu- ously shifting "representation of identity"1. As John Thieme aptly points out, the Caribbean archipelago is the land where an interesting and overwhelming "cultural cross-pollination" takes place (Thieme 1999: 1). This aspect has been underlined not only within the domain of postcolonial literary critique but also in other areas of the humanities because the formation and the perpetuation of a heterogeneous community implies the settlement and the 'root- ing' of that same community in a shared and communal space and area.

In the light of this perspective, many critics have explored how Walcott's poetical en- deavour tries to attain a compromise bringing together different forms of identifications while engaging with the crucial questions affecting plural and various cultural groups, such as the different approaches to the burden of a colonial past or, more interestingly, the assim- ilation of languages formerly imposed as national and inclusive modes of communication.

Although the sketching of the contours of a "Caribbean identity" has proven one of the most urgent tasks critics and scholars had to investigate in the aftermath of Caribbean liter- ary success, in recent years the attention has shifted towards other meaningful peculiarities of the 'Caribbean singularity'. In particular, scholars have focused on the intimate relation Caribbean writers have with the Caribbean land. This is not only because most writers and poets are aware of the fact that the 'New World' landscape is an unavoidable subject to draw from but also because, in the domain of critical theory, environmental discourse has gained major attention as it encompasses multiple historical and literary concerns and addresses issues relating to the future of human destiny and survival.

In this sense, Caribbean authors have proven creative in promoting a parallelism be- tween the prerogatives of "defying identity" with the issues regarding the relation between human(s) and the natural environment. Finding themselves in an uncontaminated and un- known territory, the Europeans, the transported Africans and the Asian indentured labour- ers2 brought to the West Indies their plural and

various traditions capturing immediately the dissonance existing between their former natural heritage and the Antillean land. Migrating to a new territory meant also coming face to face with a new landscape and an un-familiar flora and fauna. The general perception of the first colonisers was that of an alienating and estranging region difficult to "dominate" and relate to. As an example of this attitude I want to recall the negative connotation of the title the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss gave to his collection of exotic adventures in the primordial territories of central America during the 1950s: Tristes Tropiques, the "Sad Tropics". Derek Walcott confutes this viewpoint directly in his collection of essays What the Twilight Says when he argues:

The Caribbean is looked at with elegiac pathos, a prolonged sadness to which Lé- vi-Strauss has supplied an epigraph: Tristes Tropiques. Their tristesse derives from an attitude to the Caribbean dusk, to rain, to uncontrollable vegetation […]. The mood is understandable, the melancholy as contagious as fever of a sunset, like the gold fronds of diseased coconut palms, but there is something alien and ultimately wrong in the way such a sadness, even a morbidity, is described by English, French, or some of our exiled writers. It relates to a misunderstanding of the light and the people on whom the light falls (Walcott 1998: 76).

In this passage Walcott agrees on the immediate impression the colonisers derived from the sight of the Caribbean landscape, that of a "melancholic land" governed by "un- controllable vegetation", but he wisely denounces the incapacity of the observers to under- stand its "light" and thus the "true meaning" of those territories. In a profound reasoning, the poet is challenging the western canonical environmental interpretation, suggesting the need to interpret and decode the inner and implicit symbols that same place conceals from human eyes through a different awareness and strategy. In Caribbean Discourses, ÉdouardGlissant, one of the most acute observers of Caribbean society and the first to define its intricate agglomerate of communities as creolised, shares the same thinking as Walcott when he points out that in the West-Indies:

The relationship with the land, one that is even more threatened because the com- munity is alienated from that land, becomes so fundamental in

this discourse that landscape in the work [of Caribbean writers] stops being merely decorative or supportive and emerges as a full character. Describing the landscape is not enough. The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history. Landscape is a character in this process. Its deepest meanings need to be understood (Glissant 1999: 105-106).

13.3 WOUNDED IDENTITIES IN WALCOTT'S OMEROS

The intrinsic connection Derek Walcott establishes with the Caribbean environment is easily recognisable in his mostly celebrated masterpiece, his epic Omeros. In the work, the relation the main characters entertain with the natural environment is extremely elaborate and sym- bolic. The poem recounts the stories of a multiple spectrum of identities dealing essentially with the issue of finding "their own roots".

Achille and Hector are two black fishermen vying for the love of the beautiful waitress Helen. They both come from African descendants and need to come to terms not only with their own aboriginal origins but also with the destiny the island has chosen for them. From the beginning of the poem, in fact, the landscape 'sends' signals to their troubled question- ing of life, inciting them to take the way of the blue sea. In the following section of the article we will analyse the beginning of the poem, where Walcott depicts a highly symbolic ritual the Caribbean seamen carry out in order to establish an indissoluble relationship with the land, i.e. the act of felling the trees so to "transform" them into canoes. This simple act takes on a significant meaning because in doing so the sailors seal off a reciprocal pact with nature, while turning away from it could lead to regretful consequences. This happens particularly to the character of Hector when he decides to abandon sea-life in order to "gain more money" and ends up accepting a job as a taxi driver, working for the exploitative and environ- mentally damaging industry of tourism. In this way the character corrupts not only his soul but also the intimate connection he had created with the land and so, towards the end of the epic, he perishes in a car accident.

Another important character Walcott decided to include in his work is the ambivalent figure of the crippled Philoctete.

In direct contrast to his classical counterpart though, the Walcottian protagonist is not a marginalised figure, isolated from the society that surrounds him, but embodies the true essence of that same community and world. Philoctete is an outcast suffering from a symbolic "wound" he received from a "rusted anchor". The bruise epitomises the agonies and injustices Caribbean people had to endure under colonial oppression and subjugation. It is only through the help of Ma Kilman, an enigmatic and eccentricobeah priestess4, that Philoctete will be able to cure his sore and finally be able to rejoice in the festivities of the island. Getting rid of the wound signifies for the character the freeing of himself from the burden of collective and historical pain affecting the "identity" of his fellow compatriots. As I will go on to present in the second passage I have chosen to analyse in this article, the most interesting event in Philoctete's story concerns the rather peculiar quest Ma Kilman has to undertake to find the healing ingredients for his cure. The tenant of the symbolic "No Pain Café" will have to recover her instinctual and natural memory in order to read the "language of nature", the only bearer of the truth, capable of helping the recovery of West-Indian integrity and wholeness. As Jahan Ramazani has rightly pointed out in one of his articles on WalcottianOmeros:

[Philoctete's scar is] a mysteriously unhealed wound that reflects the condition of the land and indeed of the entire region. Like the Fisher King in T. S. Eliot's Waste Land, Philoctete is a synecdochic figure for a general loss, injury, and impotence that must be healed for the (is)lands to be set in order. Like many vegetation deities, Philoctete requires the ministration of a female counterpart to be healed: the obeah woman or sibyl Ma Kilman (Ramazani 1997: 410).

These two examples clearly show how Caribbean writing and the work of Derek Walcott in particular are closely embedded within a literary discourse that pays significant attention to the issues concerning the natural and the environmental awareness and its desirable preservation. Therefore, when looking for a coherent theoretical framework for the analysis of these two episodes, my choice naturally fell on the analytical features and stylistic tools provided within the field of 'ecolinguistics'.

Specifically, I believe that Walcottian verses are compelling illustrations of what Arran Stibbe defines as "beneficial discourses",

i.e. "discourses that convey ideologies which can actively encourage people to protect the systems that support life" (Stibbe 2015: 30). In his comprehensive study dealing with stories that promote critical attentiveness towards the protection of biological and bioethical diversity, Stibbe highlights important contributions coming from the study of other distinctive scholars from this research area, as in the following extract:

Traditional and indigenous cultures around the world provide a source for searching for beneficial discourses: after all, there are cultures which have survived for thou- sands of years without destroying the ecosystems that they depend on for their survival (Chawla 2001: 115).

Aboriginal communities did not believe in the human possession of the land and most of the groups thought that the natural elements and symbols were representative of a powerful and transcendental spiritual force.

Within the field of cultural studies, another important scholar who emphasises the hu- man endeavour in re-establishing a connection with the natural world is the Jewish-American anthropologist and social activist Riane Eisler5. In one of her works entitled The Power of Partnership (Eisler: 2002), she has focused on seven complementary ways through which humanity could attain a transformative (r)evolution in order to reject the violent un-ethical dominator paradigm it is accustomed to perpetrate not only in relation with the other(s) but also within itself and towards the non-human world. According to Eisler, the power of communal and beneficial feeling of partnership will lead our societies to find a new ethical value, respectful of difference(s), peaceful and sustainable, a voice that could 'echo' the link sustaining the ecological network of life.

While western dominator cultural paradigms have tended to consider 'nature' either as a "locus amoenus" or, worse, as an element to be exploited in favour of economic progress, postcolonial cultures and writers have tried to promote a different, protective attitude towards the space they live in, as they recognise not only its life-sustaining

significance but also its invaluable importance as a reassuring place for "transplanted" and culturally diverse individuals.

It is interesting to note, in fact, how in western literary criticism the different approach undertaken by these new liminal literatures6 has been recognised as an "ecocritic of the Glob- al South", meaning in particular "the tendency to interpret the role of ecology in the light of a convergence between the history of humanity and that of the environment, attenuating in this way reciprocal conflicts" (Scaffai 2017: 69-70, my translation).

13.4 THE AWAKENING OF NATURE AND THE BEGINNING OF THE EPIC

This section explores the opening scene of the Walcottian epic Omeros, not only because it strikingly represents the first imaginative drawing of the Caribbean setting, but also be- cause it exemplifies the meaningful features decipherable from Walcottian ideological writ- ing, being in particular the representation of a drifting and unstable conception of 'identity':

This is how, one sunrise, we cut down them canoes.
Philoctete smiles for the tourists, who try taking
his soul with their cameras. Once wind bring the news
to the laurier-cannelles, their leaves start shaking the minute the axe of sunlight hit the cedars, because they could see the axes in our own eyes.
Wind lift the ferns. They sound like the sea that feed us fishermen all our life, and the ferns nodded "Yes,
the trees have to die" […] (Walcott 2008: 12).

Even if the act of 'cutting the trees' is here represented as a sacred ritual foreground- ing its urgent and practical need for human survival, in these very first lines the reader is struck by the anthropomorphised and sensible 'consciousness' of the vegetation. In most of Walcottian writings the natural environment has the capacity of feeling, expressing and remembering much more acutely then the humans. Trees are the oldest inhabitants of the region; they were there before the arrival of the aboriginal tribes, they have witnessed dis- putes, wars and bloodshed and thus they represent the true custodians of the land. They are strongly

linked with that ‘particular space’, that edge of the world in which people have been ‘transplanted’ and forced to migrate to.

Significant also is Walcott’s choice to begin his epic with the rising of the day. This is, in fact, the moment of the “ordinary” (i.e. daily life) the poet prefers while working and com-posing. As he pointed out in several interviews, the awakening of living nature corresponds to that rare moment, that surprising and inexplicable awe, through which humans are able to experience a profound connection with the world they inhabit. As Barnard Don recalls, in “his Nobel Prize acceptance address, The Antilles, [Walcott] said”:

There is a force of exultation, a celebration of luck, when a writer finds himself a witness to the early morning of a culture that is defying itself, branch by branch, leaf by leaf, in that self-defying dawn, which is why, especially at the edge of the sea, it is good to make a ritual of sunrise. Then the noun, the ‘Antilles’ ripples like brightening water, and the sound of leaves, palm fronds and birds are the sound of fresh dialect, the native tongue (Walcott quoted in Barnard 2014: 82).

Moreover, as we can discern from the beginning of his epic, Walcott does not abandon the common language of his people (i.e. the French Creole) to define and name the natural elements of his story. While the wind brings the news – of the cutting – to other plants, the poet records the laurier-cannelles7 frightening reaction. This is one of many specific West-In- dian plants Walcott does not neglect to describe and talk about throughout his entire literary production. As subjective and independent actors, the natural elements have the right to say what they think and even take irreversible choices: “Yes, the trees have to die”.

In presenting the setting of his epic Walcott also promptly introduces one of the key figures of his mythical story, the ‘wounded Philoctete’, while he is having a conversation with some tourists:

For some extra silver, under a sea-almond, he [Philoctete] shows them a scar made by a rusted anchor, rolling down one trouser-leg up with the rising moan of a conch. It has puckered like the corolla of a sea-urchin. He does not explain its cure. “It have some things” – he smiles – “worth more than a dollar”.

He has left it to a garrulous waterfall

to pour out his secret down La Sorcière, since the tall laurels fell, for the ground-dove's mating call to pass on its note to the blue, tacit mountains whose talkative brooks, carrying it to the sea, turn into idle pools where the clear minnows shoot and an egret stalks the reeds with one rusted cry as it stabs and stabs the mud with one lifting foot.

Then silence is sawn in half by a dragonflyas eels sign their names along the clear bottom-sand, when the sunrise brightens the river's memoryand waves of huge ferns are nodding to the sea's sound. […] an iguana hears the axes, clouding each lensover its lost name, when the hunched island was called "Iounalao", "Where the iguana is found" […] (Walcott 2008: 12-14).

Philoctete's psychological mark is described through an evocative metaphorical lan- guage that bonds it together with images coming from the Caribbean Sea: the wound looks like the "corolla / of a sea-urchin". The symbolic imagery continues in the recalling of different aquatic elements: the "garrulous waterfall", the "talkative brooks" and the "idle pools". These ever-flowing elements are not simple natural phenomena but they epitomise the motifs for Caribbean collective redemption: Philoctete, and all the community he stands for, will be finally freed from their curse after having accepted their 'true identity' and after being re-baptised through a cleansing bath. Another interesting and meaningful interpretation of this passage has been given by Barnard when he argues that these watery metaphors:

[…] are more than metaphor. They also recall the West African/Caribbean spirits of nature, particularly MamiWata or MamanDlo, the female spirit who hides in a wa- terfall and protects the rivers and forests against the abuse of men. She is seen as both the cause of and only cure for sickness (Barnard 2014: 83).

The island's landscape, as much as the animal world living on it, are direct witnesses of Caribbean human agonies. Through its animistic cries and movements, the environment is able to replicate the painful amnesia that has prevented the immediate healing of the people. The land reflects the problems of the human world: the iguana has forgotten its primordial aboriginal name while the egret tries to walk through an intricate and muddy area which prevents it from feeling stable and balanced.

A sense of precariousness pervades the entire scene: the flight of a light-weighted drag- onfly breaks the dormant tranquillity of the forest. Everything contributes to the replication of the never-ending fluctuation and unsteadiness of the "Caribbean reality". The animal and the human worlds are tightly associated in the impermanence of their precarious existences while, at the same time, they are linked in the fight for establishing roots and determining their inevitable presence.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Discuss the lieraray work of Derek Walcott.

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Q2. Share the analysis aspects of Omeros.

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13.5 HEALING IDENTITIES THROUGH THE SACRED POWER OF NATURE

The second passage of the epic we have decided to analyse relates to the moment in which the obeah priestess Ma Kilman leaves for a quest through the Caribbean forest in order to find the curative ingredients for Philoctete's wound. This occurs towards the end of the epic when any hope of recovery seems lost. Following the path marked by the Antillean ants, the obeah priestess finally uncovers the curative root or herb: an African sea-swift had carried its seed centuries ago while crossing the ocean. It is through a symbolical and holistic re-connection with the natural world that the priestess accomplishes her spiritual task:

The wild, wire-haired, and generously featured apotheosis of the caverned prophetess began. Ma Kilman unpinned the black, red-berried straw-hat with its false beads, lifted the pressof the henna wig, made of horsehair, from the mark on her forehead […]

[…]. Her hair sprung free as the moss. Ants scurried through the wiry curls, barring, then passing each other the same message with scribbling fingers and forehead touching forehead. Ma Kilman bent hers forward,

and as her lips moved the ants, her mossed skull heard the ants talking the language of her great-grandmother, the gossip of a distant market, and she understood,the way we follow our thoughts without any language, why the ants sent her this message to come to the wood where the wound of the flower, its gangrene, its rage festering for centuries, reeked with corrupted blood,seeped the pustular drops instead of sunlit dew into the skull, the brain of the earth, in the mind ashamed of its flesh […] (Walcott 2008: 412-414).

In order to recover the powerful union connecting humanity to the environment, Ma Kilman has to undress and take off her fake ornaments. The ceremony could be read as a meaningful dropping of constructed values of 'being', a sort of 'decolonisation' of the body8: the priestess needs to retrieve her primordial and uncorrupted 'form' to become 'part of the land'. The animal world finally recognises her as an enlightening source of knowledge and as a prophetess of the truth. The ants are not afraid to run over her, they feel her ancestral power and so they decide to unveil the secret lingering over the herb. The flower has been bleeding "for centuries", wounded in its animistic living lymph. It has experienced the "cor- ruption" and the transformation of the land and shared the destiny of transported African people. The flower has "seeped […] pustular drops instead of sunlit dew".

The relation connecting the human and the natural world is here clearly and emphat- ically displayed: the flower and the communities transplanted to this "edge of the world" are intrinsically interfacing. The 'humanised' land is symbolically "ashamed of its flesh" as much as its living inhabitants. As Walcott points out in much of his critique:

History is there, in Antillean geography, in the vegetation itself. The sea sighs with the drowned from the Middle Passage, the butchery of its aborigines, Carib and Aruac and Taino, bleeds in the scarlet of the immortelle, and even the actions of surf on sand cannot erase the African memory (Walcott 1998: 81).

Having discerned the causes preventing Philoctete's recovery from the unhealed wound, the obeah priestess Ma Kilman calls on the power of nature to help her remember the atrocities of Caribbean history. It is only through redemption that her community will be able to unchain itself from the burden of European tormented subjugation. Although he has

always professed the need for a “collective amnesia” in regard to colonial atrocities and their harmful consequences, Walcott is here disclosing his psychologically repressed feel- ings and agonies:

[…]. She [Ma Kilman] rubbed dirt in her hair, she prayed in the language of the ants and her grandmother, to lift the sore from its roots in Philoctete’s rotting shin, from the flower on his shin-blade, puckering inwards; she scraped the earth with her nails, and the sun put the clouds to its ears as her screech reeled backwards to its beginning, from the black original cave

of the sibyl’s mouth, her howl made the emerald lizardlift one clawed leg, remembering the sound. Philoctete shook himself up from the bed of his grave,and felt the pain draining, as surf-flower sink through sand (Walcott 2008: 414).

The mystical and redeeming ritual has been accomplished. Through the help and the guidance of ‘nature’, the Sibyl has initiated the journey for communal and individual re- covery. The pain has been drained and transferred from the entrails of Caribbean land to “Philoctete’s rotting shin”. The union of once allied spiritual entities (the human and the environment) has been recovered and restored.

The ultimate task will be the washing off from Philoctete’s shin the “shame” of his people. Having returned from the woods with the needed ingredients, including the seed of the “corrupted” flower, Ma Kilman prepares in an emblematic oval cauldron (that recalls the shape of a woman’s womb) the redemptive and healing bath. Philoctete is immersed and, once again, while using a powerful metaphor that connects the prepared concoction to the beneficial washing of the Caribbean Sea, Walcott finally unchains Philoctete (and with him, allegorically, all his community) from the weight of his ‘hybrid identity’ and from his intricate relationship with the colonial past.

13.6 OMEROS

Walcott's epic book-length poem Omeros was published in 1990 to critical acclaim. The poem very loosely echoes and references Homer and some of his major characters from The Iliad. Some of the poem's major characters include the island fishermen Achille and Hector, the

retired English officer Major Plunkett and his wife Maud, the housemaid Helen, the blind man Seven Seas (who symbolically represents Homer), and the author himself.

Although the main narrative of the poem takes place on the island of St. Lucia, where Walcott was born and raised, Walcott also includes scenes from Brookline, Massachusetts (where Walcott was living and teaching at the time of the poem's composition), and the character Achille imagines a voyage from Africa onto a slave ship that is headed for the Americas; also, in Book Five of the poem, Walcott narrates some of his travel experiences in a variety of cities around the world, including Lisbon, London, Dublin, Rome, and Toronto.

Composed in a variation on terzarima, the work explores the themes that run throughout Walcott's oeuvre: the beauty of the islands, the colonial burden, the fragmentation of Caribbean identity, and the role of the poet in a post-colonial world.

Nobel Prize in Literature

Derek Walcott was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992, two years after publishing the epic poem "Omeros." He was known for writing about "the harsh legacy of colonialism and the complexities of living and writing in two cultural worlds." His poetic voice reflected a blend of his ear for the English language and his sense of his own people. Stephen Breslow explained that he and the Swedish Academy chose Derek Walcott for the Nobel Laureate in Literature because his work had "a strong regional voice that transcends its topical locality, through the depth and breadth of its poetic resonance and through its global human implication." It was Walcott's ability to be more than just "exotic" that brought his work critical attention. Breslow explains that "Walcott has merged a profound, rhapsodic reverie upon his remote birthplace – its people, its landscape, and its history – with the central, classical tradition of Western civilization." This ability shows the importance of multiculturalism and literary mastery to the Swedish Academy. Walcott's works represent how different cultures can enrich one another to produce even more compelling works.

In his Nobel acceptance speech, Walcott describes life on Antilles and what it means to discover identity. He describes all of the "broken fragments" of his "diasporic" identity. People need books, he says, but they are not enough to encompass all that a culture is. Walcott says that "the visible poetry of the Antilles, then. [is] Survival" because "all of the Antilles, every island, is an effort of memory; every mind, every racial biography culminating in amnesia and fog." He encompasses the diasporic identity found in Caribbean Literature by looking at how insignificant he feels because he cannot, alone, fully bring together a cultural identity.

Criticism and praise

Walcott's work has received praise from major poets including Robert Graves, who wrote that Walcott "handles English with a closer understanding of its inner magic than most, if not any, of his contemporaries",[49] and Joseph Brodsky, who praised Walcott's work, writing: "For almost forty years his throbbing and relentless lines kept arriving in the English language like tidal waves, coagulating into an archipelago of poems without which the map of modern literature would effectively match wallpaper. He gives us more than himself or 'a world'; he gives us a sense of infinity embodied in the language." Walcott noted that he, Brodsky, and the Irish poet Seamus Heaney, who all taught in the United States, were a band of poets "outside the American experience".

The poetry critic William Logan critiqued Walcott's work in a New York Times book review of Walcott's Selected Poems. While he praised Walcott's writing in Sea Grapes and The Arkansas Testament, Logan had mostly negative things to say about Walcott's poetry, calling Omeros "clumsy" and Another Life "pretentious." He concluded with "No living poet has written verse more delicately rendered or distinguished than Walcott, though few individual poems seem destined to be remembered."

Most reviews of Walcott's work are more positive. For instance, in The New Yorker review of The Poetry of Derek Walcott, Adam Kirsch had high praise for Walcott's oeuvre, describing his style in the following manner:

By combining the grammar of vision with the freedom of metaphor, Walcott produces a beautiful style that is also a philosophical style. People perceive the world on dual channels, Walcott's verse suggests, through the senses and through the mind, and each is constantly seeping into the other. The result is a state of perpetual magical thinking, a kind of Alice in Wonderland world where concepts have bodies and landscapes are always liable to get up and start talking.

Kirsch calls Another Life Walcott's "first major peak" and analyzes the painterly qualities of Walcott's imagery from his earliest work through to later books like Tiepolo's Hound. He also explores the post-colonial politics in Walcott's work, calling him "the postcolonial writer par excellence". Kirsch calls the early poem "A Far Cry from Africa" a turning point in Walcott's development as a poet. Like Logan, Kirsch is critical of Omeros, which he believes Walcott fails to successfully sustain over its entirety. Although Omeros is the volume of Walcott's that usually receives the most critical praise, Kirsch believes Midsummer to be his best book.

His poetry, as spoken performance, appears briefly in the sampled sounds in the music album of the group Dreadzone. Their track entitled "Captain Dread" from the album Second Light incorporates the fourth verse of Walcott's 1990 poem "The Schooner Flight".

In 2013 Dutch filmmaker Ida Does released Poetry is an Island, a feature documentary film about Walcott's life and the ever-present influence of his birthplace of St Lucia.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Discuss the various accolades received by Derek Walcott

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Q2. Give brief summary of Omeros.

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……**.....**

13.7 LET'S SUM UP

Derek Walcott (1930-) published his first poem at the age of just 14 in a local paper that was circulated on the Caribbean island of his birth, Saint Lucia. This island falls within the Windward Islands and, as an ex-British colony, is part of the Anglophone Carribbean. Walcott's hereditary make-up reflects these complex historical pasts - he had two white grandfathers and two black grandmothers, and he is subsequently of both African and European descent. Walcott's father, Warwick, was well-versed in English literature and was himself an artist - a watercolour painter. This adoption of a European cultural heritage, alongside his African ancestry, means that the creolized identity pervasive in the Caribbean becomes one of Walcott's central concerns. Both his poetry and plays, written almost completely in English, though with some French scattered throughout, interrogate these complexities.

At the age of just 19 Walcott self-published two collections of poems, 25 Poems (1948) and Epitaph for the Young: XII Cantos (1949), and they both excapsulate two more key thematic strands of Walcott's later work: his methodist and distinctly spiritual background, and his engagement with English modernist poets such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound - indeed, Walcott would go on to win the T.S. Eliot Prize for his poetry collection, White Egrets (2010), in 2011. Walcott's first international fame came, however, with the publication in 1962 of his collection In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960, which included his perhaps mostly widely read poem, 'Ruins of a Great House'. This poem configures brilliantly the contradiction that runs through Walcott's oeuvre, a contradiction interrogated by many other, now canonical, postcolonial authors: the dilemma of producing severe critiques of British imperialism and the horrors that went hand in hand with colonialism, whilst also seeking affiliation with, and a position within, the strong literary cultures that originate there. For Walcott, in the poem as in much of his other work, the answer to this contradiction lies in the creation of new hybridized identities that are rooted in the soil of Caribbean islands and the abundance of water (with its connotations of redemption and 'washing away') that moves between them.

As a playwright, Walcott came to international notice just a few years later when his drama, Dream on Monkey Mountain (1970), appeared on NBC-TV in North America in the same year of its publication, winning an Obie Award for 'Best Foreign Play' - a year after the play's appearance, the British government gave Walcott an OBE for his literary work. However, it was with the publication of Omeros in 1990 that Walcott's prowess was solidified on the international stage. The epic poem once again shows influence by a European literary tradition as it loosely rewrites the Homeric epics ('Omeros' is Homer in Greek). However, the action is set on Walcott's home island of Saint Lucia, narrating the history of colonialism depicting daily life on the island. In Omeros, Walcott encapsulates what is one of the central tenets of his life's work: the appropriation of the English language by the post-colonial world. For a summary of Walcott's achievements and their importance for post/colonial writing, we need look no further than The Nobel Foundation, who awarded him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992 'for a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of multicultural commitment.'

13.8 KEYWORDS

1. **Imperialism:**A political strategy of extending a power and influence through diplomacy or force.

2. **Encroachment**: An infringement upon others; slowly displacing the space, traditions or culture that belongs to another.

3. **Acculturation**: The processes of a member of one culture assuming the attributes or social patterns of a different culture.

4. **Subservience**: A state in which a person or culture is conditioned to unquestioningly obey the orders of another.

13.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- In what ways does Walcott use epic conventions?
- Why does Walcott latch on to Homer and his work for the basis of this poem? ...

- What role does nature play in the poem?
- What is the role of the narrator-poet in Omeros?

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13.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 13.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 13.4

Check Your Progress Ii :

Answer 1 : Check Section 13.5

Answer 2 : Check Section 13.6

UNIT: 14 DEREK WALCOTT- PANTOMIME

STRUCTURE

14.0 Objective

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Derek Walcott Writing Back To The Centre In His Play Pantomime.

14.3 Summary

14.4 Character

14.5 Theme Of The Play

14.6 Analysis

14.7 Let's Sum Up

14.8 Keywords

14.9 Questions For Review

14.10 Suggested Readings And References

14.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit help to analyse and summary of Pantomime by Derek Walcott. This unit helps to understand various characters of the play. Unit provides the theme of the play along with its background. Units gives insight in the writings of Derek Walcott.

Unit helps to achieve following objective:

- **Pantomime: Summary and analysis**
- **Theme of the play**
- **Characters of the play**

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1978, Derek Walcott wrote Pantomime within two days, after the ideas for the play had been fermenting for some time. The themes and elements of the play are closely linked with his biography. Born in St Lucia in 1930, he grew up between two worlds: While his grandfathers were white, his grandmothers were black. His father died when Walcott was one year old. His mother, a respected teacher of Shakespeare and acting, fostered his interest in writing. At the age of 14, he published his first poem, and at 16, he self-published a collection of poems and wrote five plays. Growing up in Castries, the capital of St Lucia, he was exposed to a Europeanized culture, whereas the countryside was dominated by Afro-Caribbean folk customs and traditions. This discrepancy between the two cultures is evident in many of his works, including Pantomime.

Subsequently, a major theme that runs throughout Walcott's works is his search for identity. Since his early childhood, he had been experiencing the duality of old Caribbean culture and new Western traditions in all the Caribbean countries he visited. Moreover, he experienced similar conflicts in language and religion, which led to a sense of confusion and helplessness. Later, however, he became more optimistic and a strong advocate for multiculturalism. This spark of hope shines through at the end of Pantomime when the protagonists start to collaborate and achieve unity through art. Walcott was fascinated by explorers such as Christopher Columbus and James Cook, who discovered the part of the world in which he was born. He has a passion for Robinson Crusoe, which he considers an archetype: After writing the long poem "Crusoe's Island" in 1965, he reuses the subject matter in Pantomime.

In an interview with The Guardian in 2012, Walcott remarks that the tourist industry keeps the racial relationships of the pre-colonial era alive by walking on a fine line between service-mindedness and slavery for the sake of profit. In this regard, even though published roughly four decades ago, Pantomime is still highly relevant.

14.2 DEREK WALCOTT WRITING BACK TO THE CENTRE IN HIS PLAY PANTOMIME.

Once upon a time the British Empire controlled colonized territories spanning the entire Caribbean. As their history books will tell it, they came to educate the uncivilized people and properly manage their resources. They brought with them their own way of life, their own language and their own means of redemption also known as Christianity. The bestowed these wonders upon the natives and so the story went. Then along came the Post-colonial theorists who realized that the only voice being heard was that of the colonizer. Theorists since then have exploded with post-colonial ideologies which have debunked the once irrefutable books in an attempt to highlight the injustice the colonized people endured. Salman Rushdie being one of these theorists coined the phrase: "The Empire writes back to the centre". Walcott's play is an embodiment of this phrase as he creates a counter colonial discourse writing back to one of the canonical texts: Robinson Crusoe. Let it be known that contrary to popular belief Walcott does not attempt to rewrite Defoe's book but rather writes back to it as he creates a play which reverses the roles of the stereotypical 'black' man and 'white' man or as Edward Said would term them: the orient and the occident. (Said). The presentation of these two men of polar ethnic backgrounds allows Walcott to examine the influences of colonization on the Caribbean identity, since Walcott himself is a byproduct of this cultural 'cookup', he projects his personal opinions of identity onto the play. Walcott utilizes the play within the play to dramatize the formation of a Caribbean identity simultaneously questioning the authority of Defoe's sole narrator in Robinson Crusoe. This post-colonial play not only reverses the roles of the colonizer and the colonized, but Walcott also grants a voice to both entities allowing the subaltern to speak as GayatriSpivak's theory on the subaltern would suggest. By allowing the presupposed subservient entity to speak, Walcott contradicts decades of colonial writings in which the colonial other has always been silenced, this action in itself is a rewriting of history as Walcott allows history to be told from a vastly different perspective.

Therefore the element of intertextuality is exceeding important in writing back to the centre as it is a means of creating a counter colonial discourse. The use of Robinson Crusoe in Pantomime provides the reader with a point of reference for the post-colonial arguments that are

presented by Walcott. In the play, the process of writing back is primarily achieved by the role reversals, wherein Jackson becomes a 'black' Crusoe and Harry Trewe a 'white' Friday. This role reversals creates a startling paradigm shift in an anti-foundational manner as it explicitly undermines decades of colonial discourse. Even though it is Harry Trewe who suggests the idea of the pantomime his mind changes as this seemingly simple reversal creates a doubt in the mind of this supposed liberal. As Jackson dramatizes his role of colonizer by renaming objects, attempting to teach a new language to 'Friday' who he then renames Thursday, Mr. Trewe begins to withdraw from the idea ironically stating:

All right, so it's Thursday. He comes across this naked cannibal called Thursday you know. And then look at what would happen. He would have to start o … well, he'd have to, sorry… This cannibal, who is Christian, would have to be taught… I mean… he'd have to be taught by this- African… that everything was wrong, that he was doing… I mean, for nearly two thousand years… was wrong. Barbarous, I mean, you know. And Crusoe would then have to teach him things like, you know, about Africa, his gods, patamba, and so on… and it would get very, very complicated […]. (Walcott 141)

Walcott utilizes Harry's speech to provide and explanation of the ramifications of the juxtaposition between the two ideologies surrounding the role reversals. The aversion Mr. Trewe dramatizes in his speech is actually Walcott highlighting the aversion the Caribbean identity has experienced through the process of colonization during which their culture was stripped away and another man's culture was forced upon them. The speech is especially ironic because Mr. Trewe the liberal delivers it, the man who has supposedly acknowledged the injustices of colonization is unable to simply play a role in which he would be representative of the colonial other. Gilbert and Tompkins commenting on the issue of role reversals state: "The staged postcolonial body is one of the most malleable and resonant vehicles for subverting and problematizing the roles of identity, subjectivity, and corporeality that colonialism has assigned to the colonized subject." (Gilbert and Tompkins 253). Walcott's technique of role reversals as a means of writing back to the centre echoes the ideologies of the undermining of

colonial discourse through the dramatization of the juxtaposed characters of Crusoe and Friday.

His play creates a sense of displacement as it destabilizes the sole voice of Crusoe's narrator, writing back to the text through the use of local theatre traditions and the incorporation of prominent elements of the Caribbean and snippets of England. Calypso is especially important to the Caribbean as calypsonians utilize their art to express their views on social and political aspects of their country. Calypso includes ideologies reaching from commentaries on the color of one's skin to a satire on society Jackaman asserts "Calypso, which involves the spontaneous creation of witty lyrics, is an influential medium in subverting the established discourse in the Caribbean as it articulates political and social commentary directly to alive audience" (Jackaman, 139). Jackaman's comment on the use of calypso is on par with Walcott's incorporation of this element in his play, this is observed in the dramatization of the subversion of colonial discourse resonating from Jackson's calypsos. Jeyifo commenting on the incorporation of these elements elaborates:

The performance idioms of the English music hall and the Trinidadian calypsonian carnival become vehicles of thorough going textual revisions of Defoe's classic novel and deconstructive assault on a vast array of cultural systems and codes which have defined the encounter of the colonizer and the colonized (Jeyifo 115)

Jeyifo highlights the Walcott's use of the familiar as a method of deconstructing and writing back to the canonical text by including aspects of the Caribbean that were never acknowledged. Jackson's calypso first highlights the nature of colonial discourse as he sings:

I want to tell you 'bout Robinson Crusoe.
He tell Friday, when I do so, do so.
Whatever I do, you must do like me,
He make Friday a Good Friday Bohbolee. (Walcott 142)

Jackson's witty lyrics provides a brief, relatively euphemistic account of history as he summarizes Defoe's book in four short lines in an attempt to portray the master-slave relationship. Then, Walcott writes back to Defoe in the following verse of the song creating a role reversal upsetting the balance of history:

Now that was the first example of slavery,

'Cause I am still Friday and you ain't me,
Now Crusoe he was this Christian and all,
Friday, his slave, was a cannibal,
But one day things bound to go in reverse,
With Crusoe the slave and Friday the Boss. (Walcott 142)

Jackson's second verse highlights the injustices the colonized people faced as they were ruled over by the colonizer. Jackson continues in this manner exposing the fact that even in a post-colonial era, there is still a racial imbalance which is why he believes that even though slavery is over, he is still placed in the position of the subservient entity in the society as the binary concept of black and white still permeated the populous. However, Jackson proceeds in a revolutionary manner asserting that it is simply a matter of time before the positions are reversed.

Ultimately the play, and the play within the play end in a promising way. Jackson whilst enacting the pantomime allows Harry to overcome the subconscious racial prejudices he harbored. The catharsis that occurs heals both characters as Harry is able to overcome the resentment for his wife along with the loss of his son, and Jackson gains respect from the man who viewed him as just another colonial other. The play ends with the men represented as equals. This reinforces Walcott's play as a literary work writing back to the centre as it does not simply do away with a character. Throughout the play Walcott provides counter arguments for the colonial ideologies represented in Robinson Crusoe by dramatizing a counter colonial discourse in his play Pantomime as he writes back to the center, representing the culture of the once colonized Caribbean.

14.3 SUMMARY

In the opening lines of Pantomime, Harry Trewe introduces an adaptation of Robinson Crusoe. Trewe is an Englishman who came to Tobago to run a hotel where this play is set. He is working on a dance routine, which he hopes will entertain his guests when the hotel opens. However, he struggles with the task and is dissatisfied with his performance.

While Trewe is still contemplating his play, Jackson, his waiter, would like to serve breakfast. Jackson reminds Trewe that instead of rehearsing the play, he should focus on renovating the hotel first, as the facilities are run down. Instead of acknowledging Jackson's ideas, Trewe playfully pretends to jump off the ledge and commit suicide, eventually dismissing the idea because it would be too much work, as the items needed for a suicide note are all broken. Jackson remarks that even if Trewe committed suicide, the authorities would blame him as the black man instead.

Trewe reveals that he has been suffering from insomnia, trying to find out how his guests could be entertained as promised in the ads. He has been working on an adaptation of Robinson Crusoe, which he presents to Jackson. The waiter, however, does not want to play a role in the production, saying his days as a performer are over. He also disapproves of the parrot participating, as he hates the bird for blurting out racial slurs.

In an attempt to create a light, satirical piece, Trewe then suggests reversing the roles, with Jackson playing the part of the master. He even takes off his clothes to get into the role of Friday, but Jackson urges him to remember his manners, even if there are no guests around yet. When Trewe continues the humiliating act, Jackson loses his temper and reminds his boss that he is a grown man, threatening to quit because of his unprofessional behavior.

Eventually, Trewe uses his superior position to force Jackson to listen to his proposal, while he appeals to the brilliant Calypso artist that he once was. Jackson's initial reaction is dismissive, as he realizes the implications of the role reversal. While Trewe tries to keep it light, Jackson knows that it would become a serious play about racial discrimination, the master-slave relationship, and the negative effects of imperialism. He starts to portray Robinson Crusoe as a violent man forcing his language and beliefs onto Friday, played by Trewe. He also points out that immigrants from the colonies are now frightening the British. When he starts to improvise a calypso song, Trewe sees the potential of it and wants to record it. Jackson, however, takes this opportunity to force his ideas for the play onto Trewe. He makes Treweplay a seagull, which Trewe finds humiliating and therefore wants

to stop the rehearsal. Jackson ignores him and continues with his interpretation of the play, accusing him of racial prejudice and breaking his word: After all, Trewe has told Jackson to get into his part. Jackson explicitly compares their play with the history of imperialism and refuses to commit only partly, as the British have done in Tobago.

Trewe realizes that the play would be inappropriate as a light form of night entertainment. Again, he wants to stop the rehearsal because he feels uncomfortable with the role reversal, which offends Jackson because clearly, Trewe does not respect him as equal. At the end of Act I, Jackson goes back to fixing a table, not wanting Trewe to interrupt or help him.

Act II starts with Jackson making excessive noise while doing his work, which Trewe considers vindictive. Even though Trewe is annoyed by Jackson's hammering, he apologizes for having hurt his feelings earlier. He blames his ideas on the heat and loneliness, so Jackson suggests going back to England if he finds Tobago boring. Trewe tells him the story of how he ended up at this hotel, saying that all his savings are tied to it after he came to Tobago to forget his wife and son. Jackson then makes it his mission to counsel Trewe and restore his mental health. Both continue to collaborate on their adaptation of Robinson Crusoe. While Trewe's acting is influenced by music hall and Romanticism, Jackson complements it with Calypso ideas and makes sure it stays realistic. For example, Jackson reminds Trewe that instead of thinking about his wife and son, Robinson Crusoe's first thoughts would probably be about killing a goat for food and clothes.When Jackson is asking for a five-minute bathroom break, Trewe tells him to use his private bathroom instead of the dirty staff toilet to save time. Jackson declines the offer, indicating that the differences between black and white, and master and slave, are still too significant, so he would not feel equal and therefore comfortable using Trewe's toilet. He takes the opportunity to compare this situation to the general tendency of the British to grant independence to colonies too quickly, which leaves political, social and economic turmoil behind.

On the way back Jackson finally kills the parrot, which upsets Trewe so much that he insults Jackson, who then goes back to playing a remorseful slave. When both have calmed down, they have a drink. Trewe toasts to

his wife, which Jackson feels is inappropriate because she is not with them. Therefore, the waiter takes her photo and, using it as a mask, forces Trewe to confront his past and all the negative feelings against his wife. It turns out that Trewe wants to play Robinson Crusoe because he is envious of his wife's success as an actress and tries to prove he is better than her. He also accuses her of killing his son, but he does not say how this happened.

After he has poured his heart out, Trewe is so depressed that Jackson has to remind him to get back to playing Robinson Crusoe. He shouts at him that he must live. Both men continue the rehearsal, but Jackson is not sure whether Trewe is acting or really crying. Trewe shows him that it is impossible to tell the difference from someone's back, which makes both men laugh. They continue laughing after playing with the word 'goat.' Jackson tells Trewe that after all this he found his true calling. He benignly resigns and sings a song summarizing the play. In the end, however, he asks Trewe for a raise, indicating that he does not want to leave him after all.

The play Pantomime was written in 1978 by the prolific West Indian poet and playwright Derek Walcott. The short two-act play dissects the relationship between an English hotel owner and his Creole servant in Tobago, Trinidad. Walcott is from Saint Lucia in the Caribbean Islands and hails from a mixed-racial background. Although the play has an anti-colonial implication, Walcott’s writing is not overt; he instead uses clever dialogue and humor to drive the message. His penchant for crafting impactful dialogue most likely comes from his skill as a poet. He is an extremely decorated author who received a MacArthur Fellowship, or “genius grant,” in 1981 and won a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992.

In Act I, a frustrated Englishman named Harry Trewe rehearses a play in the lobby of the hotel he recently bought. The play is intended to entertain new hotel clientele; however, the rehearsals are not going very well. Trewe’s assistant, Jackson Phillip, who has more hotel experience than Trewe, urges him to shift his focus to polishing up the hotel, which is not in good condition. Trewe jokes about committing suicide to escape doing the work, and Jackson tells him not to because he would get blamed for it.

Trewe persists in his rehearsal of the play, an adaptation of Robinson Crusoe. Jackson does not want to be a part of the play and is angry that the hotel's parrot has picked up racial slurs from the actors. Trewe tries to manipulate Jackson into helping him by reminding him of his past as a talented calypsonian performer. Jackson uses the opportunity to transform the play into a message about racial equality, hijacking the character of Robinson Crusoe and turning him into an imperialist. Trewe, who is playing the role of Crusoe's servant, is taken aback.

Jackson further twists the play by breaking into a calypso song in the middle of the rehearsal. Trewe tries to record him singing, and Jackson takes offense and stops. He then forces Trewe to play the role of a seagull, which further angers Trewe. Jackson defends himself by saying he is only trying to get Trewe to rehearse, which is what he wanted to do in the first place. Trewe says that the play will not fulfill the purpose of light entertainment in this form and wants to stop the rehearsal. Jackson returns to fixing a table.

In Act II, Jackson works loudly on the table to annoy Trewe. Trewe apologizes for being difficult and blames his mood on the heat of Tobago. Jackson quickly suggests that he should return to England. After this, Trewe admits he spent all his savings on the hotel and cannot return to England. Jackson starts to feel sympathetic, and they resume their hybrid version of the play. Unlike earlier, their different styles now seem to complement each other. However, Jackson can switch between accents quickly, and his talent threatens Trewe. The constant role reversal is used to demonstrate the struggle of colonized people and colonizers to find their identity.

After an hour or so, Jackson needs to take a bathroom break, so Trewe instructs him to use his toilet rather than the servant toilet. Jackson declines the offer because he says there is too large of a power imbalance between the two of them. He then compares this situation to the irresponsible behavior of British colonialists who grant independence to nations before they are ready for it, leaving them shattered and unstable. This further demonstrates the complicated relationship between Jackson, a colonized person, and Trewe, a colonizer.

On his way back from the toilet, the parrot is still spewing racial slurs, so Jackson kills it. The parrot symbolizes the way that colonized peoples

tend to mimic their masters without much resistance, therefore implying that Jackson is fed up with living under the shadow of colonialism. After the parrot's death, Trewe becomes even angrier, so Jackson plays a slave for a while to appease him. After a run-through of the play, they toast to Trewe's wife, but Jackson will not toast to her because she is not there. He instead urges him to talk about his suppressed feelings. Trewe confides in Jackson that he is jealous of his wife's success as an actress and that he thinks she may have killed their son. He does not elaborate further.

After the short, therapeutic session, Trewe becomes morose and needs Jackson's encouragement to continue with the Robinson Crusoe character. Trewe seems truly emotional for the rest of the rehearsal, and Jackson does not think he is acting. The two men somehow start to enjoy each other's company and spend the rest of the day laughing. In the end, Jackson asks Trewe for a pay raise.

Adam Langer of the Chicago Reader observes that "what makes [Pantomime] so powerful is the beauty of Walcott's language and the multiplicity of relationships he explores in examining the roles of master and servant." Walcott is revered for his exploration of the Caribbean cultural experience and the responsibility of native artists post-colonialism to create new, meaningful works. In an interview, Walcott maintained that "if we continue to sulk and say, "look at what the slave-owner did," and so forth, we will never mature. While we sit moping or writing morose poems and novels that glorify a non-existent past, then time passes us by."

14.4 CHARACTER

Harry Trewe

Harry Trewe is an Englishman in his mid-forties, who came to Tobago to escape his personal problems in England, where his wife had left him and his son had died in a car crash, which was caused by his drunk mother. He is now the owner of the Castaways Guest House, which is situated on a cliff. However, instead of improving his life he suffers from insomnia and boredom; he also talks about suicide and jumping off the cliff.

Moreover, his knowledge of hospitality as well as his management skills are limited at best. Even though he talks about his best intentions for the hotel, he does not manage it effectively; instead, being a retired actor, playwright, and musician, he is frequently lost in Romantic ideas, idealizing Robinson Crusoe. His main concern is putting together a stage play to entertain his guests. He forces Jackson, a Trinidadian waiter who would rather spend his time improving the hotel's facilities, to play the part of Robinson in an attempt to create a satirical play. Even though Harry wants Jackson to be equal in an attempt to overcome his image of a white superior, he becomes frightened when Jackson uses this freedom to bitingly criticize imperialism; therefore, Harry falls back to commanding Jackson.

Jackson Phillip

Jackson Philipp, a 40-year-old Trinidadian, is a retired calypsonian who now works as a waiter at Harry Trewe's hotel in Tobago. Unlike his boss, he has experience in the hotel business, as he has previously worked in hotels in various positions. Jackson knows that the hotel can only attract guests if it is in good condition, so he puts in extra effort to renovate the place and even does the job of the carpenter who is not coming regularly due to the low salary he receives from Harry. His relationship with Harry is purely professional; Jackson follows the rules of the hotel and observes his working hours minutely. Being a realist, he does not approve of Harry's idealistic views. Therefore, when Harry forces him to play the role of the master in his adaptation of Robinson Crusoe, he is at first uncomfortable and dismisses the idea before he eventually capitulates; as the two continue their brainstorming and rehearsal, however, he starts to exploit his role and furiously presents his criticism of imperialism, demonstrating a thorough understanding of English history and culture. Jackson's extraordinary language skills allow him to effortlessly switch between Creole and English accents, thus mimicking Harry and the British. He is a master of sarcasm on a level that Harry does not always understand.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Write a brief summary in your own words.

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Q2. Give brief on various characters of the Play Pantomime.

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14.5 THEME OF THE PLAY

Struggle for Identity

The central theme of Pantomime is the protagonists' struggle for identity. It is a mirror of the situation in the colonized countries in the Caribbean, where people are torn between the inherited Caribbean traditions and the imposed Western culture. The struggle is evident in action and language. Harry, the hotel owner, neglects his property and his staff by refusing to direct them, effectively denying his status of a boss. Jackson, his servant, switches between the English and Creole accents, and therefore identities, depending on the situation. Their inability to find their identity is exemplified by their rehearsal of Robinson Crusoe, when the roles are reversed. Both slip in and out of the role of master and servant, struggling to portray the characters of Robinson and Friday, before they eventually realize the limitations of their capabilities: Jackson cannot be the master because he has nothing that he could impose on the slave, while Harry cannot be the slave because he feels uncomfortable in this role. At the end of the play, Derek Walcott proposes a celebration of diversity in art, embracing one's heritage, and collaboration with other cultures to foster human unity.

The Relationships between the Colonized and the Colonizer

The play highlights the complex relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. By leaving England to buy and run a hotel in Tobago, Harry Trewe naturally assumes the role of the colonizer, as he has enough money to employ servants. However, Jackson, one of these servants, remarks on more than one occasion that he and the other hotel

staff are being exploited, while the basic necessities such as food, water and shelter are not sufficiently provided. This situation reflects the imperialist practice of exploiting the colonies without looking after their people. Harry, however, claims to consider Jackson equal, yet shows subconsciously that he is not ready to practice what he preaches. Paradoxically, Jackson does not want to be considered equal immediately. Instead, he first wants to be treated with respect and prefers a gradual introduction of equality. In his opinion, the British have imposed a new culture and new beliefs on the colonies only to prematurely withdraw from them, which caused turmoil. He exposes the colonizers' superficial promise of equality by listing their fear of immigrants and exploiting the colonies through tourism as examples for their continued subjection of former colonies.

Mimicry/Parroting

Mimicry is an important theme in the play because it is a tool of imperialism. The idea of colonizing other nations and legitimizing racial discrimination is parroted by children and thus lives on in future generations. Jackson explains this point by referring to the parrot at the hotel, which keeps harassing him by repeating racial slurs. In the end, however, he kills the parrot, indicating that he will not tolerate this racial prejudice to continue.

The central idea of mimicry is that European traditions and beliefs are imposed on the colonies by imitating the masters without understanding. Jackson (as Robinson) uses this technique to teach Harry new words, which was a common approach in the colonial era. However, he bitingly notes that even if the colonized mimic their masters perfectly, they are never good enough and therefore will always be considered second-class citizens. He also points out that every time the colonized mastered what the imperialists taught them, they were suddenly considered a threat.

Apart from being considered inferior citizens, the general colonial assumption is that Caribbean art is also inferior, being merely an imitation of European thoughts and techniques. However, particularly in act II Jackson's superiority in acting becomes evident: He dismisses Harry's gray European classical background and focuses on his own

colorful Calypso heritage instead. Therefore, Walcott effectively defends Carribean culture against Western criticism.

14.6 ANALYSIS

In Pantomime, Walcott dramatizes the struggle for identity to create an allegory of the unequal relationship between colony and mother country. Even though the play is set in the post-colonial era, the initial setting resembles that of a colony: Harry Truwe, the white man, has come from England to run a hotel in Tobago, where he employs Jackson Phillip, a Trinidadian, for little money. However, Harry is still haunted by his past, suffering from insomnia and depression. He threatens to jump off the cliff, but reveals that he is just acting when Jackson tells him to stop. This is the first of numerous occasions where Harry acts or fakes things, which leaves Jackson and the audience puzzled to what his actual intention is. He mocks the development of Tobago by saying that he would not be able to commit suicide because "[y]ou can't leave a note because the pencils break, you can't cut your wrist with the local blades." Jackson, on the other hand, indirectly criticizes the justice system as a relic of the colonial era, saying the authorities would rather accuse the black man of murder instead of accepting the white man's suicide.

Trewe's detachment from reality is evident in the way he acts as hotelier: Instead of performing his duties as the head of the establishment responsibly, he is shown practicing a dance routine. It is his servant, Jackson, who assesses the facilities and presents a comprehensive list of tasks that need to be carried out if their guests are to be safe and happy. Even though it includes necessities such as water, food, shelter, as well as higher salaries for the hotel staff to boost their motivation, Harry does not address these issues, implying that these basic elements of hospitality do not concern him. Instead, he is working on a light satirical play to keep his guests entertained. Jackson keeps his professional tone ("Breakfast, sir. Or else is overtime.") until Harry suggests staging an adaptation of Robinson Crusoe with reversed roles. Jackson is clearly annoyed by the proposal, because he apparently was humiliated by Harry in public before and does not want this to happen again, and because he has retired from his career as a calypso artist. He loses his temper when

Harry takes off his pants to get into the role of Friday, and again it is Jackson who is the more mature, reminding Harry of his manners: "Put on your blasted pants, man! You like a blasted child, you know!" It turns out the roles of the two protagonists are already reversed, by the master behaving like a child and the servant reprimanding him like a parent.

When Jackson declines to take part in the play, Harry quickly assumes the role of his superior and uses the carrot-and-stick approach to force Jackson to collaborate--the same carrot-and-stick approach that imperialists have been following for millennia to control their colonies: "So sit down! Please. Oh, goddamnit, sit... down... (Jackson sits. Nods.) Good. Relax. Smoke. Have a cup of tepid coffee."

However, his authority is quickly diminished when Jackson tells him that his idea of reversing the roles of Crusoe and Friday is "shit." Indeed, Harry does not reprimand Jackson for the use of foul language, implying that he has slipped out of the role of master again.

While Harry sees the proposed play as a light form of entertainment, Jackson has a much deeper understanding of its implications. His strong feelings toward imperialism and the treatment of colonized people become evident in his "trance-like" speech outlining the violent imposition of Western beliefs, traditions, and religion on the oppressed colonies. Jackson gradually fills his role of Crusoe with dominance until Harry cannot bear the oppression and humiliation any longer, asking him to stop the rehearsal. However, in this situation Jackson struggles to completely assume the role of superior, as he does not have a language to impose on Harry, which the inferior is quick to point out and mocks him: "You never called anything by the same name twice. [...] You fake." Jackson eventually surrenders, implying that he is not fit to take on the identity of the white superior.

Harry, however, wants to continue the rehearsal after Jackson sings a verse calypso style, and so a rivalry between the two develops. Their different ideas of interpreting the play of Robinson Crusoe is an allegory of the different art forms they represent: While Harry is a classical music-hall singer/dancer, influenced by the restraints of the European theater, Jackson plays his role more freely and colorful, using props to make the scenes more vivid. Because Harry is so impressed by the Song that Jackson has sung earlier that he wants to tape it, Jackson now

realizes that he has leverage and impose his interpretation on Harry. He evidently gets more comfortable with the role of dominating the white man. Again, Harry tries to end the rehearsal when he feels humiliated, switching from Friday to hotelier and commanding: "No, Jackson. You will not continue. You will straighten this table, put back the tablecloth, take away the breakfast things, give me back the hat, put your jacket back on, and we will continue as normal and forget the whole matter." Jackson compares this reaction to the British withdrawing from their colonies after they have started to imitate the superiors too closely. Apparently, in the post-colonial era there are still people who do not understand the allegory of their version of Robinson Crusoe, so he makes it crystal clear to Harry and the audience: "This moment that we are now acting here is the history of imperialism; it's nothing less than that." He also accuses Harry, and therefore the British, to deny him, and therefore Tobago and other colonies, equal status and respect.Harry is afraid that if they continue the play, they "might commit Art, which is a kind of crime in this society," which indicates that the British visitors will not want to see a mirror of their imperialism with the negative aspects being depicted so violently.

At this point, he has also realized how degrading the process of colonization was, and that he does not at all want to take the identity of the inferior. He struggles with this realization, indicated by the pauses between his words, which imply that he tries to make sense of it all: "[Crusoe] comes across this naked white cannibal called Thursday, you know. And then look at what would happen. [...] This cannibal, who is a Christian, would have to start unlearning his Christianity. He would have to be taught [...] by this - African ... that everything was wrong, that what he was doing ... I mean, for nearly two thousand years ... was wrong. That his civilization, his culture, his whatever, was ... horrible." After that, he forces Jackson to clean up, thus ending the rehearsal. Jackson remarks that his behavior is an exact replication of imperialism, where the British imposed their culture on other countries only to leave without sorting out the confusion rooted in the mixed identities of the inhabitants. At the end of Act I, Jackson tells Harry that all he wanted was some respect, which is an allegory of the motherland treating the colony as a second-class country.

After Jackson has opened Harry's eyes to the true face of imperialism, Harry opens up to Jackson and tries to explain what is bothering him. He tells him that the reason for leaving England and coming to Tobago is his wife, who left him. It becomes clear that Harry has come to Tobago to regain his manhood after his wife has become more successful at acting than him, which makes him envious.

Jackson then asks for a break. This is a significant scene because it shows how sensitive Jackson is to imperialistic ideas, as he continues to discover parallels between Harry and the British rule. He explicitly describes Harry's offer of using his private bathroom as an allegory of granting independence to colonies. While Harry thinks the offer is a sign of trust and equality, Jackson notes that he does not feel comfortable because he still feels inferior, as he considers Harry's offer a special privilege. In Jackson's opinion, independence must be granted gradually to allow the colony to establish a stable society before the ruling power can withdraw. He criticizes the British for having abandoned their colonies too quickly, thus leaving turmoil behind. Moreover, he recognizes that even though Harry says he considers Jackson equal, his actions do not support this claim: Harry, and therefore the British, still finds it difficult to accept the colonies as equal and to treat them with respect, which illustrates the limitations of liberalism and the openness of the human mind.

Jackson comes back, having killed the parrot which has constantly been harassing him by blurting out racial slurs. Harry, therefore, accuses Jackson of merely mimicking European artists, listing a number of texts containing a similar motif, which shows that he is prone to a common misunderstanding of Caribbean art being unoriginal. Angered by the death of the parrot, both switch roles again: Harry starts taking back his property, while Jackson rolls on the floor pretending to be the submissive Friday, only to command Harry shortly after: "That master-and-servant shit finish. Bring a beer for me." This strict tone suggests that Jackson is in control of the action.

Jackson then exploits Harry's moment of weakness by using the photo of his wife as a mask to confront Harry with his past. He asks personal questions that he did not dare to ask before. Thus, he is able to help

Harry close this chapter of his life. In the end, however, both laugh about goats and find some common ground in the production of the play. Their collaboration can be seen as a hopeful sign that it is possible to cooperate and achieve unity between England and Tobago through art if both parties treat each other as equals.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.Discuss the theme of Play Pantomime

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Q2. Give the critical analysis of Play Pantomime

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14.7 LET'S SUM UP

Derek Walcott (1930-) published his first poem at the age of just 14 in a local paper that was circulated on the Caribbean island of his birth, Saint Lucia. This island falls within the Windward Islands and, as an ex-British colony, is part of the Anglophone Carribbean. Walcott's hereditary make-up reflects these complex historical pasts - he had two white grandfathers and two black grandmothers, and he is subsequently of both African and European descent. Walcott's father, Warwick, was well-versed in English literature and was himself an artist - a watercolour painter. This adoption of a European cultural heritage, alongside his African ancestry, means that the creolized identity pervasive in the Caribbean becomes one of Walcott's central concerns. Both his poetry and plays, written almost completely in English, though with some French scattered throughout, interrogate these complexities.

At the age of just 19 Walcott self-published two collections of poems, 25 Poems (1948) and Epitaph for the Young: XII Cantos (1949), and they both excapsulate two more key thematic strands of Walcott's later work:

his methodist and distinctly spiritual background, and his engagement with English modernist poets such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound - indeed, Walcott would go on to win the T.S. Eliot Prize for his poetry collection, White Egrets (2010), in 2011. Walcott's first international fame came, however, with the publication in 1962 of his collection In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960, which included his perhaps mostly widely read poem, 'Ruins of a Great House'. This poem configures brilliantly the contradiction that runs through Walcott's oeuvre, a contradiction interrogated by many other, now canonical, postcolonial authors: the dilemma of producing severe critiques of British imperialism and the horrors that went hand in hand with colonialism, whilst also seeking affiliation with, and a position within, the strong literary cultures that originate there. For Walcott, in the poem as in much of his other work, the answer to this contradiction lies in the creation of new hybridized identities that are rooted in the soil of Caribbean islands and the abundance of water (with its connotations of redemption and 'washing away') that moves between them.

As a playwright, Walcott came to international notice just a few years later when his drama, Dream on Monkey Mountain (1970), appeared on NBC-TV in North America in the same year of its publication, winning an Obie Award for 'Best Foreign Play' - a year after the play's appearance, the British government gave Walcott an OBE for his literary work. However, it was with the publication of Omeros in 1990 that Walcott's prowess was solidified on the international stage. The epic poem once again shows influence by a European literary tradition as it loosely rewrites the Homeric epics ('Omeros' is Homer in Greek). However, the action is set on Walcott's home island of Saint Lucia, narrating the history of colonialism depicting daily life on the island. In Omeros, Walcott encapsulates what is one of the central tenets of his life's work: the appropriation of the English language by the post-colonial world. For a summary of Walcott's achievements and their importance for post/colonial writing, we need look no further than The Nobel Foundation, who awarded him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992 'for a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of multicultural commitment.'

14.8 KEYWORDS

1. **Pantomime:** Style of entertainment in which all meaning is expressed through physica movement with no spoken words and usually no vocalized sound at all.

2. **Insomnia:**The inability to sleep.

3. **Calypso:**Musical style popularized in West Indies utilizing syncopated African rhythm and lyrics typically lauding the tropical island lifestyle.

4. **Robinson Crusoe**: The title and name of main character in novel by Daniel Defoe about a white Englishman shipwrecked on an island who eventually finds a companion in a native black man he calls Friday.

5. **Role-reversal**: A therapeutic treatment for dealing with cultural differences between people in which each adopts the role of the other and attempts to engage in discourse from that other perspective as a mean of working toward understanding. .

14.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

l) How does the relationship between Harry and Jackson develop in Act II and what is their relationship at the end of the play?

m) What do we learn about Harry when Jackson plays the part of Harry's wife?

n) What is the role of Harry's wife in the development of Harry's character? What may it indicate about the function of Tobago for Harry and possibly other English men?

o) What is the difference the conclusion in the script and in the performance? Comment on the significance.

14.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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14.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 14.3

Answer 2 : Check Section 14.4

Check Your Progress Ii :

Answer 1 : Check Section 14.5

Answer 2 : Check Section 14.6