

摘要

这篇论文从后殖民身份认同这一视角分析《抵达之谜》中 V.S.奈保尔对自身迷失在后现代，后殖民多元时代的杂交身份所进行的解构，重组以及重新定位。在这部具有转折性和总结性的重要作品中，奈保尔进行了一场自我身份认同的革命，重新审视其自身身份构成中的英国性，印度世界观以及以特立尼达为代表的殖民文化，并经历了一个对其杂交身份的由迷茫、排斥到认同的过程。

随着后殖民理论与实践的发展，近年来国内外评论界对奈保尔的批评研究由对其文本的文化研究逐渐转向对其后殖民身份的探讨，奈保尔文化身份中的流浪性，无根性和边缘性得到了一致认同。这种定位虽然抓住了关键，但容易造成对奈保尔处于文化真空的误读。在以文化杂交为特征的后殖民时代，文化主体必然无法逃避面对这种建立在杂交文化之上的杂交身份认同问题。在当今的文化多元时代，以奈保尔为代表的来自第三世界的后殖民作家作为一支崛起的力量正日益改变着以西方话语权为主导的世界的同时，他们自身也正经历着身份认同的危机。如何定位这种复杂身份，使奈保尔们走出身份认同危机成为当下急待解决的课题，这也正是本论文的研究意义所在。

本论文共分五个部分：导言，第一章，第二章，第三章，结论。导言是对本论文思想框架的整体介绍。在总结前人研究的同时，也对奈保尔的写作风格及重叠主题进行了总结与探讨。相似主题反映出奈保尔精神深处对自己无所依傍的流亡身份的焦虑，这也是当今多元文化社会中包括移民作家在内的边缘文化主体所面临的共同问题。

第一章具体论述了身份认同危机的时代背景和主要特征。身份问题的研究先后经历了以孤立、稳定的自我为中心的启蒙思想，直到流动变化着的，无中心的后现代身份观。在当今文化多元的后殖民时代，随着民族主义的去神话化以及对二元对立观的解构，文化不再是相互对立的而是在对立中相互融合，而建立在文化之上的身份也必然走向杂交。奈保尔正是在这种东西方文化的碰撞中迷失了自我，找不到文化和精神的归宿。

第二章中，着重论述了奈保尔在身份重构过程中对其误读已久的特立尼达以

及印度文化的重新思考和回归。英国式的教育背景，二度移民的家族出身，使奈保尔处于两种文化的“双重外在”状态。奈保尔对其文化组成中不可或缺的加勒比文化以及印度文化一直持背弃态度，这也正是导致文化身份失落的重要原因。在《抵达之谜》中，通过对加勒比和印度数次旅行的回忆总结使奈保尔认识到，无论是殖民地的对精神归宿的集体诉求，还是印度婆罗门文化对秩序的向往，生与死的相互转化以及“出世”的世界观都是其杂交身份中不可或缺的部分，且已经影响了他思考世界的方式。

第三章则从奈保尔对弥漫在作品中的对幻想中的英国主义既向往又失望的情绪着手，分析了奈保尔与英国的“养母文化”之间的矛盾关系。《抵达之谜》是奈保尔对自身英国身份的集中清算：多年的英国边缘人身份经历使奈保尔对自身身份中的英国性经历了一场由崇拜到失望的过程。无法承受这种裂变，促使他逃往乡村，以期在相对封闭的乡村重拾城市久已失落的英国主义，挽救自身丧失的英国身份。奈保尔失望的意识到想象中构建出的维多利亚式的英国主义早已失落殆尽，而其建立在此基础上的英国文化身份也随之陷落。最终促使奈保尔接受这种裂变的是乡村中来往的各色人物：他们或是成为英国主义的殉葬品，或是成功摆脱身份失落的梦魇重建新身份，都成为奈保尔自身矛盾的写照。这启发他走出身份裂变的苦恼，意识到建立在一种单一文化之上的文化身份必然走向失落。

结论是对整篇文章的总结。首先再次申明了当今多元化社会中，处在文化杂交环境下的文化主体所面临的身份失落或被边缘化的现实。身份的混乱和失落阻碍了他们争夺话语权的进程。奈保尔不断地寻求自我文化身份和文学创作定位，经历了一系列的痛苦裂变，最终将身份定位在既内在于同时又外在于某种特定文化的杂交文化之中。这种定位既有妥协的成分同时又是后殖民作家们摆脱危机，寻求认同的唯一的出路。正是这种身份定位使他们的创作能够成为世界文坛上独树一帜，为他们所代言的边缘力量争夺话语权。

关键词：身份认同；身份危机； 裂变； 杂交； 定位

ABSTRACT

This thesis, from the perspective of postcolonial identity, studies V.S.Naipaul's deconstruction, reconstruction and relocation of his hybridity identity, which has already lost in the postmodern and postcolonial world, in *The Enigma of Arrival*. In this important and transitional work, Naipaul experiences a revolution in his identity, through which he re-examines the mixed cultural elements of his identity: Englishness, Indian philosophy and colonial culture represented by his homeland, Trinidad. The re-examination also makes him go through a painful process of accepting the hybridity identity, which he has been rejecting.

As the development of postcolonial theory and practice, the study of Naipaul has already turned from text and cultural researches to issues of postcolonial identification in his works. The location of his identity—exile, homelessness and marginality in the metropolitan world has been generally agreed on. Although this location catches the keywords, it would lead to misinterpret Naipaul that he is positioned in cultural vacuum. In this postmodern world marked with cultural hybridity, Naipaul, a representative of postmodern cultural subjects, can not duck the fate of accepting this hybridity identity in the circumstance of culture mixing. As a rising power to break the domain of western discourse power, postcolonial or immigrated writers are also experiencing the crisis of identification. Study of Naipaul's identity reconstruction may help to provide inspirations for them to get out of the identity crisis, which is the very purpose of this thesis.

This thesis consists of five parts: Introduction, Chapter One, Chapter Two, Chapter Three and Conclusion. In Introduction, besides a general summary of former researches, there is also a discussion on Naipaul's writing styles and repeated themes. The overlapping themes reflect Naipaul's agonies and struggles for a location of his exile identity in three cultures, which has caused anxieties of homelessness shared by most of the postcolonial exiles and other marginal cultural subjects.

The first chapter reviews the history of identity crisis and its features. Studies of identity have been through the Enlightenment identity, characterized with an isolated and stable self, onwards to the postmodern identity, flexible and acentric. As nationalism is pulled off the myth altar and deconstruction of the binary antagonism, different cultures are coming to hybridity in clashes, which leads to hybridity of cultural identity. Naipaul loses his identity in these clashes of western and eastern cultures, and can not find his cultural and spiritual belonging.

Chapter two discusses Naipaul's re-examination and return to Trinidadian and Indian culture, which he has long misunderstood and turned his back on, in the process of identity reconstruction. With English education and the double exile background, Naipaul is stuck in the "Double Exteriority" situation, which, together with his betrayal of Trinidadian and Indian cultures, is the reason of his identity loss. In *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul reviews journeys back to Caribbean and India, through which he realizes that either the colonial collective searches for spiritual belonging or Indian Brahmin philosophy on order, life, death and withdrawal has already penetrated into his identity, and influenced his worldviews as well.

The third chapter catches Naipaul's controversial attitudes toward Englishness pervading the book and focuses on the complicated relationship between Naipaul and his English "foster culture". *The Enigma of Arrival* records his settlement with the English identity. After years' marginal experience, Naipaul's Englishness and English culture worship ends up disillusionment. In order to recover from this rip and restore the broken English identity, he withdraws into countryside, where he finds the Victorian Englishness only exists in fantasies. Various people there, becoming sacrifice to this lost identity or moving on to construct a new one, are doubles of Naipaul, who finally help to heal his wound from a ripped identity. Naipaul realizes that a cultural identity in the context of one occlusive culture is doomed to get lost in this multi-cultural world.

Conclusion briefly reviews the reality of the identity crisis cultural subjects have to face in this cultural hybridity context. The loss of a certain identity has already suffocated their voices. After a series of rips and pains, Naipaul, the

representative of postcolonial exile writers who have been in search of a location for their cultural identity and writing, finally successfully locates his identity in the hybridity culture, a “third-space” position out of constraints of either particular culture. Although this location is a comprising solution, it is their only way out of identity crisis to get acknowledged. This identity location makes them a rising power in the literary world and spokesmen of the marginal cultural subjects in the battle over discourse power. .

Key words: identity; crisis of identification; splits; location; hybridity

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INTRODUCTION

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, born to an emigrated Hindu family in Chaguanas, Trinidad, which remained a British colony until 1962, has become one of the most controversial English writers. People either slaughter or worship him to serve their respective purposes. Naipaul has become the combination of a great writer and a cultural traitor, either a god or a demon to the critical world.

As a colonial, Naipaul's experience resembles most of the success stories of people from the third world. He attended Queen's Royal College and won a Trinidad government scholarship for studying in England, where he got a chance to study at Oxford in 1950. After graduation from Oxford, he suffered a long period of difficult time without a regular job or a decent house until he found a job working as a free-lance writer for BBC on the program "Caribbean Voices" as most of the Caribbean immigrated writers did at that time. Since his marriage to an English woman—Patricia Ann Hale in 1955, he resided in London and continued his writing career which had started since his Oxford days. In 1957, Naipaul published *The Mystic Masseur*, which caught critics' attention and gave him a good start as a serious English writer. From then on, he traveled a lot as a journalist and wrote novels, essays and short stories etc. His footprints were left all over West Indies, south Asia, Arabian world and Africa. Wherever his journey goes, he observes and thinks, taking a stand on neutrality—at least he believes so. His penetrating observation and obsession of "truth" are recorded in a series of great works: *The House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) and other Caribbean books are the results of his revisits and rethinking of Caribbean's past and present. The "India trilogy"—*An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990)—is dealing with his obsession with the ancestral land, one of his "areas of darkness" (Two Worlds)¹, since his childhood. His concerns about Islamic and the Africans bring out some controversial works, including the most famous ones, *A Bend in the River* (1979),

¹ V.S.Naipaul, "Two Worlds". Nobel lecture. December 7, 2001.

Among the Believers (1981), *Beyond Beliefs* (1998). All of these works won him the fame as a serious and excellent writer, which is further confirmed by a series of most glorious honors a writer can get. Naipaul got Booker Prize, was knighted as Sir Vidia, and finally won the Nobel Prize in 2001, which are gestures from the critical world to acknowledge his talents and works.

In his Nobel lecture—"Two World", he says that everything of value about him is in his books. It once was confusing for critics to define his literary genre in his early career. Naipaul creates a new literary form by combining autobiography, travelogue, fiction and reportage, through which would, he believes, give readers a "realistic" observation to the subjects he writes. Most of his works are dealing with two themes: one is the social chaos and confusions of former colonies in Postcolonial world after the political decolonization. His concerns cover three continents, Asia, Africa and South America. As an insider (a Trinidadian born) as well as an outsider (a writer writing mostly for western readers), he notices the dilemma which catches the ex-colonial people in modern society facing the new economical colonialism enforced by the West and the difficulty to make their voices heard. At the same time, he points out from afar the roots of the poverty and political chaos through his sharp observation. The other theme of Naipaul's, which is often entwined in, or appears as "subtexts"¹, is self-struggles of an exile with cross-cultured background in searching for a belonging in most of his semi-autobiographical work. Both themes are actually reflections of Naipaul's agonies and struggles in search of a location for his Diasporatic identity in multi-cultures, which has caused anxieties of homelessness shared by most of the exiles. As he says in Nobel lecture, he actually is writing "one book". All of his works are one book recording Naipaul's works on his identity issue.

Naipaul says in his Nobel lecture and many other interviews that he is writing one book and his subjects are the darkness around him since he was a child, which actually is the common ground of most of the postcolonial writers' works. Either meditations on the fates of nations or sarcastic depicts of common people concerns

¹ Bruce King, *V.S. Naipaul*: second edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p.6.

this “darkness”, which keeps tormenting exiles like Naipaul. This darkness actually is the inner torments and the life long motives of locating his long lost identity. Being an immigrated Indian in Trinidad and an exile with English education background and a career of an English writer in Britain, Naipaul is embarrassingly stuck in the crossroad of being a colonial or English. Since his first book, Naipaul keeps studying and comparing the three cultures which have long penetrated into his blood and mind, trying to find a place or culture to locate his complicated identity. These efforts and anxieties make Naipaul one of the most controversial writers in the world, and all of criticism, no matter friendly or spiteful, actually can be traced down to issues of his identity.

After his first successful book—*The Mystic Masseur*, some reviews on his early works scatter among some influential newspapers and magazines across the Atlantic, which help to introduce and expand Naipaul’s readership. Most of the critics at that time were interested in his works and the “truths” in them, and most reviews then were favorable. As the postcolonialism studies come to form and have been developing fast since the 1970s, critics studying Naipaul turn to interpret his works in the context of postcolonialism due to his Caribbean, Indian and British background. As his fame rises and the subjects of his concerns expand, Naipaul has been caught in two extremely controversial critics. The most interesting thing is that his critics are characterized by a clear cultural cleavage. To the west, he is one of the greatest living English writers in the world, a sober observer and a spokesman of the third world—the west and east India in particular; however, he still remains a marginal “other”, instead of being one of them. On the other hand, while he is winning praises and honors from the former imperial world, Naipaul gradually loses his third-world fellows’ supports. People in third world are irritated by his “arrogant” attitudes towards his ancestry lands and cultures, and his self-endowed privilege as a representative of the third-world, which unavoidably brings some sour tones to their criticism. Derek Walcott, a Nobel Laureate and famous Caribbean poet, accuses Naipaul of ungratefully betraying Caribbean world in one of his poems:

You spit on your people,

Your People applauded
Your former oppressors laurel you.
The thorns biting your forehead
Are contempt
Disguised as concern.¹

It can be regarded as the prevailing attitude towards Naipaul among his third world fellow writers. Naipaul's "concern" about Islamic, Indian and African world has aroused many negative comments. Among the catcalls, Edward Said must be the loudest one. On Naipaul's two works about *Islamic-Among the Believers* and *Beyond Belief*, Said charges him with contorting the Islamic world and its culture in "An Intellectual Catastrophe"², and categorizes him into the "Yea-sayers" satisfying the Western reader's oriental imagination according to his discussion about exiles in *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994). Critics cite each other to prove that Naipaul is a reactionary, a traitor, or a sober observer, a metropolitan citizen who gets rid of the partial prejudices. The participation of famous writers and scholars in the debating and the Nobel Prize, as well as the encouragement from Naipaul himself by throwing out irritating speeches on hot topics at times, apparently makes Naipaul a confusing writer who is difficult to see through and can be interpreted in many ways. Friendly or not, both sides of the critics are trying to understand: which side Naipaul is writing for, the west or the former-colonial countries? How does Naipaul construct his identity? In what culture his identity is located? In a word, the root of the cleavage of the critics actually is closely related to Naipaul's identity issue, which is also the question all the exiles or immigrated writers face in this postcolonial and postmodern world.

Study on Naipaul's identity issue has almost come to a climax in recent years. People work from different angles to examine Naipaul's themes and cultural complex in his works, trying to give readers a "real" Naipaul. Since the first book of interpreting Naipaul's works – *V.S. Naipaul: an Introduction to His Work* by Paul Theroux in 1972, many books are published to make postcolonial interpretation to his

¹ Derek Walcott, "Sea Grapes" in *Collected Poems (1948-1981)*. New York: Noonday, 1986.

² Edward Said, "An Intellectual Catastrophe", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 6-12 August 1998.

work, catching the key words of a Naipaul, such as exile, homelessness, displacement and identity loss: Timothy F. Weiss points out the repeating images of displacement and confusions toward “freedom” in Naipaul’s several important works. Helen Hayward tries to understand Naipaul’s writing by tracing Naipaul’s past in his autobiographic works and by examining his way of treating raw materials. John Thieme studies the use of allusions and Caribbean writing traditions and catches the cultural collisions in his works. Selwyn R. Cudjoe reads Naipaul from the angle of Marxism in his *V.S. Naipaul: A Materialist Reading*. In *London Calling*, Rob Nixon inherits Edward Said’s ideas, pointing out that Naipaul abuses his identity as a third-world man and becomes a postcolonial mandarin, winking at the metropolitan world.

In China, the *Miguel Street* was translated and published in 1992, which was the first translation of Naipaul’s work. However, Naipaul didn’t arouse critics’ much attention in China until the Nobel Prize in 2001. In the next year, both translation and critics reached its climax: *A Bend in the River*, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, “the Indian Trilogy” and *The Enigma of Arrival* are gradually translated into Chinese. Then the focus of Naipaul study turns from introduction of the writer and his literary characteristics in general to penetrate into his world in works. They catch the recurring themes of Naipaul, such as exile, displacement, rootless, cultural hybrid and marginality, which echo the English-speaking critics.

Although it seems difficult to give Naipaul, the writer and his works an accorded depicts, the critical world, no matter how controversial its opinions on Naipaul are, comes into an accord on his identity. The writer’s identity and his works in critical world are nailed down to some keywords: exile, homelessness, metropolitan and marginality at the same time. In most of his works and interviews, Naipaul himself also encourages this location, that is, a cosmopolitan who has surpassed the borderline of nations and culture. With the background of three cultures, at the first stage of his career, Naipaul, as most of his fellow writers from the third-world, was definitely stuck in the swamp of locating his own identity. This embarrassing state explains the uneasiness and linger run through his early works which record Naipaul’s

struggle of searching for cultural and spiritual belonging. The all-acknowledged “exile” or “rootlessness”, in some way, unveils the uncertainty of Naipaul’s identity issue; however, they can not correctly convey the complicated state of Naipaul’s identity. Even worse, this conclusion is easy to lead readers astray to misinterpret Naipaul that he is in a cultural vacuum state, a “free” man without any culture to back him on. According to theories of Said and Homi Bhabha’s etc, the postmodern world is a cultural hybridity one that one can not get rid of the influence of mixed cultures and his identity is unavoidably marked with this hybridity, which makes relocation and re-depicts of Naipaul’s identity states in the complicated culture mixing world important and inspiring to postcolonial studies.

In Naipaul’s later works, the critics find that Naipaul has turned into a “kinder, gentler Naipaul”¹, although the typical sober observation remains, the sever judgment and uneasiness of no-belonging fade, instead, it seems that Naipaul starts to embrace the difference of cultures with a kind of toleration . The turning point is *The Enigma of Arrival*. In this book, V.S.Naipaul returns to the metropolitan center—England, after the landing full of dreams and the self-exile in the last 30 years, where he reviews his early years and for the first time quietly examines the “real” English people besides him. Through the experiences of the narrative “I”, Naipaul re-examines the chaotic identity in his first half life and undoes the tangle of the identification, which opens a new era of his career. Through journeys he has made in his half a life, Naipaul penetrates into himself and accepts a hybridity identity which integrates metropolitan culture, Indian pessimistic philosophy and the contradictive Trinidadian exclusiveness and ability of accommodation inherited from his exiled ancestry as well. The acceptance of this hybridity identity, willingly or not, has taken Naipaul half a century to make and has greatly influenced his later life and career. Thus a study of Naipaul’s identity reconstruction in *The Enigma of Arrival* not only helps to understand his works, but also provides alternative ways for the vast marginal groups who are also tormented by identity loss as Naipaul once did.

¹ Rob Nixon. *London Calling: V.S.Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin*. New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. p. 159

CHAPTER ONE

Crisis of V. S. Naipaul's Identity

Identity has been an important subject in western cultural studies since the Enlightenment. The question of identity can be traced back to Locke and Descartes in the Enlightenment. Coming to the postmodern era, esp. since the 1960s, identity has emerged as a central theme of cultural studies and has been examined over and over by New-lefties, feminism, neo-historicism and post-colonialism. Around the concept of identity, a series of questions have been asked: who am "I" (the cultural subject)? Where am "I" from? And where am "I" going? In the de-centering postmodern world, the question of identity has been the tormenting ghost haunting the modern men.

I. Identity Crisis in the Modern World

In the web of the social cultural system, under no matter what historical and cultural situation, a person has to set up a certain relationship with other people, and has to, according to some cultural code, establish and stabilize his social role, which is a process of identification. The question of identity has been an important issue since the enlightenment, via modernity, onwards to the present time. The characteristics of the Enlightenment identity, in Jorge Larrain's words, are:

It made the human being the centre of the world, the measures of all things, as against the old theocentric world-view...the human being became 'the subject', the basis of all knowledge, the master of all things, the necessary point of reference for all that goes on.¹

¹ Jorge Larrain, *Ideology and Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World Presence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p.143.

The self has become the subject of receiving crashes from different cultures and ideologies. This idea of isolated and independent self had reigned over the Enlightenment philosophy and psychology for a quite lone time. It seemed reasonable to give an unchanged identity to make sure the stabilization of morality and personality at that time; however, people have gradually began to ask questions about it since the eighteenth century. The point of departure lies in the transcendence and abstractness of the subject. At the end of 18th century, under the influence of sociology and psychology, esp. Marxism, the focus of identity study turned into social identity which puts the society to the center of formation of identity. Marx charged the old materialism with abstracting individual identity from the historical and cultural situation. The subject of identity is no longer an isolated, unchanged or pre-given consciousness but “the ensemble of the social relations”¹, which are socially determined and conditioned. Thus, it is the modern psychology and postmodernism’s task to further endow the subject of identity with a notion of change.

Freud’s study on modern psychology further breaks the “the prior self” and provides a new perspective to understand identity. The self is divided into ego, superego and Id that the “self” is not the center of identity but a stage, on which ego—the social reality and Id, the unstrained self fighting against each other. Thus, subject is no longer something given but something being created and kept changing by social forces which remains subjectively unconscious. Starting from Freud and Lacan, identity has become something always in process of being formed, always incomplete, always on the way of changing.

If Enlightenment philosophy defines identity as self-consciousness, modernists point out that identity and social relations are interacting. By accepting a complete self, poststructuralist and postmodernist theories further throw the issue of identity into chaos.

Postmodernism, the conception itself, is chaotic, which arouses endless arguments; however, the uncertainty and controversy is the very feature of the

¹Jorge Larraín, *Ideology and Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World Presence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p.147.

postmodern times. This is a time of distrusting every ism and of questioning every authority, quoting Jorge Larrain again,

Postmodernity is a kind of cultural change... mediated by a new way of experiencing time and space. Postmodernity represents a kind of reaction to modernity, whereas the latter emphasizes linear progress, technology, positive science and reason, the former privileges indeterminacy, fragmentation, heterogeneity and difference. It distrusts both absolute truths and meta-narratives or totalizing discourses of universal application, especially those which propound human emancipation".¹

If Derrida's essay "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human-Sciences" in 1967 announces war against the structuralism, the philosophy has entered into a period of "a step outside of philosophy"². Poststructuralism as a deconstructive method breaks the domain of the existing Western thought and culture, which unavoidably besieges the modern identity constructed around a bunch of social relations. The issue of identity comes into further crisis: since the individuals themselves are also fragmented and decentred, "the complete self has become dislocated and decentred, incapable of unitary."³ Identification has become a de-centering process of deconstructing the old identities and reconstructing a new identity. Stuart Hall also agrees with this idea, says in his "The Question of Cultural Identity" that the subject assumes different identities at different times, that there are contradictory identities which cannot be unified.⁴

People who are most sensitive to this crisis in the postmodern world are the new-leftists, feminists, postcolonial writers and scholars and other marginal groups.

¹ Jorge Larrain, *Ideology and Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World Presence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p.105.

² Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse" in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies* ed. Neil Lazarus, Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 2004, p.113.

³ Jorge Larrain, *Ideology and Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World Presence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p.150.

⁴ *Ibid.* p.150.

With all of these groups joining the battle, the identification politics has become a hot issue in the study of postmodern culture, in which the postcolonial study is the most prominent one since its emergence in the late 1970s; moreover, issues of ethnic, nation, gender and class are intertwined with the arising marginal discourses, which makes the identity issue more complicated and difficult to untangle. Further more, as Jorge Larrain puts, “the decline of nation-state and the acceleration of globalization and time-space compression processes have certainly affected national allegiances and identities.”¹ The process of decolonization and globalization not only erodes the national identity or imperial identity by the loss of empire in Britain’s case, but makes the displacement and dislocation the main concern of the post-colonial people; as Bill Ashcraft et al puts in *The Empire Writes Back*, to the effect, the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place has become the main concern of post-colonial crisis of identity. He further explains that, due to the dislocation resulting from experience of enslavement, transportation, or ‘voluntary’ removal for indentured labour in the early history and the voluntary migration in the globalization time, the used stable and complete self is experiencing crisis of reconstructing its own identity, which manifests in the works of almost all the post-colonial writers.

II. Hybridity Identity in the Postcolonial World

The west, from the very beginning of the colonial expansion, creates a series of concepts, like religion, civilization, culture, class, ethnicity, nationality and development etc. Thus, in the process of colonization, when they (the colonizers) meet with the “less-developed” nations, it is a natural response for them to develop a binary antagonistic form of master/slave, the west/the east, the white/the black, the colonizer/the colonized, in which context all the colonizing actions, both material and cultural, are performed. Believing that power is everywhere, Foucault, under the

¹ Jorge Larrain, *Ideology and Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World Presence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p.154.

influence of Nietzsche and Freud, exercises his power theory into the identity issue, pointing out that “the individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies”¹, so that the identity is doomed to be tangled in the net of powers. While the west form a cultural identity tagged with the superiority over the east (or the colonized generally), the colonized people also experiencing a rip from a self-rule and a definite identity to an identity as a marginal “other”. That rip, some people believe, equals the loss of identity. Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks* argues that there is not a real black identity in him any more, which could be a most convincing proof:

I had to meet the white man’s eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema...I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects...I took myself far off from my own presence...what else would it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? ²

The identity of the colonized people no longer stands independently but depends on the recognition of the west instead; however, this recognition cannot be given by the west willingly, as Simon Gikandi analyzes, “Identity depended on recognition from the European; this recognition could not be granted; it had to be demanded through an act of resistance.”³ Fighting and resisting seem to be the only ways out for the loss of identity and marginal discourse. Fanon, unquestionably, is the representative of the “justified anger and resentment of formerly colonized peoples”⁴, which is shown in the resistance and liberation theme of Fanon’s two important books *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*.

¹ *ibid* p.148.

² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p.42.

³ Simon Gikandi, “Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies* ed. Neil Lazarus, Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 2004, p.106.

⁴ Valerie Kennedy, *Edward Said: A Critical Introduction* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000, p.91.

If in works of Fanon, Satre and Said, the binary antagonistic order of the colonial and post-colonial world is universally attacked, some scholars begin to realize that it can not solve those problems by stressing the oppositional elements. Moreover, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, facing the booming emergence of the ex-colonial subjects and their rising literature power, the critical world of English literature or “Common literature” has been stuck in the crisis due to historical and realistic critical tradition. The critics are anxious to find a way out of this crisis. Derrida’s Poststructuralism undoubtedly unfolds a new perspective to understand the postmodern world. Since Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* is translated and introduced into the field of postcolonial studies of the Anglophone world by Gayatri Spivak, Poststructuralism, as a deconstructive way of reading, achieves a conjuncture with the postcolonial studies, and also enlightens postcolonial scholars to get an alternative theory. Scholars like Edward Said and Spivak begin to reconsider the simplified binary antagonistic relationship between the colonizers and the colonized and to question the assumptions they made before. After the radical *Orientalism*, in *Culture and Imperialism*, Said begins to quest for an alternative to both radical and conservative orthodoxies. In the section of “Movement and Migrations” Said tries to describe postcolonial world, whose main characteristics are migrancy, exile and hybridity following it. He interprets this to mean that “we should work through individual and specific attachments to all-embracing and undifferentiated universalism. That is, he appeals for a transcendence of national boundaries and separated traditions.”¹ Said’s transition is the product of cultural hybridity current, which undoubtedly inspires people like Homi Bhabha and provides them a new perspective to study the postcolonial writings and identity issues tormenting writers like Naipaul.

In Neil Lazarus words, the last quarter of the twentieth century has borne witness to a profound decentering of dominant traditions of the literary world.² From the

¹ Valerie Kennedy, *Edward Said: A Critical Introduction* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000, p.98

² Neil Lazarus, “Introducing Postcolonial Studies” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies* ed. Neil Lazarus, Cambridge university Press, 2004, p.13.

perspective of culture, western modernism and postmodernism are derived from the fragment of the world; on the other hand, the modernism and postmodernism further break the world into more pieces.

Echoing this critic movement, inspired by Benedict Anderson's "imagined community", Homi Bhabha further attacks the concepts of "nation" and "nationalism", from which the oppositional concepts --master/slave, conquer/counter-conquer justice/injustice --of the postcolonial world come into being according to his *"Nation and Narrative"* (1990). In the book, he points out that nations are nothing but myths, pulling nationalism off the altar.

In the colonial period, identity of a writer mostly is derived from his national identity; however, coming into postcolonial world, the decline of the nation-state and the globalization process have strongly affected national allegiance and identities, which leads to difficulty in defining identities of exile writers like Naipaul with national identity. Bhabha believes that the concept of community is "the antagonist supplement of modernity: in the metropolitan space it is the territory of the minority, threatening the claims of civility; in the transnational world it becomes the border-problem of the diasporic, the migrant, and the refugee."¹ Crossing different nations, classes, and cultural traditions, the hybridity identities of writers like V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie indicate that cultural identity is not pre-given and unchangeable. As Stuart Hall says,

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being". It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identity come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere "recovery" of the past,

¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p.231.

which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past.¹

In the postcolonial writing, the “idea of a pure, ‘ethically cleansed’ national identity” in the binary oppositional world has been replaced by a “more transitional and translational sense of the hybridity of imagined communities.”²The “post” in jargons of our time—postmodernism, postcolonialism etc. represents the main characteristic of the cultural hybridity world. In Bhabha’s words:

This is a moment of the scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in nations of others...the gathering of the people in the diaspora: indentured, migrant, and interned—the genealogy of that lonely figures that John Berger named the seventh man.³

These seventh men, exiles or immigrants from the former colonial, mostly receive educations of metropolitan culture, which to them is a foster culture, while their growing-up circumstances deeply mark their worldviews with the mother culture. These hybridity subjects would surely bring to the speed-up of cultural hybridity and clashes of different cultures, and they themselves are stuck in the gap between the “mother” culture — Third-world culture, and “foster” culture, that is the metropolitan culture, which endow them two or more contradictive cultural identities. Cultural difference should not be regarded as the result of the pre-given ethics and cultural tradition any longer but, from the minority perspective, “a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerges in moments of historical transformation.”⁴As to the definition of cultural hybridity, Said uses it to

¹ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” in *Colonial Discourse & Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams & Laura Chrisman, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, 225.

² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p.5.

³ *Ibid.* p.139.

⁴ *Ibid.* p.2.

mean the overlapping of the colonizing and colonized cultures in all domains, and the characteristics of literary works produced in this situation; while Homi Bhabha proposes that

Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledge enters upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority- its rule and recognition.¹

Hybridity does not emerge mechanically and peacefully, instead, there hides voices from the colonized to be acknowledged and recognized. Bhabha insists "negotiation" instead of "negation" that negotiation contains a temporality that makes it possible to convey of the articulation of antagonistic element. The cultural subjects are jammed between the two or more cultures; through the interaction of the two cultures, the cultural subjects get a neutral position or "Double Exteriority" in some cultural study works, delicately standing between the two cultures. Homi Bhabha gives several visual images to depict this delicate position—beyond, border lives, stairwell, third space, "in-between" and "middle passage" etc. He quotes in the first beginning of *Location of Culture* that "a boundary is not that at which something stops but as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing."² Dwelling in the "beyond"—an intervening space—is, as Bhabha interprets, "to be part of a reversionary time, a return to the presents to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity...to touch the future on its hither side"³. Because of the interaction — hybridity among the "self" and "other" cultures and the delicate position they stand in, the hybridity cultural subjects are able to get a room to make their true voice heard.

By way of stepping out of constrains of both cultures, cultural subjects can see

¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p.114.

² Ibid.p.1.

³ Ibid. p.7.

clear and far that many of them celebrate the favor: Julia Kristeva speaks the pleasure of exile that one can avoid sinking into the mire of common sense by becoming a stranger to one's own country, language, sex and identity.¹ Salman Rushdie proposes through *The Satanic Verses* that the truest eyes now belong to migrants' double vision. The stepping out of culture of two antagonistic sides makes the cultural subjects — post-colonial writers be able to help the mother culture (or colonial culture they once turned their back on) out of the plights and resist the intrusion of the metropolitan culture.

III Loss at Identity Location

V.S. Naipaul is one of the products of this cultural hybridity current. Born to a colonial island and arriving at the center of the English literature, Naipaul used to be caught in the current of great transition, and engulfed by the crisis of identity location. His career as a serious writer further leads to fall deep in the crisis. The anxiety for a located identity runs through his works, which partly make Naipaul's writing style, which is famous for contempt and ironies in examining cultures and peoples. After years of escape from facing this crisis, Naipaul has to admit the fact that he has been looking for an identity never truly belongs to him, and on the other hand, he has been denying the Trinidadian and Indian identity, which means his identity has long got lost.

With the early colonial education mimicking the metropolitan and the influence of an English literature worshiper father, Naipaul is emotionally and practically adopted by England; however, on arrival at the metropolitan center — London after the long pilgrimage, he only finds dislocation, disappointment and the loss of identity.

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, when the narrator (Naipaul himself) accidentally overheard English workmen talking under his window, he was surprised by the way

¹Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p.141.

they talked and realized a country he never found although he had lives in for half a century. The narrator was shock by the facts:

It was a little frightening, this eavesdropping on what was like an unknown country. I knew another side of England: Oxford, people in broadcasting, writers. I had never been brought into contact like this with the country I had been living in for so long. I hadn't read about working men like the ones I was now listening to; I hadn't seen films about them.¹

After half a century's residence and writing in it, England—the dreamland Naipaul struggles to reach remains a stranger to him. The England he knows only exists in radios, literary works and movies, which are nothing but kind of man-made myths. As Rob Nixon says, emotionally and culturally, Naipaul's childhood had prepared for a Victorian Britain that had long since passed.² He came to England with a dream to be a metropolitan man; while after years' efforts, he was disappointed at the fact that he is still lingering outside of the society of a real England, not mention of being an English man. This strangeness, however, also works in the other way that Naipaul remains a stranger or an “other” to the English society too. He once says in an interview: “When I came to England in 1950 I was a thorough colonial”.³ He once contemned this identity and tried to deny the colonial identity at his first arrival at London, by repeatedly depicting a London which only exists in his own fantasy. The enthusiasm and blind optimism are soon worn out by the reality.

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, the narrator is disappointed at the metropolitan city and withdraws into countryside. The superficial stillness makes Naipaul drown himself in the pretence of getting rid of the crisis; however, this pretence is interrupted by a letter from an acquaintance, Angela. The letter reminds him his past, his first arrival at London and the divergences of his identity. He realizes that: “we had both

¹ V.S.Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival*. New York: Vintage Books, 1988, p.167.

² Rob Nixon, “Naipaul and the Traditions of Travel” in *London Calling: V.S.Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin*. 1992, p.46.

³ Ian Hamilton, “Without a Place”, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 30 July 1971, p.897.

made circular journeys, returning from time to time to something like our starting point.”(p178) After years’ pretence and hiding, Naipaul knows it is time to face his lost identity.

The anxiety for a belonging forces him to go on a another journey from English metropolitan cities to the countryside, from Trinidad to India, which makes him realize that in order to locate his identities, one has to break the borders of the mother culture and the foster culture. Only through stepping out of constrains of both cultures and accepting cultural hybridity reality, one can really construct his postcolonial identity. In Naipaul’ case, he has to first break the half-life long worship to the Englishness which doesn’t exist and make a return to the Indian and Trinidadian culture which he has long turned his back on.

CHAPTER TWO

The Journey back to Mother Culture

In the introduction to his book on Naipaul, Timothy F. Weiss talks about the issue of exile, saying: "Exile is a process of becoming, in between origins and destination, and because the exile is in-between, his journey can be a two-directional movement."¹ Journey has become one of Naipaul's trademarks and a symbol of his life-long identity searching. The journey he makes is a "two-directional movement", which is also one of repetitive images in the novel: the journey the narrator made years ago from Trinidad to England; return journeys back to Caribbean and Indian physically and culturally. The journey also represents two abstract ones: one is made by his ancestry from Indian to Trinidad and life itself as a journey. Actually, journeys Naipaul has made are also experienced by most of the Caribbean exile writers, like Jean Rhys, Sam Selvon and George Lamming etc.: with dreams of a glamour life in the metropolitan center, they struggle to arrive at it, only finding disillusion and strangeness. Driven by the anxiety for a location and an integrated identity, they choose to return the motherland once they turned their back on. All of the travels signify the exile writers' anxiety of lacking a settled culture, and a cultivated society to write about as other metropolitan writers do.

I. The Reconciliation with Trinidadian Origin

In most of Naipaul's works, mother figures are mostly wicked, dominating and sometimes weak, if they are not absent. For example, Mrs. Tulsi and Shama in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, the former one is dominating over the family, leading the Hanuman House into decays; while the latter, as a mother, incapable of protecting her

¹ Timothy F. Weiss, *On the Margins: The Art of Exile in V.S. Naipaul*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts., 1992.p. 5.

children from the big family, breaks the expensive toys to stop her sisters' jealousy. In one of Naipaul short stories, the mother even becomes enemy of narrator's childhood; she doesn't love the only son and always misunderstands what he does so that she becomes the child's tempt of growing up in order to get rid of her control. The mother is to be the first person to leave behind when "I" grow up, however, at the end of the story, the mother's tears at seeing her son's wounds make "I" wish to become an Indian god with two hundred arms, and to break them all in order to see mother's tears again. The complicated attitudes towards mother can be read as the attitudes of Naipaul's to Trinidad and India: on one hand, Naipaul completely rejects the occluding, acentric and decaying colonial culture; on the other hand, Indian descendent background, marginal colonial life and Caribbean culture objectively make who he is and are deeply marked in him, which he cannot escape from.

I had thought that because of my insecure past—peasant India, colonial Trinidad, my own family circumstances, the colonial smallness that didn't consort with the grandeur of my ambition, my uprooting of myself for a writing career, my coming to England with so little, and the very little I still had to fall back on—I had thought that because of this I had been given an especially tender or raw sense of an unaccommodating world. (92)

In Naipaul's case, he believes that the blood of exile — the situation without a home runs through his family. The inheritance of dislocation and insecurity determines his homelessness and half-life's journey across continents for an integrated identity. With dreams of a "real life" and becoming a metropolitan writer, Naipaul came into the metropolitan center—London; however, being in the place that "for all those years had been the 'elsewhere,' no further dream was possible".(134) The displacement results in the loss of dreams as well as the fragmentation of the identities. At the same time, the false ideas of falsifying his past and hiding from his true identities directly leads to the splits of a man and writer and the stagnancy of the writing career as well, "very soon— after 'Gala Night' and all my many writings about the Hardings and

Angela — I had nothing to record and had to stop”.(146) In the place of others’, Naipaul realizes the English culture doesn’t fully belong to him, so that he has to find his own culture to back on, a culture out of the Englishness. When he was asked whether he thinks he were writing outside the tradition of English literature:

What’s important is that English didn’t understand what I was doing. If it were my own territory it would be different, but I have no territory. England has not appreciated or acknowledged the work I have done. My task was to open up a territory...¹

The territory he returns is “the streets in which I grew up in Port of Spain in Trinidad.”² that is, the mother culture he has long turned back on. In order to locate identity, one has to go back his past and re-examine what he has left behind. Then house was sold, furniture put in warehouse, the runaway son decides to return to the once cultural desert.

As Naipaul describes, in his Nobel lecture as well as in many of his early novels, Trinidad is an immigrant country, due to its history as a plantation colony, and a cultural desert in his days as well, which was one of reasons of his fleeing to England. The cultural circumstance is chaotic: the formation of the population is complicated, Blacks, Indians, Creoles and Chinese, among which no cultural communication happens except for struggles of dominating over the island. Blacks, who have the biggest population and actually control the government after decolonization, have no traditional culture of their own but mimicry to the English. Creoles, mostly drunkards, uneducated and self-deserted holding no lasting values, take over the best jobs. Indian community with a big population second to African blacks keeps their community to themselves. Since childhood, Naipaul has a sense of two worlds, “the world outside that tall corrugated-iron gate, and the world at home”, he continues in his Nobel

¹ Farrukh Dhondy, “Report of an interview by Farrukh Dhondy with V.S.Naipaul”, *Asian Age*, 9th August, 2001.

² *Ibid.*

lecture “Two Worlds”:

That excluding idea was a kind of protection; it enabled us—for the time being, and only for the time being—to live in our own way and according to our own rules, to live in our own fading India. It made for an extraordinary self-centeredness. We looked inwards; we lived out our days; the world outside existed in a kind of darkness; we inquired about nothing.”

Although it is heartbreaking for a runaway son to look back at the decaying traditional Indian culture and the cultural decentralization on the island, the narrator in the book celebrates the freedom and ambitions provided by the island after disillusionment at the metropolitan center. It is the island that nurtured his early fantasies and fed his ambitions to be a writer. The little island and contained life, gave him the ideas of civilization and wakened his curiosity for the larger world:

...The island had given me the world as a writer; had given me the themes that in the second half of the twentieth century had become important; had made me metropolitan ... (153)

As a writer, Naipaul realizes the most important thing from the island he once turned back on — writing materials and themes which make him distinguished from other English writers. From his first novel *The Mystic Masseur* on, he wrote many works based on Trinidadian personal experience, family immigration history, and later his interests expanded to studies and meditations on Caribbean culture, which has become Naipaul's another trademark.

Same as most of postcolonial writers, Naipaul makes history of personal and community immigration subjects of his works, which explains the overlapping accounts of the early life in many of his books. The revision of personal life or recreation of a nation or community history actually has already become weapons for marginal postcolonial writers to make their voices heard in the literature dominated by

the metropolitan voices. Naipaul's overlapping references of his personal and family exile history, far beyond a writing strategy, is reconstruction and revision of meditation on his identities of double exiles. Trinidad has already become part of Naipaul, penetrating into his worldviews; so that no matter which place he depicts, Caribbean islands or African jungles, he would bring it into a compare with Trinidad, which undoubtedly has become his reference mark. In that way, Naipaul is "in" the reach of Trinidad.

At the same time, Naipaul is simultaneously "out" of Trinidad. As we have talked above, the attitudes of Naipaul's towards the motherland is complicated: on one hand, he wishes to be embraced by it; on the other hand, he also longs for a breakaway. The repeated accounts of life on the island, from another perspective, are evidences of Naipaul's self-imprisonment in the anxiety of the dislocation of his identity as a double exile, which is one of the roots of his sourness and fastidious attitudes towards the former colonials and their culture. The anxiety forces him to recreate another Trinidad of his own in books, from which he has felt a deep romance. As soon as he comes back the original one, he is immediately "restless, anxious to move on".(152) This restlessness and anxiety is derived from fears of being lost in the narrow-minded simplicity of the colonial which he has been running away from. He recalls:

Their racial obsession, which once could tug at my heart, made them simple people. Part of extinction which I had developed as a child had 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. (152-153)

The narrator remembered two black men he met in the first journey—the journey left for London. The first one met at the airport was on his way to Harlem to be an American; while the other was an American on his way to be a Germany. At that time, the narrator was in a state of great excitement, which was too strong for him to recognize himself reflected in them. The revisit years later made him recall the two

black men. The muscular, weight-lifting Trinidad black was quiet and cool, without any shine in the eyes; he was in a borrowed jacket, which was in particular prepared for the journey. To him, the future was so glamorous that it didn't occur to him what he was deserting was more than a colonial island but an identity attached to him since his birth. He then was leaving for a new identity, to be a metropolitan person, to be an American, which was just like the tight jacket not belonging to him. He is a double of Naipaul 40 years ago, who was searching for a new identity which would never fully belong to him. The American black on the ship, on the other hand, would rather put up with crowds with white people than share a cabin with the narrator—a colored man. Later, the narrator was told that the black man was moving to Germany for he was tired of American prejudice. He was obviously unaware that the identity he was escaping from had already become a part of his self, which he can never shed off. By remembering the two blacks, Naipaul is looking into mirror, which reflects his state: blindly holding on one identity doesn't belong to him, and on the other hand trying to deserting another one he can never get rid of.

So to return to my island in the Orinoco, after the twenty years of writing that had taken me to a romantic vision of the place was to return to a place that was no longer mine in the way that it had been mine when I was a child, when I never thought whether it was mine or not. (159)

After 40 years' exile life, experiencing ups and downs as a metropolitan writer, Naipaul has already been able to face his past and to examine his colonial identity. The result of this reconciliation is that: Trinidad remains unchanged; the changed one is Naipaul, who, on one hand, has already grown out of the island which is not his Trinidad any more; on the other hand, the colonial identity has long implanted in his self, no matter how reluctantly for him to recognize the fact.

II. The Rediscovery of India

Different from Trinidad, India is always a place for Naipaul to return, which is an area of darkness to venture in and a part of him to be discovered. Since his grandfather was sent to Trinidad as an indentured farm worker, Naipaul's family had begun a hundred-year-long dream of going back home. In *A House for Mr. Biswas*, old men sitting in penthouses talk about going back to India, which is never fulfilled. The Indian religious rites survive in a way out of the understanding of children who speak English: "there were many ceremonies and readings, some of which went on for days. But no one explained or translated for us who could no longer follow the language."¹ Indian religions have become foreign to Naipaul, as he says in *India: A Wounded Civilisation*, Indian identity is related to a set of beliefs and rituals, a knowledge of the gods, a code, an entire civilization. The loss of traditional beliefs directly leads to the loss of Indian identity.

With the expectation to review the lost Indian culture and traditions, Naipaul traveled several times back to India. The output of the first two disappointing journeys is two travelogues: *An Area of Darkness* (1963) and *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977). Instead of seeing a strong culture to back on, he realized that India as a myth is doomed. There is no way out. "India is the old, wounded and 'ancient culture' that has lost the drive to go forward". Hinduism has lost its creative urges. Shiva has stopped dancing.²

Although the first two journeys before fail to find a strong and renovating culture, they provide Naipaul a chance to be aware of the Indian traditions and philosophies in his consciousness. The rediscovery undoubtedly strongly affects Naipaul's worldview and forces him to further examine his Indian identity. As a descendant of a Brahminian family, Naipaul inherits the Hindu consciousness of longing for order, castes, duties and wishes for a spiritual life, which scatter everywhere in the novel.

¹ Naipaul V.S. "Two Worlds". Nobel lecture. December 7, 2001.

² Abdollah Zahiri, "The Rediscovery of India: V.S. Naipaul and Making and Remaking of the Third World". *College Quarterly*, Fall 2005 – Volume 8 Number 4.

Naipaul admits in an interview: "I have to admit ...that a lot of Hindu attitudes, the deeper attitudes, are probably also mine—that I probably do have a feeling about the vanity of human action and human life."¹ The essence of Hindu philosophy is order and the vanity of life, which explains the pessimism hanging over the world in the book and relief at the end of *The Enigma of Arrival*.

The order consciousness consists of order of society and order of life. Although Naipaul criticizes the discrimination and violence caused by the caste system, he advocates the order of the caste from other angles. He talks in an interview: "The caste system, that friendly society which provides people with every kind of cushion in bad times"², which is frequently quoted as one among many other evidences for Naipaul's retroactive attitudes towards Third-world by his enemies. Naipaul actually longs for the order of the caste system in his consciousness, in which people act and work in accordance with their social roles. In *The Enigma of Arrival*, after recounting his journey back and forth the two worlds and his tough experience as a writer, the narrator returns to Wiltshire, the epitome of England, and sees the decays in a new angle. He mentions one of the poems his landlord sent him—a poem of Indian fancy about Krishna and Shiva, on which the narrator comments:

The romance was in fact older...something from the days of imperial glory, when—out of material satiety and the expectation of the world's continuing to be ordered as it had been ordered for a whole century and more—power and glory had begun to undo themselves from within. " (212)

The landlord, as well as the narrator, holds nostalgia towards the ordered society. The narrator believes that the loss of order is one of the reasons of the decay, which he sees in the Wiltshire, in Salman Rushdie's words, "the British have lost their way

¹ Robert M. Greenberg, "Anger and the Alchemy of Literary Method in V.S.Naipaul's Political Fiction: The Case of *The Mimic Men*", *Twentieth Century Literature*, summer, 2000

² Rachael Kohn, "Indian Through V.S.Naipaul's Eyes" *Radio National, Australia*, 9 September 2001

because of ‘an absence of authority, an organization in decay.’”¹ The image of the manor no doubt serves as an image of epitome of English society: due to the retreat of the landlord, the manor quickly reduces into decays, while the fall of the manor encourages intrusion of different people, factory workers, town people and foreigners (the narrator himself), which in turn signifies and speeds up the falling the manor, that is, the loss of the ordered society. The valley, which is supposed to be a Wordsworthian peasantry world, now is threatened by the new farming and the chaos along with it.

As to the life order, most of Naipaul’s books are structured around the Indian notion of four stages of life—student, marriage, house owner and withdrawal from the worldliness. Naipaul says to Rachael Kohn in the interview about Indian traditions that: along with the highly-ordered caste system, there always are Sadhus elements in Indian philosophy, which causes people wish to drop out of the tight caste and family constrains, to be free, and “at end of you life when you have been in the world, you might then withdraw, which we all feel sometimes that it’s time to withdraw, to pack up one’s boots, to retire.”² Naipaul has been definitely influenced by this pessimistic philosophy. In *The Enigma of Arrival*, by way of revision of his early journeys and meditations on life in the valley, Naipaul reviews his stages of life—a student from the colonial, establishment as a writer and settlement at Wiltshire at last. The narrator repeatedly describes his first arrival at the valley: rained and misty, “hardly see where I was” and “felt strangeness”; everything around seems familiar as well as foreign to him, which deepens the anxiety he feels as an intruder. For his own emotional needs of stability, rootedness and continuity, the narrator tries to transform the flux of the actual world—seasons, decays and deaths of people—into orderly, continuous cycles of changes, from which the Indian philosophy penetrates into Naipaul and in turn directs his way of seeing the world. In the last parts of the novel, the intrusion of the modernization, the decays of the manor and deaths of people around him are finally

¹ Salman Rushdie, “A Sad Pastoral”. *The Guardian*. Friday March 13, 1987.

² Rachael Kohn, “Indian Through V.S.Naipaul’s Eyes” *Radio National, Australia*, 9 September 2001

gathered into an order, a cycle, says the narrator, "I had lived with the idea of change, had seen it as a constant, had seen a world in flux, had seen human life as a series of cycles that sometimes ran together." (335)

According to Indian myths, Shiva, the most powerful God, holds Destruction in one hand and Creation in the other. For Indians, life is a recurring cycle without ending that from the place of destruction new life emerges. The world is nothing but an illusion. Life consists of changes, rise or fall of individuals and countries as well. Disappointed at the metropolitan culture, the narrator (Naipaul) withdraws to the countryside; however, instead of being saved from the identity fragmentation, he sees the same changes and decays. After the uneasiness and disillusionment, feelings of mourning at the changes begin to fade away. He begins to realize that "idea of an unchanging life was wrong. Change was constant".(32) With the awareness, he feels "in tune with the natural world", and meeting distress halfway, he "cultivated old, possibly ancestral ways of feeling, the ways of glory dead, and held on to the idea of a world in flux: the drum of creation in the god's right hand, the flame of destruction in his left".(54)

It is a series of deaths that make narrator come to final relief. Death is no only another motif of this novel but the motif of life. He comprehends that, "Death was the motif; it had perhaps been the motif all along. Death and the way of handling it—that was the motif of the story of Jack". (344) In the head page of the book, the writer dedicates this novel to his dead little brother who was a fellow writer and died several years before the book, which suggests the pessimistic feeling hanging over the book. In the last two parts of the book, "Rooks" and "The Ceremony of Farewell", the narrator describes several other deaths—deaths of the butler of the manor Phillip, of Mrs. Gandhi and of the narrator's sister Sati. On the sister's funeral, Sati's husband asks the pundit if he could see his wife again. The pundit, believing the Hindu idea of reincarnation that men will be released from the cycle of rebirth after a series of good lives, answers, "But you wouldn't know it is her".(349) The simple explanation embodies the essence of destruction/creation philosophy. Every thing in the world will get a rebirth in a new form. After realizing this, the narrator gets released and writes

“very fast about Jack and his garden”. (354)

In order to locate his identities, Naipaul takes journeys, physically and spiritually, back to his origins— Trinidad and India, expecting to find the root. The researches of the Caribbean world and the analysis of Indian religion and culture make Naipaul believe that the Indian-Trinidadian culture, which he has long turned his back on, has already penetrated into him and has become a part of his identity. However, alienation from his origins makes it difficult for him to be fully “in” them: Living and writing in London, he is geographically away from his root; in culture, due to the loss of language of the colonial, it’s also hard for him to comprehend and recognize former colonial and Indian culturally; receiving English education, Naipaul has long lost religious beliefs so that lots of Brahmin prohibitions have been deserted. In a word, as an English writer in the cultural hybridity world, due to the clashes of different cultures, Naipaul has no choice but to accept his hybridity identity

Among the rising post-colonial writers tormented by the loss of roots, V.S.Naipaul is undoubtedly the most prominent one. As a descendant of Indian Brahman Diaspora, Naipaul inherits the family uprootedness and anxiety for a certain identity in the circumstance of the displacement. As “new arrivals” and “a disadvantaged community”, his Indian family chooses to withdraw into its own world— “the world of my grandmother’s house” with tall corrugated-iron gate, in which way they wish to protect their own Indian identity. As Naipaul says in his Nobel lecture—Two Worlds: “the excluding idea was a kind of protection; it enabled us—for the time being, and only for the time being—to live in our worn way and according to our own rules, to live in own fading India.” This judge is also described in his most famous book *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Ignoring the threatening invasion of the outside world and other culture, the Indian Diasporatic family pretends not seeing their identity is on the danger of loosing. With the English education and wishes to see “those areas of darkness” around him, Naipaul chooses to step out of the limited world to locate his own identity in this hybridity world; since his first arrival at the center of metropolitan experiencing his second rootlessness, Naipaul has started the never-ending searching

for the lost identity and has experienced several stages of locating his identity, yearning for the metropolitan identity, disappointing at the loss of Englishness, turning to Indian culture—the wishes for a strong cultural background, all of which unveil Naipaul's identity crisis. He travels and observes, tormented at a way out of the crisis, and *The Enigma of Arrival* is the output of his many years searching, which makes him realized that the colonial cultures and identities have long penetrated into him and have make important parts of his identity that he can never escape from.

CHAPTER THREE

The Settlement with the English Identity

My story was to be set in classical times, in the Mediterranean...He (arrived)... at that classical port with the walls and gateways like cutouts. He would enter there and be swallowed by the life and noise of a crowded city...Gradually there would come to him a feeling that he was getting nowhere; he would lose his sense of mission; he would begin to know only that he was lost. His feeling of adventure would give way to panic...he has been saved; the world is as he remembered it. Only one thing is missing now. Above the cutout walls and buildings there is no mast, no sail. The antique ship has gone. The traveler has lived out his life. (98-99)

The quoted passage is a “free ride of the imagination” of the “I” — the narrator in the book— after accidentally coming across one of Giorgio de Chirico’s painting, *The Enigma of Arrival*. The name of the painting and the painting itself attract him because they make him feel that “in an indirect way the title referred to something in my own experience”.(98) Most of Naipaul’s works, fiction or non-fiction, are autobiographical, drawing materials from his life, which seems to be a tradition of the third-world writers due to their similar colonial background and English writing experience . To Naipaul, if at the first beginning of his writing career, accounts of his life are supposed to be a strategy to attract critical attention (and he did) in works like *A House for Mr. Biswas*, autobiography gradually becomes a chance of revising his life, to “assert a connection between a past and present self—establish a continuity over time which could be thought to define the very notion of identity...”¹*The Enigma*

¹Helen Hayward, *The Enigma of V.S.Naipaul: Sources and Contexts*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 39

of Arrival continues and summarizes Naipaul's half-a-century's battle with his English identity.

I. The Disillusionment with English Culture

In forming their personal identities, people share certain group allegiances or characteristics such as religion, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and nationality, which help to specify the subject and its sense of identity.¹ As we have talked in previous chapter, there are two views of cultural identity; one is closed, believing that it is a pre-given and fixed one; the other is open, believing that cultural identity is always in process, never to be fully completed. Since the cultural identity is not born into a subject, the demand to locate his identity in the process of globalization and hybridity of culture forces cultural subjects to choose a strong culture to back on.

Homi Bhabha, talking in Fanon's case, says, "In occupying two places at once—or three in Fanon's case—the depersonalized, dislocated colonial subject can become an incalculable object, quite literally difficult to place".² This comment works in Naipaul's case as well. With the biological background of Indian and Caribbean, whose culture is supposed to be Naipaul's mother culture, and educational ground of metropolitan culture which can be regarded as his "foster culture", the identity issue is chaotic and confusing to Naipaul. According to Derrida, the postmodern identity is a process of deconstructing the old identities and reconstructing new ones; While the "third-space" or "in-between" situation requires the postcolonial cultural subjects to be delicately "in" both the metropolitan culture and colonial culture and "out" of them at the same time. In Naipaul's case, he is deeply in metropolitan culture after receiving English education, speaking English as the mother tongue, studying English literature as major at school, setting up English writing as career and inhabiting in England as well. Language, literature works,

¹ Jorge Larrain, *Ideology and Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World Presence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p.154.

² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p.62.

together with people, can be regarded as carriers of certain culture. In Fanon's words, speaking one language means accepting its culture. Naipaul has fully embraced English culture; however, rewards to this faith and devotement from the foster mother are disappointing: as Naipaul repeatedly describes in interviews and in *The Enigma of Arrival*, publishers and critics expect him to be a post-colonial writer, writing to satisfy western readers' curiosity for novelty and wonders. This alienation and distance makes Naipaul realize that "the life in England had been savorless and much of it mean".(101) As a colonial, he would never really move into the center of the metropolitan life, but remain an outsider.

The Enigma of Arrival is a record of Naipaul's settlement with his English cultural identity. Before this book, Naipaul has two other works set in England: *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963) and *The Mimic Men* (1967), through which the fantasy of Naipaul's Englishness begins to collapse. This fantasy mostly comes from his childhood reading and education. Asked about the falsifying cultures in those canons, Naipaul answers,

when you read, you ask yourself what is the country that's giving him all his wonderful material and you have to see, after a while, that isn't a country that's giving him the material. He, by his vision, is creating a country.¹

The transition from admiration to disappointment is a process that almost all colonial writers have to experience. The two books mentioned above can be regarded as the products of this disappointment. In *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963), the story is a parody of Arthurian romance or mimicry of a romantic past. Mr. Stone—a double exile as the writer himself, middle-aged, a classical bourgeois approaching retirement—after a boring life, on his retirement day, Mr. Stone receives a traditional honor to every retired employee—Knight Companion. Ironically, Mr. Stone, far from a romantic knight companion in reality but a little man who used to live in order, has a

¹ Farrukh Dhondy, "Report of an interview by Farrukh Dhondy with V.S.Naipaul", *Asian Age*, 9th August, 2001.

silent wife and a cat as his enemy to exercise his energy on. He is the picture of the imprisoned metropolitan mass of men, who lead “lives of quiet desperation” in Thoreau’s famous words. Only in fantasy, Stone’s spirit can soar out of his prison of self above the imprisoned metropolitan. Naipaul, with depiction of a Mr. Stone, attacks the English bourgeois who are mimicking their former roles and lament an imprisoned, a decaying old world of orderliness; moreover, he is examining one part of himself which he has been dodging. If Naipaul laments the decay of an orderly world in *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*, *The Mimic Men* shows his lamentation at the loss of a new world order. Ralph Singh, Caribbean-Indian businessman and politician, reaches London—the center of the “real” world he looks forwards to all his early life, after a shipwreck of his career in Isabella, ending up with further disillusionment at the metropolitan English society. Most of Naipaul’s African and Caribbean works treat metropolitan England as an alternative solution for the post-colonial people; in *A Bend in the River* e.g. Salim flies to London after getting out the dangerous “jungle”. In Singh’s case, life in London further splits his identity. He imagines himself escaping from the modern city to a London with sheep in Soho Square, riders on horseback, wishing the former time could integrate the spilt identity.

We can read the two works together with *The Enigma of Arrival* as trilogy. Naipaul as an English writer couldn’t be completely accepted by the English audience as an insider; he once said in an interview: “... England didn’t understand what I was doing. If it was my territory it would be different, but I have no territory. England has not appreciated or acknowledged the work I have done”.¹ Disappointed at the metropolitan city, Naipaul turns to countryside with a wish to find remnant of an orderly old England and to recover the lost Englishness in cities.

The narrator arrives on a rainy winter day in a Wiltshire village; the mist, the coldness, everything makes him uneasiness because “I saw what I saw very clearly. But I didn’t know what I was looking at.”(7) He felt “unanchored and strange.”(15) In

¹ Farrukh Dhondy, “Report of an interview by Farrukh Dhondy with V.S.Naipaul”, *Asian Age*, 9th August, 2001.

order to get rid of the feeling of an outsider, an intruder to the old valley—the “real” English, he stands by and watches silently. However, after seeing clear the circumstance around, he soon drowns in a deep sorrow over the complete loss of the Englishness and his nostalgia for the heyday of Victorian imperialism. More than once, he mourns he has missed the peak of the world in the book:

I had grown to live with the idea that things changed; already I lived with the idea of decay. (I had always lived with this idea. It was like my curse: the idea, which I had had even as a child in Trinidad, that I had come into a world past its peak)... So I grew to feel that the grandeur belonged to the past; that I had come to England at the wrong time; that I had come too late to find the England, the heart of empire, which (like a provincial, from a far corner of the empire) I had created in my fantasy ...so I was used to living in a world where the signs were without meaning, or without the meaning intended by their makers. (23, 130-131)

This lamentation runs through the whole book, however, the feeling most strongly expressed in the first section of the book: “Jack’s Garden”. The narrator, holding a wish to find the “real England”, first meets Jack father-in-law and imagines him “Wordsworthian, the subject of a poem Wordsworth might have called ‘the Fuel-Gatherer’.”(22-23) On the other hand, Jack, a farmer with “upright, easy, elegant walk” and a well-managed garden, is the remnant of an old peasantry. Jack, in Naipaul’s imagination, becomes the representative of a real England and its romantic past, in contrast with the new farmer workers from the town. Whenever Naipaul is drawn into the nostalgia for the old England, however, he sees fakeness and decay which cannot be avoided, although they have threatened what he had found and what he had just begun to enter. Seen from afar, a church standing beside the manor gives the surrounding an atmosphere of Victorian Gothic romance; however, observing it closely, the narrator finds the church, which is supposed to be a part of the wealth and security of Victorian-Edwardian times, actually is a renovated one as artificial as the

manor itself.

The estate the narrator stays in is the most powerful proof of the decay of the Victorian England in fantasy. The estate, built with the wealth of empire and once the representation of the glamour of the Imperialism, now arrives at the end of falling which has begun 20 years ago. The builder of the estate, with the ease provided by the empire, gives the building the same style bearing: "There was something very satisfying about this style of building; everything seemed so much itself; everything seemed built for long use; there was no fragility, no anxiety."(205) Coming to narrator's time, with ivy eroding trees and buildings, grounds turning into wildness and gardens shut, the decline of the estate reflects the unavoidable decline and breaks the fantasy of Englishness myths into pieces. The once shining empire, together with its myths, now comes to its end, which is similar to the race horse, who once was noble, famous with loads of triumphs and great records but now is old, blind, trampling in his own dung and waiting for his doom.

Naipaul's desperation to find the remnant Englishness gives away his disorientation at the dismantlement of English identity. As an immigrant writer advancing into metropolitan center from the margin, instead of gloating at the victory of the former colonial exiles as Rob Nixon comments, Naipaul is truly mourning the loss of the grandeur of the Empire and gets uneasy at the intrusion of the globalization and postmodernism as well as his lost metropolitan identity. But he does something more than mourning.

Most of Naipaul's writings draw autobiographical materials. Since autobiography is an act of revision— an act of reworking on one's life, the writer has to get rid of some material intentionally or accidentally. More than once, Naipaul furnishes his accounts of life in more than one occasion to serve different purposes. In *Enigma of Arrival*, as the title suggests, is filled with a sense of an end, kind of apprehension. The distortion of his identity drives him to review his life and to ponder on the source of his disillusionment at the loss of the Englishness Myths. Through the revision, he realizes that, as a product of the colonial mimicry to the metropolitan

culture, the English identity he has been running after is just a myth.

In the section of "The Journey", the narrator starts from the farewell to his Indian family before the take-off to the "real world", which can be read as a sequel of *A House for Mr. Biswas*. As a son to a big Indian family, with expectation of a disappointed father who has a fever at the English culture and literature, he feels suffocated at the Trinidadian "wildness" and dreams of flying to the "real world" to be a writer. The journey is supposed to be a reward for the dream and a new life to the narrator: "This journey began some days before my eighteenth birthday...It was the journey that took me from my island, Trinidad, off the northern coast of Venezuela, to England". (104) The eighteenth birthday is the indication of growing-up, in narrator's case, it becomes a rebirth, the beginning of a new life. Half of his life is prepared for this rebirth: "As English penetrated, we began to lose our language"¹; English becomes his mother language; with an English education, the only form of education the island can supply, and a journalist father enlightening his passion at English literature, narrator becomes a product of the colonial mimicry towards the metropolitan world. With an ambition to be an English writer, as he imagines an English writer should be, the narrator tries to collect "metropolitan" material for his "Gala Night", which is the synthesis of his England in fantasy. He soon realizes that there are no such things existing in reality any longer. Expecting to meet a London as the one leaping out of Dickens's novels and illustrations, instead, the narrator gets disillusioned and then emptiness and loneliness follow. He is disturbed by the truth that he is disowned by the metropolis, to which he thought he belongs. The disturbance, he recalls "more diminishing than the disturbance I had felt in New York when I had entered, as though entering something that was mine by right, the bookshop which had turned out to have very little for me after all." (134) He missed the days dreaming in books and cinemas far away back on the isolated island—"In those dark halls I had dreamt of a life elsewhere. Now, in the place that for all those years had been the 'elsewhere', no further dream was possible". (134)

¹ V. S. Naipaul, "Two Worlds". Nobel lecture. December 7, 2001

Like a disowned child, the narrator begins to realize his own life as a colonial and exile. This realization makes the narrator experience a rupture and up-rootlessness which he never feels at the airfield from Trinidad to New York as an ambitious young man. He sees that he has been falsifying his experience, hiding from his identity and widening the rupture between man and writer. Anxieties of exile, the insecurity as a deserted child, and the distortion of his identity, as “a corpse at the bottom of a river or stream, tossing in the current” (158), force him to go on another journey to find his lost identity.

II The Arrival at the Third Space

Timothy F. Weiss analyzes Naipaul’s London complex, saying that a defining element in Naipaul’s early works is his characters’ romantic desire for the “real world” beyond Trinidad.¹ This real world is not exactly England but a constructive and collective colonial fantasy of the metropolis, “the center to which all things from the colonies gravitate; it is the idealized, affluent, modern First World”². Once entering into London, they—the exiled colonials begin to realize that it is a limbo that cuts them from their community and the metropolitan community: the marginal position and the impersonality of the modern big city have turned them into stones without a complete identity as in *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*. For a colonial, “exile is a condition of absence that cannot be filled either by returning home or to a former identity, manner of perception, or way of thinking.”³ Weiss further proposes that in order to unify the spilt self and construct a sense of society and home, one has to take a “revolution in mind” which means seeing in a new way. The sense of exile ends only when there is no longer a barrier between one’s new self and the newly-constructed social context.

This is consistent with Bhabha’s third- space theory: he insists on “negotiation”

¹ Timothy F. Weiss, *On the Margins: The Art of Exile in V.S. Naipaul*. US: The University of Massachusetts/ Amherst. 1992. p.88.

² *Ibid.* p. 89.

³ *Ibid.* p. 91.

instead of confrontation or “negation” in face of cultural difference, and introduces “unhomely lives” to illustrate the exiles and their situation. In the displacement, “the border between home and world become confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other...”¹ Since the colonials are doomed to be exiles and homeless, the only way out is to make his own world, that is, turning the world into his home, in which to construct the hybridity identities.

If Naipaul retreats into the countryside with the expectation to be “saved” from the loss of the myths of Englishness and the splits of identity which he has been searching for half a life, what he has found makes the anxiety for a certain identity gradually fade, which is replaced by a feeling of peace instead. In the book, he keeps reminding readers his fading dreads of changes and decays, and his successful balance of anxiety and the ideas of flux as well, all of which show that Naipaul has walked out of the constraints of a definite identity, nationally or culturally, no matter how reluctantly he is.

Naipaul once regarded Maupassant as the greatest French writer because he was good at writing about the function of writing in a culture that “in nearly every story there is a complete life that is being displayed.”² Penetrating into characters by sharp observation is one of features in Naipaul’s works. Naipaul depicts many characters and their different response to the loss of identity that all the modern people are facing. There are people, whose identity is closely related to the Metropolitan culture, clinging to the fantasy of the past. The landlord of the manor, an unsuccessful Edwardian, has become the axis that links different people together. Naipaul holds special feelings to the landlord and in some way regarding him as the imperial version of Naipaul. They are brought together by the historical chains. The estate, a product of the empire, links them together:

An empire lay between us...This Empire explains my birth in the New

¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p.9.

² Farrukh Dhondy, “Report of an interview by Farrukh Dhondy with V.S.Naipaul”, *Asian Age*, 9th August, 2001.

World, the language I used, the vocation and ambition I had; this empire in the end explained my presence there in the valley, in the cottage, in the grounds of the manor. But we were— or started— at opposite ends of wealth, privilege, and in the hearts of different cultures. (191)

The landlord and his decaying estate are closely associated with imperial England. Their history is the history of the modern England. The landlord retreats into his castle since the 1950s, which is a period of the beginning of the great movement of peoples as Naipaul recalls. It's also the time that Naipaul came into the metropolitan center and the beginning of the loss of the Englishness myths. The loss of the old order directly threatens the English imperial identity, which makes the landlord withdraw into the manor to protect his identities of a Victorian-Edwardian, to protect his identity characterized with “the value of his name, this affection, the badge of a particular group, this class lesson from another age”(215) from being split. The identity of landlord, similar to the style of his poems and paintings in early years, stalls there:

He had struck to his form and won admiration for his style at an early age; had early arrived at his ideas of who he was, his worth and his sensibility; and he had stalled there...the view from his back windows of a complete, untouched, untroubled world — had turned to morbidity, acedia, a death of the soul. (282)

The bigger world is changing; even the estate has become an economic burden and has eventually been intruded by new order including town people, lower classes and even former colonials, like Naipaul himself. Blind to the changes outside his window, the landlord is drowned into his own fantasy of the past—the trees surrounded with ivy, the Edwardian pronunciation, poems and stories about old Oriental fantasies and romantic gardens, through which to protect the long-lost imperial identity from losing in this man-made, falsifying mini-empire.

The landlord and his decaying manor are symbols of the England and Englishness, on which people and their identities are dependent. People either cling to the past or get used to new identities after experiencing agonies of ripping and transforming. Salman Rushdie gives his comments, which is over general but catches the points:

All the book's personage are in some way fast chained to the manor—a second gardener, Pitton, the estate manager Philips and his wife, a driver, a failed writer, even the narrator himself—and they, too, are going down with the ship. Death and failure stalk them all.¹

Alan, the unsuccessful writer, can be regarded as shadow of the early Naipaul, searching for “materials” similar to the “Gala Night”, which a young Naipaul dreamed to be real England. Different from the landlord, Alan senses the loss of English identity as a result of the struggles between a new order and the old one. The failure as an English writer and the homosexual orientation make him on the margin of the metropolitan literary world. The anxiety of finding a position to locate his identity occasionally drives him to the countryside, and to the fantasy of “rich friend”—the landlord, which is also the remnant of the old literature—a therapy to get rid of the impersonality of London; however, the decay of the manor and the withdrawal of the landlord himself cannot “save” him from the splits of a man and a writer. Alan cannot find a place to locate his identity, which causes his suicide at the end. Ironically, his death provides the people whom he once flatters materials, and only in these pretended mourning articles, he acquires his identity of a man and of a writer as well which he never got in his day. Alan's death and failure signify the loss of the old Englishness and English literature, whose revival is dependent on the new orders created by people like Naipaul, representative of the growing postcolonial writers.

In order to keep old identities he is born into or made into, the landlord chooses

¹ Salman Rushdie, “A Sad Pastoral”. *The Guardian*. Friday March 13, 1987.

withdrawal into his small empire, and Alan death; while the less significant people manage to survive pangs of splits from the old identities and devote themselves into new identities, which they construct, willingly or not. It's also them who give Naipaul inspiration to desert constraints of his past and to live with the world created by him. Both Pitton the gardener and Bray the car hirer live a dependent life on the manor, spiritually and financially. Without the manor, they both turn to nobody without an independent identity. After working in the manor for 20 years, Pitton, the remnant of the sixteen gardeners in legend of the manor, has long lost his identity as a person. In order to be distinguished from servants of the manor, he insists on wearing suits and ties which obviously fail to come to the effect and falls into a joke. The overdressed manner, not unlike Bray—the car hirer's peaked cap, which is for the sake of "business" as Bray once explains to narrator, and the plumber Tony's van with his name on it, is Pitton's efforts for people to recognize him as a person. He mimics his employer—the landlord, mimicking his pronunciations, gestures and tastes with a wish to establish an identity, from which Naipaul definitely finds something in common as a former colonial searching for identity in the metropolitan center. Pitton doesn't exist as himself unless at occasions, Mr. Philips calls out "Fred" for tea and he is invited for champagne by the landlord. He gets panicked at the narrator's sudden home visit, exposing of his poverty and dependence at the manor, which is the end of his pretence of an independent man. When he is fired due to the economic burden of the manor, Pitton loses his identity and direction completely. He refuses to move on, keeps bringing up new ideas and keeps rejecting them, disorientated at the loss:

He was disorientated, his frenzy expressed in these brisk, jerky little journeys, half yielding to his old routine, his wish to look after his garden, to do the jobs he had planned to do that morning; then awaking afresh to his loss. Like an ant whose nest had just been smashed, he moved about hither and thither. (273)

This is also the picture of Naipaul before his arrival at the valley: as an exile, who is

disowned by the English culture which he is made into since he was a colonial child, and a traitor who has long turned his back on his mother culture, Naipaul is not unlike Pitton who has lost his half a life long identity and gets disorientated at the future. However, different from Naipaul's stagnancy at the valley mediating on the past, Pitton finally moves on by moving into another council flat, and working as a laundry man. He has found his new position and identity.

Naipaul gradually learns to celebrate the life in Wiltshire, although he is aware that it's not his place, and is embarrassed at finding that his existence in the valley is sort of intrusion:

For me, for the writer's gift and freedom, the labor and disappointments of the writing life, and the being away from my home; for that loss, for having no place of my own, this gift of the second life in Wiltshire, the second, happier childhood as it were, the second arrival (but with an adult's perception) at a knowledge of natural things, together with the fulfillment of the child's dream of the safe house in the wood. (88)

If his first childhood has made him dream of a career as a English writer in metropolitan England and caused his life-long agony over the loss of identity, this second "childhood" makes him arrive at a new realization, which he has been searching for his whole life, that is, in the postmodern world, everybody is experiencing the uprootedness and being stuck in the identity crisis, whether on his own land or not. There are new farmers with a college degree being part of the machinery and moving with their work everywhere; the milkman family moves to the valley in order to be saved from the impersonality of city life, only ends up as an outsiders and is forced to move on; beautiful Brenda, who inherits her father's disappointment and lives with a fantasy of romance, elopes with the plumber and ends up dead; the Philipsses, campers "in the ruins, living with what he found, delighted by the evidence of the life of the past"(p.235), live in the manor as servants without awareness of their temporary situation and the approaching uprootedness. It

is a universal crisis for every each person in the world.

Since coming back to the past — Victorian England, Indian and Trinidad is impossible, Naipaul has to make up a world of his own, in which one can combine his split identities as an exile writer and man. Jack's life is one of the most inspiring one. The narrator's first impression on Jack is romantic that he becomes a "figure of literature in that ancient landscape", a Wordsworthian character who lives in harmony with the circumstance. He lives and works in tune with the seasons and the fast changing countryside so that, to the narrator, Jack is almost the symbol of real England, functioning as the Stonehenge does near the valley. But slowly realization occurs to him that "Jack was living in the middle of junk, among the ruins of nearly a century", "among superseded things".(p.15.) The garden, which is supposed to be part of Jack's personality, actually looks "like the greenhouse advertised in newspapers and magazines, and might have been bought by mail order".(30) Jack is no more rooted as the narrator does, except that he has created his own world and lives in harmony with this creation.

What lead to final relief are several deaths— Jack's, Alan's, Mr. Philips's, Sati's, Mrs. Gandhi's and his brother's— and the narrator's sudden middle age. Naipaul comes into an existential realization: threatened with the unavoidable uprootedness and death, one should choose to be a doer, to create our own world, even though what he creates is always inevitably undone; he has to remake our world. When Jack enjoys his last Sunday afternoon with friends and waves happily in his bouncing car, Naipaul is touched by his courage and optimism, believing that Jack has created his own world and lived out his life.

House is an important image in the book. Everybody except the landlord lives in a rented house, which is symbol of instability of exiles. They improve or damage their rented houses at will to make it home or a temporary camp. The attitudes towards the house are responses to anxiety of the instable identity. The dairyman family wrecks the pretty pink cottage with rose gardens and moves on to another place. The Philipases decorate the servant parlor with care, which still can't protect the instability in them from the narrator. Jack runs his garden in tune with the season,

however, after his death, his wife has to desert the garden and moves into a council flat. The reality without a place of one's own echoes Naipaul's situation of losing a place to locate his identity: "...without lodgings or security, people who knew what it was to be in charge of their fates, but felt they had lost control".(305) At the end of the book, the narrator moves out of the manor' cottage and constructs a house of his own, which used to belong to a girl half century ago. The house is already out of the old lady's recognition. Naipaul realizes that, as in Alan's case, the new order represented by former colonials or outsiders both in English literature and English life has taken over the world from the old ones. Naipaul has finally arrived at the third space—a "beyond" place simultaneously outside and insides of the first world and former colonial one— to locate his hybridity identity. He has created the world into his home.

CONCLUSION

This is a hybridity world that the decay of the nationalism mythology has already made the stable national-cultural identity a fantasy. Postcolonial cultural subjects become products of cultural hybridity: receiving metropolitan education and deserting their own original places, they are stuck in an embarrassing position outside of either culture. Due to English education and English cultural influences, they have already spiritually acknowledged the metropolitan culture; however, as exiles in metropolitan world, they are marginalized as cultural bastards, in the subaltern position. They are forced to stay in the border — the third space between the first world and the third one. So that constructing a hybridity identity in the liminary space is the only compromising way out for postcolonial cultural subjects, willingly or not.

Constructing a hybridity identity acquires cultural subjects at the same time both “in” and “out” of either culture. Minorities and postcolonial subjects have to negotiate his identification by rejecting metropolitan cultural priority and re-examining the colonial history at the same time, through which to get out of the subaltern position and to make their voices heard. This new identity provides the marginalized minority groups theory weapons to locate their identity and fight for equal rights in the multi-cultural world. The location of this identity for displaced cultural subjects is a process of cultural transition, in which they have to experience a suffering rip from their past and their mimic identity. They have to experience a process full of negotiation and insecurity, to be reborn.

Before *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul was long stuck in confusions of locating his own identity as most of his fellow postcolonial writers did. As a colonial with a dream of being an English writer, Naipaul chooses to self-exile in the metropolitan London, experiencing loss of an integrated identity. Anxiety and agony of no belonging permeate most of his works, and identity searching has become one of his themes. Driven by the anxiety of insecurity, he travels and searches across continents

in hope of finding a place to locate his identity. *The Enigma of Arrival* is the accumulation and record of his half-life's efforts, torments and rips along with the searching journey.

In order to construct a new identity, one has to deconstruct the old one. In Naipaul's case, the new identity is constructed through two-directional journeys, geographically and spiritually. One is going back to his ancestry lands to rediscover Indian-Trinidadian culture he left behind years ago. The result of this journey is both celebrating and heartbreaking: he realizes that, both the Indian diasporic insecurity inherited from his Indian-Trinidadian family and the traditional Brahmin philosophy surviving the English education have become part of his identity, which he can not escape from

The Enigma of Arrival is also a record of Naipaul's settlement with his English identity. If his journey back to Trinidad and India is to rediscover what he has left behind, the journey from London to countryside is to desert fantasies — the English identity that he has been running after. Although after more than 40 years' work, his works and writing talents have been acknowledged by the western people, Naipaul is always tormented by his marginal position in the metropolitan center as well as the disillusionment at the Englishness, which is held by most of the postcolonial explorers. He exiles himself into the countryside from the impersonal London, with a wish to rediscover the remnant of Englishness and reconstruct his English identities on it; however, what he discovers from Wiltshire is not the lost Englishness but further disillusionment, and deconstruction of the English identity follows.

After journeys mixed with ruptures and celebrations, Naipaul arrives at third space — out of constrains of cultural opposition and accepts the hybridity identity, which is a process of rebirth. The new identity and new position out of certain cultural controls endow him the truest eyes to observe the world and people around, from which he realizes that everyone is exile, either a local or a colonial immigrant, in the multi-cultural world. Facing the threats of modernization and globalization, everyone is in danger of losing his identities. Naipaul turns the valley into a stage, on which people come back and forth to put a life show on, to unify his self and the world. The

construction of the new identity eases the anxiety of security and belonging, which pushes his works into a new stage. His experience of negotiating between different cultures to locate the lost exile identity undoubtedly inspires other postmodern cultural subjects who are struggling to get out of identification crisis.

This new identity also overthrows the domination of the major voices and provides postcolonial cultural subjects new positions in the multi-cultural world. Josna E. Rege's comments on another exile writer Salman Rushdie's also works in Naipaul and other postcolonial writers' case:

In the contemporary context, ...in which a migrant, diasporic, cosmopolitan consciousness dominates, and also as the foundational texts for a new kind of postcolonialism being established in the metropolitan academy....the opportunity these novels give to members of marginalized groups or national minorities to place themselves center stage in the drama of national history, rather than feel the pressure to subsume themselves in the mainstream, official version¹.

The hybridity identity, as the fundamental element, arms people like V.S.Naipaul to walk into the plural world and make their voices heard in the metropolitan world.

¹ Josna E. Rege, "Victim into Protagonist? *Midnight Children* and the Post-Rushdie National Narratives of the Eighties" in *Critical Essays on Salman Rushdie* ed. M. Keith Booker. New York: G.K.Hall & Co. 1999. p.253. & p.273.

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