

Desperate Spirits: The Blurred Belonging as a Sign of Identity Split in V. S. Naipaul's Narrative of Migration *The Mimic Men*

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Abstract:

The ongoing colonialism left tremendous psychological and social aftermaths on the colonized individuals' psyche. This paper offers a critical reading of V.S Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* (1967). It evokes questions of identity crisis through the examination of the character of a Caribbean migrant, Ralph Singh, and his experience of exile. The novel describes the conflicts of the displaced migrant, Ralph Singh, in Britain as it pasteurizes his journey of self-discovery and self-identification. It focuses on the dilemma of identity crisis as a sign of social and psychological disorder. Ralph feels ashamed of his paternal Indian origin and he is disappointed because he belongs to Trinidad which is a chaotic society that lacks order. Ralph skepticism to Britain reflects his psychological disorder. Therefore, this paper explores the psychological dimensions of displacement in the novel. Using the postcolonial approach, this paper exhibits the traumatized self that suffers from extremist disorder. It focuses on the representation and construction of identity in the former colonized Caribbean by focusing on the traumatized individual who faces the dilemma of exile, double alienation that leads crisis of identity. Precisely, it examines the concept of mimicry as a simulation of self-discovery and a living illusion of reality.

Keywords: disorder, displacement, identity, migration, mimicry

1. INTRODUCTION:

Literature, among other artistic forms, is one of the representatives of reality. Authors, journalists as well as novelists use narrative texts to reflect on reality. Their writings contemplate geographical, social, political and even psychological realities. Writing involves a strong orientation of historical and cultural interpretation. Therefore, postcolonial English language writing stands as a paramount communicative and as a means of decolonizing the minds.

In the postcolonial context, literary texts are written in English, one of the languages of European colonizers, by the subjects of colonization and imperialism. These texts are centered on common themes that are related to the social, political and psychological aftereffects of colonialism, and they exhibit the tensions with the colonial power. They focus on denouncing the alleged genocides of the colonial authority and the ongoing oppression towards the colonized individuals. These texts deal with some issues that are related to colonization and that led to the emergence of certain social, cultural, and psychological plight such as historical trauma, memory disorder, displacement, and identity crisis.

The after effects of the colonization by Great European powers have been highly discussed in postcolonial fiction and nonfiction texts all over the ex-colonized nations. Among these, one can mention V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* (1967). On the light of these texts, Naipaul examines the acts and deeds of the colonizer and demonstrates that these acts have left the formerly colonized nations culturally fractured and devastated. This

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cultural alienation foisted the sensibilities of previously colonized peoples, leaving them in dilemma with fractured psyche, wounded and distorted souls, and fragmented identity. Indeed, the psychological disorders have led some kind of identity crisis, homelessness, exile, and displacement. These issues of identity crisis are deeply rooted in national politics as well as in social space (Jenkins, 2013, p.29).

Yet, Hall (1996) argues that there exists a strong relationship between identity construction and literary narratives. He states that language, culture and history are the fundamental resources used to construct identity and identify one's self within its belonging. On the light of his arguments, identities are determined in relation to representation. To Hall;

[identities] arise from the narrativization of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectivity, even if the belongingness, the suturing into the story through which identities arise is, partly, in the imaginary and therefore, always, partly constructed in fantasy, or at least within a fantasmatic field. (p.04)

Moreover, White agrees with Hall as both contend that narration contributes in constructing self-definition and belonging since it amalgamates real and imaginary aspects in one literary text such as historical novel. White believes that real and imaginary events are references of historiography as both the subjective and the social poles of identity construction are interrelated. Consequently, the real which refers to the historical aspect of a narrative and the imaginary which reflects the subjective aspect of identity construction are references of narration. On this way,

narrative is revealed to be a particularly effective system of discursive meaning production by which individuals can be taught to live a distinctively "imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence" that is to say, an unreal but meaningful relation to the social formations in which they are indentured to live out their lives and realize their destinies as social subjects. (Hall, 1996, p.271)

Using narratives, the writer creates a relationship between the literary text and society to identify himself as a member of the society in the narrative text and generates a strong meaning to the surrounding reality.

2. Methodology Justification: Postcolonial Approach and Literary Criticism

2.1. Fanon's Theory of Inferiority Complex

The postcolonial era witnessed specific cultural changes in the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups. This has affected their cultural identity creating a third space of belonging. Hall argues that cultural identities have histories, seeds in the cultural heritage of the nation they belong to, but they endure consistent continual metamorphosis as he argues "... 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 mere "recovery" of the past" (Pirbhai, 2004, pp.288). It is the past which induces and actuates the cultural identity of a nation as well as the individuals.

The story of *The Mimic Men* revolves around Ralph Singh, a man who finds himself displaced and homeless after his encounter with western culture. Ralph is confused in his self-determination within the unsettled borderline that is shown through Ralph's perception of the colonizer's culture as this latter creates confusion and anxiety in his mind and confines him as a Third World subject. He develops an inferiority complex and therefore thinks that travel and migration to the European ideal land of order will help him cure his memory and impose order on his past. This journey of migration and experience of exile and displacement aims at self-identification and recovery in the present. In the light of Ralph's feeling of shame and inferiority, Fanon's theory of Inferiority Complex is applied

to delineate his psychic disorder, identity crisis and trauma of displacement to explain his desire for admission and recognition within the British borders.

2.2. Bhabha's Theories of Mimicry, Ambivalence and Hybridity

Ralph is a Trinidadian man who is searching for his authentic identity after experiencing multiple identities as he is Indian by origin, Trinidadian by birth and British by mimicry. The desire of identification and the thirst for recognition push Ralph to imitate the European values and behaviors at schools to identify himself within them. Eventually, Ralph is recognized as a politician in Trinidad when he comes back home but he finds himself unable to reconstruct his identity as he feels disordered and displaced. He ends up escaping again to London to spend his days writing his memoir. Ralph considers Trinidad as a shipwrecked island as he says:

Shipwreck: I have used this word before. With my island background, it was the word that always came to me. And this was what I felt I had encountered again in the great city: this feeling of being adrift, a cell of perception, little more, that might be altered, if only fleetingly, by any encounter. (Naipaul, 1967, pp.23-24)

This pessimistic vision towards the island versus the bright perception of the metropolis drives Ralph to live between the borders of the two clashing worlds, in what Bhabha calls "The Third Space". Bhabha (1994) points out that the nonlinear spatiotemporal of worldwide cultures produces a cultural space, a third space, in which irreconcilable disparities are negotiated, creating a conflict unique to borderline occurrences (p.312). Accordingly, the colonizer and the colonized fall under the ambivalence of the colonial discourse. Nevertheless, authority is also hybridized since ambivalence provokes the shift of authority from its position to be placed in the colonial context in which it is inflected by other cultures (Ashcroft, 2013, p.14).

This third space generates the relationship that comes from the amalgamation of the clashing cultures' borders to initiate the inclusive political and social space creating a new identity. Accordingly; Meredith (1998) affirms that third space "initiates new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation" (p.03). Yet, hybridity is a subversive psychological and political strategy that allows the oppressed to locate himself within both cultures. It starts by denying the aboriginal identity since the colonized individual is suffering from trauma and inferiority complex then undergoes different stages of mimicry before it reaches the last stage in which the colonial subject acquires a hybrid identity (Zhou, 2015, p.35). Therefore, The need for a reconstructed, familiar "Other," as a subject of a distinction which is almost the similar, but still not quite, is colonial mimicry. That is to say, the discourse of mimicry is designed upon ambiguity; in order to be effective, mimicry would constantly create its displacement, surplus, and variation (Bhabha, 1994, p.122).

Mimicry and the desire for recognition by the western society is not a choice, rather; it is a psychological reaction towards oppression. The oppressed people develop a feeling of cultural submission. Hence, they find themselves seeking admission and recognition. Fanon arguably states that "since the Other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself know" (Antony, 2013, p.4). Out of the feeling of inferiority, the colonized subject started to mimic the Europeans in their life style using verbose expressions in speaking or writing a European language burying their indigenous culture under the notion of modernity and civilization. Likewise, Fanon (1963) assumes that:

every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. (p.09)

3. Results:

3.1. Dramatizing Reality: the Journey of Shipwrecked Soul

As an outstanding travel writer, Naipaul deals with the political and social issues that affect Third World communities, the aftermaths of colonialism, imperialism, and links them to the question of migration. His works depict his personal experiences as a Trinidadian man by birth, an Indian by ethnicity and origin, and a British by educational career. Naipaul criticizes the weaknesses of his indigenous culture as well as the imperial culture after being disappointed by the breakdown of the ideal image he had about Britain (Sigh et al, 2013, p.98). As a postcolonial writer and critic from Trinidad, an island that went through several stages of colonialism and British imperialism, V.S Naipaul is conscious of the representation of the themes and characters in his writings. He focuses on writing about political themes, oppression, exile, identity, displacement, migration, and alienation. He examines the dilemma of postcolonial societies in his texts, particularly in *The Mimic Men* (1967).

In his novel, *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul exhibits the power of the colonial mimicry that destroys people's culture and history pushing the traumatized colonized individuals to develop a shaken sense of identity. As a migrant displaced writer, Naipaul has a strong sense of pessimism towards home and belonging. He doubts his ability of escaping his actual situation of exile and homelessness as he questions the authenticity of his culture and identity (Ashcroft et al, 2013, p.87). Thus, he views mimicry and migration as the dawn of a new day that opens the doors to the ideal pure life of order in the colonizer's world. This belief is crystal clear in the character of Ralph Singh, the Trinidadian migrant who finds himself in a world that "yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world" (Schalk, 2011, p.198).

Therefore, V.S Naipaul delineates the image of the Caribbean individuals who are culturally hybridized and who are entitled to a dual identity that shakes their sense of belonging. Naipaul claims that Caribbean people who are from distinct ethnicities (Africans, Asians and Indians) could hardly identify themselves and persist with the burden of hybridization (Phukan, 2008, p.142). Thus, they mimic the imperial master, believing that they will be admitted as members of the ideal society of order; one that gives them an authentic fixed identity.

In his novel, *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul discloses his search for home and belonging using the main character, Ralph Singh, to reflect his experience as a migrant who suffers from displacement and identity. Albeit Naipaul admits his Indian and Trinidadian affiliations, he celebrates and propagates the British culture while writing about his dilemma of blurred identity and foggy culture. Naipaul seeks to impose order on his actual life through writing. He uses native characters such as Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men* to depict how they mimic the British imperial power. Thus, his characters are always in search for identity. They migrated from India to Trinidad and then to London. Because of this migration and displacement, those people are always caught between the borders of culture lacking home and the sense of belonging. To use Naipaul's (1981) words when he commented on homelessness in *The Middle Passage*; "living in a borrowed culture, the West Indian, more than most, needs writers to tell him who he is and where he stands"(p.68).

Besides, Naipaul's main character, Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men*, discloses his individual as well as social identity. He lives in a mess of confusion and multiculturalism as he is always exposed to colonial brainwashing in the missionary boarding schools that worked on erasing his indigenous culture along with implementing the seeds of complexes of inferiority and imperialism superiority in his mind.

3.2. The Psychology of Oppression: the Enigma of Double Alienation

Imperialism has left a great impact on the minds and the psyches of the colonized people. The colonized nations went through dilemmas of torments, oppression, and even

annihilation. They experienced multiple psychological issues such as historical trauma, inferiority complex, shock and mental disorders. As long as they were exposed to the colonizer culture and modern life style, they conceived some defensive mechanisms towards the issue of inferiority complex. In the light of the rise of the ongoing criminalization, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1981) argues that "...the most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world" (p.16). The colonizer focuses on colonizing the indigenous' minds to reshape their personalities according to what fits them. Hence, those people, the oppressed, become confused about their belonging; they stand out of themselves to contemplate their existence.

Being dominated for a long period by the western imperial power, the indigenous people feel worthless. They are the miserable wretched of the earth. They are homeless, dislocated, marginalized, their minds are colonized and their identities are fragmented. Accordingly, Fanon (1961) asserts that "to be 'The Other' is to feel that one is always in a shaky position, to be always on guard, ready to be rejected and...unconsciously doing everything needed to bring about exactly this catastrophe" (p.55). As a colonial dependent, Ralph is exposed to issues of historical trauma, identity crises, exile, and homelessness.

The traumatized exhibit several physical and psychological behaviors. They seem to produce symptoms of hallucination, intrusive flashbacks, recurring dreams and they re-experience past events. Trauma coerces people to relive their fears and sorrow and to go back to their stored memories to experience and feel them again. As it is discussed by Sociologist Bloom (1999) when he notes that "the memories remain [frozen for long time in form of images], body sensations like smells, touch, tastes, and even pain, and strong emotions. [However, they are relived again once they are emotionally provoked] (p.06).

In fact, memory controls and dominates one's life. It is what determines the relationship between one's future, present and past, Bal et al (1999) argue that "our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action, without it, we are nothing" (p.42). The present representations of events, feelings, actions and reactions are disposed and actuated by the images and flashbacks that are stored in memory. The experienced events occur in the cultural context and others hold them beneath determined descriptions. Thus the traumatic memory is cultural memory that holds all the past experiences. On this way,

All representation is based on memory but rather than leading us to some authentic origin or giving us verifiable access to the real, memory, even and especially in its belatedness, is itself based on representation. The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory (Bal et al, 1999, p: 42).

Ralph Singh feels that Isabella gives him the sense of dislocation and this is what causes him to be fractured and fail to find order and self-determination. As he says, he undervalues the Caribbean and views the island as a chaotic society with no cultural or historical context "I wanted to start again from scratch. And it was at this point that I made the decision to forsake the shipwrecked island and all on it" (Naipaul, 1967, p.118). Ralph believes that Isabella Island has provided him with nothing but nonentity, schism, and disarray, so he seeks refuge and acceptance in London in order to establish his personal and social identity. He defends his move to London and departure of the Caribbean by stating:

Coming to London, the great city, seeking order, seeking the flowering, the extension of myself that ought to have come in a city of such miraculous light, I had tried to hasten a process which had seemed elusive. I had tried to give myself a personality. (p.26)

However, after meeting the desperate displaced refugees in London, Singh's aspirations of order and determination in London vanish quickly. His status as an

immigrant student and existence among the displaced people exposes the dilemma of exile, which is mirrored in his effort and desire to make connection with London and integrate himself with Londoners while feeling powerless, perplexed, and hopeless to do so. He is enthralled by the city and its residents; he encapsulates the ideal he has yearned for since deciding to leave the Caribbean and everything that it entails; he claims:

In the great city, so three-dimensional, so rooted in its soil, drawing color from such depths, only the city was real. Those of us who came to it lost some of our solidity; we were trapped into fixed, flat postures. And in this growing disassociation between ourselves and the city in which we walked, scores of separate meetings, not linked even by ourselves, who became nothing more than perceivers: everyone reduced, reciprocally, to a succession of such meetings, so that first experience and then the personality divided bewilderingly into compartments (Naipaul, 1967, p. 27)

Ralph is obsessed by the concept of displacement and homelessness. He feels exiled and displaced in London as he did in Isabella; “[he] was fighting the afternoon alarm of homelessness, an inseparable part of the gipsy life that had inexplicably befallen [him] (Naipaul, 1967, p.206). He tries to find solitude and home in London but he fails. His Memory is still haunted and full of images of his childhood in the Isabella Island. These feelings of nostalgia and fragmentation are signs of his trauma and therefore; “to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event” (Mehni et al, 2015, p.96). In short, Ralph’s psychological awareness about his identity and his memory are muddled by the traumatic experience of displacement. Ralph is the depiction of the traumatic psyche whose severe issue hangs between home and homelessness, order and disorder, purity and impurity. He troubles and challenges his memory ignoring his Indianness, looking for a pure belonging.

Likewise, Ralph considers London as the land of opportunities and order, and Isabella Island as a cursed land. In the light of these assumptions, Ralph believes that “to be born on an island like Isabella, an obscure New World transplantation, second-hand and barbarous, was to be born to disorder” (Naipaul 2001, p.141). He is not satisfied being born in this island, a land he believes is still waiting for Columbus and discovery. Accordingly, Memmi (1974) explains the colonized people’s psychological traumatic experience through the behaviors of the traumatized individual, he states that “this psychological trauma was so intense that they tend to run away from their own individuality by imbibing the traits of their own masters, in order to be equal or to be accepted by the white community” (166).

3.3. Shades of Mimicry: Thirst for Admission and Recognition

Under colonialism and imperialism and in the context of immigration and displacement, mimicry is seen as an unprincipled pattern of behavior. The oppression of the imperialist on the colonized people leads the latter to frustration. In return, the colonized subject develops certain psychological issues and defenses whose unfavorable purposes are to be accepted and recognized by the colonizer. They also feel inferior to their master, developing what Frantz Fanon calls “inferiority complexes.” Fanon argues that the overwhelmed colonized becomes so because the predominant social and cultural order of the colonizer makes racial differences proclaiming and manifesting the superiority of one race over the other. He assumes that the oppressed people develop a sense of denial, self-loathing, shame and dismissal of the homeland culture, as they believe in the colonizer’s superiority (Antony, 2013, p.02). Meanwhile, Fanon emphasizes his perspective using Aimé Césaire words when he says, “I am talking of millions of men who have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair and abasement” (Fanon, 1963, p.1). The colonized people wear the masks of the colonizer’s civilization and alienate themselves from their culture.

Ralph is the sublime mimic man who believes that London is the land of civilization, opportunities, and freedom where he can find purity and order. His attraction to whiteness and the way he admires them is highly clear in Singh's amazement about the white man Mr. Shylock when he says, "Mr. Shylock looked distinguished, like a lawyer or businessman. He had the habit of stroking the lobe of his ear and inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copied it" (Naipaul, 1967, p.7).

Although mimicry is believed to be almost the illusory persuasive layout to assimilation into colonial power order, it makes the mimic man a copy of his master with a fragmentation in his identity and belonging. Those traumatic mimic men advocate the colonizer's culture and civilization. In the light of this fact Memmi (1974) states that "... this psychological trauma was so intense that [the oppressed individuals] tend to run away from their own individuality by imbibing the traits of their own masters, in order to be equal or to be accepted by the white community" (p.166). On behalf of the oppressed Caribbean people, Naipaul uses Ralph Singh to speak about the mimic men in the Caribbean as well as in London and how they behave in order to be recognized by the "Other." Accordingly, Ralph symbolizes the mimic man who wears the mask of an English civilized man; he says:

[The Caribbean people], here on [the Other's] island, handling books printed in this world, and using its goods, had been abandoned and forgotten. [They] pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing [themselves] for life, [they are the] mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new (1967, p.175).

The people of Isabella find themselves under the shades of mimicry because they lack the real authentic culture. It is worth noting that Isabella is a land of indentured servitude, where multiple races melt together under the authority of the colonizer. Thus, the ex-colonized people develop that sense of inferiority complex and thirst for recognition by the 'Other'. Therefore, they tend to assimilate themselves within the western culture to be identified as members of the authoritative society to gain power and recognition. They do so by imitating the colonizer in their lifestyles, values, norms and language.

The mimic men learn to be copies of their masters on the first day at school since education in the Isabella Island has been under the authority of the imperial power. This has a great contribution in raising the sense of alienation and dislocation in the Isabella people's minds and spirits. Ralph asserts that he was persuaded and brainwashed how to perfectly mimic the European. Ralph says:

My first memory of school is of taking an apple to the teacher. This puzzles me. We had no apples on Isabella. It must have been an orange; yet my memory insists on the apple. The editing is clearly at fault, but the edited version is all I have, copied it (Naipaul, 1967, p.90).

The colonial educational system aims at assimilating the children of Isabella Island into the imperialist civilization. It worked on washing their brain through implementing the English culture, values and changes. At the boarding schools, Ralph and his colleagues are indoctrinated how to be mimic men. For example, they are taught to take an apple to their teacher instead of an orange although there is no apple tree on the Isabella Island. In this case, Ralph, as any other colonized, learns to distinguish between the apple and the orange. In this sense, the apple symbolizes the English culture that is considered as the superior civilization and the orange which is part of Isabella; and that refers to the native culture.

By going back to his childhood memory at school, Ralph believes that he was right that they do have oranges not apples but they give their teachers apples. Hence, distinguishing between the two and trying to convince himself that the orange version is more correct enlightens his conscious that his culture is the mirror of his identity and

homeland to which he belongs. In reality, he sees the apple but his mind believes in the apple as a part of the Caribbean culture. However, his English education makes him a mimic man who cannot change his fate as a product of the sociopolitical and cultural formation of the imperialist colonizer. Nevertheless, he is questioning his pure belonging wondering whether he is the fruit of Isabella Island or the fruit of England, the land of purity and order, as he believes.

Although Ralph is an accurate depiction of the colonizer's object, he is aware of his life in the mimicked society. He still feels nostalgia and affiliation towards his childhood home. He defines his mimicry when he says: "we pretend to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New world, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the news" (p.32). He admits that mimicry is implemented in the colonized individual's veins since his infancy despite all the given excuses such as the desire to be educated and prepared for the modern metropolis life.

2.4. Politics of Home and Split of Identity

Once the indigenous culture is exposed to recovery in the postcolonial era, it becomes hybrid. The colonized find themselves unable to identify themselves and determine their identity. They are recognized as half-breed, a mixed cultured people who are partly indigenous, partly European. Hence, to determine his identity and belonging, the colonized finds himself unable to choose between his indigenous identity and the colonial identity. He chooses to have a diasporic identity that enables him to keep his loyalty to the two nations. Accordingly, Stuart Hall asserts that, "diaspora identities are constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new, through transformations and difference" (Weiss, 2016, p.60). Accordingly, diasporic identity people belong to the politically adopted home as well as to the home of origin. They are part of the two countries celebrating both cultures with preference to the colonizer's civilization.

People with a diasporic identity forge sense of consciousness towards their multiculturalists identity and belonging along with a sense of otherness and difference, and develop a sense of displacement (Weiss, 2016, p.60). They believe in identicalness between their motherland and the land in which they are coalesced and assimilated socially, politically, and culturally. Those people are loyal to the imitated world though they remain affiliated to their homeland. Hence, the identity of the displaced people is fragmented due to the sense of the blurred belonging where they live between the borders of two clashing cultures. Diasporic identity is certainly neither complete nor fixed.

Ralph is uncertain about his character as a man of the new world. On one hand, he celebrates the bright side of the culture he imitates such as life style and education, on the other one he criticizes the corrupted side. Ralph's uncertainty and fragility evince the unscrupulousness of the mimicked human souls and the colonizers ones also (Dizayi, 2019, p.924). Mimicry gives the colonized people a chance to experience the modern life aspiring them to feel the illusion of Brutishness as Bhabha (1984) argues; "...mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance that differs/defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically" (p.131). This cultural dismissal represents and elucidates colonial anxiety and the ambivalent relationship between the colonial authority and the mimicked nations that are caught between the borders of two cultures with a fragmented identity.

2.5. Nostalgia and the Desire to Belong

Migration raises questions of identity and belonging along with certain issues such as exile, homelessness, nostalgic memories, and cultural differences. These traits of alienation put people in a situation in which they find themselves in need to belong. Elnnaji (2005) states that the oppressed people suffer from the dilemma of identity crisis that arise when the oppressed develop a sense of belonging to another nation and therefore the different

identities contradict each other and each of which compete to dominate (p.23). Henceforth, the oppressed people go back to their history in order to find signs that may help them identify themselves within one society. To use Clifford words, Bhupen (2014) asserts that, "thinking historically is a process of locating oneself in space and time. And a location... is an itinerary rather than a bounded site a series of encounters and translations" (p.133).

As numerous migrants, Ralph suffers from symptoms of identity crisis, displacement and exile in the Caribbean Isabella Island as well as in London. Although he was born in the Caribbean where he spends his childhood life, he lacks the sense of belonging (Menhil et al, 2015, p.96). Ralph considers his childhood land as a shipwrecked land which is full of chaos and disorder. Thus, he wants to find order, competence, solitude, and belonging in London, the city of light and snow. He admits "[I] wished to make a fresh, clean start. And it was now that [he] resolved to abandon the shipwrecked island and all on it..." (Naipaul, 1967, p.118).

Ralph thinks of Isabella as a landscape of chaos, impurity and disorder. He refuses all what is not British, admitting the infamy and disrepute of the Isabella Island. Ralph states that "[he] had been able at certain moments to think of Isabella as deserted and awaiting discovery" (p.146). Besides, Ralph is convinced that the Isabella's culture is impure. It is deficient from cultural and historical accumulation due to the different races and multicultural ethnicities in the island, along with colonization and imperialism. These descendent ethnicities, migrated Indians, blacks, slaves, indentured servants, and Asians are conscious of and satisfied with their hybrid identities albeit they are not able to identify what they belong to. On the contrary, Ralph is anxious about his identity, he feels detached from the Isabella island community. Meanwhile, he states that the only affiliation between those migrants is the 'Britishness' given to them by the colonizer. Indeed, he thinks that:

Everyone was an individual, fighting for his place in the community. Yet there was community. We were of various races, religious, sets and cliques; and we had somehow found ourselves on the same small island. Nothing bound us together except this common residence... It was only our Britishness, our belonging to the British, which gave us any identity (Naipaul, 1967, p.73).

Naipaul's character, Ralph, symbolizes the unsatisfied ex-colonized who is working to identify himself in one community bearing one culture, a pure one. He endeavors rearrange his life, to detach and emancipate himself from hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, and senses of homelessness and displacement. Meanwhile, he also aims at breaking the ties with the colonizer and at decolonizing his landscape to assert his Indianness. In that sense, Naipaul declares that

It was [his] hope to give expression to the restlessness, the deep disorder...it was [his] hope to give partial expression to the restlessness which this great upheaval has brought about...But... [He is] too much a victim of that restlessness (p.38).

2.6.The Myth of Superiority and Self-Discovery

As a colonizing power the British presented their civilization to the non-English world as an ideal one. This colonial strategy has been undertaken through inculcation of certain norms and beliefs in the colonized natives who attended British funded boarding schools. They presented the English world a world of order, opportunities, success, and power. Thus, the colonized minds believe in the superiority of their colonizer. Ralph Singh believes in this superiority. He considers his paternal culture as subsets of the English culture as he claims;

To be born on an island like Isabella, an obscure New World transplantation, second-hand and barbarous, was to be born to disorder. From an early age, almost from my first lesson at school about the weight of the king's crown, I had sensed this. Now I was to discover that disorder has its own logic and permanence: the

Greek was wise. Even as I was formulating my resolve to escape, there began that series of events which, while sharpening my desire to get away, yet rooted me more firmly to the locality where accident had placed me. (Naipaul, 1967, p.97)

This feeling of shame and disorder motivate Ralph to leave Trinidad fleeing to London. Actually, Ralph goes to London seeking recognition and belonging. He believes that London can give him the opportunity to be assimilated into metropolis world to become one of the English men. In this respect, Naipaul acknowledges that;

Coming to London, the great city, seeking order, seeking the flowering, the extension of myself that ought to have come in a city of such miraculous light, I had tried to hasten a process that had seemed elusive. I had tried to give myself a personality. (Naipaul, 1967, p.26)

To Ralph Singh, London is thus the idealized city to which everyone is dreaming to belong to. He believes that he can find the same order of the English boarding schools in Isabella. That memory is the light that guides Ralph in his way of searching for the self. Meanwhile, he considers his boarding house and the stable relationship with Mr. Shylock and Lieni as a sign of order and Britishness. However, this empire of order collapses when his relationship becomes dispersal. Eventually, he comments on the sense of order in London when he says, "... with Lieni and Mr. Shylock's boarding-house one type of order had gone for good. And when order goes it goes" (p.36). Thereupon, this breakdown denotes the dawn of a new journey of disillusionment and displacement, as Ralph notifies "... so quickly had London gone sour on me" (p.22).

The disorder in London brings about new uncertainties, anxiety, and instability to Ralph's life again. His new vision elucidates London as "the greater disorder, the greater shipwreck" (p.214), though he used to affirm that Isabella is a shipwrecked land:

I had once dismissed as shipwreck. Shipwreck: I have used this word before. With my island background, it was the word that always came to me. And this was what I felt I had encountered again in the great city: this feeling of being adrift, a cell of perception, little more that might be altered, if only fleetingly, by any encounter. (p.32)

Ralph identifies himself as British men depending on the stories of friendship which make him feel home but which can never give him authentic political, economic, and social identity. Thus, he feels lost again, disrupted, and dislocated.

This life experience in London enlightens his consciousness as it guides him to acknowledge his past and enables him determine his identity. It also helps him find his true home and belonging, not the one imposed by the colonizer on his restless life. Singh fails in accomplishing his illusory desire of having an autonomous ideal British identity in London. After experiencing a panic failure, he finds himself into greater disorder. He talks of "escaping to the simple life. But he also thinks that "we do not mean what we say. It is from simplification such as this that we wish to escape, to return to a more elemental complexity" (p.43). Ralph escapes from the Caribbean island and looks for order and purity in England. However, he finds himself in the darkness and dilemma of a greater disorder and low self-esteem. This situation of uncertainties raises his sense of nostalgia to his indigenous homeland along with the feeling of homelessness and alienation, the same he paradoxically has felt in Isabella.

The colonized people's tendency to emulate representative roles of the colonizer's culture is effectively described by the term mimicry, in this case, those of student, dandy, husband and politician. These colonized roles are culmination, which means that the individual is attempting to represent his or her entire identity by adopting a trait that he or she identifies as typical of the colonizing culture as a whole. Singh immerses himself in the aforementioned roles, assuming that he has eventually discovered order and stability in his world, or that he has attained a harmonious identity, despite the fact that such roles only

capture a minor fraction of his identity and consciousness. His identity is so fractured that it can't be encapsulated in a single function. As a result, each role is followed by a breakdown (Huttunen, 2002, p.274) Singh explains the beginning of his dandy role as follows:

In London I had no guide. There was no one to link my present with my past, no one to note my consistences or inconsistencies. It was up to me to choose my character, and I chose the character that was easiest and most attractive. I was the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent to scholarship. (Naipaul, 1967, p.19)

Ralph contradicts himself; a few words later by revealing that he did have a guide; his position as a dandy was developed by Lien, his landlady. He claims that he just did not recognize this at the time, implying that he was already beginning to discover important linkages among his disparate experiences and occurrences through his writing. He adds a little later that he had attempted to adopt a personality, as he had done so many times before, but that he had lost track of who he was. Singh has spent his entire life attempting to become the person he believes people perceive in him. To put it another way, he has defined himself via others and on a larger scale; Ralph has "[the] feeling of being adrift, a cell of perception, little more, that might be altered, if only fleetingly, by any encounter" (Naipaul 2001, p.24). Each interaction draws from him a part that he believes is being demanded of him (Huttunen, 2002, pp.275-276) and there for he remains lost between the clashing worlds.

Singh is unable to create a third place, a harmonization of his disparate identities or ideologies, at this time. As a result, he shifts from one position to the next, experiencing the same sense of nothingness, worthlessness, ambiguity, disarray, and being on the outskirts of almost everything. He experiences flipping backwards and forward between one realm and another, one set of connections and another (Naipaul, 1967, p.154). Ralph has a sense of alienation and confusion as a child on Isabella, and yearned for the order of the city. Soon after coming there, he starts to feel chaotic again and wishes to return to Isabella's conviction, to which he now believes he fits. As his political career on the island demonstrates, this sense of belonging is illusory once again; and so is the case with the traveling back and forth between London and Isabella, the adoption of roles is replicated several times and always has identical repercussions (Huttunen, 2002, p.276).

3. Discussion

3.1. Diasporic Identity and the Journey of Self-discovery

Diasporic migrants frequently have no definite cultural belonging; yet, they have dual loyalty to the indigenous cultural space the settled home. They consider the indigenous culture as the historical ties with the homeland while the adopted nation as a social, political and economic shelter of self-identification. Exiles and migrants are often attached to their past and their motherland. Thus, diasporic identity represents the affiliation between the memories of the past and the realities of the present (Pirbhai 2004, p.288). Exile and migrant memories are translated into narratives that tackle issues of the modern mimic society that undergoes political and cultural changes (Müller, 2013, p.286). This sociopolitical metamorphosis paved the way to the emergence of identity crisis. On this way Stuart Hall defines identity as a continuous shifting process that is formed and transformed due to the surrounding cultural aspects (Hall, 1995, p.598). Accordingly, Maalouf (2000) believes that these circumstances allow people to represent either distinctive or common features within the same community (p.10).

In the act of self-discovery, Ralph gives himself several identities. He is Indian by blood and Trinidadian by childhood belonging. Meanwhile, his friendship with Mr. Shylock and his marriage to Sandra allow him to be identified as a British man. None of the above-mentioned journeys could give Ralph a fixed identity. However literature does

as he ends up with a blurred identity in a hotel room in London writing his memoir to give himself the identity of a migrant writer. Through writing his memoirs, Ralph Singh recounts his experiences and personal background from his Indian ancestry, Trinidadian childhood and education, and his writing career in England. Accordingly, Sweet Wong argues, that “[telling] a story is a great responsibility because words carry power. To receive a story is also a profound responsibility...These stories are survival stories, reckonings with the brutal history of colonization” (D. Sweet Wong et al, 2008, p.XIV). Ralph is able, now, to reconstruct his identity.

3.2. Home and Identity Reconstruction through Writing

Ralph creates a psychic home through writing, but it is not his natural home; it is synthetic and restrained. This illusionary home is still isolated from Ralph’s consciousness, and it is also not centered on his awareness of his history and cultural identity. Along this context, it is ironic that the imperial man’s language, that is an alien artifact, has now become his residence and “an end in itself” (Naipaul, 1967, p.267), and it is fairly more ironic that his current home in London, which he thinks of it as exile, has now become his comfortable zone wherein he finds the clue to reconstruct his fragmented identity (p.271). Ralph, on the other hand, soon convinces himself of the value of his writing in terms of reconnecting him to his Aryan heritage.

Nevertheless, Ralph concludes that he is the only one who can give his past authenticity and order. So, He thinks of the value of his writing in terms of re-connecting him to his Aryan heritage. He no longer craves for ideal landscapes and thus he no more has the desire to quest for knowledge and to know the ideal metropolis city, as he writes. Yet, this does not really seem to him to be a loss. Nevertheless, he assumes that he has ended up living beyond the chaotic absurd life and stepped away from the cycle of experiences. This brings him satisfaction to discover that in doing so, he has also accomplished his Aryan grandparents’ doubling existence split. He recounts the experiences he went through in the journey of self-discovery stating that he has been a student, a homeowner, and a man of affairs, as well as a loner (p.204). Ralph realizes that writing seems to be the only way he can give his history significance and order. He makes it his therapy and reconciliation; “so writing, for all its initial distortion, clarifies, and even becomes a process of life” (p.274).

4. Conclusion

The ongoing exploitation and spiritual colonization of the ex-colonies of the British Empire have deeply affected the colonized people; their minds, their psyche and their collective and individual identities. Being exposed to missionaries and Christianization along with studying in the British boarding schools make the colonized individuals as well as ex-colonized migrants psychologically injured. They were lost between their indigenous culture and the colonizer’s civilization. Thus, they developed a sense of nationalism towards Britain. They think of it as the ideal land of opportunities and freedom. However, they find themselves exposed to the dilemma of displacement and exile. Meanwhile, their inferiority complexes and low self-esteem grew rapidly; therefore, they started to imitate the oppressor’s life style adopting their beliefs and values in the sake of acceptance and recognition in the British society. Even more, some have left their homeland towards Britain believing in the illusion of finding a home and belonging there. However, they end up lost again in the dilemma of diaspora and fragmented identity. Ralph Singh is the idealistic representative of the Caribbean migrant who strives to locate himself in a society of order and power. Yet, he ends up admitting that writing his memoir is the sole cure for his fractured identity.

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