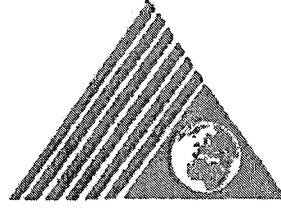


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**T.C.
YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**TRAVELING AND WRITING AS METAPHORS TOWARDS
SELF-REALIZATION IN THE EXILE CONTEXT:**

**JAMAL MAHJOUR'S TRAVELING WITH DJINNS (2003)
AND
VIDIADHAR SURAJPRASAD NAIPAUL'S MIMIC MEN (1967)**

by

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**Submitted to the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences
In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English Literature**

Istanbul, 2005

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Date of Approval by the Administrative Council of the Institute .../.../2005

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to show my gratitude to Asst. Prof. Martin Vialon, my supervisor for the help, and guidance he provided me during my writing process. With the feedback and critical outlook he offered and assisted me in enriching my ideas which made this project come true.

All the sources that I have made use of while writing are depicted in the Bibliography at the end of this work. No other materials have been used out of those referred to the Bibliography.



ABSTRACT

By comparing Jamal Mahjoub's *Travelling with Djinn*s and Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul's *Mimic Men*, I have attempted to depict how the state of metaphorical exile enables the postcolonial intellectual to change his state of alienation to a process of self-realization through the more conscious usage of the processes of traveling and writing. Here writing and traveling form metaphorical grounds where the individual confronts himself as "the other" through which he is better to judge himself and order his life.

In *Travelling with Djinn*s by Mahjoub we are confronted with a 37 years old Sudanese-English protagonist Yasin who has chosen England to spend the rest of his life but by becoming disillusioned by the society and family has become alienated. Throughout the novel Yasin by making a journey in Europe with his son Leo tries to regain the lost sense of space which will enable him to understand what the enigma of Europe is. The journey also becomes a metaphorical quest in time in which Yasin confronts his intermixed memories that burden him.

Similarly, in *The Mimic Men* by Naipaul, we come across a disillusioned middle-aged individual, Ralph Singh, who is in exile in England. Having been born on Isabella from Indian parents, Ralph has never been able to feel himself a part of any land due to racial prejudices which has led him to lead a life of alienation. After his political failure on Isabella we confront him lonely in a hotel room in London detached from friends and family. There he tries to give some order to his life by writing his autobiography which also becomes a metaphorical journey in space and time.

Finally the aim is to make a study of the aesthetic and literary historical implications in the text.

SUNUŞ

Bu alıřmada Jamal Mahjoub'un *Cinlerle Yolculuk* ve Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul'un *Taklitiler* adlı eserlerini inceleyerek, metaforik srgn konumunun, eski smrge lkelerinde doęmuř olan entellektel bireyi daha bilili kıldıęını ve bu ynde seyahat ve yazmayı iinde bulunduęu yabancılařmayı ařarak kendini gerekleřtirmesine yardımcı olan sreler olarak kullanmasına olanak saęladıęını gstermek istedim. Burada seyahat ve yazma bireyin kendini bir yabancı olarak grdę fakat kendini daha iyi yargılamasına ve bylece hayatını dzene sokmasına yardım eden mecazi alanlar olustururlar.

Cinlerle Yolculuk'ta İngiltere'de hayatını srdrmeyi seen fakat toplumla ve ailesiyle olan iliřkilerinde hayal kırıklıęına uęrayarak kendini soyutlayan 37 yařında Sudanlı-İngiliz bir kahramanla karřılařırız. Romanda Yasin oęlu Leo ile Avrupa'da bir yolculuęa ıkararak kaybolan yer dugusunu yeniden kazanarak Avrupa'nın gizemini zmmeye alıřır. Bu yolculuk aynı zamanda Yasin'in karřık hatıralarıyla yzleřtięi zamanda mecazi bir arařtırmaya da dnřr.

Benzer biimde, Naipaul'un *Taklitiler'inde* de İngiltere'de srgn olan, hayal kırıklıęına uęramıř, orta yařı bir kahramanla, Ralph Singh ile karřılařırız. Isabella'da Hintli bir ailenin ocuęu olarak doęmuř olan Ralph kendini hibir zaman ırk ayırımıdan dolayı bir lkeye ait hissetmemiřtir ki bu onu yalnızlıęa itmiřtir. Isabella'daki politik bařarısızlıęından sonra romanda onu Londra'da bir otel odasında arkadařlarından ve ailesinden uzak bir biimde buluruz. Orada, zamanda ve mekanda mecazi bir yolculuęa dnřen bir zyařam hikayesi yazarak hayatını dzene sokmaya alıřır.

Sonuç olarak ama her iki eserdeki estetik ve edebi-tarihsel ęeler zerinde bir arařtırma yapmaktır.

I. INTRODUCTION

Not belonging to any place, any time, any love. A lost origin, the impossibility to take root, a rummaging memory, the present in abeyance. The space of the foreigner is a moving train, a plane in flight, the very transition that precludes stopping.

Julia Kristeva: Strangers to Ourselves (1991)

In the age of vast migrations how is the individual in metaphorical exile going to find a way out into self-realization is the main concentration point of my thesis. In this process there are two main narratives that will help the individual confront his double self which will open up new possibilities to get over the sense of inaction, placidity and disturbance that renders him/her in an ambivalent state. I propose the metaphor of traveling as ontological discourse and writing as a metaphorical journey to be the proper ways of inner psychological confrontation where the individual gains self-awareness and reaches to an inner essence. To my contention it is only possible for the doubly displaced individual to regain a relationship with the “alienated other” inside himself if he discovers the positive potential, recovers from the inferiority complex and gets rid of his ego that deprives him of acting tolerance and hinders his integration into society. I intend to show that through traveling in the foreign land the displaced individual not only regains a new sense of the unfamiliar place whose history he has learned in his homeland but attributes a sense of order to his disturbed memories by finding new connections with his past and present. Writing in the same way becomes a confrontation with the double self of the displaced individual, a ground of action taking, where the narrated becomes the split “I” which by its unfolding helps the writer gain self-fulfillment with the help of a distanced, critical outlook to the past and present self.

My thesis comprises philological and theoretical approach to two contemporary novels

written by displaced individuals from two different countries (Sudan and Trinidad) with a forty years time difference. The first novel where traveling is used as a metaphorical ground to find an inner essence and regain a new consciousness of place is Jamal Mahjoub's (b.1960) *Travelling with Djinns*¹. The second novel where the process of writing a personal autobiography becomes a metaphor for a similar kind of spiritual journey is Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul's (b.1932) novel *The Mimic Men*². Both novels are the depictions of the climax points of their middle-aged protagonists (Yasin Zahir and Ralph Singh respectively) both of whom are overridden by the urge of creating an order into their lives of metaphorical exile which is tattered and disintegrated. However their experiences and wisdom help them turn their exile stance into a creative consciousness whereby they try to get out of the system of power relationships by facing the "negative other" in themselves which they have to erase to make a fresh start. I propose that contrary to the negative view point against the exiled individuals, the notion of metaphorical exile which is used by the displaced individual in order to assess his detachment and originality is a ground of creativity and inspiration which brings forth weapons to fight back against the system of racial prejudices and stereotyping.

Together with the philological approach to my study I will make use of some important theorists like Edward W. Said (1935-2003), Franz Fanon (1925-1961), Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) and Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) related to the concepts of metaphorical exile, post-colonial nationalism, collective memory and racism which are the common grounds which affect the protagonists as postcolonial displaced individuals. By depicting their theories we will have a better historical and methodical understanding of the circumstances that the immigrant individuals have confronted and suffered under and how these concepts find reception in our century as it was tried to be shown in the novels.

In the metaphorical journeys of these protagonists which are aimed at reconciliation there are various intersecting themes that come to the foreground and need to be

¹ Mahjoub, Jamal: *Travelling with Djinns*. London: Chatto and Windus 2003.

² Naipaul, Vidiadhar Surajprasad: *The Mimic Men* [1967], London: Picador 1995.

resolved to fight back the ambivalence. In my thesis respectively I will concentrate on the positive capability of metaphorical exile by relying on Edward Said. Secondly the impact of memories in the displaced individual will be analyzed by focusing on Maurice Halbwachs' new coined term "collective memory" which attributes out identity formation to the society we live in thus offering a logical answer to the integration problems of the migrants.

Furthermore I will expand on colonial hegemony and racism as tropes which render the postcolonial individual in a chaotic state. Furthermore as the sense of distortion is also an outcome of a permanent sense of homelessness I will focus on the shortcomings of the post independence period of postcolonial countries which create a sense of suffocation in the displaced individual. Finally I will expand on the different roles of postcolonial literature which can be used to create a new sense of identity in the individual.

All in all in should be stated that this comparative analysis will be first of its kind regarding the novel *Travelling with Djinns* which will offer a concise account of the world view of Jamal Mahjoub which is full of allusions to other literary figures and art works in the eastern and western worlds through which he offers us a mirror into his own soul full of contradictions.

II. THEORETICAL APPLICATION

1. Edward W. Said: Metaphorical Exile as a Ground of Creativity

The twentieth century witnessed many significant changes in the world structure and organization. With the shifts in the system of production and consumption in the age of capitalism, the steady growth of information technology, the fluctuation in the nation states, the rapid spread of globalization and the resulting leadership of transnational companies in which borders become imaginary, we witnessed the mass mobilization of people across continents. Since in the post-colonial era the burgeoning of national states did not promise the expected changes in the homeland, rather rendering these countries as mimics of the once colonizer countries, the people have considered immigration as the only way for a better future. However movement brought with itself cultural enmity, the abuse of human rights, segregation on mass scale that shattered the uniform identity of the individual leading to disillusionment and inbetweenness. Furthermore the terms used for the types of movement became more fluid; each overlapping and intersecting with each other.

One of these terms which became highly famous in the literary circles is “exile” which has gained a metaphorical meaning. Rather than using the terms immigration, refugee or diaspora why do some postcolonial intellectuals choose to define themselves in a sense of metaphorical exile although they live voluntarily in the host country? The answer could lie in its capability to enable the individual to assess its distinctiveness and reach self-realization through its creative powers rather than being a prejudiced and condescending attribute of the individual as some might claim. In the *Mimic Men* and *Traveling with Djinnns* we confront protagonists who also define themselves as individuals in exile in a metaphorical sense which gives them a certain sense of aloofness and disinterestedness that renders them capable of considering the problems of the displaced individuals from different perspectives although sometimes they are being tortured by the sense of loneliness. In this chapter I will mainly focus on the positive and creative aspects of exile rather than considering it as a state of banishment

embracing negativity. In my analysis I will expand on the theory of Edward W. Said as I believe he thoroughly and insightfully lays bare the positive dynamics of exile having witnessed the same situation himself.³

Throughout the centuries exile was considered as a term of negativity as it meant the enforced removal of an individual from the native land according to an edict or sentence; penal expatriation or banishment. The individual in exile, who had to live as an outcast, wandering permanently, was pitied as he was tortured by the nostalgia of homeland and filled by a bitter sense of melancholia. When we come to the postcolonial context, in the twentieth and twenty first century the term still holds its negative character as great masses of people were forcefully removed from their homelands especially after the Second World War as consequence of widespread territorial rearrangements. However the term also gained a metaphorical character describing the state of the intellectual. Especially in the postcolonial context the term metaphorical exile has been used to highlight the detachment of the writer from the society in which he lives, depicting his supra-national outlook which gives him originality and creativity no matter if he is forcefully removed or voluntarily has chosen to live in another country. One of these prominent writers is Vidiadhar Surajprasadipaul Naipaul who gains strength from his homelessness. Likewise Salman Rushdi (b. 1938) and Edward W. Said make use of this term, which highlights their detachment and distinctiveness. Generally for the writers who define themselves in exile the other terms like émigré, refugee and expatriate fall short of defining the circumstances they are in. As the term immigrant is associated more with an easier sense of renunciation with the homeland and defined as the person who has come to the host country to make a fresh start due to economic and social reasons, this association

³ Edward Said who was a Palestinian born literary critic famous in the USA has himself suffered under the sense of literal and metaphorical exile as he was never be able to have a distinct sense of home. To better understand his ambivalence and distortion I suggest you to read: Said, Edward: Out of Place: A Memoir. New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1999. In his autobiography Said writes about his family and friends from his birthplace in Jerusalem, schools in Cairo, and summers in the mountains above Beirut, to boarding school and college in the United States. We encounter the identity crisis of Said as he was trying to come to terms with the dissonance of being an American citizen, a Christian and a Palestinian, and, ultimately, an outsider.

does not fit the writers very well. Refugees are usually imagined as a great mass of people who are helpless and voiceless. As for the expatriates their experience is seen as unproblematic and less painful as they voluntarily chose to live in another country. None of these terms according to some postcolonial writers are enough to illustrate their struggle and suffering and their preferring the term exile points more to the ambivalence and ambiguity in an individual or distinct way. Not seeing themselves connected to the intellectual circle in their homeland and not finding solace in the host country these writers refrain from being part of any political creed that could lead to easy-reached universalisms thus leading to greater intolerance and cultural differentiation. As a matter of fact these writers try to emphasize their marginality and supranational outlook by a metaphorical sense of exile where the process of writing becomes the temporary abode of self-realization and a means of “secular criticism”.

The distinctiveness of exile is thoroughly expanded on in the works of Edward W. Said. His theory on exile is strongly linked to his conceptions of the worldliness of the critic thus carrying creative implications. According to Said the Western Academy is afflicted with abstruse abstractions and theories that have lost touch with reality. However what we need is the worldliness of the critic who in an amateurish way refuses to be locked in professional specializations and prejudices rather involving in his criticism with great love and dilettantism. On the role of the intellectual Said refuses any party or faction affiliation. For him the intellectual should represent emancipation and enlightenment and this can only be done in a secular manner, which prevents narrow generalizations bringing with itself intolerance and segregation. For instance in the postcolonial societies the writer and critic should not give all his energy on blaming imperialism and segregating Europeans. There should be a middle way reached by secular criticism. Said in 1993 Reith Lectures asserts:

The pattern that sets the course for the intellectual as outsider is best exemplified by the condition of exile, the state of never being fully adjusted, always feeling outside the chatty, familiar world inhabited by natives. [...] Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home;

and, alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one in your new home or situation.⁴

This sense of inbetweenness naturally causes pain and suffering in a great amount. There is pathos, anguish and severance in Said's terms; however this state also carries within itself a positive capability and a distinguished outlook which is an opportunity given only to a few. In order to reimburse his idea Said in his book *Orientalism*⁵ and his article "Reflections on Exile"⁶ pays tribute to Eric Auerbach (1892-1957), a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, whom he describes as the great twentieth-century literary scholar who spent the war years in Turkey in a state of exile. It was this state of detachment that gave Auerbach creative empowerment to write his monumental work *Mimesis*⁷ which is a study of Western criticism, a last attempt to lay out the principles of Western literary performance in all their variety, richness and fertility. Said goes on referring to Auerbach's quotation from Hugo of St. Victor (1096–1141) a 12th century Augustinian mystic Saxon Monk who in his *Didascalicon*⁸ contends:

It is, therefore, a source of great virtue for the practiced mind to learn, bit by bit, first to change about invisible and transitory things, so that afterwards it may be able to leave them behind altogether. The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.⁹

According to Said only by embracing this attitude can a historian understand human experience in its diversity and particularity. If he does not agree with this he will be led by prejudices and exclusions. Auerbach like Said was able to reach to this kind of perfect consciousness which enabled him to affiliate himself both with an alien culture he was living in and consider western culture from a point of detachment leading to a

⁴ Said, Edward W.: *Intellectual Exile. Expatriates and Marginals* [1993], in: *Representations of the Intellectual. The 1993 Reith Lectures*, London: Vintage 1994, pp. 35-47, esp. p. 39.

⁵ Said, Edward W.: *Orientalism* [1978], London: Penguin Books 2003.

⁶ Said, Edward W.: *Reflections on Exile* [1984], in: *The same: Reflections on Exile and other Literary and Cultural Essays*, London: Granta Books 2001, pp. 173-186.

⁷ Auerbach, Erich: *Mimesis. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* [1946], Translated from the German by Willard R. Trask. Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press 2003.

⁸ Hugo von St. Viktor: *Didascalicon. De studio legendi* [1127]. Studienbuch. Translated from Latin into German by Thilo Offergeld. Freiburg, Basel, Wien, Barcelona, Rom, New York: Herder Verlag 1997 (*Fontes Christiania*, Bd. 27).

⁹ Auerbach, Erich: *Philology and Weltliteratur* [1952], Translated from the German by Edward Said, in: *Centennial Review* 13, No.1, Winter 1969, pp. 1-17, esp. p. 17.

certain kind of synthesis. It was a state of true critical worldliness in Said's sense, which was a combination of personal desolation, and cultural empowerment which made his texts not owned by any nation, community or religion with a talent of free-ranging criticism. Martin Vialon in his study "Philologie als kritische Kunst" in which he shows the interconnection between Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) and Erich Auerbach also points out to the uniqueness of Auerbach and his work *Mimesis* when he contends:

Auerbachs Vermächtnis besteht darin, daß er nicht irgendeine Theorie über die primären Werke der Literatur streift, sondern deren mimetische Gegenstände selbst zum Sprechen bringt, ohne daß damit der primäre Text vergewaltigt würde. Diese Methode der Literaturinterpretation nennt er „Philologie als kritische Kunst“, als eine Kunst, die sowohl die Liebe zum Wort wie auch die Liebe zur Welt und ihren Dingen voraussetzt, um die enorm politische und soziale Tragweite wahrnehmbar zu machen, die unter dieser literatursoziologischen Perspektive sichtbar wird.¹⁰

This worldly affiliation, unprejudiced viewpoint and unlimitless love of the intellectual as seen in Auerbach and Said and many others is made possible by the state of exile in which the plurality of vision forms a consciousness of two dimensions.

In Said's world exile seems to be a romanticized concept which belongs to an aesthetic world of creativity and loss. The exiled intellectual while carrying within himself the traces of home feels in an unsettling transitional state in the host country, which renders him in an eternal state of ambivalence:

Exile, in the words of Wallace Stevens is a 'mind of winter' in which the pathos of summer and autumn as much as the potential of spring are nearby but unobtainable. Perhaps this is another way of saying that a little of exile moves according to a different calendar, and is less seasonal and settles than life at home. Exile is life led outside habitual order. It is nomadic,

¹⁰ Vialon, Martin: "Philologie als kritische Kunst": Ein unbekanntes Vico-Typoskript von Erich Auerbach über Giambattista Vicos Philosophie (1948), betrachtet im Kontext von *Mimesis* (1946) und im Hinblick auf *Philologie der Weltliteratur* (1952), in: Helga Schreckenberger (Hrsg.): *Die Alchemie des Exils. Exil als schöpferischer Impuls*, Wien: Edition Praesens Verlag 2005, pp. 227-251, esp. p. 27: "Auerbach's legacy survives in that he does not apply any theory to the primary works of literature rather making their mimetic qualities come to the foreground without depreciating their value. This method of literary interpretation he calls as „Philologie als kritische Kunst“ that assumes love not only for the word but also for the world and its entities to make the enormous scope of political and social matters perceptible that become visible under this literary sociological perspective." (translation is mine).

decentered, contrapuntal; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew.¹¹

This chaotic ambiance is in fact what renders the individual independent from cultural empowerment. The individual does not respond to the logic of the conventional but becomes more audacious and ready to changes. Thus the worldly affiliations of the exile, in other words the disinterested attitude makes the text also independent of bondages like nation, religion or culture and the space of writing becomes a free speech of different overlapping criticisms. Exile in this sense becomes a powerful weapon in the hand of the intellectual as Said asserts: “An intellectual is like a shipwrecked person who learns how to live in a certain sense with the land, not on it.”¹²

2. Maurice Halbwachs: Cultural Memory

In *Mimic Men* and *Traveling with Djinns* the protagonists cannot integrate themselves easily into the host society as there are always remembrances about their home country. It cannot be expected from them to erase that part in an unproblematic way as they are not living there any more. Their culture will always be an inherent part of their identity which in fact reimburses the idea that the formation of identity is not an individual phenomenon but a construction out of our relationship with other people. Connected to this topic I find the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs' (1877-1945) theory on cultural memory very insightful as it perfectly offers us an explanation for the distorted memories the displaced individuals suffer under as it is usually expected from them to make a fresh new start in the host country.

Maurice Halbwachs in his book *On Collective Memory*¹³ firstly coined the term cultural memory. According to Halbwachs apart from the sphere of dreams which lack organization, there is not any area of human experience which is not affected by a social context and structure. In his world although we tend to conceptualize memory in

¹¹ Said, *Reflections on Exile*, p. 55.

¹² Said, *Intellectual Exile*, p. 44.

¹³ Halbwachs, Maurice: *On Collective Memory* [1925]. Edited, translated, and with an introduction by Lewis A. Coser, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1992.

individual terms, we do not pay attention to its formation process in which the society plays a key role. Halbwachs asserts:

There are no recollections which can be said to be purely interior, that is, which can be preserved only within individual memory. Indeed from the moment that a recollection reproduces a collective perception, it can itself only be collective; it would be impossible for the individual to represent to himself anew, using only his forces, that which he could not represent to himself previously- unless he has recourse to the thought of his group."¹⁴

According to Halbwachs when we think about past events we discourse upon them; however to discourse upon something means to connect within a single system our opinions and those of the others. In other words individual memory is an outcome of socialization; even the most private memories are an outcome of the communication process of the society, which is highly affected by it. So what are really kept in the individual mind are the social representations that constitute the past on the basis of the necessities of the present. Indeed from the moment that a recollection reproduces a collective perception we tend to remember what the others in the group narrated us in their own prejudiced way which means we do not learn things in a neutral way, all our learning are imbued with the outlook of our society:

If we enumerate the number of recollections during one day that we have evoked upon the occasion of our direct and indirect relations with other people, we will see that, most frequently, we appeal to our memory only in order to answer questions which others have asked us, or that we suppose they could have asked us. We note, moreover, that in order to answer them, we place ourselves in their perspective and we consider ourselves as being part of the same group or groups as they.¹⁵

As a matter of fact memory maintains its existence in a net of relationships and it is formed of many layers, which is produced by the person's taking part in different kinds of group memories. Social classes, families, associations, corporations, armies, and trade unions all have distinctive memories that their members have constructed, often over long periods of time. It is of course individuals who remember, and it should be stated that each memory is unique and independent in that each individual forms

¹⁴ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 169.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

another relationship with the cultural memory which is the common ground or context of various group memories for the creation of the past.

Halbwachs after defining collective memory goes on defining historical and autobiographical memory. Historical memory only reaches the individual through written records or pictures and it can be kept alive through commemorations or celebrations. As it is not an individual phenomenon its perpetuation depends on the interpretation of social institutions. If the individual participants do not take part in festives and memorial celebrations they will relax the social bonds that would threaten their annihilation. Autobiographical memory on the other hand is the private realm of events that we experienced in the past. Autobiographical memory tends to change over time if we do not have any contact with a specific group of significance to us. It can be asserted that autobiographical memory is always rooted in other people. Consequently what Halbwachs shows is that it is memory that binds people together which has a collective function. Memory can be defined as a landmark hindering the group from a disintegration thus leaving the individual in a chaotic state. It is important that for its integrity collective feeding is necessary:

Whereas in our present society we occupy a definite position and are subject to constraints that go with it, memory gives us the illusion of living in the midst of groups, which do not imprison us, which impose on us only so far and so long we accept them. If certain memories are inconvenient or burden us we can always oppose to them the sense of reality inseparable from our present life. We are free to choose.¹⁶

Another important point to be considered is that what figures make our memories meaningful? For an incident to become an essential part of memory it should be enriched with a meaningful truth. If a concept or a historical occasion is to be remembered it must have a certain kind of connection with temporality and spatiality. Every figure of remembering needs to be conceptualized in a certain space and time. The things we remember may be related to a distant past, they may be connected to supernatural events or they become temporalized according to the periodic rhythm of remembering. For instance festivals are the reflections of a common time spent

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 84.

together may they be a part of religion, tradition of the peasants or bourgeoisie, or military. Furthermore memory is connected to a certain place to which a meaning is attributed. For a family it could be the home, for the peasants the village for the bourgeoisie the city. This conception becomes especially important when the person is away from his country. The group and the place form a symbolic common ground. Cultural memory is only possible with its carriers in that it can only be connected to a group that is real and alive. So it is not only concrete place and time but it is also a concrete identity. Lastly it can also be considered as an educational tool that defines the general attitude of the group, not only reconstructing the past but also defining the forms of existence, its characteristics and weaknesses. Also cultural memory is never stagnant; it is reconstructed in every different period of the group according to the changing standards.

The contents of cultural memory may offer a secure atmosphere for the individual with whose help the elements of former life may be recreated. The lost sense of place may be regained with the creation of a symbolical space in the host land with the fellow members; the sense of a lost time can be revitalized by the constant repetition of customs and festivals. However another case could be avoiding some components of cultural memory, by relegating them to the background in which case integration or assimilation is trying to be achieved. Nonetheless this can have deleterious results in that it is impossible to evade the integral parts of memory.

3. Edward W. Said: Cultural Hegemony

In the migrant novels we usually come across individuals who have distorted memories due to the ideological education they got in the colonized homelands. As a consequence of hegemony these characters cannot associate themselves with their countries, have an inferiority complex, consider their homelands in derogatory terms and have a distorted notion of their history where an unreality surrenders them. This is

also the case in *Mimic Men* and *Travelling with Djinns* where the protagonists suffer under the ideological education policies of the colonizer country. Related to this concept Edward W. Said in his book *Culture and Imperialism*¹⁷ depicts coherently the relationship between hegemony and imperialistic attitude and how cultural traits were made use of in the assimilationist tendencies.

If we dwell on the term hegemony it was initially used as a term to denote the dominance of one state within a confederation; however now it is used to mean dominance by consent. This term was firstly popularized in the 1930s by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). In his most prominent work *The Prison Notebooks*¹⁸ Gramsci makes a detailed analysis of hegemony. According to him there are two major superstructural levels which are civil society and political society. He comments:

These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the State and 'juridical' government.¹⁹

According to Gramsci hegemony arose because the ruling class wanted to persuade the other classes that their interests are the interests of the others. Hegemony refers to the way in which the consent of the subordinate classes to their domination is achieved. This is both a struggle and a process and it is never permanent. Hegemonic beliefs are dominant cultural motifs, which reinforce inequality. They allow dominant groups to rule more efficiently as they permit a reduction in the level of force required to maintain social order. According to Gramsci domination is exerted by subtle and inclusive power over economy and other state apparatuses in such a way the motives of the ruling class are shown in league with the common interest. His term became highly useful in the era of imperialism in that the ultimate motive of the colonizer was to influence the great masses of people by consent.

¹⁷ Said, Edward W.: *Culture and Imperialism* [1993], London: Vintage 1994.

¹⁸ The original version *Quaderni del Carcere* was firstly published in 1947, however in my study I will make use of: Gramsci, Antonio: *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* [1947]. Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, New York: International Publishers 1971.

¹⁹ Gramsci, Antonio, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 12.

Said who was highly influenced by Gramsci expanded on the theory of hegemony in the colonial context and tried to lay bare the apparatuses which rendered hegemony possible. Cultural hegemony which arose as a motif of imperialism is highly connected to the notion of Orientalism. Said asserts that the discourse of Orientalism was created out of the binary distinction between East and West where the East was conceived of as a static, a-temporal entity, inferior to the West. It was clearly based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and the Occident. The West became the perfect example of civilization and culture in reference to the East and it was the mission of the West to elevate the other into its contemporary state. In the age of colonialism in order to rule the colonies in an unproblematic way it became the mission of the Westerners to educate the native populations in such a way that they would be dictated to accept their inferiority and consider the West as the ultimate perfection which would elevate their status. The other option of using force against the natives would not be of any use as they outweighed in number and tremendous effort would be needed. However by the non-violent control mechanism through which every part of the social institutions were made use of, there could be created a perfect state of colonial subjectivity. Here we encounter the idea of consent achieved through the control mechanisms of culture. Said asserts:

It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and strength I have been speaking about so far. [...] The major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European people and cultures.²⁰

If culture is conceived as an entity operating in the civil society and if it is inseparable from politics as Antonio Gramsci has also stated, the very social institutions and the sciences can become the tool of propaganda as in the imperial world. Said is right in stating:

[...] It becomes possible now to reinterpret the Western cultural achievement as if fractured geographically by the activated imperial divide, to do rather a different kind of reading and interpretation. In the first place, the history of such fields as comparative literature, English studies, cultural analysis,

²⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 7.

anthropology can be seen as affiliated with the empire and, in a manner of speaking, even contributing to its methods for maintaining Western ascendancy over non Western natives.²¹

From this point of view every cultural production can be seen as the agent of the dominating strategy that tries to create imperial stereotypes. But it is also interesting to see that the native must be controlled in a special way so that the Western ideals he learns should not make him question his state; otherwise this could lead to rebellion. So mimicking is allowed to a certain degree but never in extremities. Later in his book Said, using the Gramscian model, analyses the novels of the 18th and 19th century from a new perspective trying to see the hidden motives of imperial culture which is dictated to the natives.

In this power relationship education became of the most important areas where the natives could be managed and turned into subjects. There were constructed educational strategies for convincing the natives that colonialism was natural, inevitable and progressive. The extent to which this Western education supplanted in its recipients any notion of indigenous culture or its value is made clear in the wealth of empirical and anecdotal evidence in the autobiographical accounts of writers, artists and musicians. What is seen is that the formation of identity of the colonial subject was constructed according to the will of the colonizer, but this is an unconscious process which had to be prepared in an elaborate way. Said again makes use of Gramsci quoting from the *Prison Notebooks*:

The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.²²

Edward Said, having been educated in the Western standards still feels the need to inventory the traces upon him, the oriental subject and his book *Orientalism* is an outcome of these efforts. The colonial subject has to be aware of the exploitative character of the cultural values and try to deconstruct these values by understanding their formation process.

²¹ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 59.

²² Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 324.

4. Hannah Arendt: Racism

Racism and imperialism are terms that are strongly connected to each other in that the former necessitated the invention of the latter term, which led to the mass extermination of millions of people on the globe. Although race thinking had been an inherent term since the beginning of colonization it gained a horrific reality and became a destructive ideology in the 19th century. I will analyze this concept concentrating on the theories of Hannah Arendt who in her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*²³ lays bare the intersecting qualities in the concepts of nationalism, imperialism and racism and how they initiated the age of totalitarianism, an era of evil monstrosity, which led to the extermination of millions of Jews and which regained its power in our century due to the vast immigration movements seen in the globe.

Racism as a concept is the theory or idea that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and certain traits of personality, intellect, or culture and, with it, the notion that some races are inherently superior to others. From this definition it can be inferred that the community attaches itself the qualities of goodness, morality or beauty whereas the other who was not created the same way is seen as the evil which has to be controlled. With the era of colonization which was initiated with the Portuguese the Europeans came firstly across people with different physical qualities, culture and languages they did not know how to treat the people. In the beginning the Christian teaching of equality of all man and reason was applied and the natives were considered as equals if they converted to Christianity. However as the centuries progressed with the advent of capitalism, race relations gained a new meaning. For limitless economical gains the exploitation of people was necessitated where race difference was used as a tool to make commodities out of the people in the European colonies.

Although race thinking is sometimes associated with the Germans which they used as a weapon with a through-going consistency as never seen before, Arendt claims that its roots were deep embedded in the 18th century which was stimulated as full force in the 19th century in all Western countries as a consequence of imperialism:

²³ Arendt, Hannah: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [1951], San Diego, New York, London: A Harvest Book 1976.

Racism has been the powerful ideology of imperialistic policies since the turn of the century. It certainly has absorbed and revived all the old patterns of race opinions which, however, by themselves hardly would have been able to create or, for that matter to degenerate into racism as a 'Weltanschauung' or an ideology.²⁴

Until the "Scramble of Africa" race thinking had been one of the free opinions which within the liberal system had been argued like any other opinion; however it became a full-fledged ideology trying to get the support of masses of people under the pretext of nationalism which started the destruction period:

Racism sprang from experiences and political constellations which were still unknown and would and would have been utterly strange even to such devoted defenders of race as Gobineau or Disraeli. [...] It is highly probably that the thinking in terms of race would have disappeared in due time together with other irresponsible opinions of the 19th century, if the 'scramble for Africa' and the new era of imperialism had not exposed Western humanity to new and shocking experiences. Imperialism would have necessitated the invention of racism as the only possible 'explanation' and excuse for its deeds, even if no race-thinking had ever had existed in the civilized world.²⁵

However how was it that imperialism led to the inception of such an ideology? In order to understand the conditions of its forthcoming, the imperialistic character should be analyzed. Arendt associated imperialism with the political emancipation of the bourgeoisie, who under the banner of capitalism adopted expansion as a permanent and supreme aim of politics that became an end in itself:

Expansion meant increase in actual production of goods to be used and consumed. Imperialism was born when the ruling class in capitalist production came up against national limitations to its economic expansion. The bourgeoisie turned to politics out of economic necessity; for it did not want to give up the capitalist system whose inherent law is constant economic growth, it had to impose this law upon its home governments and to proclaim expansion to be ultimate political goal of foreign policy.²⁶

As a matter of fact it was the bourgeoisie who with its slogan "expansion for expansions sake" persuaded its government to enter into world politics. However this insatiable greed was in fact not appropriate for a nation-state because unlimited growth

²⁴ Arendt, Hannah: Race-Thinking before Racism, in: *The Review of Politics*, Vol. IV., 1944, pp. 36-73, esp. p. 36.

²⁵ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 184.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

was impossible as unlimited consent could not be stretched to its base. So as long as the nation-states strived after this ideal, they had to impose dominancy over the native people and exploit them as much as they could for the sake of greater economic gains which ended up in an imperialistic ideal bringing forth destruction and violation of human rights. Worst of all this was attributed to the sake of the national ideal. Although the British tried to evade the inconsistency in their attempt at empire building by leaving the conquered people free in application of their own culture, religion or law, a conscientious cultural hegemony was created in which the British culture was shown to be the superior and an inferiority complex was tried to be attributed to the natives because of their race. As they were not believed to be able to govern themselves the necessity of the imperialist consciousness was taken for granted rendering the differences permanently intact.

Race was seen as an emergency explanation attributed to human beings whom no European could understand and who was frightening the immigrants in such a stage that they did not desire to belong to the same human race. Arendt asserts: "They were, as it were, "natural" human beings who lacked the specifically human character, the specifically human reality, so when European men massacred them they somehow were not aware that they had committed murder."²⁷ As a result in Africa there was witnessed a massive extermination of brutes: the Boers' extermination of Hottentot tribes, the wild murdering by Carl Peters in German Southeast Africa, the decimation of the peaceful Congo population. In this system slavery was considered as the only means of managing these people who were seen as cheap labor and made to work in inhuman circumstances for the utmost profit of the capitalists. This was clearly the case with the Boers, the descendants of Dutch settlers who were stationed at the Cape and who treated the natives as raw material and lived on them. Also I want to remark that as an imperialistic divide and rule strategy this sense of racial difference was consciously inflicted on the colonized people too. Natives from different origins were made enemies to each other whose consequences we still see in the postcolonial period where numerous countries cannot be united due to racial conflicts.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 192.

While in the overseas colonies racism was used as major political idea for the exploitation of men power; in Europe the nation formation process was also accompanied by racism. In her article “Race-Thinking before Racism” Arendt lays bare the early formation of racism in France, England and Germany. In France for example, A French nobleman, The Comte de Boulainvillie (1658-1722), who was rather disturbed by the coexistence of different people together interpreted the history of France as the history of two different nations. The aristocrats according to him came from German origin and conquered the older inhabitants the Gauls who were inferior. In order to regain their primacy the noble had to deny their ties with the French people. However it should be pointed out that his doctrine was based on the right of conquest and the right of the superior people was based on a historical deed rather than on physical fact. Worst of all was Count Arthur de Gobineau’s (1816-1882) book *The Inequality of Races* published in 1853, where he attributed the fall of civilization due to the degeneration of races. What Gobineau had in mind was to create an elite which was to replace aristocracy. Arendt comments: “If race and mixture of races are the all-determining factors for the individual it is possible to pretend that physical superiorities might come into existence in every individual no matter what his present situation is.”²⁸ Unfortunately at that time science began also to be used to generate racial difference and claim the dominance of Europeans as a superior race. For instance the polygenists challenged the Bible and denied any relationships between human races. Darwinism could also be used for race or class rule or it could also be used against race discrimination. Arendt warns:

The most dangerous aspects of these evolutionist doctrines are that they combined the inheritance concept with the insistence on personal achievements and individual character which had been so important for the self-respect of the 19th century middle-class.²⁹

From this concept was the notion of the “overman” born who was considered as the personification of race. No matter to dwell on the ramifications of race thinking in Germany during the Nazi regime which turned other men into beast and created a world of disaster never known before. Although a great lesson has been gained from

²⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

this tragic disaster in our century racism is regaining its force again. In *Mimic Men* and *Traveling with Djinns* the aspect of racial discrimination both in the homeland and in England is subjectivised that renders the immigrant unconfident and alienated.

5. Franz Fanon: Pitfalls of National Consciousness

In *Mimic Men* and *Travelling with Djinns* both of the protagonists suffer under a certain sense of homelessness as they cannot associate themselves with their countries anymore. However who are they so disillusioned with their countries Sudan and Isabella (Trinidad)? It is certainly connected to the failure of both countries to reach to a common sense of national consciousness. In *Mimic Men* the protagonist Ralph experiences this process directly as he becomes a minister out in his political movement but is stirred by a certain sense of inaction not being able to save the country. However why are the countries not be able to reach a unitary consciousness? In such a state there is nothing left for the citizens to immigrate to other countries in the hope for a more peaceful ambiance. Connected to this dilemma I find the ideas of Franz Fanon (1925-1961) in his book the *Wretched of the Earth*³⁰ very insightful who attributes the failure mainly to the bourgeoisie government's trying to mimic everything from the Western bourgeoisie thus leading the country into disaster.

Under the chapter "Pitfalls of National Consciousness" Fanon points out how the nationalist bourgeoisie in Algeria tried to establish parity with France in the issues of human rights, self-rule, labor union; however they have become mimic men by doing this in which counter insurgency came to the foreground. By copying the same standards in fact they caused many tensions between country and city, bourgeoisie and peasants, feudal and political leaders and nationalism became another form of colonial rhetoric. Fanon warns that unlike the expectation of many citizens the post era may bring desperation and failure which will turn the country even worse then its colonial phase:

³⁰Fanon, Franz: *The Wretched of the Earth* [1961]. Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre. Translated by Constance Farrington, Harmondworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books 1967. In this books Fanon employed a fiery rhetoric to call for an anticolonial revolution led by the peasants of the Third World, rather than by the proletariat. According to Fanon, a new type of humanity, modern yet proud of its nonwhite heritage, would emerge from this violent struggle.

History teaches us clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism. For a very long time the native devotes his energies to ending certain definite abuses: forced labor, corporal punishment, inequality of salaries, limitation of political rights, etc. This fight for democracy against the oppression of mankind will slowly leave the confusion of neo-liberal universalism to emerge, sometimes laboriously, as a claim to nationhood. It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps.³¹

Fanon states that the national bourgeoisie which tries to govern the country cannot be successful as it is not engaged in production, nor invention or building therefore not having the ability of accumulating capital. As they are ignorant of the economic state of the country the exploitation and suffering of the workers will be intensified and as they will not be able to offer any solutions they will become the mimics of the Western bourgeoisie always paying visits to Europe for more funding and help:

The national bourgeoisie will be greatly helped on its way towards decadence by the Western bourgeoisie, who come to it as tourists avid for the exotic, for big-game hunting and for casinos. The national bourgeoisie organizes centers of rest and relaxation and pleasure resorts to meet the wishes of the Western bourgeoisie.³²

Bereft of offering any humanist solution, overridden by laziness, unable to bring about the existence of coherent social relations, the bourgeoisie begins to fear from the population and it will immediately switch to a single party system where it can assert its autonomy and dictatorship. In this system the only solution plausible to them is to imitate the once colonial countries in the same way: "This get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or of inventiveness. It remembers what it has read in European textbooks and imperceptibly it becomes not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature."³³ In this state of turmoil the leader becomes disillusioned and by his speeches tries to drive the people as a herd. In such an atmosphere privileges multiply and corruption becomes a common phenomenon. The party cannot bring solution to racial or tribal differences: "When the bourgeoisie's demands for ruling class made up exclusively of Negroes or Arabs do not spring from authentic movement of

³¹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 119.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

nationalization but merely correspond to an anxiety to place, the masses on their level present the same demands.”³⁴ As a matter of fact Fanon warns the population against the dictatorship of these people; however by also offering some solutions.

Fanon asserts that unless national consciousness is changed into a social consciousness the future will be an extension of imperialism. A national policy should be created for the masses in that the party will be the direct expression of them rather than directing Education of these masses plays a key role in this dilemma: “Political education means opening their minds, awakening them, and allowing the birth of their intelligence; as Césaire said, it is to ‘invent souls’.”³⁵ Also the government must follow such a policy that the middle-classes trading sector is nationalized and decentralization is reached. It is always from the base that forces mount up which supply the summit with its dynamic.

It can be asserted that Fanon considers mimicry as a betrayal; by imitating the system of the colonizer countries the government shows its alienation from the people and native culture. Rather than being incentive at all and directing the productive forces of the nation they just try to use the inventiveness of the western bourgeoisie. However this state of mimicry can be overridden if the right kind of economic and social preventions are taken and here he differs also from Naipaul who has an inherent pessimistic attitude about the problem which I will dwell in my text analysis.

6. The Role of Literature in the Postcolonial Context

Literature has had a pivotal role both in colonial and anti-colonial context. Colonialism that affected nearly the entire world shaped the lives of millions of people whose results are strongly seen in political, economical and social spheres. Literature has been one of the tools of the colonizer to keep the colonized under hegemony. However it also became a powerful tool that helped colonized people to make their voice heard and reach to a repossession of reality. Language became a battle ground for the colonized, a symbolic space where they could counter attack the repressive mechanism of colonialism. However among the postcolonial writers heavy discussions are

³⁴ Ibid., p. 126.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 159.

witnessed as to what the function of literature should be. Controversial themes like which language to use, what kind of elements to insert in the context, to which audience to write have generated myriads of viewpoints. We witness these discussions also in *Traveling with Djinns* when the protagonist writes a novel and is criticized by his family due to their different conceptions of postcolonial literature which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

The term postcolonial literature designates the myriads of writings, which flourished after the independence period of colonized countries mostly in the 1960s; however the term postcolonial cannot be thought separately from the era of colonization which affected the minds of the people for centuries. In their introduction to the book *The Empire Writes Back* Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin assert that what each of these literatures have in common is “they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial center.”³⁶ However why has this literature become so powerful in our century? This can be attributed to the impact of cultural materialism that flourished in the mid-1980s that emphasized the material base of all culture. Accordingly in the colonial context texts began to be considered as the most important instigators and purveyors of colonial power and a contrary force was created in the embodiment of anti-colonial counter textuality. The study of this textuality is successfully depicted by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* in which he depicts Orientalism as a discourse:

The orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.³⁷

What is here implicated is that the Orientalist discourse was created according to some metaphors and tropes in which the superiority of the Western discourse was asserted so that the Orient became the symbolical space for the imagination and desire of the West. In the process these tropes or labeling became intertextual in character in that every

³⁶ Ashcroft, Bill/Griffiths, Gareth/Tiffin, Helen: *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, London, New York: Routledge 1989, p. 2.

³⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 2.

writer or scientist relied on the previous one for the vision or description. Consequently the Orient became a mere description of ideological interests where the trace of reality was lost for ever. When we consider British colonialism from this textual aspect it can be asserted that although in the beginning the colonized people were invaded by force later on control was maintained with the help of a textual take over. Writing became a mission which helped in the domestication of the alien lands. It turned colonization into a natural process whose implications are seen in the Victorian novel. Also literature became an appropriate tool of hegemony in that English literature became an important educational tool in the colonial world which dictated the natives of their inferiority as opposed to the superior culture of the great mother land. As a result of these the educated native was circumscribed with an atmosphere of “unreality”, in which the native environment and culture became alien entities.

However as time passed, from the very center of textuality emerged a counter textuality which defied the secure boundaries of the imperial rhetoric. Nationalist writers educated by a Western curriculum began to subvert the textual authority from within. Firstly by observation they began to misrepresent the foundational assertions of the discourse by making use of differential knowledge, which rendered the information distorted and enabled the creation of new sites of power. It was the mission to get rid of the unreality that the writers were surrounded by. Durix in his study which shows the relationship between mimesis, reality and post-colonial discourse also asserts:

In order to set up such a counter-culture, post-colonial writers had to take possession of their own reality by ‘naming’ their environment in terms which clearly belong to them [...]. The realistic pact between writer and reader implies that, once localized, the text presents itself as a believable artifact.³⁸

In this subversion context there emerged two main groups in the academy however with differences among each other too. On the one hand there are emerged nationalist writers who preferred narrating their past, traditions and cultures in realistic terms as Durix asserts above. They preferred using a simple and concise language so that all the people could get hold of their ideas. In this context I would like to give reference to two African writers one of whom is Chinua Achebe (b.1930) who is considered as one

³⁸ Durix, Jean-Pierre: *Mimesis, Genres, and Post-Colonial Discourse. Deconstructing Magic Realism*, New Hampshire: St. Martin's Press 1998, p. 62.

of the best and earliest Nigerian novelists who created his first novel *Things Fall Apart*³⁹ during the Nigerian Renaissance where different writings began to be produced. At that time a lot of countries in Africa were not independent and his novels usually reflect the humiliations visited on Africans by colonialism and the corruption and inefficiency after the postcolonial period. In this context although Achebe favors using English his subversion technique is interesting in that he mixes native words and cultural terms to his language which creates a different sense of reality. He asserts:

I have been given this language and I intend to use it. [...] I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surrounding.⁴⁰

Contrary to him Ngugi Wa Thiong (b.1938), the famous Kenyan novelist, essayist, and playwright, abjured writing in English preferring to write in Gikuyu so that the common uneducated people could also have access to his novels. Heavily influenced by the key concepts of Fanon and Marxism, he defines literature as a class struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed which cannot stay outside the social reality. He denounces the neutral attitude of uninvolved literature:

Because of its social involvement, because of its thoroughly social character, literature is partisan: literature takes side, and more so in a class society [...]. A writer is trying to persuade us, to make us view not only a certain kind of reality, but also from a certain angle of vision often, though perhaps unconsciously, on behalf of a certain class, race, or nation.⁴¹

During this mission the superiority of the colonial mechanism was also to be repudiated so he is against the use of English and dispersion of English literature. He believes that so far as literature is duty-bound to animate the spirit of the people, the unauthentic discourse of English is to be replaced by African literature and language.

³⁹ *Things Fall Apart* in particular focuses on the early experience of colonialism as it occurred in Nigeria in the late 1800's, from the first days of contact with the British to widespread British administration. Achebe is interested in showing Ibo society in the period of transition when rooted, traditional values are put in conflict with an alien and more powerful culture that will tear them apart. Achebe paints a vivid picture of Ibo society both before and after the arrival of white men, and avoids the temptation to idealize either culture. For further study see: Achebe, Chinua: *Things Fall Apart*, Surrey: Heinemann 1958.

⁴⁰ Achebe, Chinua: *Morning yet on Creation Day*. New York: Anchor Press 1975, p. 103.

⁴¹ Thiong Ngugi Wa: *Writers in Politics* [1981]. Oxford: James Currey 1997, p. 6.

However it is doubtful if Ngugi Wa Thiong is right in favoring another kind of monolithic superiority against the Western discourse. I still believe that even if the colonized uses the colonizers language he can still use it in such a way that the constricting ideology can be subverted as will be seen in the next group of writers. One should be alert to the nationalistic excess in the postcolonial countries which leads to the elimination of European authors from the curriculum, blaming every white writer to be racist or colonialist. This generates another kind of reductionist outlook which is as dangerous as the Orientalist discourse of the Westerners.

There has also emerged a new category of migrant novel which found its apotheosis in the cosmopolitan writers two of which are for instance Salman Rushdi and V. S. Naipaul. These writers usually choose to live in a metaphorical sense of exile seeing themselves detached from the society which enables them to have an objective outlook to the dilemmas they are surrounded by. They have chosen to write in English; however they question the supremacy of the Eurocentric attitude by using different literary techniques like metanarration, parody, non-linear narrativity which enables the language to counter attack with its own tools. In Leela Gandhi in her book *Postcolonial Theory* asserts: "Their rhetoric is imbued with hybridity, positioned on the margins or intersects of two antagonistic national cultures; it claims to open up an in-between space of cultural ambivalence."⁴² These writers have the power to transform the geographical and imaginative space from the inside of the metropolis. In fact with the new emergence of new fictions of exile and immigration the older concepts of postcolonial literature have turned upside down. What we encounter in their novels is the disillusioned and fragmented subject who does not find salvation in any land. The content is mainly shaped by personal journeys, attachments memories and losses. In these narratives nationalism is not seen as solution and usually the problematic independence period of the countries with their perpetuating problems are highlighted. These writings can be termed as the new bourgeois novel. In order to show this ambivalence some of the writers resort to postmodernist techniques which is the case with Salman Rushdi's

⁴² Gandhi, Leela: *Postcolonial Theory. A Critical Introduction*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1998, p. 153.

*Midnight's Children*⁴³ considered as one of the best works in postcolonial writing, which challenges the one sided linear writing style of the Western canon and shows the fragmented postcolonial identity in the form of historiographic metafiction where the protagonist Salem Sinai becomes the embodiment of Indian nation. Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul also writes his novels with a critical outlook regarding himself as a cosmopolitan writer. Not feeling himself a part of India, Trinidad or England he is destined to lead a life of homelessness which enriches his outlook. One of his best known novels *The Mimic Men* for instance parodies the mimicking of the postcolonial countries the Western world with a grim outlook through the fictionalized autobiography of Ralph Singh in a non-linear narrativity. One of the newest writers Jamal Mahjoub in his novel *Traveling with Djinns* also makes use of a non-linear style where the past and present get intermixed to each other with many symbols from the West and East in the mind of the alienated protagonist Yasin.

However these writers are criticized for not paying enough credit for the under represented populations in the homeland, they are considered to repeat the discourse of Orientalism in which they describe the subaltern without making their voice heard. They are blamed for only writing for the tastes of a Western audience and are repudiated by the leftist writers. It should be kept in mind that by these writings the intelligentsia must be highly cautious of their mission; it is not a solution to change the Manichean allegory upside down this time asserting the supremacy of the nationalist discourse by degrading the Western one. Furthermore by not taking interest of class, gender or historical relations a writer cannot be an authorized mouthpiece for the whole population. Also by considering literature as an ideological tool one should not underestimate the aesthetic role of it thereby showing interest only to the content. The mission of these writers as intellectuals should always be to have a supranational outlook, evading narrow concepts that are bereft of tolerance and try to bring a new consciousness to their readers.

⁴³ Rushdie, Salman: *Midnight's Children* [1981], London: Vintage 1995.

III. LITERARY ANALYSIS

1. TRAVELING WITH DJINNS

Every voyage can be said to involve a re-sitting of boundaries. The traveling self is here both the self that moves physically from one place to another, following 'public routes and beaten tracks' within a mapped movement, and the self that embarks on an undetermined journeying practice, having constantly to negotiate between home and abroad, native culture and adopted culture, or more creatively speaking, between a here, a there, and an elsewhere

Trinh T. Minh-ha: Other than myself/ my other self (1989)

The traveling of a displaced identity in a foreign land not only to acquaint himself more with the place he is alien to but also to have a clearer notion of the common history and intermixed memories is successfully depicted in *Travelling with Djinnns* by Jamal Mahjoub. For the displaced individual there are two hindrances that prevent the continuity of the identity. The first one is the feeling of displacement in the foreign country where the sense of "space" cannot be converted into the notion of "place". Connected to this is the ambiguous notion of the past, which can be problematic in a double sense. It is either the distorted notion of the collective memory of the nation, which was inherited to him/her by various mechanisms like family, school and certain groups, or it is the burden of some autobiographical memories which torture the individual from the subconscious.

In *Traveling with Djinnns* we confront the Sudanese-English protagonist Yasin who is the son of an English mother and a Sudanese father suffering under this dilemma. Having grown up in Sudan with an English education system where the culture and history of England were imposed on him, Yasin has already become alienated to his

culture in his homeland. As his country becomes an unpromising land to live, due to the racial segregation between the north and south, he decides to move to England with the hope of self-realization and happiness. However there he is trapped in a world full of stereotyped images where he feels encircled by strangers. In England, the disillusionment process, which began in Sudan, leads slowly to his destruction. When Yasin at the age of 37 begins to scrutinize his life, nothing seems to be promising: he is about to get divorced from his English wife, his job does not give him much pleasure, and he feels distanced from his siblings. He puts his only hope on his seven-year-old son Leo, with whom he wants to have a healthy relationship.

The journey that he takes with his son, after an argument with his wife, forms a cornerstone in his life. It leads into the heart of Europe, making him acquainted with the places he will spend the rest of his life. Besides its literal value, the journey becomes an attempt of the protagonist to put an order into his deeper self, which is haunted by myriads of memories that he does not want to remember. So the journey becomes also metaphorical in the sense that it turns into a spiritual quest, a personal fight which will help him lead a more peaceful life in the future. In order to make the metaphorical journey possible the story is narrated in flashbacks where we encounter in the “present” of the narrative the existence of both past and future. Many significant themes are explored in the narrative in order to illustrate the in-betweenness and fragmentary identity of the intellectual migrant who in fact feels himself in a permanent sense of metaphorical exile.

Firstly there is the striking opposition and war of the Eastern and Western elements in the protagonist which although lead him into alienation are the sources for distinctiveness and creation. Throughout his travel Yasin’s referring to many stories from different cultures is the indication of his desire to be accepted as a “chimere” in his own terms that drag him on the borders of insanity and self-realization. Secondly related to this ambiguity the sources of the disturbed memory are examined which lead the protagonist to his childhood and university years connecting us to the colonial experience and the vague notion of the national past intermixed with the Western

narratives. Furthermore there are the personal memories relating to the problematic relationships between the family members. Lastly the realm of literature is depicted as a ground which offers Yasin integrity and creativity.

A) The Nature of the Journey

1. The Metaphorical Journey Depicted by Eastern and Western Stories

A journey can both be a search for the self and a path of self-development or it can be a manifestation of rootlessness and homelessness. Both Mahjoub and his protagonist show an awareness of the two potentials of travel. That what the protagonist takes is a metaphorical journey is implicated from the name of the novel: *Travelling with Djinns*. Yasin mentions that there is an expression in Danish about a person's troubles going with her wherever she travels: something like an imp-like creature or djinn. In that case, the title manifests how Yasin is afflicted by the heavy burdens of the past so the journey is not a real escape but it is a confrontation with the hidden agendas and forces, which have created a nonentity of him. It is interesting to see that in order to assert his bicultural intellectual identity Yasin gives reference to well known Eastern and Western stories to describe his journey. Since describing his ambiguous self is rather a difficult process it seems that Yasin needs the solidity of the well-known narratives.

From the very beginning in order to describe the nature of his journey Yasin makes use of a well-known European epic story which is *the Odyssey*. He comments:

And it hits me with the slow, dull weight of a falling stone that this doesn't have to be a dire Odyssean epic, this journey; a series of tests and trials. No, this is an opportunity, a marvelous chance to travel through the world together, alone. We don't have to be anywhere at any time. [...] I wander about with the mental framework of a transient, an outsider, not seeing myself anywhere.⁴⁴

In order to understand this declaration we have to compare the world of the hero Odysseus and the nature of his journey. *The Odyssey*, which is believed to have been composed orally towards the end of the 8th century B.C. along the Greek-occupied

⁴⁴ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinns*, p. 22.

seaboard of Western Anatolia, is the second of the vast epic poems of Homer (approximately 8th-9th century) which is about the return journey of the Greek hero Odysseus and his friends to Ithaca following the fall of Troy and the defeat of the Trojans. In fact we first encounter Odysseus in Homer's *the Iliad*⁴⁵ where he has a primary role in the victory of the Greek army against the Trojans by giving the idea of the wooden horse which makes him renowned as a quick-minded and shrewd character. In *the Odyssey*, this time, we encounter him as the protagonist who is the embodiment of a brave wanderer, a loyal husband and a wise leader who has to deal with many hardships on his way home. Although the time-span of the story is extended comprising the period from the youth of Odysseus' father Laertes to Odysseus' death, it is centered around the return journey of the hero⁴⁶ which takes place around the Mediterranean where he encounters many adventures related to the whims of the Gods and takes tests (related to intelligence, strength, cunning) in order to reach to his homeland. As Odysseus' return to his homeland is blocked for ten years turning him into an exile figure, in the narrative we encounter his constant yearning for home, which forms an overarching sense of nostalgia for the desired land. As a matter of fact, the journey rather than being a quest to find an ideal land or becoming the self-questioning of the hero is a journey which takes the hero to the very centre where he belongs and feels himself attached. The places he visits during his journey are the necessary points where he has to encounter trials so that in the end he can reach home. In fact this very idea of return, to the place of your roots, which gives security and stability, is a life giving force in the story. In order to accomplish that, however, the hero has to be fully in control of his emotions and motives as one mistake could hinder the whole process. Odysseus in this sense is totally purposeful, he is strong, quick-minded and most important of all, self-possessed and he has to be this way as Odysseus' efforts for the Greek cause are integrated with the fundamental love of home:

⁴⁵ This is Homer's first epic believed to have been composed in the 8th century BC. *The Iliad* narrates several weeks of action during the tenth and final year of the Trojan War, concentrating on the wrath of Achilles.

⁴⁶ However the adventures of Odysseus start at Book V, before which we encounter the adventures of his son.

It is 'philia', that attachment to one's normal and natural environment that underlied much of Greek happiness. Within the context of the Heroic Age and perhaps of the Homeric Age, the identification of one's best interests with the general welfare of one's kith, kin, and comrades was a saving grace for both the individual and the society.⁴⁷

In the end naturally we are presented with a success story, a hero who in a determined way has overcome all the traps in order to be united with his wife, son and homeland.

However Yasin's journey is not directed towards home; it does not have any nature of return. He lacks the security and happiness of a centre which would give him integrity. As he is stuck in between two countries neither of which gives him satisfaction, the journey he takes becomes a self-questioning without a destination point:

So I am driving by instinct alone. I hardly have a destination in my mind. The vast undulating sheet of time tends to shift suddenly and without warning whole worlds disappear. I am at the centre of a great divide, a line that cuts through the earth like a plough, or a tectonic feature, a deep-seated fissure which has the potential to shake continents, disturb centuries of order and uproot entire nations. I seem to be traversing this line without being entirely sure why.⁴⁸

Composed of the Eastern and Western elements; however not knowing how to reconcile them in a world of oppositions where cultures do not show tolerance to each other, the crack inside Yasin gets wider every day. Bereft of feeling any attachment to relatives and kinsmen, for Yasin the world is meaningless. He does not even have a Penelope that awaits him as he is going to be divorced from his wife. However "the crack" has to be mended; otherwise there will be madness and annihilation. So the journey in nature is a self-questioning, the trials he has to take are psychological rather than adventurous, it is a war within himself as opposed to Odysseus. He has to face the past in order to have a clearer future without dilemmas and he needs to clarify the meaning of home. Also another mission of the journey is to prevent his son from experiencing a similar dilemma:

I want him to learn about this place, this continent where so much of our fate has been forged. Love it or loathe it he would have to learn to deal with it, this thing we call Europe. Whether he decides to live his life here or not, this

⁴⁷ Stanford, W. B.: *The Untypical Hero* [1955], in *Homer: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Edited by George Steiner and Robert Fagles, Prentice-Hall: A Spectrum Book 1962, pp. 122-138, esp. p. 137.

⁴⁸ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 7.

is where he was born. I was not. I came here, and my fate is tied to the soil of this continent in ways that I have never entirely understood.⁴⁹

As a matter of fact this journey is the signifier of an age of homelessness bringing with itself decay and disruption into the lives of myriads of immigrants. We are faced with a defeated hero, wandering in a “wasteland” where the idea of belonging and family affiliations has long been distorted. The adventurous journey of trials with a happy ending has become a hell like journey where the protagonist has to fight with the “other” inside himself in order to lead a more satisfactory life. However the notion of an ultimate ending point or belonging is out of reach. The world of Odysseus becomes an ideal out of reach.

A second story that helps to describe Yasin’s journey is this time not from literature but from the realm of art. During his visit in Germany, Trier, Yasin and his son stop outside a shop that sells reproductions of artwork. There Yasin is attracted to paintings that have a coherent inner structure and hidden meaning as opposed to his personality that is in a chaotic state. One of these is Pieter Brueghel the Elder’s (1525-1569) painting “The Fall of Icarus” (Oil-tempera, 29 inches x 44 inches, Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, 1558) which Yasin uses to depict his own journey with his son and also their situation as immigrants in Europe. In the shop they discuss the painting thoroughly with his son Leo:

Yasin: Brueghel’s *Icarus*.

Leo: The one whose wings melted? I don’t see him anywhere.

Yasin: All you can see are his feet.

Leo: But why was it named after Icarus, then, if you can hardly see him?

Yasin: The title of a painting tells us what the artist was thinking. Maybe the point is we are so busy with what we are doing that we don’t even notice something so remarkable as a man falling out of the sky [...] Supposing it wasn’t that they didn’t notice, but that they didn’t want to see him.?

Leo: Why wouldn’t they want to see him?

Yasin: Because they had everything they needed. [...]

Leo: How can you know what a painter was thinking hundreds of years ago? Yasin: I don’t. Nobody does. But the point is that after all those years we are still thinking about it. So there must be something there.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 72.

What is the significance of this picture to the protagonist and the author? As respects to the painter; Brueghel is known to hide his meaning within a pattern apparently designed to conceal rather than to reveal his meaning. In his age he had a great unwillingness to associate himself with either the Italian or Flemish schools. He did not want to imitate the optimistic view of Italians. According to Burness :

His vision of human folly and his social and moral concern find expression through satire which is primarily a literary technique. Brueghel saw men as a beast dominated by his passions, primarily lust, gluttony and aggression so his world can be defined as one of human suffering, cruelty and ingratitude.⁵¹

In his paintings we see a certain kind of realism no matter if it is a biblical or mythological story and he interprets them in a different way. In the “Fall of Icarus” there is also a religious allegory shown in a mythological story. The mythological story of Icarus and Deadalus, which has been told by Ovid (43BC–17AD)⁵² and Apollodorus (140 BC)⁵³ is put into a realistic setting. In the picture a sunny spring day is depicted and there is a peaceful atmosphere. Although the painting is about the fall of Icarus to the sea as his wax melts, he is a peripheral figure of the painting. On the other hand the peasants who are doing their everyday work are foregrounded. When we scrutinize the picture what first takes our attention is a farmer who is ploughing his field in a detached way. Another farmer at the back is herding his sheep; however in the picture he is looking up into the sky. At the background are fishermen and sailors who are doing their everyday tasks in a leisurely manner. However no one is interested in Icarus’ life-death struggle. In the picture we catch a glimpse of his two tiny legs in the right corner. This scenery has also been a great inspiration to the English poet Wylan

⁵¹ Burness, Donald B.: Pieter Brueghel: Painter for Poets, in: Art Journal, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1972, pp. 175-162, esp. p. 157.

⁵² The roman poet Ovid in his work the *Metamorphosis* (9AD) dealt with mythological, legendary, and historical figures and recorded the history of the world from chaos to the apotheosis of Julius Caesar and the reign of Augustus. Comprised of 15 books. Book 8 was about the Fall of Icarus.

⁵³ The Greek scholar Apollodorus is known for his compendium to Greek mythology which is called *The Library*. (The first two centuries A.D.) This is the most complete ancient mythographic compilation available. After a Theogonical introduction, Apollodorus goes through the description of several mythological families, such as that of Deucalion, that of Inachus, Atlas, etc. This work, including its *Epitome*, covers the Trojan War, the Returns of the Achaean leaders, and the wanderings of Odysseus.

Hugh Auden's (1907-1923) famous poem *Musee de Beaux Arts*⁵⁴. According to Auden although the peasants have heard the scream they go on their work and the ships go on their way without disruption. It is therefore the depiction of a ruthless world in which human feelings do not count much. Why does such a melancholic and pessimistic depiction of the world take the attention of Yasin? It is probably because the story of Icarus has some parallels with Yasin's story. Icarus is the son of Deadalus both of whom were imprisoned in a tower on Crete by the king Minos. Their only way for escape was by air so Deadalus fabricated wings for him and his son. The smaller wing he secured with wax; however as his son denied to fly in a moderate height as advised by his father the wax melted in the sun. According to a traditional symbolic value what Icarus tried to depict was the Fall of Lucifer that signified the fall of pride. As pride was considered to be one of the vilest sins in Christianity it was always associated with death that came as a warning. As in the case of Yasin it is probable that he associates himself with Icarus. After all he has not listened to his father's advice and did not turn back to Sudan to work for his country's well being. This has created a sense of guilt in his subconscious, as his father saw him as a treacherous figure. So as a prejudiced individual against his country, who acts in a prideful attitude, he feels that he is bound to fall like Icarus. In the falling down there is no one to help him from his family or his friends as he feels himself as a peripheral figure. This journey is his last chance to confront the hidden agendas of his life; however to reach to a self-realization he has to get rid of the prejudices he has inside. Also if he does not help his son to find his identity, he will become the second Icarus figure. So he has to change the ending of their journey; there must be another fate awaiting them as opposed to the one of Icarus and Deadalus. Furthermore the painting symbolizes the downfall of many immigrants

⁵⁴ Auden, Wystan Hugh: *Musee de Beaux Arts* [1938], in: W.H. Auden: *Selected Poems*. Edited by Edward Mendelson. New York: Vintage 1989, p. 79. Here I would like to cite the second part of the poem which gives a perfect description of the scenery:

In Brueghel's Icarus for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster, the plowman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

who with great hope like Daedalus and his son have left their countries but became disillusioned in the host country. When they were afflicted by problems however there was no one to help them, as the age has become imbued with human segregation and bitterness. The individuals have lost their humanity and everyone is dragged by his own interests as was the period of Brueghel. In this world of misfortunes and failure the painting of Brueghel serves best the needs.

In the story not only does Yasin refer to Western symbols in art and literature to describe his journey; there is also a story pertaining to Sufism from which he was heavily influenced in Sudan. This story is called *The Conference of Birds* (1188) written by a twelfth century poet Farid al Din Attar (1142-1221)⁵⁵ which is about a quest similar to the painting of Brueghel. Yasin first hears the story from his grandmother Haboba; however this story has such an impact on him that:

Years later I picked up an English translation of Attar's *Conference of the Birds*. As I read it I realized that I already knew the story. What was far suddenly became near in one of those curious moments when the two halves of your life come together and everything fits and the world makes perfect sense.⁵⁶

Why does this story have such an impact on the writer? This story is in fact a religious allegory that is about the doctrine of Sufism on the self-realization of the person who has to get rid of the feelings of pride and prejudice. In the story the birds of the world gather together led by hoopoe to find their ideal king Simorgh however some of them avoid going to this perilous journey. At the end of the journey the birds that travel realize that only thirty of them have been left and there is no ideal king waiting for them. As a matter of fact they understand that, the king Simorgh they have been looking for is none other than themselves. The journey they take resembles the journey of the Sufis which is composed of seven parts. It is in fact the ones who have not been dictated by pride and have continued their journey with passionate love that have been

⁵⁵ He is one of the most ancient poets of Persia. He has provided the inspiration for Rumi and many other poets. Attar traveled for 39 years to Egypt, Syria, Arabia, India, and Central Asia before settling in his native Nishapur. He wrote 114 pieces, the same number of "suras" in the holy book of Koran. About thirty of his works survived. He wrote at least 45,000 rhymed couplets and many prose works. Attar wrote biographies of Sufi saints, but the allegorical *Conference of the Birds*, completed in 1188, is considered his greatest work.

⁵⁶ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 42.

rewarded. As can be seen similar to Christianity also in Sufism there is the necessity of destroying the self that is composed of pride and reputation. This spiritual journey of these birds is similar to Yasin's journey in that he also tries to find what his inner essence is and in order to do that he has to get rid of all the prejudices and dilemmas within himself. What we encounter is the depiction of two different stories one from Christianity the other from Islam which have similar messages and which also symbolize Yasin's journey. In paying credit to both of them Yasin is trying to depict his hybrid like situation composed of opposites. In the case of the symbolic value, the stories have similarities, which show the reconciliation process of two different cultures.

Not only does Yasin refer to artworks of historical worth, he also describes his journey with modern examples one of which is his car he has chosen to travel. The car is in fact a French car, a Peugeot 504, which is only produced in Nigeria. This car is a reminder of the Third World people and Yasin's own past:

The Peugeot 504 is a legend anywhere in Africa or the Middle East. It is prized above any one of a number of competitors because it is as though a tank. Here, among all those lightweight sleek machines, which are about as robust as waxed paper, there is something about this car, which strikes a note with some people. They seem to see in it a symbol of their own past, a sense of continuity, a memory perhaps. [...] This car is what I need right now, something solid around me, something that feels like it is in touch with the ground. It is a nostalgic reminder of my childhood, of the long-gone past.⁵⁷

Nigeria like Sudan is among the African countries that were the most afflicted by the slavery process and in its present state it is afflicted by conflicts between north and south, and other inter-regional fighting, which hinders it from becoming a unified republic. So Yasin aims to use the tool of the outsider, to challenge Europe. No matter how tattered the car is it is the native soul that matters for Yasin, and that makes it more precious than the high tech cars of the continent. In fact the car also stands for his soul who is on the verge of collapse. During the journey it goes slowly, breaks down however Yasin is determined to go on with it. The state of the car symbolizes the stages of Yasin's psychological state; however he has to go on with his quest in a

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

stubborn way. He is the colonizer now trying to understand the hidden agenda of Europe with the tool of the colonizer. Like the ideas he got from his imperial education and the foreign language he uses to criticize the state of colonialism with his writing; the car is a mechanism directed against the ideals of the west. This is the only mission left as he is like a survivor of an accident who has lost his memory. So the search for the continent's soul is also a search for his own soul.

2. Goethe's Journey of Self-Discovery as Inspirational Force

Yasin in his journey is greatly inspired by Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1831), the great German writer and thinker of the 18th century. He remembers one of his trips with his father-in-law Claus when they were driving through the mountains of North Wales as Yasin was enlisted to help him fetch a 17th century oak chest he had purchased from an antique dealer. During this drive they have the opportunity to talk about different topics one of which is Goethe: "Claus bounded ahead of me on the track, talking full speed over his shoulder. These mountains had always reminded him of Goethe's minute scientific description of the Alps made during a journey to Italy in 1786."⁵⁸ As the dialogue proceeds they switch on the topic of an inner indestructible self essence. Claus thinks that it is an indispensable part of human essence that provides an immutable centre of gravity giving people balance. Yasin comments:

And perhaps he said, it was this inner element, this instinct, to which Goethe trusted when he set out, in July 1814, on a journey of his own, down through the Rhineland of his childhood. He was sixty-five years old. Most of his friends and contemporaries were dead and gone. In the last decade he had not written anything of great worth.⁵⁹

Then Claus goes on comparing Napoleon and Goethe. Whereas Napoleon had physically invaded Egypt in order to understand the secrets of the universe Goethe followed another way:

Unlike Napoleon, however, Goethe felt the key to unlocking that source was to be found in poetry and mysticism rather than in physical conquest. So in his journey through the Rhineland, the Weimar, fleeing the pressures of public life and reputation, found inspiration in the great spiritual tradition of

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 176.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 177.

the Sufi poets. There he perceived a link that could prove his belief in the idea of a universal literature.⁶⁰

Then Claus goes on talking about how Goethe created his *West-Östlicher Diwan*⁶¹ in which he rendered homage to the 14th century Persian master Hafiz (1325–1389)⁶² who according to Goethe did not squander his gift.

Why does Yasin remember every detail of this conversation about Goethe so clearly? It can be assessed that Goethe's journeys he took to Italy and Weimar carry similarities with Yasin's journey in that they were both attempts at self-discovery after which a new period had opened up in Goethe's life. Secondly Goethe who by his idea of a universal literature found inspiration not only in the West but also in the Sufi tradition of the East by writing his famous *West-Östlicher Divan* is a writer who appeals to the worldview of Yasin and the writer Jamal Mahjoub. When we concentrate on the Italian journey⁶³ he took in 1786, when he was 37 years old, it can be considered as a new path to self-discovery after the mid-life crisis he faced. In 1786 Goethe was holding an important position (minister of construction); he was admired and loved. Yet according to Auden and Mayer it was the stability, which Weimar had given him that was threatening to become a prison:

Though it had enabled him to put Werther behind him, it had failed to give him any hints as to what kind of thing he should be writing instead. [...] His official life had had its remedial effect, but as the public affairs were not his

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 178.

⁶¹ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang: *West-Östlicher Divan* [1819]. In: *Goethes Werke. Textkritisch durchgesehen und mit Anmerkungen versehen von Erich Trunz*, Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag 1960, pp. 7-125.

⁶² Hafiz was the poetic name of Shams-ud-Din Mohammed which, in Arabic, means 'one who knows the Koran by heart'. He was born in Shiraz, Persia. As a theologian he preached tolerance, as a poet he produced over 700 poems collected in a work called *Divan* by Mohammad Golandaam in 1410 A.D. Hafiz' poems are considered one of the highpoints of Persian poetry.

⁶³ Goethe fled to Italy, leaving Carlsbad in secret early in the morning of September 3, 1786. He recorded his impressions at a time in a diary for Frau von Stein; later he drew heavily on this diary for his *Italienische Reise* (1817/29 translated as *Travels in Italy*, 1846). In his reflections on Italy and his experiences there the interests and developments of the previous twelve years coalesce and become clearly articulated. Apart from brief stays in Venice and Naples and a tour to Sicily, Goethe spent all of his time in Rome, visiting galleries and monument to study painting and sculpture. For most of his stay he socialized only with the German art colony, especially with Wilhelm Tischbein and Angelika Kauffmann. He revised an completed *Egmont*, *Iphigenie auf Taurus*, and part of *Torquato Tasso* for the edition of his works that was underway (1787-1790); he also added two scenes to the version of *Faust* he had composed before he left Frankfurt for Weimar, and selected from his *Faust* material scenes that he published in preliminary form as *Faust: Ein Fragment* (1790). The journey ended in 1788.

vocation his duties were becoming senseless tasks which exhausted his energies.⁶⁴

As a matter of fact the idea of a journey to Italy proved out to be an escape from this turmoil but also an attempt to self-realization: "My purpose in making this wonderful journey is not to delude myself but to discover myself in the objects I see."⁶⁵ Or when he says: "[...] I am very well and more finding out who I am, learning to distinguish between what is really me and what is not. I am working hard and absorbing all I can which comes to me on all sides from without, so that I may develop all the better from within."⁶⁶ When we consider Yasin, who is the same age as Goethe when he began his Italian journey, he also wants to evade the incarceration he faces in London, the disillusionment in his work atmosphere and his unbalanced relationship with his wife. This journey is aimed at finding "the other" inside Yasin, a path which is towards self-realization by the process of defamiliarization. In the beginning of his journey Yasin admits: "Until this moment I have simply improvised my life, hopping from one plan to the next with no real idea of where it was all leading. Now for the first time in my life it becomes plain to me that I have no idea what I am doing. I do not another dream to latch on to."⁶⁷ In another instance similarly he reclaims:

Why have I never been able to escape, to really escape, to just get up and go? All of those other stirrings, straying across fences, flirting with the idea of breaking free none of them led anywhere, except to the incontrovertible fact that nothing could change. And now here I am, drifting along the surface, not quite able to believe it.⁶⁸

However his traveling to Germany, France and Spain during which he examines the architecture, the museums and the paths in which past and present merge, opens up a new period in his life. For instance the mosque he comes across in France gives him a certain kind of inner peace which he has not experienced before:

⁶⁴Auden, W. H./Mayer, Elisabeth: Introduction, in: J. W. Goethe: Italian Journey (1786-1788) [1817/29]. Translated from the German by W.H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer, London: Penguin Books 1970, pp. 6-19, esp. p. 13.

⁶⁵ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang: The Italian Journey (1786-1788) [1817/29]. Translated from the German by W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer, London: Penguin Books 1970, p. 137.

⁶⁶ Goethe, Italian Journey, p. 345.

⁶⁷ Mahjoub, Traveling with Djinns, p. 59.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

Instantly, I feel a sublime sense of contentment and harmony washing over me, almost a kind of relief, of being in the protective embrace of something much larger than myself, something that recognizes me [...] This sense of belonging catches me off balance. I am not sure what I have been expecting. Churches I am clear about. I visit them for the architecture, for the feeling of history one gains from the stone walls [...].⁶⁹

Here again by the sense of defamiliarization he begins to see the thing he knows previously from a new light. Although he has visited a mosque before, out of duty with his family, it is this free journey out of restrictions which makes him consider things from a new perspective. This discovery brings forth the latent cultural heritage he was raised in. Eventually the journey does help him to mend partially the rift inside himself: "Everything now seems intrically connected. I occupy the centre of a complex maze, a mystery to which my existence is the key. And there are ghost traveling with us."⁷⁰ Goethe also after his one year stay in Italy seems to have profited much. Wherever he goes, he comes across familiar objects in an unfamiliar world and as a consequence his observations and ideas gain a new kind of vitality. He declares:

A new era is beginning for me. My spiritual horizons have been so extended by all my looking and learning that now I have to knuckle down to some definite piece of work. Human individuality is a strange thing: it is only during the last year, when I have had to depend solely on myself and at the same time be in daily contact with complete strangers, that I have really come to know my own.⁷¹

As a matter of fact for both Goethe and Yasin traveling becomes a metaphor which is central to an ontological discourse central to the relations between self and other. It becomes a path towards self-realization and discovery where the disfavorable atmosphere creates the possibility of new meaning formation. However this necessitates the feeling of an ongoing senses of exile where one is able to feel a stranger and at home at the same time. Goethe's Italian journey makes a new sense of poetic mission possible.

Goethe's second journey through Weimar is also an attempt at self-discovery. He takes the journey when he is 65; again disillusioned by the world he is surrounded. The death of Schiller in 1805 and the defeat of the Prussians at Jena in 1806 mark another major

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 111.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 302.

⁷¹ Goethe, Italian Journey, p. 406.

turning point in Goethe's life. His sympathy with Napoleon, his insistence on the independence of art from politics, and his unorthodox social and religious attitudes alienated him from an ever-increasing portion of his public. It was this shattering reality, which he tried to escape when he took another journey of 4 months in the latter part of 1814 to Frankfurt and Rhineland. This journey was also a journey to his own past. He renewed old ties and visited places belonging to his former time. This journey also started a new era in his life as he befriended Sulpiz Boisserree who was a young art-historian and collector of pictures from Cologne who opened Goethe's eyes to the significance on the Middle Ages in which romantics were interested also he brought him to view the Roman Catholic Religion with more sympathy and understanding. Secondly he fell in love with Marianne Willemer the wife of a well-to-do Frankfurt merchant, Johann Jakob von Willemer. Here the first seeds of Goethe's *West-Östlicher Divan* were also initiated which would be enriched by his love to Marianne and his changing concept to the East. After the journey Goethe came upon the translation of the *Divan* of the Persian poet Hafiz by the Viennese scholar Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1799)⁷² which greatly inspired him. So he created the *West-Östlicher Divan* which is a collection of lyrics written in homage to the great Persian poet Hafiz based on the themes of Persian poetry and deeply imbued with the idea of mysticism. The poet by writing the poems becomes a spiritual traveler in the East in search of the unmediated presence of the divine and the origins of humanity and divine light. Furthermore the "Book of Suleika" section in *West-Östlicher Divan* reflected the emotional experience of the poet's love to Marianne Willemer. Yasin's reference to this work carries within itself important connotations. Firstly in this work Goethe's fascination with the Eastern elements and literature is accordance with Yasin's predilections who in his journey tries to make a connection of the eastern and western stories. For Yasin who grew up in Sudan the impact of Sufism is overabundant: "My first encounter with Sufi mysticism coincided with a bout of teenage angst. I read Idries Shah's tales of the Dervishes while trying to decide who I was and what I wanted to do

⁷² He was a distinguished Austrian Orientalist. He studied at Graz and Vienna, entering the Oriental academy of Vienna in 1788, to devote himself to Oriental languages. From the Persian he translated the entire *Divan* of Hafiz (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1812-13).

with my life.”⁷³ Or when he dwells on the meaning of Derwish and tries to associate it with his journey: “One of these is that it derives from the Persian and means simply ‘the seeker of doors’. As though the physical world were a dark room and the Sufi mystic blindly trying to find a way out. [...] But is this a mystical quest or am I just running away?”⁷⁴ Certainly Goethe’s metaphorical journey to the East in which he reaches to a certain kind of renunciation is an ideal Yasin wants to reach, as he is not sure how he is to lead his life. Trapped in the ruthless age of mass migrations in which racism, segregation and nationalism threat the integrity of the age, in which the Western greed of capitalism is at its highest course seen in the case of the Iraqian War; Yasin is desperate about the war of civilizations where he is stuck in between. Neither did Goethe experience a peaceful age, due to the political, social and intellectual turmoil in Europe in the wake of French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. Goethe’s turn to the Orient symbolized his desperation from the narcissistic attitude of Europe in which tolerance became a distant notion rather overtaken by the love of land and goods. Goethe by concentrating to the East and the notion of mysticism tried to reach to a different kind of fulfillment. In his notes to the “Book of Parables” he comments about the mystical ones:

Sie treibt den meschen aus dem vorhergehenden Zustand, der noch immer ängstlich und drückend bleibt, zur Vereinigung mit Gott schon in diesem leben und zur vorläufigen Entsagung derjenigen Güter, deren allenfallsiger Verlust uns schmerzen könnte.⁷⁵

Goethe who was faced with the extreme ruthlessness and brutality in the European example did not approve the limitless self-realization of the people, who did not care about other human beings. The metaphorical quest he started through mysticism and the creative power of poetry was to offer heal to the western narcissism. It is this healing power what Claus wants to emphasize when he compares Napoleon to Goethe and favors the poet above all.

⁷³ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinns*, p. 86.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁷⁵ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang: *Noten und Abhandlungen zu besserem Verständnis des West-Östlichen Divans [1819]*, in: *Goethes Werke. Textkritisch durchgesehen und mit Anmerkungen versehen von Erich Trunz*, Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag ⁵1960, S. 126- 267, esp. p. 205: “It takes humans out of their former state of mind- which remains still anxious and oppressing- toward a unification with God in this life and to a transitional renunciation of those goods whose final loss might bring about pain.” (translation is mine)

B. The Sense of Ambivalence: Stereotyping in England and Sudan

Because he is born from parents coming from different civilizations Yasin from the very beginning suffers under disintegration as he states:

My sense of being divided, split, incomplete, went back to an early recollection of my parents leaning over my crib as a baby- one dark and the other pale. At least, I think I remember, but the image remained, whether it floated up from the buried subconscious or was an early flash of inspiration.⁷⁶

Such are the words of Yasin, an ambivalent individual, who is in an eternal sense of exile. The protagonist signals to the lack of a fixed cultural background with the diversity in his family and the cultural multiplicity in his native country. As his mother is English and his father Sudanese Yasin does not have a proper sense of identity and he does not feel himself a part of Sudan and England. It is not only racism and alienation in Britain that troubles Yasin. His alienation starts in Sudan, in his immediate family and is extended into his family life in Britain. He is the mythological monster “chimere” formed from different parts of different animals whose life “is a mosaic of juxtaposed opposites, fragments, flinty chips all fitted together in such a way that it is only from a far that any kind of cohesion is discernible.”⁷⁷ However due to the clashing of opposites he has a yearning for the security of an integral identity:

I have two passports and quite a variety of other documents to identify me, all of which tell the world where I have been, but not who I am, nor where I am going to. [...] Some might say that I have been assimilated, but they would be wrong. Others would say I am alienated and ought to be better integrated by now, but that too would be to miss the point. Don't get me wrong, it's not sympathy I am looking for, simply that I have never really been able to make sense of all this before.⁷⁸

We see this need for security and belonging when Yasin decides to tell a story about his father which was narrated to him by his grandmother. It is about an accident that his father survived when he was working as a caddy for the English gentleman. The survival of his father also enabled the starting point of his own life story. In that

⁷⁶ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 87.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

instance he remembers another story narrated by his mother which however he does not tell. It is interesting to see that rather than telling one of his own memories about his father the protagonist tells us a second hand story and he admits: "All the stories that make any sense in my life have been given to me by women."⁷⁹ Why does the protagonist from the very beginning of the text necessitate making this declaration? The story told by the grandmother might signal the urge to reach back to an original pristine state, 'the story told by the mother' which signalizes the safety of home and integrity. Trinh T. Minha in her article "Other than Myself/ my other Self" also tries to lay bare the ambiguity in the immigrant personalities and shows that the stories about childhood and especially about the mother do have a great deal of influence on the individual. She asserts:

The meanings of here and there home and abroad, third and first, margin and centre keep on being displaced according to how one position oneself. Where is 'home'? Mother continues to exert her power from afar. Even in her absence she is present within the teller, his blood, his source of life.⁸⁰

When Yasin talks about the house in which he grew up we see that it was full of women, the men had all gone away for one motif or another. So women are the symbols of rootedness and stability for Yasin and their stories naturally form the most important part of his childhood memories. However as he grows up and leaves the security of home, he encounters many other stories dictated at school, which has an English educational system. He watches American movies with different messages, there are the stories of his father about their own past and in the end there appear so many contradictory accounts from different cultural backgrounds. Yasin is unable to find his true path in them:

I had the strange feeling of an infinite number of stories- I had no idea how many there were, or which of them were true and which made up, which handed down over generations, and which picked up at the market that very morning. [...] I could not imagine what all those stories contained, but recall vividly the overwhelming conviction that they were there for me alone to discover."⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁸⁰ Minh-ha, Trinh T.: Other than myself/ my other self, in: Traveller's Tales. Narratives of Home and Displacement. Edited by George Robertson [et al.]. London, New York: Routledge 1994, pp. 9-26, esp. p. 20.

⁸¹ Mahjoub, Traveling with Djinns, p. 4.

In the journey he takes, we confront the names of many different countries, the names of the writers from different cultures. We confront indications of Sufism but also Taosim and Christianity. Yasin is in fact a lonely intellectual in a metaphorical state of exile. This makes him envious of those writers whose history and literary tradition is seen clearly in their works; however his narrative is full of contradictions and uncertainties. The indicators of a complete personality like the sense of history and language are absent from him and he wants to reclaim them. In discussing this problem however the metaphorical way he chooses to depict himself is rather interesting. He says: "I belong to the nomad tribe, the great unwashed, those people born in joins between continental shelves, in the unclaimed interstices between time zones, strung across latitudes. A tribe of no fixed locus, the homeless, the stateless."⁸²

However his using the image has contradictions within itself too. Why is Yasin particularly using the image of the nomad when trying to define himself? In the Euro-American modernity the desert symbolizes the eternal and original state. Without its boundaries it symbolizes the site of critical and individual freedom. In this respect the nomad is an ideal representative of movement based on perpetual displacement. Kaplan who in her book *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* makes a detailed analysis of tropes of traveling states: "Nomads, bedouins and other mobile tribes have been geographically located outside metropolitan locations (in the desert or forest). These romanticized figures are always positioned in colonial discourse of the 'other', signifying the opposite of Euro-American metropolitan modernity."⁸³ For Yasin, who believes in the futility of the imaginary boundaries and is burdened by the notion of nationhood, the life of the nomad symbolizes freedom and happiness. However it is interesting to see that in trying to conceptualize his ideal state he uses the Orientalist trope of the West that shows the impact of the grand narrative on the lives of the postcolonial subject. This is a manifestation, in fact, of the eternal clash of these binary opposites that tortures Yasin but which also gives him the vital force to survive.

⁸² Ibid., p. 5.

⁸³ Kaplan, Caren: *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* [1996] Durham: Duke University Press 2000, p. 75.

When Yasin moves to England, perplexed by the chaotic atmosphere in Sudan his ambivalence becomes worse as he is judged according to some stereotypes and is the victim of racism. This hinders his integration into the society, disturbs his family relations and renders him unsuccessful at work.

You grow up learning about the England of *David Copperfield* (the Dickens novel, not the illusionist) and what they don't tell you is that you might well be subject to insults, nasty looks and random searches. There are firebombs and stabbings, people have petrol and dog excrement pushed through their letterboxes, and even it does not happen to you personally, you know it could.⁸⁴

The positive overtone success story of David Copperfield⁸⁵ a young man who is trying to make his own way in the world and achieves it in the end has become an unattainable dream for the immigrant who hopelessly struggles to make his way in the host country. The present reality is that foreigners are not accepted easily and everyone is lost in his/her own problems. Yasin's defining himself a chimere, a mythological monster composed of different parts is an indication of the latent feeling of race difference which has been inscribed in his mind during his education period in Sudan. One day when his son, Leo, also likens themselves to chimeres Yasin questions himself if they are unhappy monsters. Then he remembers David Wark Griffith's (1875-1948)⁸⁶ film *Birth of a Nation* (1915)⁸⁷ where the mulatos are shown as sorry creatures who lust after white people and whose existence is a threat to the entire society. Remembering James Baldwin's (1924-87)⁸⁸ essay about that film, Yasin concentrates on the meaning of mulatto and how it was turned into an inferior term by the Christian slave owners:

⁸⁴ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 288.

⁸⁵ *David Copperfield* which is Charles Dicken's eighth novel was published in twenty monthly parts from May 1840 to November 1850. It is the youthful portrayal of Dicken's life through the honest, winning and successful David. The book ends in positive overtones as it was written at a time when Dickens was young and successful.

⁸⁶ A famous American director, producer and writer.

⁸⁷ I would like to give a brief description of the plot: Two brothers, Phil and Ted Stoneman, visit their friends in Piedmont, South Carolina: the family Cameron. This friendship is affected by the Civil War, as the Stonemans and the Camerons must join up opposite armies. The consequences of the War in their lives are shown in connection to major historical events, like the development of the Civil War itself, Lincoln's assassination, and the birth of the Ku Klux Klan.

⁸⁸ American writer, noted for his novels on sexual and personal identity, and sharp essays on civil-rights struggle in the United States. Baldwin also wrote three plays, a children's storybook, and a book of short stories.

The Christian slave owners, stricken with guilt at their savage, lustful behavior towards their pagan property, who usually had no choice in the matter, sought to wash away their sin and discredit the outcome of their transgression of nature's and God's laws, and do depicted their offspring as misnomers, half breeds, sterile freaks [...].⁸⁹

For Yasin race is the last great taboo whose inception was contributed by the superstition in religion and which now renders the alliance between Klansmen and Islam possible. It is this very concept under which he suffers, always understood wrongly, making him vulnerable to stereotyping and alienation.

It is because of his dark complexion that the police in the German border stop him and check his name against the list of internationally wanted suspects. Even a simple shopping can highlight Yasin's sense of difference and lead more to his alienation. In the supermarket he realizes that the women he faces tend to clutch their hand bag more. He knows exactly that it is the dark complexion of him which makes him look like a mugger to these women. Also he imagines what they will think of him if Ellen, his wife, tells to the police that he has kidnapped their son Leo. He is sure that he will be the ultimate scapegoat, the ruthless Arabic criminal who has betrayed his wife: "The newspaper headlines come to his mind with the topics: 'Muslim Fanatic Kidnaps Own Son' or 'Arab Extremist Gunned Down in Race for Border.'"⁹⁰ It has become a common place in England to treat the foreigners as the ultimate criminals who have to be feared and Yasin unfortunately cannot get rid of the race prejudices that follow him everywhere like a ghost. Yasin's sister Yasmina who lives with her husband in England also suffers under the same dilemma when she exclaims: "I have seen how they treat us in this country. We are lower than low. Muslims, Pakistanis, Arabs, Africans, Bosnians. This is the bottom of the barrel and they want to scrape it clean."⁹¹

Not only the racist outlook but also his being considered as the spokesperson for the entire nation in Sudan disturbs Yasin as the people around him do not consider his English background and urban atmosphere in which he was brought up. This stereotyping is even evident in the family circle of his wife Ellen who live in Denmark.

⁸⁹ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinns*, p. 77.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

One day when they decide to visit Ellen's father in Denmark and join a family meeting gossip about Yasin and wrong notions about his country come up to the front. For instance there is a whispering between an old man and his wife:

Old man: He doesn't look like an oil sheikh, to me.

Wife: Not oil sheikh, his father was a political candidate I think.

Old man: I didn't know they had elections.⁹²

Another ironic incident occurs during Yasin's conversations with his father-in-law Claus who begins asking questions about the Bedouins as if all the inhabitants in Sudan live in that way or all of them have to be informed about every aspect of them. He forgets that Yasin grew up in an urban atmosphere and also knows Bedouins from books:

I would find myself describing ancient rituals of long- forgotten tribes, often having to make up the details as I went along; not being schooled in such matters. Whatever hopes or ambitions he envisaged for our relationship, all of them were some how centred on my being a ready source of accurate and precise information on the lifestyles and habits of every ethnic group living east of Suez.⁹³

For Yasin it is inconceivable that they do not consider his identity English although his mother is from England. The nativeness of Yasin is highlighted in every occasion; he is being treated as the exotic oriental who has brought news from a distant world which the others do not care to scrutinize.

Not being able to feel himself a part of England can Sudan be an ideal place for him to live? Unfortunately as an immigrant who lives in England he is not accepted to the Sudanese society either; as he is considered to be the rich dandy who lives well-off and is not aware of the problems of his country. This feeling comes to the foreground when he visits Sudan with his wife and son. At the airport Yasin has problems with his passport as his passport has expired. The officers who control the passports do not want to do him any favor although they know his situation. Yasin knows that there is an ongoing sense of hatred between them: "He heard my rusty Arabic, saw my western clothes, my English wife, my child. He saw a young man who was probably living a

⁹² Ibid., p. 33.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 27.

comfortable life over there in England. He shook his head and reached for a stamp.”⁹⁴
As a matter of fact we are confronted with an individual in exile who due to racism and stereotyping is stuck in a world of ambivalence which is different to overcome

C. A Reclamation in Space and Time of the Displaced Self

However how is the journey going to help a character composed of such ambivalent terms? It can be asserted that the metaphorical journey Yasin takes to overcome his displaced self and which he considers as the search of the Sufi wanderer for the light of illumination is significant in a double sense. Firstly it is an attempt towards reclamation of place in order to recuperate the feeling of displacement. The notion of place has an important role in the formation of cultural and personal identity. A place can be defined as a space to which a certain kind of meaning is attributed; as opposed to the abstractedness and emptiness of space. The spaces human beings occupy are given religious, cultural characteristics and are enclosed by imaginary borders, which give security to the personality. The question of who we are is usually connected with the notion of where we are. For instance Edward Said called his autobiographical narrative *Out of Place* to signify the ambivalences in his identity as an outcome of being eternally away from his homeland. All of the narratives of the immigrants, exiles and diasporas are afflicted by the feeling of dislocation. There is the never-ending dream of a certain place called homeland. Yasin’s sense of place is blurred in double sense.

Sudan, where he spent his childhood has become an alien place for him afflicted by wars, apartheid, famine and class interests. He era of postcolonial independence has proved out to be a sham as nationalism could not save the country from its backwardness Although Sudan will always be an integral part of Yasin’s identity, he does not feel himself strongly attached to it anymore:

The country that would always be home in my mind had become a metaphor for human suffering on an unimaginable scale. For half a century the country had struggled to make coherent sense of its post-colonial heritage. Throughout the turbulent years of the Cold war, the country had switched ideological sides on a regular basis, first right, then left then left, then right, until suddenly neither option existed [...]. It was all a sham: Political

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 196.

pluralism, multi-ethnic representation, religious and racial equality none of it worked.⁹⁵

In a sudden flashback Yasin remembers the time when he and his wife decided to go to Sudan to visit his relatives. There Yasin was seen as the alienated Westernized person, who had betrayed his country. He did not belong to the people any more. Throughout the journey Yasin refers to the history and the current political situation in Sudan from which we learn his ideas about the country. In Sudan the vital problem is that the people cannot be integrated into a whole as in the North and South the religion and ethnicity of the people are different. Yasin does not believe in unity which was proposed in the independence movement of the country:

It had all gone terribly wrong. The great age of national independence had proved to be nothing more than a neo-colonial mirage. [...] The pluralists and the secularists, the ones who preached pan-African unity and a nation of equals, regardless of race or creed, or who your father was and how many franchises he owned, were now just a gang of toothless old grumps who mumbled nostalgically about things nobody remembered. Nobody had any patience for any of that any more.⁹⁶

Yasin pities his father who all his life long had strived for the ideal state and national unity. Most of the leaders of the country betrayed the people by becoming rich and fleeing the country when things went wrong. Everywhere in the government there were bitter stories of corruption in government offices and the officials were trading their authority for multi-million-dollar commissions on aircraft sales and weapons of every calibre. For Yasin it is inconceivable that none of these people were caught:

They had friends who tipped them off. They turned their backs on politics. They fled the country. They had mansions in Hampshire and numbered accounts in Zurich. They had all the dancing girls they wanted.⁹⁷

When Yasin visits the country second time with his family, he feels himself as complete stranger and he is moved by the poverty of the people and the violation of human rights. For instance in the capital he sees many shantytowns which were built by the people who ran away from the war in the south. When he talks to his friends he hears stories of people being arrested for no reason and tortured. As the dream of

⁹⁵ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 134.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

national independence period proved out to be a failure, fundamental Islam has gained an outweighing importance in the country. Yasin's father is really moved by the fact that the youngsters are put into the army in the name of 'jihad' (holy war) rather than being educated. As a matter of fact Yasin's sense of displacement for Sudan becomes a permanent fact for him. His visit which aims at a physical reassessing of place becomes problematic as the familiar places he once inhabited have become so different that he cannot associate himself with anything: "Coming back was not just a matter of physical returning; there were other adjustments to be made, gaps that had to be compensated for. You are no longer one person, I remember that night, but two-both of them strangers."⁹⁸

England also contributes to Yasin's displacement as he cannot associate himself with the country. Firstly, the all embracing mother concept has left itself to the cold and brute European power which is not interested in the problems of its former colonies. Yasin resents that unless it is a pop star or an actress, the newspapers and magazines are not interested in the political turmoil going on in his country. Furthermore his father's attempt at trying to call for help from the authorities is shattered. Not only is it the disinterestedness that disturbs Yasin but it is also the world of illusion created by the British Press against the Middle East that nauseates him:

It was a cruel joke being played out on the world. For the first time in my life I began to wonder about the integrity of the British Press, which I had always been led to believe was second to none. It was open season on Arabs, and anything, anywhere, was a legitimate target.⁹⁹

The country he is trying to live in has created such a segregationist outlook on Yasin and his countrymen that, everyday it becomes more difficult for him to associate himself with the land. However not only England but the general tendency in Europe against the Arabs and Islam is in such a devastating scale that tolerance and human rights do not count anymore. Yasin is depressed living on this continent as it symbolizes the peak of capitalism and technology, but it has reached such a stage that human emotions do not count anymore. As a matter of fact he does not feel himself safely attached to any places; he is like a void trying to keep alive in a world full of

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 204.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 94.

contradictions. But isn't it Europe that he wants to live the rest of his life? So this journey is his last chance of his attaching some kind of meaning to the places in Europe so that he can have a more peaceful life. He exclaims: "Europe is my dark continent and I am searching for the heart of it."¹⁰⁰

However the reclamation of place is connected with the history of that place as it is the past that gives a space its overall meaning. So the journey becomes also a wandering in the European past; the places are replete with the ghosts or djinns of a distant period: "we pass through time, across the face of the continent and down through centuries."¹⁰¹ In fact it is an attempt of a certain kind of renunciation with Europe which throughout history has exploited his country and its other colonies, treated the people in a racist attitude and in the present does not want to deal with the problems of its former colonies. Yasin knows the overall history too well as they were made to learn everything in Sudan however he has never visited the places where the incidents occurred. So by traversing unfamiliar places Yasin tries to remember once more the history however much it disturbs him and consider everything with a new consciousness. The countries he chooses to visit are symbolical in that Germany is the paragon of human suffering and annihilation which in Hitler's totalitarian period caused the death of millions of people. France used to be the second biggest colonial power in Europe which in the time of Napoleon played an important part in the Middle East (Egypt's conquest) which also affected Sudan being the neighbor of Egypt. His final destination is in Spain where in the Medieval Ages Arabs¹⁰² formed a kingdom of a flourished civilization and raised important philosophers one of which is Ibn-i Arabi. So the intermixed culture reminds him of his own ancestors of both sides. As they visit the cathedrals museums and palaces the unfamiliar environment regains its meaning

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 205.

¹⁰² The Arab Conquest of Spain occurred in 710-797. After their forays into France were blunted by Charles Martel, the Muslims in Spain had begun to focus their whole attention on what they called al-Andalus, southern Spain (Andalusia), and to build there a civilization far superior to anything Spain had ever known. Reigning with wisdom and justice, they treated Christians and Jews with tolerance, with the result that many embraced Islam. They also improved trade and agriculture, patronized the arts, made valuable contributions to science, and established Cordoba as the most sophisticated city in Europe.

with the journey in time and a new kind of self-consciousness arises in Yasin, connecting him more to the continent.

To show the disturbed integrity of Yasin however the handling of the past is rather disturbed in the narrative. Although in the European narrative the notion of time is linear in that history goes in a linear progression towards a goal; for Yasin the notion of time is spiral “Time seemed to flow, just in that moment, and everything was terribly old and new at the very same time.”¹⁰³ The nostalgia of the places is intermixed with his personal memories; also the history of Sudan and Europe are shown in a web like state without any order. From the situation of Yasin it can be assessed that for the postcolonial individuals the notion of the past can be rather complex as they come across many interpretations of it in their home countries and the host country and Lowenthal’s assertion about the notion of the past reimburses the migrant’s chaotic state when he asserts:

The awareness of the past involves more than linear movement; social, cultural, and myriad other circumstances are superimposed on the narrative, together with the histories of other people, other institutions, other ideas [...]. The past is multiform, much more complex than any sequential storyline.¹⁰⁴

Yasin claims that he has no real notion of the history of Sudan. The narration of Sudanese history seems distorted by the grand narrative of the colonial power England. At school history was narrated in a Eurocentric way; the topics they were thought were all about other countries and alien incidents:

I was trying to make sense of the whole scheme of things. The problem was that the world out there was a mystery, and part of that mystery stemmed from the fact that we didn’t seem to have a history. How we came to be assembled here at this confluence of streams seemed to be a question no one was particularly interested in. History, the hard stuff, the earth-shattering events, all involved other people, other places.¹⁰⁵

For Yasin the history of Sudan becomes the history of disjointed haphazard arrangements. However nothing is mentioned about the ideological ideals of the colonial England who after the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899-1955) became the

¹⁰³ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Lowenthal, David: *The Past is a Foreign Country* [1985]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988, p. 223.

¹⁰⁵ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 62.

sole power in the country frustrating the unification of the country by its “Closed Door” ordinances with the help of which it barred all northern Sudanese from entering or working in the South. It is important to consider here the ideology of the colonialist powers in order to keep the population under control. Yasin is also one of the victims of the ideological education system of the colonial power in which England is shown as a power needing the help of Sudanese and offering its help for the development of the country. For Yasin it is inconceivable that in his homeland he is alienated from his own national history and he does not know the outcomes of these shattering events on his own history. It is as if for the whole world there is only one notion of history, one grand narrative and that belongs to Europe. When Yasin looks at a newspaper the caption “England Needs You” seems rather ironic to him. What we encounter is a de-essentialization process in which the assimilation of non-European peoples to European civilization is expected.

Regarding Yasin’s school years there are certain words that flash into mind such as Verdun, Auschwitz, Treaty of Versailles and Hiroshima. They memorized words like “Realpolitik” and “Von Bismarck” and the “Scramble of Africa” without knowing their significance in their lives. Why does Yasin choose these names out of so many other names? It is probably because these terms are all connected to nationalistic ideals which turned the world into a battleground and which directly affected the destiny of the colonial countries too. For instance the Treaty of Verdun is the partition of Charlemagne's empire among his three sons that signaled the beginning of dissolution of Charlemagne's empire into political units that foreshadowed the nations of Western Europe. Politicians and historians have tended to blame the rise of the Nazis on the Treaty of Versailles which was the peace agreement signed at the end of the First World War with Germany under which it had to give up most of its resources. Auschwitz was one of the biggest extermination camps of Nazi Germany, which witnessed the most brutal segregation. In the Second World War an attack to Hiroshima by the USA forces caused the death of millions of innocent people. If we come to the term “Realpolitik” it was termed by the German Leader Otto von Bismarck

who is the founder of a unified Germany. After the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) Germany became one of the most powerful nations in Europe soon rivaling Britain in industrial output and military power soon. The term explains a usually expansionist national policy having as its sole principle advancement of the national interest. As for “the Scramble of Africa” it denotes the initiation of new Imperialism. At the end of the 18th century colonization had come to a halt; however from 1800 to 1900 a second wave of colonization took place in which Africa witnessed the most dramatic colonization. This was termed as the “Scramble for Africa.”¹⁰⁶

Yasin’s remembering these acts in fact is a depiction of an unconscious fear within himself relating to the state of the humanity in the contemporary age. If we concentrate on especially Auschwitz, Hiroshima and the Scramble of Africa which are the utmost indicators of racism and brutality seen in human history, the danger is still inherent in the present century in which nationalism in Europe has again gained its threatening voice, where the immigrants are attacked, molested and murdered. Yasin has experienced acts of brutality in a horrified way during which his notion of violence has reached its utmost:

People are kicked to death in car parks, parents beat children senseless, arms are lopped off in churches, skulls are cracked, bullets are fired. Violence has no limits [...]. Our capacity for senseless violence is what separates us from most of the living world.¹⁰⁷

It is not only the hatred that is directed towards his fellow citizens that worries Yasin, there is another important underlying cause which generates these brutal acts which is the loss of affection of human beings towards each other. As a result of technological innovations and globalization the world has become closer but the relationship between people has worsened leading everyone to a desperate state of individualism. Yasin feels himself threatened by all this:

The close physical proximity makes us all strangers rather than a crowd. It highlights our individuality instead of our belonging. The fluorescent glow

¹⁰⁶ To see how racism became an ideology after this incident have a look at theoretical application part Chapter II.4 at this work.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 171.

strips the nerve endings of society bare, revealing the loneliness, the fear, obsession, love, desire, hatred. It all comes to the surface¹⁰⁸

However how is one to hinder this all and prevent another act of mass destruction like Hiroshima or Auschwitz? To my contention it is appropriate here to cite Theodor Adorno's (1903-1969) article "Education after Auschwitz"¹⁰⁹ where the writer shares similar opinions with Yasin. For a similar incident like Auschwitz not to occur again Adorno wants to dwell deep into the reasons why the oppressors were inclined to commit such a horrible act? For Adorno genocide has its roots in the resurrection of aggressive nationalism that has developed in many countries since the end of the 19th century. One of the greatest motifs for this brutal act was the incarceration of humanity in a net like world where feelings did not count anymore. In our contemporary age the archaic tendency toward violence is especially found in urban centers. Adorno claims that regressive tendencies, repressed sadistic traits are produced everywhere today by the global evolution of society. These acts become more often as the society becomes an entity without feelings. Like Yasin Adorno also signals to the self-centeredness and lack of affection people show to each other:

What contradicts my observation, the herd drive of the so called lonely crowd [die einsame menge], is a reaction to this process, a banding together of people completely cold who cannot endure their own coldness and yet cannot change it. Every person today, without exception feel too little loved, because every person cannot love enough. The inability to identify with others was unquestionably the most important psychological condition for the fact that something like Auschwitz could have occurred in the midst of more or less civilized and innocent people.¹¹⁰

In this atmosphere the most threatening fact is acting without critical reflection by becoming a member of a collective identity and acting to the whims of the collective body by extinguishing yourself as self-determined being. Adorno's proposing personal

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁰⁹ Theodor Adorno Wiesengrund was a well known German philosopher who was forced into exile by the Nazis (1934). He spent 16 years in England and the USA before returning to Germany to take up a chair in philosophy at Frankfurt. A leading member of the Frankfurt School, he launched critiques of the Enlightenment conception of reason of Hegelian idealism. This article was first presented in a radio lecture on 18 April 1966 under the title "Erziehung nach Auschwitz". See: Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund: Education after Auschwitz [1966], in: The same: Critical Models. Interventions and Catchwords. Translated and with a preface by Henry W. Pickford, New York: Columbia University Press 1998, pp. 191-204.

¹¹⁰ Adorno, Education after Auschwitz, p. 201.

autonomy, the critical power of self-reflection or self-determination to tackle with this dilemma is of profound importance. If Yasin and the others suffer under collective prejudices and stereotyping it is because the society resists in evaluating the problems related to the immigrants in a self-conscious way and acts as a collective body without exercising tolerance. On the other hand the immigrants also react in a collective way by embracing religious fundamentalism or terrorist acts which generates another kind of counter attack.

By becoming aware of the dangerous implications of the colonial machine, Yasin sees no remedy for the country that does not give sufficient importance to humanities and which lacks engineers and doctors. However without a clear notion of the past the country is to be divided between tribal interests and the inner conflicts will never cease. As for Europe as a consequence of the brutal acts in history it is enmeshed in guilt and embarrassment and it is very difficult for Yasin to forgive Europe as it has prepared the destruction of him and many other immigrants. However much he hates it though, it does form an important part of his essence. As a consequence we see a free-floating individual who tries to survive in the remnants of a hate and love relationship.

D. Problematic Family Relationship

Not only is the journey a coming on terms with the place by remembering the history of Europe it is also the reconsideration of the personal history which Yasin tried to evade all his life long. Yasin realizes that as a person without a clear notion of memory he has been tortured eternally and this led to failure and disillusionment. However much he tried to run away from these memories, they began haunting him like Djinn, making his burden heavier day by day. However what are these burdens apart from the lack of the notion of a clear national past? As a postcolonial intellectual Yasin feels that he has never been understood by anyone. He has an ambivalent relationship to his family and he is about to get divorced from his wife. He feels that the only important person he has in life is his son and he does not want him to end up like him.

During the journey the most outweighing memories are connected to his father with

whom he had a love-hate relationship. His father was an idealistic figure who believed in the superiority of England but it was his conviction that one should return to his native country after completing one's education and try his/her best for the advancement of the motherland. From his point of view, Yasin proves to be an unreliable person who has abandoned the most precious thing in his life. For Yasin although the ideal seems meaningless it still instills a sense of gravity to his father's life, which he lacks:

I looked around my surroundings and saw further evidence of what I had always known- that there was a centre of gravity to my father's life, a firm sense of direction which told him what was important and what wasn't. The books, the thick wedges photographs of African statesmen on the walls. All spoke of a sense of purpose.¹¹¹

What in fact seems to give his father an ongoing energy is his moral values one of which is always telling the truth. However this proves out to be an ironical concept in the age of power relationships: "From the day he came back from England he had only one real god: journalism. He believed in the sacred value of truth, and not in any mystical sense, either. You can't suppress the truth he would say. No matter where you hide it, it finds its way out."¹¹² However the country is still afflicted by corruption and deceits and when his fathers tries to fight with these he ends up in prison which puts him away from his family and friends. Later on his imprisonment leads to his exile from the country. In those times for Yasin it is inconceivable how his father so stubbornly keeps up to his ideals and he decides not to follow in his footsteps which alienates them more. In England Yasin's father's disillusionment becomes stronger as the country does not want to listen to his pleads and take positive action in Sudan. So his dream of a united Sudan under one banner is shattered forever. Finally when his daughter gets married to a son of a tycoon whom he hates the most he does not have hope left anymore:

What had happened to integrity? What about those principles he had tried to instill in his children since the moment they could be made to stand still long enough to listen to him telling us about the great leaders? It had all gone terribly wrong. It was easy why he took it so personally, when the ideals he had founded his adult life on, from the dark pre-independence days, to those

¹¹¹ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 90.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 88.

Labor rallies on foggy days in London town all of it was gone, defunct, old hat. And so, in a manner of speaking was he.¹¹³

Consequently the failure in the ambitious ideological stand of his father leaves an indelible mark in Yasin, turning him almost to a hollow. Although his relationship to his father is shattered as the rebellious son figure, later on Yasin dedicates his book to his father which in fact is the indicator of a strong bond between the two.

Yasin's relationship with his rebellious brother Muk is also full of contradictions. Muk has always rebelled against Sudan's the inferior situation. For him England is the country of bitter segregation and he finds the solution in violence and anarchy. He does not approve Yasin as he is too submissive and meek, and he also believes that Yasin has betrayed his family. He seems to have caught the point that Yasin's father is missing, that unequal relationships between cultures can lead to a blind admiration and alienation from one's native culture, instead of enlightenment and education. We grasp the bitterness and hopelessness in his tone when he is talking about the discrepancies between the ideal of education and the actual economic and social conditions:

All that stuff about learning, education and values. You could never get anywhere because there was always something in your way. You couldn't get into the places because your skin was too dark. You couldn't buy a house on certain streets. The world was ruled by them and they wanted to keep us out. You can try as hard as you want but you never get anywhere.¹¹⁴

This only leads him to despair and aimless rebellion however. For Muk, this world is hell itself and this gives him the right to do whatever he wants; he is arrested of smuggling but later in his life he manages to calm down the fury inside himself and moves to a town in Spain. For their conservative and pious sister Yasmina, Yasin has betrayed their culture by marrying an English woman, who would lead his life into utter destruction. Yasmina is quite different from her brothers in that, for her the only way of rescue is embracing religion. With her husband, who comes from a rich background, they have an active part in the Muslim community. They are detached from the English society that the family is a part of. Like Muk, Yasmina chooses to

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 138.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 242.

turn her back on the British influence on her culture and does not understand Yasin's problems.

As a matter of fact Yasin seems to be lost among the prejudiced views of his family, he has no access to any member of them and reconciliation seems impossible. His wife, who is an English woman of Danish descent, is not exactly the peaceful harbor that he seeks. Yasin and Ellen are in a constant clash. In the beginning of their marriage, Ellen makes Yasin believe that she will help him penetrate into the great enigma of Europe. However, as time passes she seems unable to handle cultural differences and starts foregrounding them by constantly criticizing Yasin. They become a psychological burden to each other, which is the root for every frustration. Yasin starts to believe that Ellen married him in order to dictate her superiority over him, and that when she realized that she would not succeed she turned bitter against him. Ellen's being a doctorate student of anthropology doing a research on the identity of the displaced communities and her not sharing any ideas with Yasin makes him resent her. For Yasin the research she does in anthropology is not fruitful as he thinks that the area is full of self-reflexive researchers who do not have any idea about what is really going on which we see clearly in one of his discussions with his wife:

You know what I mean- all these ethnographers jet off into the great unknown and have an experience, and suddenly, they're not students, they are poets and writers and they are describing their feelings of living like a native. That's travel writing not academic study.¹¹⁵

Contrary to this his wife has the predilection that it is a more honest reflection of the interaction between observer and informant. Ellen's deep interest in post-structural deconstruction of the other makes her according to Yasin, unable to make a simple communication with the people around her makes the matter worse As a matter of fact they do not share any common ground any more becoming strangers to each other. Consequently Yasin turns his affection to his son as the only precious thing left to him. He leaves his wife and starts traveling with his son.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 213.

E. The role of Literature and Writing in Yasin's Life

In the novel Yasin is depicted besides his displaced identity as a lonely intellectual who is in exile. As he is a chimera composed of various cultural attributes, which belong to Eastern and Western cultures, he is not understood by his family members and his colleagues. In this process what offers Yasin peace and repose is the world of literature and he works in different positions all of which are affiliated with literature. Referring to his creative process he also writes one book which however renders him disillusioned.

We can have a clear conception of Yasin's predilection to literature from the very start of his journey to Denmark with his wife and son when he takes all his important books with him. Although his wife does understand why he insists on taking his entire books to a short journey, for Yasin those books have great emotional value, they are like an inherent part of his memory. He comments: "The books themselves were unremarkable. No first editions, no autographed copies. No antique irreplaceable gems. They were mostly old faded paperback editions of novels that I had read during my adolescence. Books that contained memories."¹¹⁶ Among them there is *Lord Jim*¹¹⁷ written by Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), *The Conformist*¹¹⁸ written by Alberto Moravia (1907-1990), Iris Murdoch's (1919-1999) *The Sea, the Sea*¹¹⁹ and many others from Franz Kafka (1883-1924) Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) and Albert Camus (1913-1960). What do these books and writers signify to Yasin? *Lord Jim* is the story of one man's fight against his own past and his attempt to prove himself to the world as seen in the protagonist Jim written by Conrad who was an exile figure himself having traveled all over the world. *The Conformist* is similarly a search story of a man who yearns for normal life; however confusing normality with conformity and subjugating his already repressed emotions not being able to reach to self-realization as seen in the protagonist Marcello. *The Sea, the Sea* by Iris Murdoch also is a depiction of a person's journey toward becoming virtuous, spiritually mature human being as embodied by

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 226.

¹¹⁷ Conrad, Joseph: *Lord Jim: A Tale* [1900], London: Penguin Books 1994.

¹¹⁸ Moravia, Alberto: *Il Conformista* [1951], Milano: Bompiani 1955.

¹¹⁹ Murdoch, Iris: *The Sea, The Sea*. New York: The Viking Press 1978.

Charles Arrowby who has been led by certain sense of egotisms and self-regard all his life long. These protagonists' personal quests and dilemmas carry similarities with Yasin's experiences. When we come to the other writers he refers, Albert Camus born in Algiers from French immigrant family then being sent in exile to France, Alejo Carpentier who led a life of political exile in Paris between 1928 and 1939 and the Jewish writer Franz Kafka born in Prague, they all carry the traces of having led lives in two cultures constantly being tortured. As a matter of fact we are again confronted with exile context and the works of these writers offer Yasin enrichment and a way to fulfillment. Throughout his journey Yasin never wants to let them go and when he loose his suitcase in the sea containing the books he feels like he has lost an important part of his inner essence. After that incident he also has a fatal accident, so the literal accident is a signifier of the spiritual loss that he suffers under. As a matter of fact literature is like a vessel which connects Yasin to life forming a bridge into the past and future.

In the novel besides Yasin's being an avid reader, he is also an author of a fictive book whose name is *Tamarind Days*. He actually began writing this book after one of the arguments with his wife. The book was an attempt of an open dialogue with him as he was disillusioned with his state in England. As he also lost connection with his wife there was no one he could share his worries with. It was composed of mainly about his memories on Sudan. It was somehow like a personal diary which did not have any ideological motives. Yasin comments:

All these details locked away in my head suddenly came to the fore as I tired to find myself in the city I had grown up which was no longer true. I wrote it I think as a record afraid that my memories would desert me as easily as the place I remembered had fled the world.¹²⁰

The fiction he writes is an attempt towards self-realization. As a person can be considered as a non-entity without his memories, this fictive book is a tangible account of Yasin's existence in this universe where he lacks self-fulfillment. For him, art seems to have a special purpose that is, to be a vessel of communication and a way of bridging the distanced pieces of his life. Literature, in that sense, can also be a bridge

¹²⁰ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 209.

for the personal problems the migrant faces everyday. In the end his book wins a prize which is the “Natchford Blach Memorial Prize.” The book is defined as a work “Written by someone under the age of thirty-five which reflects the unique ethnic heritage of contemporary Britain.”¹²¹ However the responses he gets to his book are rather contradictory. His family members are disappointed from the book because of various reasons. In fact their responses resemble the attitudes of the postcolonial writers and critiques who have different conceptions about the role of literature in the postcolonial dilemma. The never ending war in this discussion is if literature should be in the service of ideology. Can literature be used for political aims in order to reach to some ideals? Yasin’s father for instance is disappointed by the book as it is not concerned with the political issues in Sudan. For him the novel is the representation of unreality which is treason:

What do you know? You are no better then they are. That novel you wrote? All that flowery language. Why not tell it how is it? Why not tell the world? Poverty? High-level corruption? I worked for more then forty years trying to bring those issues to light in my own small way. And there you are, all the world looking, and what do you have to say? Hibiscus and pomegranates and the smell of dust when the rain comes!¹²²

In fact he is so disappointed by the book that he has a heart attack after the discussion. Yasin feels himself unable to convey his inner life to father which renders him disturbed. As for his sister Yasina, she is also disappointed with the books as for her the book is too realistic depicting the filthiness of the country. By this depiction the Westerners will hate their country and the people and they will never consider them as their equals. She thinks that Yasin should have tried to evade the negative stereotyping of his country by creating a different world picture even if it was against reality. For her literature must give up realism if it serves against the common purpose. Apart from these Yasin’s brother Muk is also disappointed by the book. For him it is too exotic resembling the Orientalist narrative of the Westerners. In the 18th and 19th century literature in the East was considered to be an imaginary realm. In the travel writings in order to escape from the turmoil of the West, the East was considered as a ground of escape which was conceived in highly exotic terms. So the novels about the East

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 210.

¹²² Ibid., p. 293.

lacked any realistic background, enmeshed in a fictionalized world. Yasin in Muk's point of view is also an Orientalist who has become westernized. However for Yasin these blames are inconceivable. He comments:

I didn't write that book to appease the privileged classes, with their romantic vision of a country of whose existence they knew nothing. I didn't write it for the jaded Westerners either, looking for evidence of barbaric decay and noble savages. I wrote it because I wanted it hold to the world I remembered and to do that I had to write it down, plainly and without conceit.¹²³

So Yasin does not want to be affiliated with any political group or mission when writing his book, it is rather a personal universe, the remembering of the past in a disinterested way. He does not favor literature written for political purposes. It is just another laying bare of a world image which will form a magical bond with the reader.

Not only is Yasin affiliated with literature as a writer but the jobs he has in England are some how connected to literature. In this circle he meets quite interesting people who have different notions about literature some of which does not appeal to him but reflect the tendency of the era. For instance when he moves with his wife and son to the English countryside to have a more peaceful life, he finds a job as a proofreader in Oxford. However the books he is going to read are far from being important literary works, they are romances written for middle-aged women which can be considered as kitsch. The owner of the publishing house, Allan Wycliff, does not believe in literature anymore when he declares to Yasin:

Literature is dead. No, seriously. People say we still have the stuff, but open your eyes and take a look. What was the last good book you read, really good, something that stays in your mind? I'll take a guess, Kafka? Flaubert? Tolstoy? Do I detect a flicker? One of those anyway. The new stuff? Well, it comes and goes. The last great European novelist of worth was probably Kundera. Since then it's all a blur [...]. What people want today is entertainment, There's enough grief in the world, wouldn't you say? Real grief. Why would anyone want to read a novel about it?¹²⁴

Yasin is perplexed by the honest however superficial declaration of the owner. However much he seems to loath these kinds of books, as he cannot find a better job he accepts it: "I worried sometimes that my reading habits were turning my brains to

¹²³ Ibid., p. 291.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 158.

peanut butter.”¹²⁵ However illiterate or philistine Alan’s remark is there is some kind of truth in the words of him regarding the reading tendency of the people in our century. Jamal Mahjoub by reflecting this habit of our times in the novel also lays bare his worries about the situation. Like Yasin, the protagonist, he still believes in the creative and healing power of literature which he reflects in his article “Writer and Globalism”:

In terms of immediacy, literature cannot compete with the new technology, but it is still valid on its own premises. It provides a means of reflective expression and communication which requires our vital support, and can link the diverse cultures which are now, for better or worse, stuck with one another, and whose encounter now defines the world we live in. If for no other reason, then this is why literature is and will remain so essential to us all, now and for a long time to come.¹²⁶

Fortunately Yasin does not have to work long as a proof-reader and when he begins working at BBC as a reporter making programs about the novels of third world authors he believes to have made a fresh start:

I cared about the job. I enjoyed it, felt as though I were at the heart of a huge mystery that only I could resolve. Literature gave me something I could believe in. And I felt a responsibility to the listeners, those people living out there [...]. Perhaps because I had once been there myself. It was a function as necessary as medical supplies or fresh water.¹²⁷

Ironically however later he realizes that he may not be suited to the job as the program has highly political implications too. For instance one day he has to interview an African origin author whose name is Shaka Baraka (fictional). What is special about him is that he is a rap poet and writes poems about Africa with a capital A and he won an award for one of his works. Yasin at first does not want to make an interview with him as he finds his poems indulgent and portentous: “It was the fact that the Africa he seemed to be talking about sounded more like a product of wishful thinking than real insight that bothered me.”¹²⁸ Although Shaka has lived for 35 years away from Africa he claims that in his writing he is in fact Africa. By personally writing about himself he believes he has written everything about the African continent. Also by his writing he has mimicked the narration style of the civil rights movement in the USA. Yasin is

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 160.

¹²⁶ Mahjoub, Jamal: Writer and Globalism (The IFLA Satellite Meeting in Århus: 26 - 28 August 1997: pandora.lib.hel.fi/mcl/articles/aarhus.htm).

¹²⁷ Mahjoub, *Traveling with Djinn*, p. 257

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 260.

disappointed that he got a prize for considering politics above art so when he asks him if he has contributed anything original to the world of slavery in an ironic mood; he is scorned by the writer. In that instance he breaks down the conversation; however he is blamed by his colleague Tara for whom politics is about art. The conversation between them in fact leads Yasin to more distraction. He has to think what his real loyalties are and work according to that:

Tara: I always wondered where your loyalties really lay.

Yasin: Is that what it's all about? Loyalties? I thought it was about literature?

Tara: He's a well-respected and prized author, Yasin. Don't you get it? He is one of ours. No matter what you think you have to play the Game [...]. We have to stick together.

Yasin: That's it? The great philosophical question boil down to us and them?

Tara: There are no in-betweens in life, Yasin. You ought to think about that.¹²⁹

For Tara what ever their literary conceptions are writers have to stick together if there is a postcolonial context. Yasin in his emphasis on the literary value of works falls himself alone in the movement. Here I would like to switch again to Mahjoub who is highly alert to the tendency in postcolonial writing which acts in an exclusionist, separatist and even racist way as sometimes is seen in the black writing:

Speaking across cultures is less popular than simply sticking to one's crowd and telling them what they want to hear. The nineties is in many ways the age of self preservation, of guilt free narcissistic self indulgence. Transcultural literature demands more, both of the reader and the writer. It does not have the support of those cheering waving crowds who would like you to be European or Third World, Black or African or Arab. It can only rely on that thin crack of light which lies between the spheres of reader and writer.¹³⁰

Mahjoub, like Yasin claims that the tendency in our contemporary age has rendered the literary content of the works as secondary whereas the political content has been highlighted in the Third World literature. Mahjoub does not understand why the people have the conviction that literature must be always rooted in the real, that it has to be authentic to teach us anything. If it is like that fiction will not be able to breach the gap

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 262.

¹³⁰ Mahjoub, *Writer and Globalism*, p. 6.

which objectifies the other. It is in fact the fear of Mahjoub that literature by becoming enmeshed in overall political activity, in which the binary oppositions are reinserted, especially in the postcolonial context will lose its aesthetic value.

However it is difficult for a writer especially in the postcolonial ambience to assess that he will have a disinterested stance as Said pointed out with the worldliness of the critic and not care about the criticism at all. Maybe that's why Yasin quits writing for good as he sees it is nearly an impossible task to be carried out.



2. THE MIMIC MEN (1967)

A man, I suppose fights only when he hopes, when he has a vision of order, when he feels strongly there is some connection between the earth on which he walks and himself. But there was my vision of my disorder which it was beyond any one man to put right.

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul: Mimic Men (1967)

The displaced postcolonial identity may he/she be an immigrant or a person in exile, is constantly haunted by the burdens of the past and the ambivalent notion of the present and future as a consequence of being fractured between two countries as is the case with Jamal Mahjoub's novel *Travelling with Djinn*s where the protagonist does not feel himself entirely Sudanese or English. Nevertheless if the person is doubly removed from his homeland that is if his family lives as an immigrant in a country which is occupied by the colonial powers, the dilemma could have deleterious results which is successfully depicted by V.S. Naipaul in his novel the *Mimic Men* which is a representative autobiography of a Caribbean politician in the 1950s written in first-person style.

In the novel the protagonist Ralph Singh being a member of a Hindu family is a third-generation south Asian Caribbean who lives on the island of Isabella on which live people from mixed origins like the Africans, Hispanics French and the English. Although the Indians comprise a great percentage of the island they are not considered to have the same rights as the Creole population due to their late coming on the island as workers and their conception of coming from a pure ancestry hinders their mixing to the rest of the population. Not feeling himself connected to the island and yearning for his past ancestries, Ralph decides to move to the colonial motherland, England which he believes will help him overcome his dilemma. However his second life there proves out to be a failure. In order to satisfy the emptiness inside him he tries to fit in different roles all his life long: he becomes a business man, a politician both of which offer no rescue. This book is the outcome of his exile years in London where he

decides to spend the rest of his life in a passive state. Although he is in his forties, he doesn't feel the vitality of life anymore and to impose order to his chaotic world he decides to write this novel. Written in the metafictional style the novel can be considered autobiographical in genre, which is divided into three periods. The events are shown in a non-linear form where flashbacks are heavily made use of and Ralph mostly comments on the events in a dialogic way. The first part of the book consists of Ralph's university year experience in England, in the second part there is a return to his childhood period on Isabella and the last part is composed of his political career on the island.

What we confront here is an individual who feels himself in a metaphorical state of exile and as his switching his places between England and Isabel does not bring him any satisfaction, prefers to reach to self-realization in a metaphorical journey which is writing an autobiography of himself in a secluded hotel room in London. What is also interesting about the novel is that in the life story of Ralph we come across biographical information about Naipaul himself who was born on the island of Trinidad as a Hindu-Caribbean and who spent the rest of his life in London. As a consequence the protagonist sometimes becomes the double self of the writer giving us clues about his world vision.

In the following interpretation I am going to concentrate on the inherent identity struggle of the protagonist and what attempts he had made to find some kind of an order into his life. So I will focus on his childhood period, his university years in England and his political career on Isabella. Lastly I will concentrate on Ralph's perception of his writing process and how he believes it offers him some kind of solidity and a better means of self-realization.

A. The Displaced Indian on Isabella: The Segregation of Races

The greatest disturbance in Ralph's identity belongs to his childhood period which he spent on the island of Isabella. The very first dilemma he encounters is owing to his family background which is connected to India. Secondly with the other ethnicities on

the island he suffers under the colonial segregation and the education orients him towards England, encouraging him to dismiss his indigenous environment. Thirdly Ralph's family relationships are also problematic in that the class differences come to the foreground between his mother and father which hinder their becoming a healthy family. As a consequence before coming to England Ralph is already afflicted by these ongoing dilemmas. He comments: "Childhood was for me a period of incompetence, bewilderment, solitude and shameful fantasies. It was a period of burdensome secrets [...]"¹³¹ Before centering on Ralph's dilemma however I would like to give a brief analysis of the race relations on the island Trinidad¹³² and concentrate on the East Indian experience which I believe has left an indelible mark of a rift in Ralph's and literally in Naipaul's identity.

The inherent racial multiplicity and tensions are not only depicted in Ralph's school life which I will expand on later but also by the descriptions Ralph gives us when he travels on the island:

We went through purely mulatto villages where the people were a baked copper color, much disfigured by disease. My father described them as Spaniards [...]. They permitted no Negroes to settle among them. [...] We drove through Carib areas where people were more Negro than Carib [...]. Ex-slaves, fleeing the plantations, had settled here and intermarried with the very people who in the days of slavery their great tormentors, had by this intermarriage become their depressed serfs [...]. We came into the Indian areas, the flat lands where rice and sugar-cane grew. Slaves and runaways, hunters and hunted, rulers and ruled: they had no romance for me. Their message was only that nothing was secure.¹³³

As seen from the descriptions although there are multiplicities of ethnicities on the island like Chinese, Latin American and European besides the majority of Indians and Africans there is not a unitary consciousness among the races. Rather every group lives as a community in its own territory not allowing the others to interfere. Furthermore the greatest segregation is exercised to the Indians under which Ralph suffers a great deal. The Indian experience on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago has never been easy as there has been an ongoing struggle between the Africans who consider

¹³¹ Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, p. 97.

¹³² As *Mimic Men* is a foreshadowing of Naipaul's life which I will analyze in part E of this chapter in detail, I consider Isabella as the metaphoric representation of Trinidad where Naipaul was born.

¹³³ Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, p. 130.

themselves as the natives of the island and the Indians who were always considered to be outsiders. The Indians arrived on the island in 1834 as European land owners wanted cheaper and easily manageable labor and in order to justify their aim the black labor on the island was shown in derogatory terms whereas the Indians were thought as diligent, industrious and self-sacrificing. So the Indians were despised from the beginning as they were considered as a community strongly attached to their own rituals and traditions which were unable to become creolized. As a result with the elites from a European descent and the Africans forming the base the Indians were always considered as inferiors. As a counter attack the Indians began to attribute themselves to the Aryans which was an unconscious wish to attribute themselves to the Europeans who also affiliated themselves with the same ancestry. In the period the novel was written, it was a problematic stage for the country as it was the transformation period towards independence still however under the control of England. As a matter of fact we will constantly witness the feeling of being an excluded Indian in Ralph who wherever he goes will not get over the feeling of being on a permanent exile or banishment.

During his childhood and adolescence period Ralph has a constant yearning for his Indian ancestors. Although he has never been to India, the stories he heard from his family make him strongly connected to his past. This indicates that his family strongly perpetuates their traditional values; the past has not been forgotten although they are living for generations in a mixture of cultures. At school Ralph's other friends are also conscious of their own pasts and there is always an emphasis on difference rather than on a rhetoric of commonness:

China was the subject of Hok's secret reading. Mine was of Rajputs and Aryans, stories of knights, horsemen and wanderers [...]. I had read of the homeland of the Asiatic and Persian Aryans, which some put as far away as the North Pole. I lived a secret life in a world of endless plains, tall bare mountains, and white with snow at their peaks, among nomads on horseback. And I would dream that all over the central Asian plains the horsemen looked for their leader.¹³⁴

In this declaration there are two main arguments to consider. Firstly rather than using

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 105.

the term Indian he stresses on a pure Aryan past. Why does Ralph have the need to stress on this attribute? When we consider the history of Orientalism, which is thoroughly depicted by Edward W. Said, we can see that in the latter part of the 19th century Europeans created an Aryan myth referring to their descendants. In comparative linguistics or philology language and race were seen linked to each other. Furthermore a distinction was made between the good and the bad Orient, the former belonging to a distant period of India and the latter to the present day Asia, parts of North Africa, and Islam everywhere. So Aryans were associated with Europe and ancient Orient. Ralph by referring to his Aryan origin unconsciously lays bare his affiliation with the European. By coming from a pure, superior culture he is different from the creolized inhabitants of the island. His view is reimbursed by his imagination of a background which is contradictory to the island. It is imbued with 'whiteness and tall mountains as opposed to the parching sun and filthiness' on the island.

Secondly Ralph's desire to be the leader of the horsemen can be considered as a secret revolt inside him. Throughout his life Ralph has been afflicted by a certain sense of passivity and placidity; however in his dream he is the foreign invader, the valiant warrior who does not care about the boundaries and the restrictedness of time. It is the ideal freedom that he yearns for; however the incarceration of the island life eats away the vitality of his character. Later on this image is contradicted by another image where he connects the colonizers of the island with the Africans who consider themselves as Creole: "The descendant of the slave-owner could soothe the descendant of the slave with a private patois. I was the late intruder, the picturesque Asiatic, linked to neither."¹³⁵ This lays bare the segregation and alienation of the Indians on the island. Although in both imaginations Ralph asserts his distinctiveness from the rest of the society in the second one there is also hatred towards the Europeans on the island who betrayed Indians by considering themselves as creoles of the island. If his first ambiguity is a result of his alien ancestry the second one is his being a post colonial individual.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 82.

Throughout his school years Ralph attends an English college which is called Isabella Imperial and forms various friendships with people from different origins. His school years are disconnected from the island reality where they are educated according to the norms of England. There he is taught to consider the immediate world of Trinidad as paradoxically remote and insubstantial, as exiled to the margins of an English-centered reality. This period has a heavy influence on Ralph in that he begins to consider the island in negative terms, imbued with pessimism, whereas his yearning for an ideal England disconnects him from the reality that overweighs him. For instance he comments: "To be born on an island like Isabella, an obscure New World transplantation, second-hand and barbarous, was to be born to disorder."¹³⁶ The constructed island reality slowly becomes a burden which he cannot get rid of and even in his unconscious he dreams of the English countryside. For instance he imagines his grandmother walking on the English countryside: "In my imagination I saw my mother's mother leading her cow through a scene of pure pastoral: calendar pictures of English gardens superimposed on our Isabellan villages of mud and grass: village lanes on cool mornings, the ditches green and grassy, the water crystal [...]"¹³⁷ The English ideal becomes an unreachable dream which is a compensation for the disillusionment on the island.

There, as a reaction to his incompetence and inadequacy, Ralph decides to simplify his name and become more English. Although his name is Ranjit Kripalsingh he breaks his surname into two and creates a further name for himself which is Ralph. By changing his name in fact he tries to get rid of the personality which burdens him and makes him marked. Also in order to realize himself he takes up sport; for instance he plays cricket which is an English game. Then he takes up athletics and takes part in a competition. By this way he tries to impress the boys around him who are not brave enough to race like him:

While I was nervous I was in fact unsure of myself. Seeing myself as weak and variable and clinging, I had looked for similar weaknesses in others. This was the cynicism I now arrested. The discovery that many were willing to

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 127.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 95.

take me for what I said I was was pure joy. It was like a revelation of wholeness.¹³⁸

The way the boys and the teachers behave to each other is also interesting at school. Everyone is too conscious of the racial difference; however as opposed to the seriousness of the matter in everyday life, at school they make jokes about their descends and they seem not to be offended. Here we confront Eden who because of his blackness is called “Spite”, Hok who has Chinese and black blood and is known for his nervous and bookish personality, Brown who is African descent knowledgeable about street life and the son of Deshampsneufs coming from a wealthy French family and treating the others as a colonial master. In their relationships towards each other each behave according to the way they are conceived by the others, there is an innocent performance of racial segregation which does not cause any serious problems according to them:

We had converted our island into one big secret. Anything that touched on everyday life excited laughter when it was mentioned in a classroom: the name of a shop, the name of a street [...]. The laughter denied our knowledge of these things to which after the hours of school we were to return. We denied the landscape and the people we could see out of open doors and windows, we who took apples to the teacher and wrote essays about visits to temperate farms.¹³⁹

However this is also an ideological education strategy. They are not taught the real history of the island, the causes for the race differences. They never question how this problem can be overcome. In the texts books that they read they learn about the ideal realm of European landscapes and mythology, which is composed of the heroic deeds of white heroes; there is not one reference to the people’s own past and their native heroes. As matter of fact this ideal realm of a distant land becomes the only reality that the boys yearn for; whereas the brute reality on the streets becomes a hell like atmosphere they want to evade. It is owing to this system that his Chinese-African friend Hok becomes ashamed of his own African mother because of her color:

The last book he had been reading was *The Heroes*. What a difference between the mother of Perseus and that mother! What a difference between the white, blue and dark green landscapes he had so recently known and that

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 122.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

street! [...] I felt on that street, shady, with gardens, and really pretty as I now recall it, though then to me wholly drab, that Hok had dreams like mine, was also marked, and lived in imagination far from us, far from the island on which he, like my father, like myself, had been shipwrecked.¹⁴⁰

Besides this their friend Deschampsneuf who comes from a French aristocratic family sees the right in himself to make cruel jokes about the descent of his other friends. One day his remark about their school friend Eden, who is the blackest boy in the school therefore treated as a buffoon, raises Ralph's contempt when Deschampsneuf exclaims that he would let Eden breed but on the account that he crosses him with an intelligent woman. Not only the students but also the teachers take part in the racist outlook as if it were the natural outcome of the island reality. For instance in one occasion when their science teacher gets angry with Eden because he cannot tell the function of a device he remarks that he would work for Eden in his garden if his assumption about the device's creating electricity proves right: "He had saved it for last, not only the familiar pun on Eden's name, but his statement, white man to black boy, of what he considered Eden's true role, that of garden-boy or yard-boy."¹⁴¹ As a matter of fact the school system offers an unconscious feeling of racial antagonism making the students believe that it is a natural outcome of people's relationship, that there are really people who are to be masters and the ones who are their slaves. When Ralph talks to Mr. Deschampsneuf the descendant of a French family, the underlying segregation comes to the foreground:

You fellows from the Orient and so on, ancient civilization etcetera, you are the long-visioned types. You give up too easily. Just the opposite of our African brethren. Short-visioned. Can't look ahead, and nothing to look back. That is why I am sorry to say I can't see our African friends coming too much. Lot of noise and so on, but short-visioned.¹⁴²

It is as if the European has the right to classify the people according to their race and give them proper work. It is thanks to the colonial regime on the island that the races were made enemies of each other for the sake of limitless profit of the colonizer as I mentioned in the introduction part of my thesis when I referred to racism.

In the case of Ralph however there is not such a feeling of racial enmity towards his other friends as he never makes jokes about them and approaches with contempt if they

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 146.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 185.

upset each other. His friendship with Brown, a boy of African descent is an illustration of his sincerity which later will unite them together in a political movement. Robert M. Greenberg who in his article about *Mimic Men* points to Ralph's and consequently Naipaul's empathy for other races sees this friendship as a positive force:

For Singh, as they reach adolescence, friendship with Browne involves learning about slave history and seeing the world as Browne sees it. Entrance into the perspective of poor blacks like Brown's father and the thought of the "thousands who, from their fields, could look forward to nothing but servitude and days in the sun" becomes to painful for Singh to bear.¹⁴³

For Ralph the cruel island reality becomes unbearable to experience, he feels himself alone from the rest, not understanding his teachers and friends and when the family problems also come to the foreground his disturbance becomes the utmost.

The ambivalence of Ralph is not solely connected to the racial segregation on the island. His relationship he holds to his family also disturbs his identity and as a consequence also affects his relationship to other people one of whom is his wife. The greatest difference among Ralph's family members is class difference. His mother's family has become rich as the bottlers of Coca Cola and his young uncle Cecile is a tyrant figure who acts as a rich dandy and degrades the other inhabitants on the island. On the other hand his father comes from a poor family and he hates his wife's being rich. He is more tied to Indian tradition and he does not want his kids to grow up in a spoiled way. He also hates his father-in-law's exporting Coca-Cola as this has brought Western imperialism on the island. As opposed to that he tries to make a living as a government teacher on meager amounts and his not having a sufficient income makes him embarrassed. As an outcome he usually has some nervous breakdowns and he had incessant fights with his wife. In fact he is also a disturbed postcolonial figure who feels himself as an outsider. As an outcast Indian he has been brought up by a missionary family and the dictation of Christian ethics had opened a big fissure in his personality. For Ralph his father does not offer him the protection he is looking for and he feels himself more attracted to the house of his mother's family:

¹⁴³ Greenberg, Robert M.: Anger and the Alchemy of Literary in V. S. Naipaul's Political Fiction: The Case of the Mimic Men, in: *The Twentieth Century Literature* Vol. 46, No. 2, 2000, pp. 214-237, esp. p. 8 (<http://www.jstor.org/>).

The house of my mother's family was solid. I tested it whenever I went there for the weekend [...]. I did not like returning to the physical dangers of my own house, about which I could not talk to no one, and I longed for the time when I would not have to make that particular journey.¹⁴⁴

The matters become worse for Ralph when one day his father decides to revolt against the authorities and starts a rebellious Hindu movement attracting all the poor people on the island. He leaves his family and begins living on the mountains with his group. As they try to attract the attention of the people one day, they steal a certain race horse called Tamarind which belongs to the richest French family on the island. They burn the horse according to an ancient Indian cult and their movement becomes famous for that burning incident. His father's abandonment opens up a crack in Ralph's life. On the one hand he is ashamed for the abnormality of his father's behavior and he is taunted by his friends which makes him turn more inward. On the other hand the leader figure of his father becomes a paragon for him which triggers him to start a political movement in the future too. However later his father's movement becomes unsuccessful as most of the other revolt movements and he disappears silently from the foreground. The incident becomes another monotonous event in the history books like Ralph's later political movement.

All in all Ralph's pundit origins, the hermetic world of his extended family and their middle-class standing, keep him aloof in his difference which hinder him from feeling himself as a part of the minority on the island. In his personality there arises a certain sense of "being marked", the feeling of being different then the whole mass of people as an individual who is in a generic sense of exile and who can comment about the problems in a disinterested way:

[...] I was in some way protected; a celestial camera recorded my every movement, impartially, without judgment or pity. I was marked; I was of interest; I would survive. This knowledge gave me strength at difficult moments, but it remained my most shameful secret.¹⁴⁵

This sense of being marked helps him cope with the problems in a special way. However on the other hand there arises the ultimate feeling of melancholy, as a consequence of feeling himself a part of nowhere, uprooted and homeless. Shipwreck

¹⁴⁴ Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, p. 166.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

becomes an ontological position. In the beginning Ralph does not feel this attribute as an eternal part of himself. So when his education at Isabella Imperial finishes he mistakenly believes that when he leaves for England there will be a new start:

I had made my decision to abandon Isabella, to eschew my shipwreck on the tropical island. But the island had been the island of The Black Swan, the fresh green island sighted at dawn, to music. Now it felt corrupted and corrupting. It was the corruption which I now wished to flee. I wished to make a fresh start in my own element; to rid myself of those relationships which it had solaced me to think of as temporary and unimportant, but which I now felt to be tainting.¹⁴⁶

However another disillusioning period starts when Ralph is confronted with a contradictory picture of the England of his dreams, there is the brutal colonial metropolis London which like a monster takes the vitality of the immigrants rendering them as nonentities.

B. The second disillusionment: Mother England as the Wasteland

After Ralph's coming to England his ambivalence becomes insurmountable as he feels himself as a stranger more than anywhere else. The period Ralph arrives to England is after the Second World War where he finds himself in a boarding house. There Ralph meets many other people from other nationalities who have come to England with the hope of personal fulfillment. However their lives are imbued with hardships. The impersonal capitalist city London turns their lives to hell. There is no more the nurturing image of a mother England embracing its colonized subjects. Although Ralph comes from a similar background like the other immigrants in the boarding house, he puts a certain kind of boundary seeing him in a superior position. This has a resemblance to his dream of the Aryan ancestry: "This was how they always appeared: two dimensional, offering simple versions of themselves. Conversation, apart from that conducted by the Maltese group, was not easy."¹⁴⁷ Why does Ralph see the other immigrants as strangers? Here once again we witness Ralph's sense of being marked, his being detached from the population and his fellow countrymen. He is like a lonely intellectual who does not fit anywhere. His prejudiced viewpoint of the immigrants is

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 142.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

also the indication of the world of Naipaul who considered himself as different from the other diasporic individuals. Ralph is forlorn in the wasteland of his own inferno:

So quickly had London gone sour on me. The great city, centre of the world, in which, fleeting disorder, I had hoped to find the beginning of order [...]. Those of us who came to it lost some of our solidity; we were trapped into fixed, flat postures. And, in this growing dissociation between ourselves and the city in which we walked, scores of separate meetings, not linked even by ourselves, who became nothing more than perceivers.¹⁴⁸

This desolate city is not like the tropical island where he has come from. It is imbued with individuality. There are private cells; the people are like robots who lead monotonous lives. There is no trace of the warmth of the city and the friendly relationship of a group mentality. His depressive mood seems to combine with the ugly scenery of the city leading to hopelessness. There is the ultimate mark of decay, fragility and chaos which inspires a deep-seated fear. In order to cope with this dilemma Ralph goes on playing his personality game which he started when he was a child. Although his allowance is small and he tries to leave on meager terms, he makes it known that on his island his family is the bottler of Coca-Cola. As he is respected by the boys who come from the same island this fact gives him a certain kind of satisfaction:

In London I had no guide. There was no one to link my present with my past, no one to note my consistencies or inconsistencies. It was up to me to choose my character, and I chose the character that was the easiest and the most attractive. I was the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent to scholarship.¹⁴⁹

It is evident to see that Ralph's character has always been afflicted by an overarching sense of placidity. He has never been able to show his real feelings to the people around him and he feels himself like a loser. The unreality on Isabella suffocates him but he can do nothing to struggle with the rift inside him. His trying to escape to England in fact is an indication of his cowardice, his evasion of the problems that have turned him into a hollow man. This feeling of failure and placidity also follows him in England where he can not reach to self-realization. Not being able to stirred into action to break the unreality around him, to show his inner most potential this time he vents

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 19.

his anger to the people round him. Pretension becomes an end in itself where he acts like the dandy seeing the other people as his inferiors. It is this role that hinders his feeling pointless, fluid and spectral which otherwise will lead him to madness.

This distortion also affects Ralph's relationships. As he is a person who does not have self-confidence, scorning upon the friendship of his fellow citizens, the sense of detachment and loneliness affect his love relationships. At first he has numerous relationships with foreign women whose languages he cannot master. He yearns for their stories which belong to alien lands. Then he prefers prostitutes whose face he does not want to see the other day. It seems as if sex becomes a form of private rage for him.

William Walsh who analyses Ralph comments:

Sex becomes a succession of unrelated adventures in which, indeed, the constitutional detachment from human connection of the protagonist becomes even more set and contemptuous. One girl will turn out to have a 'back of irritating coarseness'; another will have bumps and scratches [...]. Intimacy began to be a horrifying word, a form of self-violation. The emotional incapacity and the aristocratic disdain feed one another.¹⁵⁰

The same rage is also directed to his countrymen. During that period his friendship with the Maltese woman Lieni also changes his conceptions of himself. It is due to her that he conceives of himself as the rich colonial figure and he is amused when by his frivolity he depresses his fellow countrymen. He becomes the invader who degrades the other immigrants and that role offers him satisfaction for some time. With this new role, by breaking the chains with the past would not order come? However he is not sure at that time. The role of the dandy does not last long when the boarding house is sold to a countess. When Ralph leaves the house also the solidity is lost. The security that Lienni offered, the ephemeral feeling of completeness by imitation is over. Now a greater shipwreck confronts Ralph. He cannot settle down anywhere for a long time. This perpetuating sense of futility and corruption hinders Ralph from becoming a whole person. In order to avoid the reality of segregation in England and the bitter memories about childhood he becomes unsettled. A certain kind of restlessness dominates his life in that he moves to various places in a short period of time, takes

¹⁵⁰ Walsh, William: V. S. Naipaul, New York: Harper and Row 1973, p. 56.

trains without knowing their destination. However how long will this escape last? In the end he becomes tired of the idea of escape however he does not know what to do. His journey has ended in shipwreck; the postcolonial individual's dream of prosperity and success has diminished, and here he is surrounded in a world of unreality:

There are certain states into which, during periods of stress, we imperceptibly sink; it is only during the climb back up that we can see how far, for all the continuing consciousness of wholeness and sanity, we had become distorted. Coming to London, the great city, seeking order, 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. It was something I had tried more than once before, and I waited for the response in the eyes of others. But now I no longer knew what I was; ambition became confused, then faded; and I found myself longing for the certainties of myself on the island of Isabella, certainties which I had once dismissed as shipwreck.¹⁵¹

Nevertheless his life seems to change once more when he meets an English girl named Sandra who does not feel herself connected to her country like he does. After having various relationships in which he cannot communicate; this relationship offers him peace and some kind of fulfillment. However what makes Sandra special to Ralph? It is mainly her view about life, which is similar to him; she does not feel herself connected to any group or family. She shares the loneliness of the modernist intellectual who gets some pleasure from the suffering. Their consciousness of their difference allows them to share a certain kind of space:

I had such confidence in her rapaciousness, such confidence in her as someone who could come to no harm- a superstitious reliance on her, which was part of the strength I drew from her- that in that moment it seemed to me that to attach myself to her was to acquire that protection which she offered, to share some of her quality of being marked.¹⁵²

However this solution is never to offer a remedy for him. Even just after their marriage we encounter the stereotyped images attributed to Ralph. The marriage officer tries to warn Sandra about living on Isabella, in case something bad happens to her. Having been married to a person from a different race she has to be protected against the violent and lustful native as seen by the Europeans. Ralph is turned into the ultimate "other" that has somehow bewitched Sandra, so his stereotyping shows the fear and

¹⁵¹ Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, p. 26.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

prejudice of the opposite side. When Sandra proposes moving to Isabella, Ralph decides to try a second chance on the island. However this time it is Sandra who feels herself as an outsider which damages their relationship. On the island the customs of the people perplex her and even after they become very rich and live in luxury the emptiness in their soul tortures them. Also among the elites Sandra becomes the illiterate English girl who is protected by her husband. Afflicted by the inert island atmosphere which widens the gap between their worlds there is nothing left for Sandra but to leave Ralph. Once more Ralph is disillusioned as a consequence of having lost the very person who gave some kind of meaning to his life.

D. Colonial Mimicry as a Negative Force

1. The Failed Politician as Mimic Men

The autobiography Ralph is trying to write is not only imbued with his private memories but it is also the confession of a disillusioned politician. Ralph is in a constant torture as he betrayed his countrymen by becoming unsuccessful in his socialist political movement which he started with his friend. By making confessions about that period he firstly tries to depict the unsuitability of the leadership role which came upon him all of a sudden. So in spite of being an agent he was mostly acted upon by the circumstances; becoming some sort of a puppet who could not control any change in the end. However he also has the need to stress the complexity of that post-independence period in which his dream of nationalization fails when England turns down any offer of reformation. Several questions need to be redirected referring to that period. Why did the idea of leadership seem attractive to Ralph and his friend Brown? How suited were they to understand the very spirit of the country when they were brought up quite detached from the island reality in an elitist atmosphere? Lastly why has the process of becoming independent and its afterwards become a nightmare for the country?

The unsuitability of Ralph's background and aspirations to a political career is obvious from the very beginning. As a person who has grown up away from the realistic atmosphere of the island life where there are racial and class differences Ralph is unaware of a national spirit. His mother's family had always been rich and he did not have much financial difficulty. His education at Isabella Imperial and England took him further away from the political and social problems of the country. As we can see from his autobiography he is perplexed by an idea of unreality dominating him in those times. However his second return to the island proves out to be a failure in that he is abandoned by his wife and is surrounded by fake people owing to his wealth. So when one day Ralph accepts one of his old school mate's (Brown) proposals to help financially to his magazine "The Socialist", they suddenly find themselves in a political movement whose pace they cannot control. In fact Brown, coming from African origin is also unsuitable for the role as he has been brought up in a similar unreal atmosphere. But he has become a pamphleteer, some sort of demagogue who can adjust his views quickly according to the sentiments of the people. One of the reasons why political life seems attractive to them is that it brings a certain sense of drama to their lives which are bereft of agency. Why they undertook such a venture together according to Ralph is:

Brown needed alien witness to prove his reality. For me a similar proof was offered by his literalness, which was like generosity. For him I had been, ever since Isabella Imperial, a total person [...]. He presented me with a picture of myself which it reassured me to study. This was his generosity; it was a relief after the continual challenge and provocation of relationship within the group that had been Sandra's and mine.¹⁵³

Political leadership becomes an aspiration through which they can reach to self-realization. However if they do not have the ability to help themselves it is questionable if they will bring any change and healing to the people's problems. Especially for Ralph who has an Orientalist vision of the island, conceiving it in inferior terms, this mission only brings more destruction. When Ralph further lingers on the instances that led him to become a leader it is clear that his striving had been sweetened by his becoming a public figure, a generous millionaire who has the

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 204.

altruistic mission to help the poor. It is the resurrection of the “London dandy” by being applauded and supported wherever he goes. It is a pretension, some kind of a disease which makes him tell more lies although it is contrary to his personality. In Ralph’s words:

Confusion: in the end it possessed us all. We were dazed by success. We didn’t know whether we had created the movement or whether the movement was creating us. When I examine myself I can think of no causes, no politician’s speeches stirring enough or convincing enough to send me into the streets, to make me one of a manipulable crowd. We zestfully abolished an order; we never defined our purpose. And it has happened in twenty countries.¹⁵⁴

Their firstly making a deal in Ralph’s the Roman Villa is also a foreshadowing of the future of the movement. The villa with its grandeur and ornateness is a source of solidity and security for Ralph which later on becomes the meeting ground to direct the country. In fact Ralph and Brown resemble the Roman leaders who are in fact outsiders of the country not being aware of the real reasons of class and ethnic differentiation. However they have the power and money and like the Romans they try to govern a mixed type of people by inflicting more suffering. Their part, in fact, becomes like the ruthless colonizers, whose ministers abuse their positions and this movement which is widely spread also to other countries has its bitter downfall like the Roman Empire. It is rather interesting to see that although their movement starts with the socialistic ideals of helping the poor and abolishing private capital in the end it becomes the servant of capitalistic powers. Ralph’s favoring the more the Asiatic ideals and Brown’s predilection to a Creole folk culture brings a more chaotic state to the country. Also their dream of bringing nationalism to the country becomes a big lie. Why is the movement doomed from the very start? According to Ralph their rhetoric is mere imitation of the West; they have not adopted a new, original strategy to find a rescue for the country:

We stood for dignity of our island, the dignity of our indignity. Borrowed phrases! Left-wing, right-wing: did it matter? Did we believe in the abolition of private property? [...] We spoke as honest men. But we used borrowed

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 215.

phrases which were part of the escape from thought, from that reality we wanted people to see but could ourselves now scarcely face.¹⁵⁵

Mimicry soon invites many problems in their governments which stands for the common problems the postcolonial states suffer under. It is the sense of unproductivity, the imitation of very aspect from the Western forces that shatter the bourgeoisie like movement.

As a consequence Ralph's and Brown's movement turns out to be a failure. By taking inexperienced and illiterate men to the government they fail to see that the new ministers become the real mimics. They become richer then before, send their families to foreign countries, take bribes, avoid the people and do not offer any solutions. They travel in Mercedes cars all around the island. In another occasion Ralph gives the proposal of preparing their own officer class in order to get rid of the English officers; however his paper is dismissed. On the contrary London offers more technical aid and experts and in an ironic way there end up more expatriates then before. Ralph exclaims: "Some of our ministers took pains to be seen in public with their English permanent secretaries: the spectacle of the black man served by the white: their revolution we claimed to have created."¹⁵⁶ Also as a politician Ralph does not act in a disinterested way, on the contrary he triggers racial division by advocating nationalism which is the benefit of the Asiatics.

As for the economy of the island it turns to its worst condition. Although Ralph tries to renegotiate the bauxite contract which is the only major resource of the island; he is faced with many difficulties. First of all they do not have any knowledge about the resource and they begin to beg foreign companies to make investments on it. However the companies refuse it as bauxite is difficult to mine and is of indifferent grade. In the end although they make an agreement with Jamaica on the use of bauxite their declination starts. For Ralph it is difficult to control and dominate a parliament which is formed from people with different interests each trying to privilege its own race. Also with the worsening economy the lower classes do not gain ant profit at all and the first revolt movement is seen on the sugar estates. It has been the aspiration of the

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 216.

¹⁵⁶ Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, p. 229.

socialist to proclaim the nationalization of the sugar estates which brings their downfall. Ralph comments:

Yet out of all confusions, against daily reports of ripe, burning canes and violence in the towns, this was the very cry that came out and was echoed from one end of the island to the other: nationalization. The estates had to be nationalized for the sake of unity, for the sake of that freedom from exploitation about which so much had been said.¹⁵⁷

It is in fact Ralph's duty to make London convinced about the task; nonetheless it becomes an utter dream when no compromise is made. The dream of nationalism becomes an emotive sound and a small revolt breaks on the island. There is a last mission left for Ralph to go to London with a delegation to make them accept the movement; however he is turned down coldly by an English minister. This time there is no one to help them; England has let them down. This is the ultimate disillusionment process of Ralph:

But on power and the consolidation of power we wasted our energies, until the biggest truth came: that in a society like ours, fragmented, inorganic, no link between men and landscape, a society not held by common interest, there was no true internal source of power, and that no power was real which did not come from the outside.¹⁵⁸

However is the outlook really that pessimistic? Is Ralph really the right person to make such kind of a declaration which shows that there is no way out of the power relationships in the country? It can be asserted that Ralph becomes the double self of Naipaul who by attributing to the colonials the organic sense of mimicry does not believe in the idea of independent nationalism. Although the situation in the country is really chaotic, can there be no way out for the postcolonial countries? The main problem of Ralph's political movement, as also mentioned by Fanon is that it is being a mere imitator of a Western discourse. The discourse of colonialism cannot be gotten rid of with the mere application of nationalism which is itself a European term. In the application of nationalism different elements should be considered carefully as ethnic and class differences, gender, religion any many others. A population cannot be treated as homogeneity if it is composed of a people sharing different attributes. The failure of most of the postcolonial countries was also due to the dictator-like leaders who tried to

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 240.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 224.

usurp the country by further reimbursing the divide and rule strategy of the colonial powers.

Ralph and Brown cannot awaken a common spirit among the people, a common nationalistic ambition for the further advancement of the country. They even widen the gap between the classes and cannot oppose the politics of England due to their economical dependency. Their situation is in fact a real foreshadowing of the political tumult in the islands of Trinidad and Tobago in the 1960s. In the end Ralph becomes the rich betrayer who has deceived the population; there is no other chance for him but to go to England as a refugee-immigrant sharing the faith of many other ex-leaders of many political countries. However the sense of failure and shame it forever going to torture him:

My sense of drama failed. This to me was the true loss. For four years drama had supported me; now, abruptly, drama failed. It was a private loss; thoughts of irresponsibility or duty dwindled, became absurd. I struggled to keep drama alive, for its replacement was despair: the vision of a boy walking on an endless desolate beach, between vegetation living, rotting, collapsed, and a mindless living sea.¹⁵⁹

From this time on Ralph suffers from a fear of action; he cannot live in a suburban semi-detached house like many of the other exiles, he cannot pretend himself to be a part of community. He chooses the incarceration of a hotel room where he will try to impose order to his life. In this period writing seems the only possible way to give some order to his life and in fact he describes his staying alone at the hotel as a fruitful time the causes of which I will analyze in the next chapter.

2. Ralph's and Naipaul's Sense of Mimicry

In the *Mimic Men* Ralph's sense of mimicry corresponds to the colonial's imitating everything relating to the West in an unproductive and static way without any sense of creativeness. His clansmen preferring the security offered by the once colonial power create an unreal atmosphere where everything is in fact the creation of the colonizer. For Ralph the condition is unbearable: "We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 261.

preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the new world, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new.”¹⁶⁰ The sense of being real is connected to the active taking part in life, by production which will lead to progress. For Ralph Europe is the representation of reality; however his land and people are only trying to emulate the standards they were once offered. They do not understand that mere imitation can only bring about destruction which they can never get over. This sense of mimicking has parasitic qualities which suffocates Ralph and makes him ashamed from his country men who do not seem to be aware of their desperate state: “To be descended from generations of idlers and failures, an unbroken line of the unimaginative, unenterprising and oppressed, had always seemed to me to be a cause for deep, silent shame.”¹⁶¹ In another instance he asserts: “I belonged to a small community which in this part of the world was doomed. We were an intermediate race, the genes passive, capable of disappearing in two generations into any of the three races of men [...]”¹⁶² This hellish atmosphere seems to be a permanent attribute of the colonized countries for Ralph. He does not offer any solution which could wake the population from this dream.

It seems from the declaration of Ralph that mimicry is an inherent attribute of these people, without which they would not be able to survive. Ralph by seeing himself detached from these people sees the only solution in solitary meditation during which writing becomes a form of escape for him. During his political period it becomes clear to him that he cannot change the attitude of his ministers and other people around him and as they seem to drag him to annihilation. What he simply does is to leave the country and prefer metaphorical exile. The choice he makes is in league with the choice of Naipaul who by detaching himself from his land chose to live in London. Also Ralph’s idea of mimicry is the direct manifestation of the Naipaulian sense of mimicry which he expanded in his numerous writings about the “Third World”.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 146.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 59.

For Naipaul like Ralph the mimics use up the creativeness of others by staying idle and dehumanizing themselves. Nixon who in his book the *London Calling* makes a detailed analysis of Naipaul's sense of mimicry points out:

Naipaul employs the word mimicry primarily to characterize a condition of insecurity that he considers endemic to Third World Societies, especially but not only those that have recently won self-rule. On this account, the fundamental insecurity of such societies derives from a weak sense of history, the shock of partial modernization, habits of dependent idleness inculcated during colonial era and grandiose dreams.¹⁶³

For Naipaul his citizens were living in a borrowed culture, imitating Europe in a hollow way thus self-destructing themselves. By using the term colonial mimicry Naipaul also includes any inhabitant of any colony and erstwhile colony thus erasing the differences between the colonizers and the colonized. Also from his static descriptions of West Indies and other Third World countries it can be assessed that he considered mimicry as historically constant. For instance in his book *Wounded Civilization* Naipaul does not see any solution for the position of India which has been dominated by Western ideas when he states: "But all the disciplines and skills that India now seeks to exercise are borrowed. Even the ideas Indians have of the achievements of their civilization are essentially the ideas given them by European scholars in the 19th century [...]."¹⁶⁴ The same feelings does he have for his homeland Trinidad when he asserts: "In the immigrant colonial society, with no standards of its own, subjected for years to the second-rate in newspaper, radio and cinema, minds are rigidly closed; and Trinidadians of all races and classes are remaking themselves in the image of the Hollywood B-man."¹⁶⁵

From his description of the people and his assessment that there is no real people in the West Indies it can be assessed that Naipaul defines the colonial as some one who has psychologically lost his identity and was invented by the empire. However his theory does not see any escape ground from this parroting position. He is persuaded by his

¹⁶³ Nixon, Rob: *London Calling*. V.S. Naipaul, *Postcolonial Mandarin*, New York: Oxford University Press 1992, p. 131.

¹⁶⁴ Naipaul, Vidiadhar Surajprasad: *India: A Wounded Civilization*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1977, p. 135.

¹⁶⁵ Naipaul, Vidiadhar Surajprasad: *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies – British, French and Dutch – in West Indies and South America* [1962], Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books 1969, p. 65.

theory that ex-colonies cannot sustain popularly rooted cultures of their own or generate inventive syntheses. Nor does Naipaul believe in a form of resistance in these once colonized lands as he defines resistance as a form of mimicry. Nixon does not see any escape point from this maze when he asserts: “Naipaul’s account of mimicry leaves no room for retaliatory, knowing, partial appropriations. His mimics are inane and self-aggrandizing. They exhibit inflated capacities for fantasy, their indebtedness to the real world serving as a measure of their distance from achieving a firm local reality.”¹⁶⁶

From such a pessimistic view it can be deduced that unlike Fanon as I handled in the theoretical application part, Naipaul does not believe in a national independence period after the postcolonial era as no government will be able to get over its mimetic character. Ralph’s failure as a politician and his despising the island is an outcome of this feeling of inability to act. However it should be kept in mind that how as a colonial is Ralph or Naipaul to escape out of this net of power relationship? Does not the very same person use literature as a way out of this dilemma? Cannot postcolonial literature be used as a weapon after self-realization? Ralph by writing does reach to some kind of self-realization and the other colonials could do that too. ,

D. The Act of Writing as a Metaphorical Journey

Mimic Men is the fictional autobiographical confrontation of the protagonist Ralph Singh with himself. His act of writing can be considered as a kind of metaphorical journey in which intermixed memories come to the foreground and are revaluated in a retrospective way. In the novel the story is accounted by the protagonist Ralph Singh; however we are always reminded that the stories he narrates are a part of his autobiography which he tries to write in a hotel room in London. What is interesting about is storytelling is that there is a non-linear sequence in which the past and future are enmeshed in each other. Thus we are firstly confronted with the university years of Ralph in England, in the second part he narrates his childhood period and in the third

¹⁶⁶ Nixon, *London Calling*, p. 157.

part we are introduced to the postcolonial politician on the island of Isabel. What we see is the ignorance of the realistic “Bildungsroman” style of the West where the life story of a protagonist is narrated in a historical order. Also we feel the omnipotent voice of the protagonist, who is also the author of his story, in every part of the novel. In the act of narration he stops the story and adds his comments in that it may signal a regret or self-criticism. Regarding the style of narration and the genre two questions have to be directed to the protagonist. Why does he choose to write at such an early age (40 years) an autobiography and why is his narration style distorted?

Disenchanted by his double journey to Isabel and London, having tried the role of a politician and dandy in order to fill up the emptiness within himself; there is nothing left for Ralph but to confront his burdens in the area of literature. As his literal journey has ended in “shipwreck” another metaphorical journey has started in the inner self of the protagonist after leaving Isabella for good. In the very beginning of the book we encounter Ralph in a London hotel, in total isolation, devastated by the loneliness and crudeness of the city:

What was I to do with so complete a beauty? And looking out from the room to the thin lines of brown smoke rising from ugly chimneypots, the plastered wall of the house next to the bombsite tremendously braced and buttressed [...]. I felt the magic of the city go away and had an intimation of the forlornness of the city and of the people who lived in it.¹⁶⁷

His being in state of exile literally and intellectually has imbued his life with a certain kind of pessimism relating to Isabella and London. Having lost touch with his family members and friends who are scattered all over the world there is no one to share his worries and disillusionment. However it is also not possible to go on his life without confronting his memories, which haunt him incessantly where ever he goes. In fact he is obsessed with the words “inaction”, “emptiness” and “order” which indicate the distorted psychological state he is in. For Ralph it is certain that changing the place, whenever he feels disillusioned, does not make him happy; on the contrary as much as he wants to evade his past he becomes worse day by day. The places he visits with a positive attitude become nightmares for him so he comments: “I no longer dream of

¹⁶⁷ Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, p. 5.

ideal landscapes or seek to attach myself to them. All landscaped eventually turn to land, the gold of the imagination to the lead of the reality.”¹⁶⁸ The childhood dream of Asian horseman is riding in an infinite land is shattered. To whatever land he travels; everywhere there will be some prioritized concepts regarding race, religion, ethnicity, language and many others which will encircle its people with boundaries. If this is the brutal reality surrounding him everywhere, then he does not want to dream anymore but to lead a life of torture. Also he does not want the help of anyone; he is the lonely modernist intellectual banished in a forlorn world for eternity. As a matter of fact in his hotel room, in a state of inaction, the writing of autobiography will show his sense of agency; it will be the facing of his burden which he has ignored for a long time. In other words his autobiography will be a battleground where the stories of childhood, adolescence, maturity overlap each other and are presented in a multi-directional way.

For the protagonist Ralph Singh literature and the act of writing have had different meanings throughout his life. Although he regards writers as incomplete people who were chose writing as a substitute of life; he also imagines himself writing during his university years in England. There terrorized by the deep disorder which surrounded him he became disillusioned with reality and he imagined himself writing about the restlessness, the deep disorder in the world history. By digging deep to the origins he felt himself responsible to bring some sense of order to this restlessness by the act of writing. So writing in this way seemed to be a reconciliation which would bring peace to his life. He comments:

It must also be confessed that in that dream of writing I was attracted less by the act and the labor than by the calm and the order which the act would have implied. It would have been, as I said, in the evening of my days. Life lived, endeavor past, the chances taken. My place of retirement an old cocoa estate, one of our rundown former slave plantations.¹⁶⁹

Here however writing seems to be an enterprise taken when one has had enough experience in his life; it is some kind of a final celebration of the glory of an individual who has lived his life to the ends. It would be a last stroke on the picture, which would depict the life in its wholeness, adding to the self-esteem of the individual. He would

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

be happily spending his last years on his island in luxurious circumstances and his autobiography would be his last endeavor “to fix his own image so that he could be certain it would not disappear like all the things in the world.”¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless this dream does not come true. His first career as a writer starts when he writes an essay about his father for the Socialist. However he is deeply disturbed by the process because the articles he writes are not sincere; they end up being deeply dishonest. He comments: “It was the work of a convert, a man just created, just presented with a picture of himself. It was the first of many such pieces; balanced, fair, with the final truth evaded, until at last truth was lost.”¹⁷¹ However his evading the truth brings more disorder to his life, writing in this instance is not an escape but a further mechanism of escaping from himself.

Writing becomes Ralph’s greatest predilection when he finds himself in England in exile. There being ashamed of his unsuccessful political career he alienates himself from his fellow country people and the society and incarcerates himself to his hotel room which is cold and bleak. However being by himself his identity becomes more problematic as he cannot share his inner most feelings with anyone. He suffers under an overwhelming feeling of placidity and inaction after his restless years on the island and England. The simplicity and monotonousness combined with the pessimistic London background suffocate him gradually. Added to these are the burdens of memories; the shame and guilt felt by the wrong deeds. Under these circumstances the only salvation for him is his writing an autobiography. The process of writing becomes an internal dialogue with him; it is a sincere confession which is to bring some order to his chaotic life:

I do not now wish to become involved in battles which are irrelevant to myself. I no longer wish to share distress; I do not have the equipment. No more words for me, except these I write, and in them the politician, Chapman in causes, will be suppressed as far as possible. My present urge is, in the inaction imposed on me, to secure the final emptiness.¹⁷²

The very act of writing becomes a battle ground of self questioning which is a way of coming on terms with the past. Ralph has never been understood by his family and

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 205.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 230.

friends. There is an urgent need to lay bare his ambivalent identity, his hopes and failures. Writing in this instance is a spiritual journey where he has to confront the memories which give him pain:

I thought that this absurd disorder, of placelessness, as part of youth and my general unease and that it would go as soon as I left Isabella. But certain emotions bridge the years. It was unease of just this sort which came to me when I began this book. [...] I sickeningly recognized that sense of captivity and lurking external threat, that pain of a rich world destroyed and rendered null. Perhaps it is the effort of writing.¹⁷³

It is this attempt to convey the deep sense of emptiness, to give it a form that initiates a struggle in the personality of Ralph. With the present consciousness he can reevaluate his past from a new angle. Everything is reconstructed and revitalized and the person has become an “other” about whom he has been talking about. New discoveries about the past startle the narrator; however it could also be an initiation of a new conception of life. When he talks about his writing process Ralph is perplexed by the revaluation process:

To me it is strange that it is only now, as I write, that I see, like the sympathetic historian who detects the seed of disaster in some minor and unregarded action, it is only now I see that all the activity of these years, existing in my own mind in parenthesis, represented a type of withdrawal, and was part of the injury inflicted on me by the too solid three-dimensional city in which I could never feel myself as anything but spectral, disintegrating, pointless, fluid.¹⁷⁴

When writing his autobiography the five elements referred above come to the foreground one of which is memory. For Ralph it is no more possible to distinguish between the memories belonging to his real life and the ones imaginarily constructed. In the very act of autobiography his mind plays on him and he forms another past which is imbued with the elements of English culture. However he confesses that they are not true so it is a dialogic confrontation with himself in a metanarrative way:

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 mind insists on the apple. The editing is clearly at fault, but the edited version is all

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

I have. This version contains a few lessons. One is about the coronation of the English King and the weight of his crown.¹⁷⁵

In the very act of writing we come across the politics of remembering. Memories which are thought to be the guarantor of the personality also play tricks on the writer; he is not able to distinguish fiction from reality. What he remembers is filtered through colonial education; his unconscious wants him to be an English citizen in fact. Secondly the experiences are shown in their nakedness and like a God figure Ralph tries to consider them in a critical outlook sometimes strictly reproaching himself. We witness his experiences as a dandy and colonial politician and there is the overlapping ground of multifaceted identities. As he refers in many parts of his autobiography throughout his life he has acted out several roles in order to hide the emptiness and disturbance inside him. Ralph has always had the fear of becoming a non-entity. At school he gave himself a new name and was absorbed in the unreal atmosphere of the *Isabella Imperial*, then in England he acted out the role of the extravagant dandy in order to be esteemed by the people around him, later on when he became a politician on the island he became the unreality himself. Since he had to convince the masses that were following him he pretended the posture of rich, generous businessmen who was ready to do everything for his country. However these different identity pretensions brought only failure and unhappiness. Also this narrative is the observation of his body and the women with whom he has a relationship. Lastly the autobiographical process is used to enact the role of agency which Ralph lacks for a long time. By writing he is to bring some kind of order and he will confront his past in a free-willed consciousness: "It was a vision of a disorder that was beyond any one man to control yet which, I felt, if I could pin down, might bring me calm. It is the vision that is with me now. This man, this room, this city; this story, this language, this form."¹⁷⁶ All in all writing becomes a ground of spiritual liberation in the end. He does not feel anymore that writers are incomplete people who avoid life. In fact writing becomes a supplement to the life; both of which enrich each other in a dialogical way.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

For Ralph recording of a life becomes the extension of that life. He even grows on to relish the order and construction of the hotel room which suffocated him in the beginning. As opposed to the unchanging background, there is a kind of process which offers fulfillment to the personality of the author. He comments: "So writing, for all its initial distortion, clarifies, and even becomes a process of life."¹⁷⁷ Not only is it only an enriching experience for himself; but also Ralph thinks that his autobiography will be a positive enrichment to postcolonial literature which will trigger discussions. So autobiography serves as constructive power for the individual especially for the postcolonial authors who feel themselves as outcasts, lonely figures in the society. *Mimic Men* ends in positive overtones in that Ralph somehow is successful in overcoming the burdens that he was haunted by. Although his distortion will not be healed completely literature gives him the chance to question his ambiguity and the underlying reasons for it so that it will also help the other individuals who suffer under the same dilemma.

E. Mimic Men: A Foreshadowing of Reality?

In the novel the protagonist Ralph Singh shares certain kind of similarities with Naipaul and the political action which he starts with Brown is in fact a foreshadowing of a similar kind of political period in the Caribbean formed by Indian and black coalition in the 1950s. As a matter of fact it can be stated that to understand Ralph means to be directly connected to Naipaul's own universe and aspirations.

Isabella where Ralph is born stands for the island of Trinidad where Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born into an Indian community. Naipaul's grandfather had been brought to Trinidad from Uttar Pradesh in the 1880s. He was of Brahman stock and was trained as a pundit. During his childhood Naipaul witnessed his mother's powerful and relatively wealthy family which disillusioned not only him but also his father. The woman-dominated family structure affected Naipaul in a negative way which made him conceive of the family structure as autocratic. This resembles Ralph's mother's family who are the local importers of Coca-Cola. The idea of individuality

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 274.

affected him throughout his life and in his autobiography he has always imagined himself as a person living in a free state who does not care about any rules and does not have any connection to anybody. So for his education he studied at Queen's Royal College and was interested in cricket and music which resembles Ralph's education at the Isabella Imperial and his predilection for cricket and athletics for self-realization.

During his adolescence years on the island Naipaul was deeply moved by the hostility of the Africans towards Indians which left an indelible mark in his life. He did not feel himself a complete part of the island which created a certain sense of unreality in him. In one of his interviews with Adrian Rowe-Ewans we gain inside into his chaotic state more clearly when he says:

I think it is much more important for me, coming from a place which is not real, a place which is imperfectly made, and a place where people are, really, quite inferior, because they demand so little of themselves. Coming from such society, I did not have views of my own; I did not know what I thought about anything, because the world was out of my hands.¹⁷⁸

This resembles the disillusioned stance of Ralph on the island who fears from the feeling of unreality. In 1950 with a Trinidadian government scholarship Naipaul went to Oxford in 1950. After completing his literary degree he moved to London where he joined the BBC as an editor of the "Caribbean Voices". However writing had been one of his greatest predilections which was inspired by his father Seepersad Naipaul who published a book named *The Adventures of Gurudeva and other Stories*¹⁷⁹. In his further life however he preferred London as his permanent abode which gave him creative force. This is also Ralph's decision after his failure on the island as a politician. Why he feels himself more affiliated with the English culture can be seen from his colonial education he had in the college which was based on an English-centered reality. At first he began writing novels then turned to non-fiction which included the experience of his peregrinations to once colonial countries. What is important about his personality is that he has always considered himself as an outsider belonging to nowhere, in other words he is in a metaphorical sense of exile. It was a

¹⁷⁸ Rowe-Ewans, Adrian: V. S. Naipaul: A Transition Interview, in: Transition, No. 40, 1971, pp. 52-62, esp. p. 56 (<http://www.jstor.org/>)

¹⁷⁹ Naipaul, Seepersad: *The Adventures of Gurudeva and other Stories* [1943], London: Andre Deutsch Limited 1976.

normal outcome in fact as he did not feel himself at home in Trinidad either, coming from Indian origins and he did not feel himself to become a creative writer in the unrealistic atmosphere of the island life. Although he is blamed by some of the postcolonial authors to be scrutinizing the postcolonial states from a Western point of view in a superior way, Naipaul claims that England was alien to him and could not give him any sense of home. As an individual haunted by a three partied relationship between countries his writings are haunted by a sense of nothingness. His global understanding of things is indeed connected to his metaphorical exile position which renders him different as he asserts:

One must make a pattern of one's observations, one's daily distress; one's lack of representation in the world; one's lack of status. These, for me, are not just ideas; when I talk about being an exile or a refugee I'm not just using a metaphor, I'm speaking literally [...]. Because one doesn't have a side, doesn't have a country, doesn't have a community; one is entirely an individual.¹⁸⁰

It is interesting to see that he is a refugee because he doesn't have privileges or representation however the exile figure reimburses his solitariness and his disinterested stance. In this passage there is a certain sense of superiority complex in that his disavowal of any national identity makes him detached giving him a fresh outlook on incidents. He is original as he also believes as he is bereft of any influence. With the trust to his worldliness he peregrinated to many countries and wrote books about them. He states: "Yet someone like myself, who has developed his gift in another place and is now trying to express the problem of his own background, will be speaking in a way that the man at home cannot follow."¹⁸¹ However the only city that would maintain his distinctiveness and creative powers is London which is a place of cultural crossroads where identities mingle and disordered. Only in an individualistic atmosphere could Naipaul create his artifacts. Although some critics blame him to be playing the role of a Western gazer with a superior outlook what in fact Naipaul tries to lay bare is the ambivalence of the postcolonial critic who grew up in Western standards. In his novels especially the personal failures are shown with all its clarity as the successes.

¹⁸⁰ Rowe-Ewans, V.S. Naipaul [interview], p. 59.

¹⁸¹ Rowe-Ewans, V.S. Naipaul [interview], p. 61.

After having scrutinized the life story and the predilections of Naipaul it can be clearly seen that Ralph Singh carries many important traces with the writer. Ralph's family background, the wealth of his family, his colonial education and his fleeing to London are all the periods of Naipaul. Although the novel is metanarrational in which the events are narrated from the selfish point of view of Ralph as he considers this as an autobiography, in fact in a third removal it is also the life of Naipaul. Ralph's conceiving himself aloof from other people, his beginning of the writing career in London in a lonely hotel room indicate how Naipaul sees the creative writing process: a sum of individual moments. The traveling in time even to the childhood period is the confrontation of Ralph with himself and the serious and unforgiving attitude

Ralph considers his past is in fact Naipaul's confrontation with himself.

IV. CONCLUSION

My primary intention in comparing two novels about the crisis process of two postcolonial individuals who consider themselves in metaphorical exile was, contrary to the general tendency of regarding these people as outcasts with negative attributes, to depict the positive capability in them to reach to a critical state of self-consciousness which enable them to have different outlooks on the dilemmas. I strongly believe that exiled people who consider themselves as homeless, by experiencing the opposition of two cultures inside them are nurtured but also constantly tortured by their stance. However these feelings create a certain sense of distinction in them who by their supernatural, disinterested outlook act out more tolerance and open-mindedness. What the society sets as the standard of normality, the basic conviction that the rules it constructed are organic therefore ought to be followed, do also create the hatred to "the other" who does not want to follow them. The postcolonial intellectual who cannot associate himself with his homeland due to pitfalls in national consciousness and who cannot find the ideal security in the host country due to stereotyping and segregation prefers to deny the comforts offered to him. Though suffering under ambivalence and

distortion he is able to persist the challenges he faces with a never seen resilience. By a never ending force he does not stop questioning his inner self and the society. He is always alert with a suspicious stance of mind whereby he avoids persistent ideologies. The grounds of traveling and writing which he uses to unfold himself and regain a new sense of consciousness offer him creative solutions enabling to impose order to his life.

Yasin and Ralph in this sense are the ultimate paragons for this self-questioning mind who although criticized by the people around them do not give up their standpoint of suspicion and aloofness and are always in a constant war with themselves to regain new vistas in life. Although these characters choose different tools on the pathway to self-fulfillment there are many intersecting similarities in their backgrounds, their life style in England and the way they cope with the problems. Both novels lay bare their middle-age crisis in which they are obsessed with a sense of order which they were never be able to achieve throughout their lives. Their search for order is in fact the consequence of their permanent sense of placidity, insecurity and emptiness which results from their double sense of displacement from their homeland and host country.

When we consider Yasin's and Ralph's backgrounds none of them feel themselves as an integral component of their home countries. Yasin has always felt in himself the presence of two cultures as his mother is English and father Sudanese and Ralph, having Indian ancestors, couldn't be a part of the Creole culture. Their relationship towards their fathers is also problematic in that both of the fathers are traditional figures who hate the idea of Western imperialism. Yasin's father cannot forgive Yasin's leaving Sudan for good. He becomes a betrayer figure who does not care about his country; whereas Ralph's father abandons him when he is a teenager. Then he starts a traditional revolt movement on Isabel which ends in failure. Their inability to have a healthy relationship with their father has caused deep distortions in their identity. Later on when they go to English colleges, surrounded by an atmosphere of unreality, they loose their sense of a common history and shared culture. During their imperialistic education they get familiar with every detail of the European culture whereas their own history is either omitted or shown in constructed terms. This makes them imagine the

English culture as the superior one which also distorts their memories about the past. Their country turns into a place which nauseates them. The sense of place and time is shattered. As the independence period both in Sudan and Isabel becomes a problematic phenomenon both of them consider immigration to England as the only solution to their dilemmas. There is an unconscious hope of optimism in their minds.

However for both of the protagonists the education period in the metropolis London has fatal consequences. There they are surrounded by a deep sense of loneliness and alienation where people are segregated however much they try to adapt themselves. Owing to their family structure and education both Ralph and Yasin share the feeling of being marked, they do not have many friends and their relationship to their families is not promising. In order to cope with the feeling of inaction and nothingness both of the protagonists get married to English women who also do not feel themselves a part of England. Yasin's wife comes from Danish ancestors and has a deep yearning for that whereas Ralph's wife Sandra despises her essences describing herself as homeless. However neither marriage brings happiness to these people as the relationships turn into a war of superiority. Yasin feels himself as a colonized figure during their marriage; whereas in the case of Ralph his wife becomes an alienated figure when they turn back to Isabella. After these unfortunate events they take different paths from each other.

Whereas Yasin moves with his wife and son to an English countryside and does not consider a return to Sudan possible, Ralph after his wife's proposal decides again to return to his homeland and start a second life. However neither decision brings any salvation to them as they do not confront the real essence of their problems. Yasin's relationship with his wife becomes more problematic in the countryside as there are always conflicts about their convictions of East and West. After Yasin starts to have another relationship with his wife's best friend there is no hope to rescue the relationship anymore. He has only one mission left to have a good relationship to his son and hinder his becoming as distorted as he is. As for Ralph although he becomes very rich on the island, the new community they are a part of is highly fake, composed

of rich people who come from different backgrounds. Their lives become afflicted by a certain sense of boredom where the problems of the island are avoided. However the lower classes still suffer from economical problems and the hatred between the races in worse as never. In the end when Sandra cannot bear the artificiality and leaves Ralph for good, the island life becomes unbearable where a certain sense of placidity and inability surrenders Ralph.

In his second period of disillusionment on the island the only possibility left for Ralph is to start a political career, which will bring a certain kind of drama or action to his life. He mistakenly believes that the sense of nothingness will be fulfilled if he affiliates himself with the problems of the country and brings salvation to the poor. However this unexpected career, combined with his inexperience and middle-class background only brings distortion and unhappiness. In the end there is nothing left but to leave the island for ever and lead a life of exile in London. As for Yasin, in his perplexed period he tries to write a novel which is a true account of the world as he remembers it without any ideological mechanism. However he is blamed by the members of his family, everyone showing different reasons for their hatred for the book. Writing brings another sense of disillusionment which does not offer salvation to the protagonist. He does not want any more to confront the blaming and prejudiced viewpoint of the others. As he highly values the aesthetic aspect of literature and hates ideological mechanisms; he does not feel that as an immigrant writer his writing will be appreciated for that quality. As a result rather than writing he goes on criticizing the other works in a radio program.

In the last period of their lives Yasin and Ralph take up opposite mechanism in order to confront their psychological disturbance. In the climax point of their lives, where the sense of alienation seems impossible to bare, Yasin decides to travel in Europe with his son so that he can reach to reclamation of place and travel back in time to confront his "Djinns". This traveling is in fact an attempt on reconciliation; a reclamation on space. During the journey, his mind turns into the battleground of different memories relating

to a national past, colonial history and family relations which he tries to put into a certain kind of order. In fact the journey becomes a metaphor of an inner dialogue of the protagonist with himself, where he is greatly challenged and threat with annihilation. In the end however the journey becomes a positive metaphor, which helps Yasin to have a more confident outlook for the future. This is foreshadowed when he finds his books and typewriter in the sea again after they had been lost for a long time. These items in fact are a tangible part of his memory and whatever he does and wherever he goes, he realizes that he cannot escape them. Although the future is not certain, he will be a survivor in Europe and maybe can take positive action. As for Ralph, the inner journey is realized when he writes his autobiography which brings order and serenity to his life. For Ralph traveling back and forth to London and Isabel does not bring any salvation. Only after his exile experience in London which renders him lonely and disillusioned does the interest arise to start an inner dialogue with himself which takes the form of an autobiography. It is this confession process which enables him to consider his deeds objectively. By criticizing himself and considering his failures although he becomes more distorted, in the end he does not have any revenge to take from the past. Furthermore he wants his writing to be guide to the other immigrants who suffer under similar problems. By giving some sense of order to his life the future becomes a more bearable place to live. However it should be kept in mind that although for Yasin and Ralph their journeys become positive action they do not offer an overall solution to their problems. They only become a guide with the help of which they can make their life more meaningful despite the outweighing problems.

For Yasin and Ralph who have chosen intellectual exile by isolating themselves from the society, regaining a total sense of identity is impossible. They feel themselves as strangers in the world as they are not attached to any homeland which however makes them stronger when we remember Hugo St. Victor's assertion as was referred in the theoretical applications part. Their not being attached to any political, religious or national group in fact makes them appropriate candidates for the secular critic as Edward Said called it. If we remember the secular critic, he had the ability of

considering the problems from a supra-national perspective not losing himself in the prejudiced viewpoint of any group. Also it is the responsibility of the secular critic to not absorb himself in any abstraction, which will estrange him from the reality of the society. Yasin and Ralph are both aware of their capacity of becoming such kind of a critic. Their aim is to reach to a synthesis between cultures which will make the displaced individual live more peacefully in the host society Writing and traveling become for them creative grounds where they can also show the other displaced individuals how to tackle with their ambiguity with a never ending sense of vitality.



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