

DIASPORIC EXPOSURE AND CULTURAL DEVIANCE

A Comparative Reading of Philip Roth and V. S. Naipaul

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*To my family,
Roth and Naipaul*

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope and Significance of this Study

Mass migrations of modern times have produced hybrid identities that reside neither within the realm of the former national or ethnic culture nor within the cultural realm of the host society. Possessor of such an identity is often criticized by both sides for being a transgressor, a deviant, while both sides neglect the interactive procedure, at the end of which this cultural wretch stands, a Frankensteinian prototype whose existence cannot be categorized in any of the cultural groups which actually created it. This creature is a diasporic subject, a hybrid in possession of a “partial' presence”, being in Homi Bhabha’s terms “almost the same, but not quite” (“Of Mimicry and Man” 86). This cultural hybrid depicts a kind of “difference” which results from being at “the rim of an 'in-between' reality” (Bhabha, “Locations of Culture” 13). In the present study, I would like to examine the tension of residing in that in-between state: the tension of being neither this nor that. For this purpose, I will compare three novels by Philip Roth, the Jewish American author, to two novels and a collection (including short stories and a novella) by V. S. Naipaul, the Trinidadian English writer. In each chapter, I will draw attention to one common or correlating notion as a space where identity dynamics and identity conflicts are negotiated. The three notions consist of home, mimicry and its existential counterpart impersonation and eventually deviance.

Findings of this study explain not only the interrelationship between the state of cultural hybridity and dynamics of identity against a background of diaspora but also social implications of diaspora such as deviance. Thereby, these findings are indebted to diaspora studies.

Diaspora studies emerged in response to a bigger movement which grew in turn in the aftermath of social and political movements such as the “black” civil movement, women's and homosexuals'

rights. In the '60s with the appearance of texts written by Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, there was an emphasis on the persistence of difference as a necessity in establishing identity as well as “heterogeneities”. The outcome was an extensive rejection of exclusion and an endorsement of “inclusion without homogenization” in both theory and practice. Additionally, historians tried to make the subaltern heard by filling gaps in their historical narratives (Tölölyan 7-8). Born out of this broad context, the academic field of diaspora studies focuses on “geographical and sociocultural heterogeneity” in an attempt to explain mass migrations and displacement worldwide (Pierre). In a world where movement is inevitable, it is necessary to fathom its enigmatic consequences. This analysis exemplifies the way literature can help us with understanding world realities.

1.2 Why Comparative Studies?

As a dynamic field, comparative literature is a flexible area of study. One can compare works which might have no similarity at first glance. Comparative literature provides the comparatist with a broader framework beyond a merely subjective understanding, in that it saves them from a polarized view of cultures (Choudhuri 114). In other words, comparing products of different cultures allows us to appreciate those cultures by highlighting their intersection, points of similarities and differences alike. This framework helps me to reveal points that an exclusive study of one diaspora would leave undiscovered. Through conducting a comparison between the two diasporas, I represent movement as a universal phenomenon, while bearing the particularities in mind. Within this broader framework, I think of those notions and concepts that surpass the dichotomy or disparity between Roth as the representative of Jewish American literature and Naipaul as the representative of Indian-Caribbean colonial literature. This comparison reveals the similarities that lie at the heart of both literary works

and displays “the human subject” in general. The latter, being a task of the humanities, is specifically achievable *through* a comparative method (Ferris 33).

In this study, going beyond one national literature also helps me reflect the way identity dynamics have changed through mass migrations as a cross-cultural experience worldwide. Additionally, using a comparative method enables an exploration of the connection between those dynamics and exposure to post-colonial spaces without being misled by divisions and tags of center and periphery. In other words, this method permits me to find the legacy of post-colonial discourse in spaces where it might not be expected at first glance.

1.3 Why Interdisciplinary Studies?

This study also profits from its combination of literary studies and sociology. In chapters Two and Four I use sociological terms of deviance, stigma and assimilation. In regard to the fact that the fields in the humanities are closely connected, combining these “natural bed fellows”, using Nicholas Saunders' metaphor (“Reach out and cuddle up to another discipline”), does not necessarily lead to a new prototype as novel as bio-informatics. By applying a partly sociological approach in my analysis of Roth and Naipaul, I try to demonstrate how literary works can help us with understanding diaspora as a social condition as well as a potential source of social anomalies.

Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, this study has also attempted to approach diaspora from a different perspective by integrating post-colonial ideas and concepts into sociology. This would improve our understanding of the topic as a complex multi-dimensional issue, as well as initiate a dialogue between literary studies and sociology. Because of its one-way approach to the topic, no single discipline can do justice to its depiction of the topic as a real-life experience. Approaching the topic from different disciplines can eliminate this deficiency.

1.4 A Review of Theory and Literature

What makes comparative studies both flexible and at the same time unique is the freedom it gives the scholar or the comparatist to find similarities in subjects which might seem quite dissimilar at first glance. A little while after writing my masters dissertation on Philip Roth, I began reading works by the other transnational writers Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul, whose critical receptions reminded me very much of the way Roth's works were received. With their diaspora backgrounds, their characters reflect a common reality and it is this reality which connects them despite their different cultural backgrounds. The answer I came up with was defiance, their critical view on their “racial” or ethnic traditions, their transgression of and resistance to those traditions and as a result, their state of being rejected or harshly criticized by their community. This defiance provided them with a freedom that is caused by an involvement in the two cultural spaces they were standing in and from which they were absent at the same time, a state of in-betweenness caused by displacement. Homi Bhabha has addressed this at length in his famous work *The Location of Culture*. But before I get to this topic, I would like to elaborate briefly on the common experience which causes this defiance and makes these characters (despite their differences) *deviate* similarly from their traditions. Characters of Roth and Naipaul are products of two different diasporas. In this study, I propose that diaspora as their common experience is the initiator of this state of being defiant and deviant.

Colonialism does not necessarily mean diaspora but it can be one of its causes. Jews' escape from Nazi Germany to the United States in the first half of the 20th century is basically initiated by the same attitude that justified superiority of a specific group of people to others and colonization of other people due to their skin color, religion, beliefs, etcetera. Anti-Semitism and colonization have been both

justified by a group of norms that are based on a polarized view of human beings whereby only white European is regarded as supreme. For this reason Jews and colonial subjects have been both subjected to social exclusion and discrimination. As a result, feelings of alienation and insulation are experienced by both groups. Additionally colonialism and anti-Semitism are historically created to boost nationalistic causes. The history of the British Empire and the German National Socialism are only a few examples. Here I will take a glimpse into the literature written on both (diaspora and colonialism), as they are both key concepts of this study. Later I will address that state of in-betweenness I mentioned above, drawing mainly on Bhabha's theories.

The term diaspora comes etymologically from Greek. “Dia” meaning “over” and “speirein” meaning “to sow or to scatter” evoke “images of multiple journeys” (Brah 181). The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* defines diaspora in a general sense as “any group of people who have spread or become dispersed beyond their traditional homeland or point of origin” (“diaspora, n.”).

In their introduction to *Comparing Postcolonial Diasporas*, Keown et al. argue that the term diaspora, which in its current use signifies an abundant number of movements around the world has been formerly used specifically to describe “the dispersal of Jews” (1). Daniel Elezar states that “diaspora”, a term originally created to refer to “the Jewish condition”, has probably been a condition for more than 2600 years. Due to the 1500 years of living without any “effective political center in their national territory”, institutions of the Jewish state are also modeled after their diasporic examples (“The Jewish People as the Classic Diaspora”). Contemporary anti-Semitism has been regarded as a factor in forming the Jewish diaspora (ibid.). “[R]eligious, philosophical, political, and eschatological connotations” of the term diaspora with reference to the Jews gain a considerable importance, due to the significant connection the Jews feel to the land of Israel (“Diaspora”). William Safran defines diaspora in the first issue of the *Diaspora* journal as:

expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate, 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (83-84)

According to Safran, these characteristics speak for many different diasporas, the most ideal of which is the Jewish diaspora. In the same article, he makes a distinction between the “theological 'neutral'” view of diaspora as a “physical dispersion (golah)” as perceived by American Jews and the traditional view of diaspora, evoking “moral degradation, insecurity, and persecution (galut)” as perceived by “much of the Israeli political leadership” (91). This is the distinction which Stuart Hall and Vijay Mishra also lay emphasis on (“Cultural Identity and Diaspora” 235; “Introduction: The Diasporic Imaginary” 19). Safran's general definition of diaspora has been widely criticized since then, because his list of characteristics either misses some aspects that are obviously present in other diasporas or contradicts them. For example, the sense of obligation to the land of origin repudiates a very common feature mentioned in most definitions of diaspora and that is the sense of loss, “absence” and “not-at-homeness” (Ashcroft, “Transnation” 75). An incisive critic of Safran's definition is James Clifford who

points out that the main parts of Jew's historical experience do not accord with Safran's last three parameters. Safran's definition ignores Jew's state of vacillation over Aliyah that has always been a controversial issue among diasporic Jews. As a result it leaves no room for the debates on Aliyah on the part of anti-Zionist Jews (Clifford 305).

Walker Connor defines diaspora as “that segment of the people living outside the homeland” (16). William Safran considers it a “metaphoric designation ... for several categories of people – expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, ethnic and minorities tout court” (83) Such over-inclusive definitions and designations of the term diaspora were more popular from the 1980s onward (R. Cohen 1). The fact that the term diaspora can be defined so differently, while each definition highlights some of its specific features at the cost of excluding some others, points at the fluidity of the concept. Probably for this reason Sandra Ponzanesi warns against the application of a general label for all people on the move (206-207). Having drawn on concepts such as region, culture, community, center and periphery, older definitions of the word diaspora with their focus on a specific locality are now considered abstruse and inadequate (Clifford 303). Different forms of mobility have made diaspora flexible and more liable to change. So despite the fact that many communities are signified by diasporic characteristics, they are not necessarily diaspora communities. Diaspora denotes a rather longer distance and a disconnection more or less similar to exile (Clifford 304). Emphasizing the “cultural affiliation” of the notion of diaspora, Ashcroft et al. distinguish it from terms such as “migration” and “immigration” which more likely and mainly refer to “movement, disruption and displacement” without evoking this cultural aspect (“Introduction to Part Sixteen” 425).

Being a flexible term, the notion of diaspora has been developed by post-colonial critics to question the dominance of “national paradigms”, inasmuch as it is linked with “movements through and between locations” and “dislocation” (Procter 151). Drawing attention to the epistemological

significance of diaspora theory, Mark Shackleton asserts that diaspora studies view these movements also in regard to “adaptation to changes, dislocations and transformations, and the construction of new forms of knowledge” and worldviews (ix). We have to keep in mind that each diaspora has nourished by different factors. While Jewish diaspora was mainly ignited by anti-Semitic attitudes, the Indian diaspora in Africa and the Caribbean as well as the African diaspora in America are fueled dominantly by colonialism. Colonialism, being “a radically diasporic movement”, led to momentary and lasting scatterment and settlement of not only Africans but also millions of Europeans throughout the world. A series of these mass migrations was caused by “ecological imperialism” through which the colonies were cultivated as a source of food production (Ashcroft et al., “Diaspora” 81-83). This is why theorists such as Robin Cohen, Vijay Mishra, Monika Fludernik and John A. Armstrong divide diasporas into different categories. In *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* Robin Cohen categorizes diaspora into two main groups. The first group is characterized by a traumatic dispersion from home across the world, while the second group features business or colonial aspirations (17). Despite being caused by different reasons, these two groups share seven features: sharing a “collective memory”, “idealization” of homeland and a devotion to it, a frequent visit to homeland (shared by the majority of the group), a sense of ethnic consciousness, problem(s) with the host society, sympathy with other ethnic members who also live in diaspora and the possibility of a successful life in diaspora (ibid.). Monika Fludernik divides Cohen’s second group into three further categories: a) colonial diaspora b) old diaspora c) new diaspora, the last two of which has been coined by Vijay Mishra. Mishra distinguishes between old and new diasporas by their duration. He characterizes old diaspora as a long-term dislocation and new diaspora as a mobile and flexible dislocation. He uses different forms of slavery as examples of old diaspora and immigration of Koreans and the Chicano to the United States of America as examples of new diaspora.

Monika Fludernik categorizes latest forms of labour immigration as new diaspora (“Diasporic Imaginary” xiii). Older forms of labour movements as illustrated in movies such as *Picture Bride* (1994), though taking place at the beginning of the 20th century, still lack a sense of negotiation that is present in the labour movements of the latest decades. In other words, most of such labour movements were not reversible.

Mishra connects new diasporas to post-colonial discourses whereby dislocation provides a space of “intercultural” exchange (“The Diasporic Imaginary and the Indian Diaspora” 22). This characteristic, shared by different diasporas, enables us to regard them as a universal phenomenon, despite their different histories and particularities. Sandra Ponzanesi also draws attention to this essential function of diaspora, forming a site of cultural “transgression” and cultural “hybridization” where different “subject positions” are brought together, contrasted, affirmed or repudiated. One famous example of this encounter is the “flux of return” which is a reversal of colonial immigrations (208-209). As a result, metropolitan sites become sites of “post/colonial encounters” (Brinkler-Gabler & Smith 8). Exposure to this dynamic site of cultural interaction challenges and problematizes cultural affiliations of not only those people who moved to that site but also those who reside on that site (Brah 208-209). This space has been examined from different aspects including its impact on identity dynamics, “bourgeois subject” and worldwide movements.

Vijay Mishra warns against a homogenization of diasporas (his example is Indian diasporas). An excessive study of new diasporas obscures the significance of the old diasporas and their histories (“The Diasporic Imaginary and the Indian Diaspora” 22).

Diasporas that I examine in this study illustrate different categories. Jewish diaspora and African diaspora in the United States are both old diasporas. African diaspora in the United States is an example of colonial diaspora. Swede Levov in *American Pastoral* (1997), the Zuckermans in *The Counterlife*

(1986) and Coleman Silk in *The Human Stain* (2000) are all subjects of old diasporas. Indian diaspora in the Caribbean and Africa are older forms of labour movement and represent old diaspora for their lack of mobility. Salim in *A Bend in the River* (1979), Randolph in *A Christmas Story* (1964) and Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men* (1967) (at least for that part of his life spent on the Isabella Island) all represent this form of diaspora. Indians who moved from the Caribbean to England form an example of transmigration that is a series of migrations to at least two locations (Stroh 301). Ralph Singh joins this kind of diaspora for the later part of his life as he moves from Isabella Island to England.

Some global movements of our time can be considered a part of these diasporas but definitely not all of them. In other words, terms such as exile, immigrant, expatriate and diasporic subject might overlap and/or exclude each other. Without falling back into the fallacy of ignoring other significant features of diaspora and avoiding an interchangeable use of terms such as exile, expatriate and immigrant, I attempt to focus on that common link which connects diasporas despite the different economic, political and historical factors which have triggered them off in the first place..

A condition of diaspora is in-betweenness or state of liminality. Concept of belonging has been traditionally connected to the idea of place, geography and community. Creating new conditions, new forms of diaspora cannot be perceived by those traditional views of place.

The term “liminality” was originally introduced by Arnold Van Gennep, a French ethnographer. He used the term to signify short periods of transition in human life. These periods mark ending of one phase and entering another phase of life. Obvious examples are birth, marriage and death (“Arnold Van Gennep”). Homi K. Bhabha brings the term to post-colonial studies. In *The Location of Culture*, he uses the terms “hybrid”, “liminal” and “interstitial” to signify the state of in-betweenness experienced by diasporic subjects. Being a new model of identity, liminality can provide diasporic subject with a broader worldview hence new prospects and advantages. Persistence of this state questions the

conventional notions of identity which have been based on binary oppositions (McLeod 247-252). Residing in this “in-between” space gives birth to new concepts, identities and narratives. Drawing upon the creative artwork of Pepon Osorio (a migrant himself), Bhabha shows how immigrants use a multiplicity of cultural experiences to create a cross-cultural space (“Locations of Culture” 7). Hybridity provides therefore a space of cultural negotiation, where cultures lose their purity (ibid.) Bhabha asserts:

This liminality of migrant experience is no less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one; there is no resolution to it because the two conditions are ambivalently enjoined in the ‘survival’ of migrant life. Living in the interstices of Lucretius and Ovid, caught in-between a ‘nativist’, even nationalist, atavism and a postcolonial metropolitan assimilation, the subject of cultural difference becomes a problem that Walter Benjamin has described as the irresolution, or liminality, of ‘translation’, the element of resistance in the process of transformation, ‘that element in a translation which does not lend itself to translation.’ (“How Newness Enters the World” 224)

His statement beautifully describes the conflict which arises out of residing in an interstitial space between the rims of cultures. Using the metaphor of translation, Bhabha indicates inconvertibility of cultural nuances. The result of this inconvertibility is a perpetual conflict which migrant should live with.

Bhabha uses the term hybrid to define colonial subject's identity which, according to him, does not fit into any of the images that colonizer attempts to represent with the colonized. He maintains that hybridity is:

the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority) Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon eye of the power. ("Signs Taken for Wonders, " 112)

Here Bhabha explains the effect of hybridity on colonial power: By creating new identities it thwarts colonial project's attempt at creating subjects that mirror colonizer. This way colonial subject's partial presence (new identity) undermines colonial power.

Another relevant concept is mimicry. According to Bhabha, mimicry is the result of an ambivalent function of colonial discourse. It is born out of colonizer's attempt at "civilizing" their subjects and at the same time maintaining them as "Other". Doing so, colonial project creates a divergent version of norms ("Of Mimicry and Man" 86) and a condition of sly resistance.

Influenced by post-structuralists such as Jacques Derrida, Bhabha deconstructs Frantz Fanon's view on mimicry developed in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Elaborating on the "racial" inferiority complex inflicted on colonial subjects by the European practice of slavery, Fanon viewed mimicry as the outcome of an outrage instigated in the colonial subject by his inferiority complex ("The Negro and Language" 9). While Fanon believed that colonial power establishes itself by compelling "black" subjects to mimic colonizer's culture, Bhabha finds mimicry to be a source of resistance in itself due to the breach it makes in the colonial project (Loomba 149, "Of Mimicry and Man" 86). Practice of a discriminatory ideology that insists on spreading European civilization and simultaneously keeping

distance from colonial subjects leads to the emergence of a new identity (Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders” 112). As a result of this new identity colonial project cannot fulfill its egoistic need for mimesis on the part of colonial subject. This is why Bhabha finds mimicry “a discourse” of “defensive warfare” pregnant with “signs of spectacular resistance” (“Signs Taken for Wonders” 121).

1.5 On Philip Roth and V. S. Naipaul

Perhaps what connects Philip Roth and V. S. Naipaul at first glance is their subversive characters who are obsessed with their ethnic traditions and simultaneously critical of them. In his analysis of the reflection of colonial situation in V. S. Naipaul's works, Michael Angrosino states that Philip Roth expressed a similar concern. Taking *Portnoy's Complaint* as the best example, he claims that characters of Roth, like Naipaul's, despite their adherence to traditions, similarly realize not only pointlessness of these traditions but also the cultural abyss that stands outside these “mental ghettos” (“V. S. Naipaul and the Colonial Image” 3).

Beside Michael Angrosino, Leah Hewitt is another author who has mentioned Roth and Naipaul's names together. Talking of the influential figures who have impacted Maryse Condé, he claims that V. S. Naipaul and Philip Roth, like Faulkner, were both ethnically diverse Anglophone writers who criticized special aspects of their societies (81). Maryse Condé calls Roth and Naipaul both “contestataires” meaning protesters (ibid.).

Although Roth and Naipaul's names have been mentioned together a couple of times, the reason behind this similarity has not been rigorously examined. In my comparison of Roth and Naipaul, I try to show that experience of diaspora, creating an in-between hybrid space, gives birth to a suspenseful dissident identity which not only slips through any ready-made categorization in its toing and froing between conformity and nonconformity to traditions and what stands outside of it but is also critical of

both. This constant obsession with ethnic/national traditions is what has made the two writers vulnerable to different kinds of critiques. Irving Howe, the former admirer of Roth's earlier works, attacks him in his essay "Philip Roth Reconsidered" for his limited "scope and interest". As an example, he criticizes Roth's constant reference to the Jewish neighborhood of his childhood. Howe believes that Roth's restricted subject matters negatively affected his creativity ("Philip Roth Reconsidered"). Roth and Naipaul have often been accused of "self-hatred" for their critical view of their ethnic traditions (Shostak, *Philip Roth- Countertexts, Counterlives* 145, Ford-Smith 392). On the other hand, fictions of Roth and Naipaul have been recognized for their self-exposing characteristic, since both used biographical elements in construction of their stories and characters (Shostak, *Philip Roth- Countertexts, Counterlives* 159 & Leela 36).

It is not a surprise that their works frequently repeated a concern about the duality of living between cultures, for both these authors lived in diaspora. Roth represented America in his early career as a place of comic degradation. Later this image gave way to a site of displacement. In these later works his characters were not able to fulfill their dreams (Omer-Sherman 236). This sense of displacement or the constant move between two states of being an American and a Jew has been an integral part of Jewish American culture (Omer-Sherman 192). Roth found Jewish identity a construct made of what Jews received throughout history in fragments ("The Jewish Intellectual" 58). Therefore, according to him, there is no Jewish identity in essence. Identity is a "performance" rather than a "reality" (Shostak, *Philip Roth- Countertexts, Counterlives* 131).

In *The Human Stain*, the African American Coleman Silk passes for a Jew after experiencing some racial incidents. Passing as "creation or imposition ... adoption or rejection" of identities calls an essentialistic view of identity into question. Passing exposes a threat to identity politics by showing identities to be diverse and conditional (Ginsberg 2-4).

In *The Counterlife*, Nathan attempts to enact his Jewishness by circumcising his son, only after he was exposed to anti-Semitism in England. Roth called essentialism of Jewish identity into question by creating characters that move back and forth between states of atheism and Jewish devotion. He rejected necessity of a constant adherence to Jewishness in a society where anti-Semitism is non-existent (Omer-Sherman 266). Anti-Semitism works by highlighting a binary opposition between the Jew and non-Jew. Anti-Semitism does to the Jew what the “white” child's exclamation in sight of a “black” person does to the “black”, in Fanon’s story. The “white” child says: “Look a Negro” and the “black” is immediately objectified in the narration of the colonizer (“The Fact of Blackness” 84). In a similar way, Jew is objectified in the narration of the anti-Semite. In both cases one’s “sense of self ... as an authentic subject” is called into question (Daschălu 95). Roth made it clear that in an open society where anti-Semitism is not prevalent, “self” replaces collective identity (Omer-Sherman 272). According to Roth, if there is an essential Jewish identity, on which he cast doubt, it is defined rather by a history of dispersal than by a Jewish nation-state or its absence (Shostak, *Philip Roth-Countertexts, Counterlives* 99).

Just like Philip Roth, Naipaul was often reproached for his obsessive thematization of one's own personal history. At the end of the 19th century, Naipaul's ancestors immigrated from India to Trinidad, back then still a British colony. Naipaul himself left the West-Indies for England in the 1950s (Cichoń 45). After the abolition of slavery in 1833, Indian laborers were transported to colonies under indenture contracts. This was a solution to the urgent problem of work force shortages in colonies (Sarbadhikary xii). Against such a background of indenture that their parents or grandparents sustained, Naipaul's characters including Mohun Biswas in *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), Salim in *A Bend in the River* and Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men* attempt to construct an independent identity in places that still experience the instability of an “independent [post-colonial] phase”. These histories make arrival at an

“authentic and whole” identity elusive (Nandan 76). In addition, his characters’ move to a third place (transmigration) adds to the complexity of their experience of diaspora.

Naipaul was often criticized for picturing the West Indies as a historyless space. What these critics has failed to see is the significant role Naipaul ascribed to colonization in creating this historylessness and its resulting identity crisis (Nandan 78). For Naipaul the term “colonial” signified “spatial displacement” and a “psychological loss of identity” (Angrosino 2). Naipaul's contradictory position on “authenticity of the margins” was a natural result of a distress caused by post-colonial situation (Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back* 90). An important point to notice in Naipaul's depiction of this tension is his characters' attempt at constructing an authentic identity against the hindrance of colonial experience. In the earlier works of Naipaul, including *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Mimic Men*, identity is pictured an essential whole. In Naipaul's later works this perception of identity gives way to a “bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with – at least temporarily” (qtd. in Zhou 108). His characters' embrace of the ambivalent state of hybridity brings about a state of displacement and “cultural schizophrenia” (qtd. in Cichoń 48). In these works, characters behave according to the cultural norms that serves the situation most (Mohan 25).

In the decades which followed decolonization, Naipaul, as a former colonial subject, was engrossed in making a distinction between “center” and “periphery” (Porter 308). Naipaul explained: “To be a colonial was to know a kind of security; it was to inhabit a fixed world. And I suppose that in my fantasy I had seen myself coming to England as to some purely literary region, where, untrammelled by the accidents of history or background, I could make a romantic career for myself as a writer. But in the new world I felt that the ground move[d] below me” (*Return of Eva Perón* 216). A reflection of this feeling can be traced in his later works, because in these works Europe does not function as a center

any more. Drawing on Bhabha's concept of hybridity, Min Zhou indicates that the identity which Naipaul illustrated in his later works outdoes “the passiveness and inferiority of the Oriental type under the 'gaze' of the West” (156). Thanks to its fluidity, this hybrid identity is able to challenge the binary opposition between center and periphery. Globalization and mass migrations go hand-in-hand in producing such hybrid identities. Viewed from this perspective, mass migrations of our time reverse what colonialism automatically propagated namely a binary view of the world.

1.6 Conventions and Exclusions

Each chapter of this study is divided into two parts, while each part deals with one author. My approach changes in each part due to the choice of work and notion discussed in the chapter. For example, in my discussion of the concept of home in Chapter One, *The Mimic Men* by V. S. Naipaul is approached from a post-colonial perspective, while *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth is approached from a sociological perspective. In choosing the approaches two factors were conclusive: first, the notion that has been discussed in that chapter; second, what the text offers in relation to that notion. For example, in my analysis of the notion of home in *American Pastoral*, application of a sociological approach is almost inevitable, since my discussion is strongly influenced by sociological concepts such as assimilation and its connection to the idea of the American dream. In chapter Four I use the other sociological concept, stigma, in my analysis of racial bias and its workings.

In my selection of these six works, the first determining factor is the notion that connects them in regard to diaspora. I chose works that due to a correlating concept or notion could function as each other's counterpart. The three correlating notions include home, mimicry/impersonation and deviance. Naturally these notions were more present in some novels of V. S. Naipaul and Philip Roth than the others. One could argue that the notion of mimicry is obviously more present in *The Mimic Men* than in

A Bend in the River. As an answer, I would say this is where the second determining factor begins to play a role. My second criterion has been to adopt a new approach to the literary works which have been repeatedly examined from one particular perspective.

Roth and Naipaul scholars often refer to the factual and historical information in the fiction of these two authors while analyzing their works. This might increase the attraction of the analytical work but at the same time makes it more complicated by pinpointing imaginary narratives with the corresponding factual realities. After consultation and in order to avoid complications of confusing the author with the character, I decided to merely stay with the fictional characters, despite the persistence of many biographical facts in fictional works of these authors as well as the intentional postmodern interplay of fact and fiction in some of them, specifically in the works of Roth.

1.7 Structure

This work consists of an introduction, a short chapter on methodology, three main chapters and a conclusion. Chapters Two, Three and Four are main chapters of this work.

Chapter Two studies the notion of home in the two works of *The Mimic Men* by V. S. Naipaul and *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth. In the first part of this chapter, I use Bhabha's theory and Lacan's idea of the symbolic, imaginary and real to show how character's view of home changes through his experience of hybridity. Entering the imaginary, he comes to terms with the past and realizes an independent identity.

In the second part of Chapter Two, I apply a sociological approach to the notions of assimilation and melting pot in Roth's *American Pastoral*, criticizing the naiveté of the idea of the American dream. Looking at the idea of “melting pot” as a pattern for nationhood and a mode of assimilation, I suggest that assimilation renders a partial identity.

Using a deconstructive approach, Chapter Three examines the concept of mimicry in Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* as well as the concept of impersonation in Roth's *The Counterlife*. The two concepts work as each other's counterparts. The first part of this chapter draws upon Bhabha's idea of mimicry to deconstruct Salim's apparently Eurocentric narrative. Here the binary opposition of powerful/over-powered is reversed.

The second part delves into the concept of impersonation as well as authenticity and possibility as they are reflected in Roth's work. Drawing on Sartre's concepts of For-Itself and In-Itself, Roth's novel shows how diaspora Jews and Israeli Jews represent these two modes of existence. Jewish characters of Roth in *The Counterlife* let themselves be redefined by anti-Semitism.. Doing so, they obscure the freedom of fulfilling an authentic self.

Drawing on notions of stigma and deviance, Chapter Four applies a sociological approach to Naipaul's *A Flag on the Island* and Roth's *The Human Stain*. Here I try to demonstrate that experiencing racial or discriminatory incidents can make people with diasporic backgrounds develop deviant strategies to cope with discrimination in host societies. These strategies are sometimes considered deviant even in the eyes of the minority groups where the subjects come from.

In the first part of this chapter I use the example of conversion in colonies to argue that mimicry initiates deviance in colonial subject. Converted colonial subjects are concrete examples whereby conflicts of residing between cultures are presented. On the other hand conversion makes the subject a betrayer in the eyes of their community. The second part draws on racial passing and its mechanism to argue for the inevitability of applying deviant methods by the discriminated in a society where racial/ethnic discrimination leaves the discriminated little chances of economic and social progress.

Last chapter of this work briefly summarizes the three chapters and their findings. Here I emphasize the effects of diasporic experiences on identity dynamics. The last part suggests further ideas to research.

Diaspora as an uprooting experience necessitates cultural transcendence on the part of diasporic subjects. Such a subject lives on the verge of two cultures. Because of this in-between state, such a subject is often condemned in both cultural spaces on the verge of which he lives.

In the following chapter I elaborate more on my method of analysis.

2 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Norman Fairclough defends the application of textual and inter-textual analysis, stating that textual analysis can better represent and record the course of socio-cultural practices than other methods (186). Novels and short stories form a canvas on which discourses are represented. The textual and inter-textual analysis of novels and short stories reveals social constructions that function as the discursive backbone of such texts and the transformation of these constructions to the symbolic.

Discourse Analysis or the study of spoken and written language in use is based on the assumption that language is charged. Discourse as a term emphasizes that the language in use is shaped by the social context in which the speaker or writer is engaged. Depending on the social context, the language in use follows a different pattern (Jørgensen & Philips 1). By investigating aspects—such as the use of personal pronouns and the speech proportions we can explain the purpose behind that speech or text and the relationship between the language in use and its practical significance in a specific social context (Griffin 93).

Discourse analysis is an appropriate method to enquire into matters such as subject, language and power relations with the aim of calling social normatives into question. Discourse is born of ideology and consists of different representations of that ideology in language. According to Foucault, discourse is “the general domain of all statements,” “an individualizable group of statements” or “a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements” (*The Archaeology of Knowledge* 80). Discourse thus validates a certain kind of knowledge while undercutting others. Some of these language uses are so naturalized that we discover their arbitrary order only by violating them (Griffin 95). Discourse analysis digs out the ideology behind every form of language use and attempts to give rise to socio-cultural changes by systematically challenging the discourses.

In “Themes in Discourse Research: the Case of Diana”, Margaret Wetherell studies discourse as a social action from three different standpoints. According to the first two viewpoints, discourse is constitutive in the sense that it embodies what is already existent. While both views ascribe a representational role to language, they differ slightly. In the first view, language is seen as part of the world itself: it is not only a mediator between the world, people and their thoughts, but also affected by either of them. In the second view, language is still a mediator between the world, people and their thoughts, but it stays detached from them. In other words, language is merely an objective means of expression. The third view regards language as a functional activity whereby people try to construct meanings and persuade one another. In this view, meaning is context-based and relational. Wetherell draws upon extracts from Martin Bashir's interview with Princess Diana in the Panorama television program to illustrate discursive practices that prove language to be an active construction (15-21).

Michel Foucault also understood discourse as a system of representation but developed a different approach to it. Foucault's point of departure is that discourse constructs the topic of knowledge. Accordingly everything finds its meaning only within discourse. In this sense, things can exist, but they can affect our practices only when they have a discursive feature. In his opinion knowledge is not represented by discourse, but it is discourse that shapes and structures knowledge in that it provides a specific meaning for it. In each historical period and each social context a particular discourse is dominant and typical. “Discursive events” are diverse and can have different forms. Still they adopt a shared terminology and manner. Foucault describes *discursive events* as anything that we experience in the form of discourse, such as lectures, books and sciences. He distinguishes between an analysis of the discursive events and a language analysis by drawing attention to the problems each tries to address. Both a language analysis and an analysis of discursive events are based on the limited categorization of linguistic patterns. But the approaches are different. In language analysis, linguists

focus on language as a system of rules which makes formation of certain statements possible. An analysis of discursive events in contrast seeks to unveil the aim of the speaker, to reveal the (un)conscious intention behind the discursive practice. In other words, discursive analysts show how a specific statement and not another has come into being (*The Archaeology of Knowledge* 27-8).

In the following section, I will explain my goals in using discourse analysis, while providing few examples of my analysis and the texts to which I applied it.

1) Colonial discourse is still present in post-colonial spaces and the unconsciousness of colonial subjects. By analyzing discursive events in the works of Naipaul and Roth, I attempt to disclose subtle leftovers of colonial discourse in post-colonial spaces and metropolitan spaces whose colonizing history does not stand out at first sight. Discursive analysis is an apt method to show the unconscious nature of an adherence to colonial legacy which lets itself slip through the narrative voice of the characters. It also helps me to trace signals of resistance and a counter-discourse in the voice of colonial subject. In order to achieve this goal, a focus on the dialogical aspects of the texts is important. The selected literary texts are marked by other texts and voices. In the works of Naipaul, for example, a great deal of the narrator's statements are influenced by taking over other voices or mimicry. This necessitates a study of the politics of representation or how power controls a specific kind of discourse. In my analysis, it is important to highlight the significance of colonial power and its production of a specific form of knowledge/discourse that confirms the validity of a regime of truth and how this prescribed truth has sustained the power in (post-)colonial spaces in return. This is especially significant in the formation of subject-positions. Like other discourses, colonial discourse constructs a place for its subjects. The colonizer can establish its power only through the identification of subjects with these subject positions. Subjects act and speak within the limits of colonial discourse and the knowledge it seeks to establish. In this thesis, I read characters' discursive practices as a reflection of

power-relations in colonial and post-colonial spaces. For example, in Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, Salim states that "[a]ll that I know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans ... They formed no part of our knowledge or pride. Without Europeans, I feel, all our past would have been washed away, like the scuff marks of fishermen on the beach outside our town" (11-12). Salim's statement demonstrates the interplay between knowledge and power. He uses the word "knowledge," indicating his acceptance of what has been bequeathed to him through colonial education as a set of truths. Having digested his position as colonial subject, he casts no doubt upon the authenticity of the colonizer's account of the colonies, which he calls "our history." This knowledge is founded, supported and approved by the colonial power. It is power that guarantees the reception of this knowledge as truth. Foucault considers truth permanently enclosed by power (*Power/Knowledge* 131).

It is not necessary to attend colonial schools or universities to be targeted by a regime of knowledge. Salim is a fanatic reader of scientific magazines and children's encyclopedias. However, it is also possible for the voiceless to speak in order to counteract the dominant discourse that has established itself by propagating a regime of truth. In the novel, for example, the Liberation Army forms a counter discourse, claiming that they follow intrinsically "truthful laws". They declare: "We of the LIBERATION ARMY have received no education. We do not print books and make speeches. We only know the TRUTH, and we acknowledge this land as the land of the people whose ancestors now shriek over it" (212). The army repeatedly uses the pronoun "we" in their leaflet to confer themselves a status of authority and validity, a status they cannot obtain from the subject position ascribed them by the colonial apparatus. The leaflet forms a kind of social reality different from that constructed by colonial education. This version forms an authentic subject position for the writers, an identity independent of the truth that the colonizer has propagated. The choice of pronouns in the leaflet are indicators of a

language that has been reworked to withstand domination. Indeed, the name of “Liberation Army”, makes sense in light of its goals.

Colonial discourse’s ascription of subject positions is not limited to the (post)colonies. Colonial values can be particularly traced in places where their colonizing history is not noticeable at first glance. There is no doubt that globalization also plays an important role in breeding these values.

In *The Human Stain* the two black students of Coleman Silk in Athena College interpret Coleman’s use of the term “spook” as an insult. I draw on the interpretation of the term “spook” by the two students to show how experiencing racial incidents can lead to an obsession with “race” on the part of the discriminated. Such an obsession can make the discriminated see racist meanings where actually none is intended. Reading Steena’s love poem in the dim light, even Coleman himself is inclined to take the word “neck” for “negro”. Both Coleman and his students show symptoms of an obsession with their “race”. On the other hand this obsession suggests an anxiety that becomes present in any kind of situation which evokes former experiences of racial discrimination.

Meaning is a socio-cultural production. Interpretation of texts and utterances are heavily dependent on the dominant discourse in a society. In the texts of Roth anti-Semitism and racism are leftovers of colonial time in spaces where white supremacy is still regarded as a truth. An analysis of the utterances and texts produced in such spaces can elucidate not only the underlying regime of truth but also the counter-discourses that are formed in such spaces.

2) By studying the events of discourse in novels of Roth and Naipaul I seek to depict the social construction of identity, “race” and ethnicity. Discursive analysis is very practical in this regard since it is through discursive practices that social constructs are sustained and strengthened. These social constructs reaffirm the power that has legitimized them in the first place. Michael Billig warns against a simplistic view of prejudice as mere words. Accordingly a close examination of discriminatory acts

proves that these acts are applied versions of biased statements (216). In the conversation between Maria, Nathan's lover and Nathan in *The Counterlife* we read:

“...there are enough politics in sex without racial politics coming into it”. I corrected her: “We’re not a race. You’re thinking of Eskimos.” “We are *not* the same race. Not according to anthropologists, or whoever measures these things. There’s Caucasian, Semitic – there are five different racial groups. Don’t look at me like that.” “I can’t help it. Some nasty superstitions always tend to crop up when people talk about a Jewish ‘race.’” (CL 71).

Maria confirms her subject-position through enunciating one of the regulatory principles that sustains a specific regime of truth. Accordingly human beings are divided into different “races”. This certain conception of differences has real consequences as Nathan’s narrative proves. He experiences racial incidents that make him want to practice Jewish traditions. Practicing cultural customs establishes the regime of truth behind them. A regime of truth can work only when it is represented in practice. In the debate between Maria and Nathan, Maria tries to legitimize her standpoint by using anthropology as her support. The fact that anthropological data are in line with Maria’s supposition proves that science can not only repeat a certain regime of truth but also function as its means.

Nathan attempts to lessen the validity of Maria’s statement by reducing such racial categories to the level of myth. However he expresses merely a personal view. Nathan’s statement falls short of authority, since it is not supported by a bigger discursive framework like philosophy, anthropology or any other kind of discursive formation.

In *A Bend in the River*, Salim reports on reproduction of dominance in the post-colonial era through Africans’ representation of a racialized discourse:

During the course of the term there had come to the lyceé some boys from the warrior tribes to the east. They were an immensely tall people; and, as Metty told me with awe, they were used to being carried around on litters by their slaves, who were of a smaller, squatter race. For these tall men of the forest there had always been European admiration. Ever since I could remember there had been articles about them in the magazines – these Africans who cared nothing about planting or trade and looked down, almost as much as Europeans, on other Africans. This European admiration still existed, articles and photographs continued to appear in magazines, in spite of the changes that had come to Africa. In fact there were now Africans who felt as the Europeans did, and saw the warrior people as the highest kind of African. (53)

Salim's narration provides important insight into the social psychology of the dominated. He highlights mechanism of cognition or mental internalization of colonial values in post-colonial era. His mention of articles and photographs that appear in the magazines indicates an organized and institutionalized propagation of a regime of truth. The way this *praised* African tribe treats other African tribes is a reproduction of the same power structure that colonizers used for spreading their dominance in the colonies. In reaction to the "surveillance of colonial space" by the colonizer, the observed colonial subject adopts the gaze of the colonizer at himself and therefore converts to the same point of view as the colonizer's (Ashcroft et al., "Surveillance" 254). The colonial subject is thus "constituted", affirming "the political order and the binary structure of power that made that position [for the colonizer] possible" (ibid.). Admiration of the other African tribes for the warrior Africans confirms this *conversion* and thereby sustains the colonizer's power structure.

Use of critical discourse analysis has helped me with understanding the strategies and discursive structures which are involved in reproduction of "race" and ethnicity. Reproduction of concepts like "race" in discursive practices in turn sustains power relations.

3) Examination of verbal practices in the works of Roth and Naipaul takes an important role in disclosing diasporic characters' identity crisis in the aftermath of physical and cultural displacement. This crisis finds its way into the symbolic, in the discursive practices of the subjects and their narratives. Narratives are in this respect an important form of discourse. It is not exaggerated, if we claim that we experience and express a large group of feelings through narrative form. Through self-narratives we express our happiness, sadness, fear, frustration and memories. Such narratives are also common among diasporic subjects. For diasporic subjects narration is a means of reconstructing home in language (Walter 65). It is the immaterial resource that can fill the gaps caused by displacement. Identity is the outcome of individual's personal history (Gergen 248). Putting life-events in a coherent order can bring fragmented pieces of diasporic identity together. Such narratives also explain why and how personalities change through life events and experiences.

Diasporic characters of Roth and Naipaul in the selected works are either narrators of their own personal history or they ask another person to write their life story for them. Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men* (1967) clearly states that he is unable to put "adventures and encounters" in a meaningful relationship to each other. His writing endeavour helps him find an order in the distorted order of his life events. At the beginning of his narration he remarks: "I had tried to give myself a personality ... But now I no longer knew what I was; ambition became confused, then faded; and I found myself longing for the certainties of my life on the island of Isabella, certainties which I had once dismissed as shipwreck" (26-27). The first two sentences of his remark reveal the identity conflicts he suffers as a result of exile. Comparing his life to the past, he finds his life on the Island of Isabella despite the setbacks they suffered as a result of their colonial past (as the metaphor of "shipwreck" suggests) certain. In exile, that "inexpressible, originally repressed part of the signifier [home]" finds expression in his narrative, the symbolic. Through narration the repressed lack changes to a desire (Hiltenbrand

1710). This passage of lack to desire gives the demand a structure, a meaning, helping the subject come to terms with the exile, eventually linking the *adventures and encounters*. Writing the book of his life provides him with a discursive space where his self becomes finally whole. In this space he is able to secure an intelligible self by filling the gap between his past and his present.

In *The Counterlife*, Nathan Zuckerman's parallel narratives develop into a thesis on absurdity of acting out identity based on the given or what the society hands down to us. Social constructions function as traps, hindering creativity of acting out an identity which is free from such impositions. Nathan's narrative demonstrates how identity is constructed by discourse. In fact a particular kind of representation in discursive practices of a society consolidates a specific image of the represented. As mentioned before, any kind of representation has a factual outcome. Nathan's narrative shows for example how anti-Semitic representations in discursive practices of the Thatcherite English society make him retreat to the sanctuary of his Jewish roots. Nathan at the end of his narrative states:

A Jew among Gentiles and a Gentile among Jews. Here it turns out, by my emotional logic, to be the number one priority. Aided by your sister, your mother, and even by you, I find myself in a situation that has reactivated the strong sense of difference that had all but atrophied in New York, and, what's more, that has drained the domestic idyll of its few remaining drops of fantasy... England has made a Jew of me in only eight weeks, which, on reflection, might be the least painful method. (CL 324)

According to Nathan the discriminatory discourse produced in his social context has contributed to his sense of alienation. His self-narrative displays his transition from a non-adherent Jew to an adherent one. There we also see the discursive nature of this change. An analysis of self-narratives exhibits the role of social determination in constructing identity. Social factors work by discourse. Self-narratives of

diasporic subjects are rich discursive resources where we can trace workings of social discourses including discriminatory discourses and their impact on identity.

In order to understand how knowledge is constructed in language, how a specific regime of truth is sustained by language and how sustaining a regime of truth authorizes power relations we should unweave language uses. Discourse analysis is an apt method for this purpose.

3 HOME WRITING

V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* and Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*

Home plays an important role in shaping identity, because people tend to form a self-concept based on their actual and symbolic “experiences of home” (Blunt & Dowling 256). In the works of V. S. Naipaul and Philip Roth, home is a central motif. Psychological implications of home constitute an important part of diaspora studies. Sometimes paradoxical, these implications can be very complex. This chapter studies implications of home in the two novels *The Mimic Men* by V. S. Naipaul and *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth based on the characters’ experience of home and displacement. In order to avoid repeating book titles I use abbreviations, referring to *The Mimic Men* as *TMM* and *American Pastoral* as *AP*.

3.1.1 Home, a Dynamic Word

The term “home” is usually taken for granted. People easily refer to it in their daily use whenever they clock off at the end of a working day to go back *home* or when they fly back *home* during a holiday. Sometimes referring to a country, other times referring to a building and occasionally referring to a series of complicated feelings that are associated with it, home is definitely one of the most dynamic words in the world. But what is really home? Various authors agree upon the fact that home is a source of contradictions, a place which one longs for, but also a place which one escapes from. Susan Friedman uses the word “homesickness” as a double entendre to convey this double-quality of home, indicating that home is a place of which and for which one is sick (192). Pondering on home as a source of tyranny, Mary Douglas wonders about the feeling of “nostalgia” depicted in many literary works about home (287). Home is indeed a location but also a symbol or a mental picture that inspires

paradoxical feelings. On the one hand it inspires feelings of “belonging, desire and intimacy”, on the other hand it awakens feelings of “fear, violence and alienation”. These feelings are therefore strongly spatial, hence home is a sphere of “spatial imaginary” (Blunt & Dowling 2). Predominantly, it is believed that the sense of belonging to a place is a source of “stability”, a feeling also conveyed by the phrase “homecoming” (Blunt & Dowling 94). Migration and exile are therefore difficult experiences, because they both damage this sense of stability. The dilemma of assimilation, of becoming one with the host society that is most often a revered entity and the pain of cutting roots is a common experience among immigrants and exiles. This dilemma is not only a dilemma of exile versus return but also a dilemma between the reality of the formerly idolized entity (the host country) and home: a home that is no longer a tangible reality but a construct, an irrecoverable fantasy, a symbol and a source of childhood memories by way of association. This dilemma is also a dilemma between fact and fantasy. I would like to show how this dilemma is reflected in the works of V. S. Naipaul and Philip Roth.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part draws upon the Eurocentric approach of the novel's protagonist, Ralph, to show how in the aftermath of colonialism, the colonial discourse imprisons the former colonial subjects in an imaginary order with its resulting identity crisis. I also attempt to demonstrate how narration (in the form of writing) helps the subject overcome this crisis by introducing him to the symbolic order. The second part of this chapter reflects on the concept of home through the nationalistic approach of the third-generation American Jewish immigrants in the 1930s. This part examines paradoxes of the idea of the American dream and the metaphor of a melting pot in relation to other notions such as racism and American nationalism. This chapter is an attempt to understand the trauma of displacement in the aftermath of immigration and exile.

3.1.2 An Immigrant or an Exile?

Most critics who have written on Naipaul use the term exile and immigrant interchangeably with reference to Naipaulian protagonists, although the two terms are not usually interchangeable. The reason for this is that most of these characters represent both groups. Ralph Singh, in *The Mimic Men*, as an example, changes his status from an immigrant to an exile as the reason behind his departures vary through time. Unlike the term *exile* that underscores a kind of imposed deprivation and isolation, the term *immigrant* indicates an act of free will. In the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, the second meaning of the term “exile” is “a person sent to or living in exile; a person compelled or choosing to live in a foreign country or a place not regarded as home” (“exile, n.2.”), whereas the term “immigrant” is defined as “one who or that which immigrates; a person who migrates to a country as a settler” (“immigrant, adj. and n.”). According to this definition, the exile's movement from one place to another is predominantly a *compulsive* act. This aspect is missing in the definition of the noun *immigrant*.

Mary McCarthy believes that the term *exile* is an indication of “an act of exclusion on the part of the state followed by a period of agonized waiting abroad on the part of the victim” (705). In contrast, the term *immigrant* (émigré or emigrant) denotes a strong “sense of renunciation, of breaking with the past in the hopes of starting a new life and adopting a new national identity” (Nixon 23). While exile is determined by factors other than personal will, an immigrant's act of leaving home, although being affected by the social, economic and political conditions, is eventually a decision. This small difference influences not only the relationship an immigrant and an exile have to their homeland but also their feelings about it. An immigrant leaves home in the knowledge that they can come back whenever they wish. In contrast to an immigrant, an exile does not have this option. Due to its deterministic nature as an imposed movement, exile is “a way of dwelling ... with a constant awareness that one is *not* [my italics] at home” (Barbour 293). This sense of absence from home, or home's unclaimability, is a

central point in the life of an exile. The exile, in fact, arranges and plans his life based on the crucial experience of departure (ibid.). Pointing to the cultural exclusion of exile as a result of spatial distance, Stephen Howe defines an exile as “someone standing out of cultures” (“Edward Said: The Traveller and the Exile”). Since culture evolves through time, the exile's spatial exclusion also means his exclusion from the temporal experience of the cultural progress. Taking all these into account, this spatial exclusion, being only a spatial change in the first place, affects all other aspects of an exile's life.

Ralph Singh, in *The Mimic Men*, has to leave Isabella Island for England due to his failed political career. In London he decides to write his life story “to secure the final emptiness” as he tells us (*TMM* 10). His first departure, as his narrative reveals, was initiated by a different motive, which he describes as a longing for other landscapes. As a result of the first movement, he becomes an immigrant. But this is not applicable to the second time he leaves the island. One should keep in mind that in *The Mimic Men* these terms are not interchangeable, but both can be applied to Ralph Singh in certain phases of his life in the knowledge that the factors which entail the state of being an immigrant, through time, give way to other factors that signify the state of being an exile.

3.1.3 The Paradox of Home and the Experience of “Unhomely”

Determined to write down his life story, Ralph Singh's narrative in *The Mimic Men* is chronologically broken and circular. Ralph asserts that he is unable to put his life events in order. The past is always present. His achronological narration is a reflection of his mental structuring of far and close memories. He is incapable of keeping this mental structure organized, because his sense of self as a source of the “feeling of reality, continuity and the rhythm of mental life” is fractured (Despinoy & Pinõl Douriez 1567).

This experience is similar to a child's experience of its existence in the mirror stage. Child recognizes his image in the mirror as an ideal whole and signals this recognition by “mimicry of the Aha-Erlebnis” (Lacan, “Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis” 93) This ideal image is in contrast to the child's former experience of its own imperfect existence based on primary needs. Child's internalization of his image in mirror as the ideal image is similar to (post-)colonial subject's experience of colonial discourse. As a child's recognition of its image turns it into a subject, colonial discourse, too, gives colonial subject a subject position. Colonial discourse provides colonial subjects with an ideal image of colonizer. In an attempt to achieve this ideal image, colonial subject reacts by mimicry.

The chaos that dominated Ralph Singh's life on Isabella Island becomes more intense in exile. His direct experience of England increases the identity conflict which he had confronted earlier on the (post-)colonial island. He expands on this internal chaos which has overtaken him in exile:

I had tried to give myself a personality ... But now I no longer knew what I was; ambition became confused, then faded; and I found myself longing for the certainties of my life on the island of Isabella, certainties which I had once dismissed as shipwreck. Shipwreck: I have used this word before. With my island background, it was the word that always came to me. And this was what I felt I had encountered again in the great city: Little twinges of panic too, already. Not the panic of being lost or lonely; the panic of ceasing to feel myself as a whole person. The threat of other people's lives, the remembered private landscapes, the relationships, the order which was not mine. I had longed for largeness. How, in the city, could largeness come to me? How could I fashion order out of all these unrelated adventures and encounters, myself never the same, never even the thread on which these things were hung? They came endlessly out of the darkness, and they couldn't be placed or fixed. And always at the end of the evening the book-shaped room, the tall window, myself sitting towards the light or towards the mirror.

(TMM 26-8)

The passage above is an expression of Ralph's agony as a post-colonial subject in the absence of the ready-made "order" that was formerly imposed on the subjects in the colonies, hence his reference to this order as something that is "not [his]" (ibid.). His vain attempt at giving himself a "personality" shows his difficulties in forming an independent identity without falling into the trap of mimicry, an identity free from the prejudices of the "European textbooks" which, according to Fanon, have made the subjects "not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature" ("The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" 175).

Colonial discourse provides a "controlled chaos" that according to Ralph "approximates in the end, ... to a continuing order" (*TMM* 192). In London the result is not different either. Ralph elaborately discusses his mental toing and froing between the island which he had left behind in the hope of finding stability and England where his hopes prove to be in vain. The keyword is "shipwreck", as it obtains a symbolic significance for its connotations of frustration, chaos and uncertainty. Ralph associates the word interchangeably with both what he has left behind and with London. The statement is a description of a vicious circle between two points of disequilibrium: home and exile. His mental state is described as *darkness*, in opposition to the term *light* that is mentioned a couple of lines later. He seeks *light*, here a metaphor for clear vision and order, because in reality he lives in darkness, a metaphor for a state of confusion and disorder that encloses his life. He considers the tall window or the mirror the only source of light. He stands displaced and disoriented among life events which have lost their connection and meaning: "The crash was coming, but I could see this only when the crash had come and when the search for order had been abandoned for something more immediate and more reassuring. And the need for reassurance was constant" (*TMM* 28).

The mirror has a more important significance as a source of reflected light. Archetypically, a mirror is a symbol of self-recognition. In the Lacanian psychoanalysis, a mirror is a means of reflecting

the “ideal Ego” or “imago” as Lacan terms it, this “jubilant assumption of ... [the infant's] specular image by the kind of being ... prior to being objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other” (Lacan, “The Mirror Stage” 76). According to Lacan, the recognition of this ideal ego is the first identity struggle the child has to deal with, because the wholeness of this image actually warns against the potential threat of becoming fragmented. Ralph's long sittings in front of the mirror indicate his search for the recognition of this ideal image. This search is a complex that is inflicted on every colonial subject. This tension between longing for the wholeness of the *imago* and the fear of a fractured self makes up the core of the identity crisis which Ralph encounters. As a result of this identity crisis, he is unable to find any connection between everyday events.

“Light” functions as the other substitute for the mirror in Ralph's narrative. He implies this by using it as an equal option for the “mirror”: “myself sitting towards the light *or* [my italics] towards the mirror” (*TMM* 28). Experiencing the snowfall for the first time in his life in London, Ralph reflects:

Snow. At last; my element. But the greater enchantment was the light. ... Below the livid grey sky roofs were white and shining black in patches. The bombsite was wholly white; every shrub, every discarded bottle, box and tin was defined. I had seen. Yet what was I to do with so complete a beauty? (*TMM* 6-7)

Snow is a metaphor for perfection. He declares his recognition of perfection: “I had seen”. Yet he is unable to find the relationship between himself and “his element” (*ibid.*). Ralph cannot find any connection between such a perfect image and himself: “What was I to do with so complete a beauty?” (*ibid.*). This runs parallel with his unresolved identity in the aftermath of colonialism. In his observation of the complete imago of the colonizer, he recognizes lack and desire.

Ralph's identity development from the unresolved fragmented identity of a post-colonial exile in London to the resolved identity of a writer who finally comes to terms with both exile and his status as

a post-colonial subject can be understood in the light of Lacan's account of the passage from the mirror stage to the symbolic order. Perceiving exile and its resulting sense of displacement is equal to a child's realization of his separation from mother and the world. Ralph's writing endeavour signifies his entrance to the symbolic order, indicated by an overt use of language. In this regard, Ralph's mention of the "book-shape" of his room is telling. The book-shaped hotel room confines him in the same way that his writing venture structures his life. Writing the book of his life provides him with a third space where his self becomes finally whole and the past and the present are unified. His book helps him finally recognize the rules and restrictions of unhomeliness. The realization of the fact that the world is there, where I live and vice versa (Bhabha, "The World and the Home" 141). Through an entrance to the symbolic order, what was formerly a lack (displacement/absence of home) is acknowledged as a desire of belonging. Ralph recognizes that he constitutes an identity independent of the imago of the colonizer. Entrance to the symbolic order also indicates the constant presence of the desire of belonging. In other words, both unification with one's own community and mimicking the colonizer in exile without growing into their "caricature", as Fanon saw it ("The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" 175) recede permanently.

According to Lacan, the real stands for whatever that is impossible to achieve. The real cannot be represented by symbols and therefore stands out of the symbolic order. (Lacan, "Response to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary" 324). Due to the impossibility that is its feature, the real is a source of anxiety and trauma. The anxiety and trauma find their way into hallucinations and fantasy, as they cannot be presented in the symbolic (Evans 163). As an example, Ralph's first memories of school on the island of Isabella are interrupted by his dream of "being carried helplessly down a swiftly flowing river, the Thames, that sloped, and could only break my fall by guiding my feet to the concrete pillars of the bridge that suddenly spanned the river, and in my dream I felt the impact and knew that I had

broken my legs and lost their use forever” (*TMM* 91). The broken legs with their “lost use” symbolize the paralyzing effect of colonial discourse which is represented by the river Thames as a metonym. His dream expresses the trauma of cultural displacement and the resulting identity crisis.

His memories of school time do not match the other memories of everyday life on the island of Isabella. His first memory of school, for example, is “of taking an apple to the teacher” (*TMM* 90). Ralph's memory “insists on the apple” despite the fact that he knows there were no apples on the island (*ibid.*). The influence of colonial education and the desire of becoming one with the ideal image that colonial teachings propagate are so deep that they even interrupt and control Ralph's memories of school. On the other hand everyday realities on the island become a “secret” as he informs us. These realities are not talked about during school hours. Ralph remembers that “the coronation of the English king and the weight of his crown” was one of their school topics (*TMM* 90). These teachings dominate the symbolic order, while the realities elude it. These realities become even humiliating and shameful when mentioned in school hours. Ralph's remembrance of his impoverished yet talented classmates strengthens his sense of loss in the knowledge that their talent has no chance of flourishing on the degraded Isabella Island compared to the advanced metropolis of England.

At school, everyday life on the island is part of the realm of the real, as it is not articulated in the language. The symbolic order of school (“calendar pictures of English gardens”) is disrupted by the unspeakable real (“the villages of mud and grass”) (*TMM* 89). The obvious example is the encounter of the classmates with Hok's mother on the street. This encounter arouses anxiety. Hok, Ralph's classmate, is known as “Confucius” for his “wit and beauty” (*TMM* 97). With all these advantages, he breaks into tears when his classmates notice his “unremarkable” mother on the street for the first time. Ralph, identifying himself with Hok, remarks:

It was for this betrayal into ordinariness that I knew he was crying ... 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 street! ... between that placid shopping mother and the name of Confucius her son had earned among us for his wit and beauty. I felt ... that Hok had dreams like mine, was probably also marked, and lived in imagination far from us, far from the island on which he, like my father, like myself, had been shipwrecked. (ibid.)

Encounters such as this highlight the discrepancies in colonial discourse. The subjects are indoctrinated by colonial teachings, whereas the school materials have no connection to the everyday reality of the island and its history of slavery and indenture.

Drawing on the power relations in the colonial discourse, Bhabha finds these discrepancies and “discriminations” a preliminary to “the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchization” as a result of which the colonizer develops a “form of governmentality that in marking out a 'subject nation,' appropriates, directs and dominates its various spheres of activity” (Bhabha, “The Other Question” 67-70). This hierarchization is discernible in the binary opposition that the colonial education sets between the English culture as the superior or normative and what the subjects experience in the postcolony as the inferior or non-normative. Ralph reflects: “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 laughter denied our knowledge of these things to which after the hours of school we were to return” (*TMM* 95). Hok's confusion and feelings of humiliation is caused by the shock of the intrusion of this symbolic sphere by the equivocal sphere of the real where home and its realities are impossible to articulate. The “colonial snobbish”, to use Naipaul's other protagonist's words in *A Bend in the River*, has a silencing effect on the realities of the colony (48). The short encounter with Hok's mother reminds him and his classmates of this inarticulate taboo real.

Ralph's dream of the river Thames has a similar effect. As Lacan points out, when something cannot be expressed in the symbolic, it appears in the form of a hallucination (qtd. in Evans 163).

Ralph's second displacement as an Indian-Caribbean exile in London carries home to the sphere of the symbolic. Exile is an 'unhomely' experience. Due to the aspect of locality, in exile the distinction between home and the world becomes more blurred and confusing. Ralph's exile adds to the complexity of his perception of home, a complexity which brings some post-colonial theorists such as Marga Munklet, Markus Schmitz, Mark Stein and Silke Stroh to use the term of "translocation" to refer to a multiple series of dislocation (xx).

Home, formerly defamiliarized through colonial discourse, is reviewed in Ralph's mind. As a result of physical absence, memories of home play an important role. Bhabha calls this state "the uncanny voice of memory" ("The World and the Home" 146), whereby home becomes the object of desire. Ralph's writing endeavour can be considered to be his last step towards the symbolic order. During the writing process, the repressed signifier of home is finally enunciated in language. The disconnect between the *adventures and encounters* in the new locality brings about the same confusion that the disconnect between the two worlds of school and the everyday life on the island had brought about earlier. Ralph is surprised by the discovery that confusion is neither restricted to a certain locality nor to a specific time, that "certain emotions bridge the years and link unlikely places. Sometimes by this linking the sense of place is destroyed, and we are ourselves alone: the young man, the boy, the child. The physical world, which we yet continue to prove, is then like a private fabrication we have always known" (*TMM* 154).

Commenting on his own memories of the past Ralph declares: "But observe the contradictions in that dream of the rundown cocoa estate. It was a dream of the past, and it came at a time when, by creating drama and insecurity, we had destroyed the past" (*TMM* 36). By mentioning the term "drama",

Ralph refers to the mimicking role of the politicians (including himself) in the (post)colonies. Accepting their role as the 'mimic men' of the colonial world, Ralph juxtaposes his perceptions of home in the past to the present. This juxtaposition reveals that their relation to home in the past was strongly influenced by their ambivalent interstitial identity. It is the persistence of this interstitial identity that connects the places and different periods of time. The key to this realization is his “aesthetic distance” which enables him to have a twofold perspective (Bhabha, “The World and the Home” 148). Realizing the absurdity of his dreaming of home as a “place”, he confirms that home is rather a construct: “a private fabrication we have always known” (*TMM* 154). In accordance with this, Rushdie talks of his own experience as an Indian-born immigrant writer:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (10)

Rushdie warns against a simplistic yielding to the desire of claiming home by its fabrication at the cost of missing its realities. Such a perspective would sacrifice the double-edged perspective which enables one not only to avoid fabrication of an imaginary home but also to understand the feelings that surpass home as a physical sphere.

The discrepancy between home as a reality and home as an imaginary construct is demonstrated best in the scene where Ralph Singh approaches Isabella Island in the company of Sandra, his English wife. He ponders:

This return so soon to a landscape which I thought I had put out of my life for good was a failure and a humiliation On that first morning I should have said, 'This tainted island is not for me. I decided years ago that this landscape was not mine. Let us move on. Let us stay on the ship and be taken somewhere else.' As we drew nearer the dock the island of the travel poster vanished. (*TMM* 51-52)

His mention of “the travel poster” suggests the fictitious nature of the image the island attempts to gain. Ralph's in-between position permits him a third space between the uncertainties of departure and arrival, unification and distance, the past and the present. Ironically this interstitial identity gives him the freedom of acting beyond the binary oppositions set by the colonial power. This is the end of the mimetic playacting. Ralph uses this interstitial state as his strength and writes about it. Doing so he brings the unspeakable to the realm of the symbolic. Stuart Hall described this state beautifully:

It is because this New World is constituted for us as a place, a narrative of displacement, that it gives rise so profoundly to a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to “lost origins”, to be once again with the mother, to go back to the beginning. Who can ever forget, when once seen rising up out of that blue-green Caribbean, those islands of enchantment? Who has not known, at this moment, the surge of an overwhelming nostalgia for lost origins, for “times past”? And yet, this “return to the beginning” is like the imaginary in Lacan – it can neither be fulfilled nor required, and hence is the beginning of the symbolic, of representation, the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search, discovery – in short the reservoir of our cinematic narratives. (“Cultural Identity and Diaspora” 236)

Considering narration the only way of reclaiming roots, Hall emphasized the unclaimability of home as a place or location in the aftermath of displacement. Through narration, the loss of home finds expression as a desire of belonging. This expression gives meaning to what was a lack before. At the beginning of his narrative Ralph informs us that he has decided to write his life story “to secure the final emptiness” (*TMM* 10). At the end of his narrative he realizes that “writing, for all its initial distortion, clarifies, and even becomes a process of life” (*TMM* 251).

The last scene, picturing him observing the Christmas guests entering the hotel, reveals his peace and detachment from whatever happens around him. He records every procedure like a detached camera. As Ralph echoes: “I feel, instead, I have lived through attachment and freed myself from one cycle of events” (*TMM* 250). Ralph arrives at this valuable estimate that is freedom from the past and the present by a series of relocations that *relocate* his perception of the world and home in turn. At this valuable estimate the world and the home become one. As Frantz Fanon observed: “In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself” (“By Way of Conclusion” 179). Ralph's experience also makes him recognize a new order in his life, an order that goes beyond the borders of home and exile and beyond the borders of the past and the present.

3.2.1 Home and the Pastoral of Nationhood in *American Pastoral*

In comparison with the concept of home in *The Mimic Men*, ‘home’ negotiates a different dynamic in *American Pastoral*. The most important reason is that the protagonist of the work, is neither an exile nor a first-generation immigrant. Swede Levov is a third-generation immigrant Jew born in the Weequahic neighborhood of Newark, New Jersey. In other words, Swede's experience of immigration is not direct. Still, he is driven by the same motivations that drove his grandparents to America, among which one can mention relinquishment of the past in order to make a better future and obtaining “a new

national identity” (Nixon 23). Swede attempts to overstep the limits of marginalization not only through integration (exemplified by his marriage to Dawn, a Gentile) but also through assimilation.

In this part I will try to address the question of assimilation in the American social context by the post-immigrant Jews. Is it possible for these generations to assimilate in a so-called *melting pot* without sharing a common history with the host society? What does America represent for the post-immigrant American Jews? And how realistic is this image? In order to answer these questions, I delve in Swede's life and character as a representative of his generation, the nationalistic spirit of their time and the perception of this spirit by the Jews of his generation and eventually the Jewish cultural identity.

3.2.2 Assimilation in the Sociology of American Society

Since assimilation is a key concept in my analysis of *American Pastoral*, it is helpful to have a short overview of assimilation theories first, especially in the context of the American society. In *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess define assimilation as a *process* through which a group of people adopt the other group's “memories, sentiments, and attitudes”. Furthermore, Park and Burgess find the “sharing” of “experience[s] and history” to be a key to the establishment of a “common cultural life” (735). Park and Burgess, however, do not explain exactly how it is possible for different groups of immigrants to share experiences and particularly history of their host society at the onset of their settlement in a new place. Later in *The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* by Edwin Seligman and Alvin Johnson, Park describes assimilation as “the process or processes” through which groups of people with different cultural and “racial” backgrounds living in a common place accomplish the “cultural solidarity” to a level that they can be called a nation (281).

It was Milton Gordon who, for the first time, systematically categorized different forms of assimilation in his book called *Assimilation in American Life* (Alba & Nee 138). Gordon uses the term

acculturation to refer to cultural or behavioral assimilation. He defines the term as a “change of cultural patterns to those of host society” (M. Gordon 71). According to Gordon, the most advanced form of assimilation is structural assimilation, as it automatically brings about other forms of assimilation. Through structural assimilation, the immigrant group enters “the societal network of groups and institutions, or societal structure” of the host society (70).

Gordon divides assimilation modes into three categories: “Anglo-conformity”, “the melting pot” and “cultural pluralism”, claiming that Anglo-conformity has probably been the most dominant mode of assimilation throughout American history. Anglo-conformity signifies the preference of “English institutions ..., the English language, and English-oriented cultural patterns” as they are considered standard (88-89). He emphasizes that proponents of Anglo-conformity are not necessarily racists. Despite the fact that Anglo-conformity and racism have reinforced each other at certain points in American history, they have not always been necessarily associated with each other (103).

In agreement with Anglo-conformity, Joshua Fishman defines the “core culture” in America predominantly as “white Protestant, middle class”, whereas A. B. Hollingshead refers to the people of Anglo-Saxon origin as the “core group” (qtd. in M. Gordon 72). Altogether, these theories hold the “white” Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture as the cultural mold.

The most important form of assimilation that has influenced the contemporary discussion of assimilation is identificational assimilation (Alba & Nee 139). According to Milton Gordon, identificational assimilation is the “development of [a] sense of peoplehood based exclusively on host society” (71). Developing such a sense of peoplehood necessitates the annunciation of ethnic belongings including ethnic identity to the advantage of a national identity (Alba & Nee 140).

The other form of assimilation is “straight-line assimilation”. The idea was originally suggested by Warner and Srole and was later widely used by Gans and Sandberg (ibid.). Milton Gordon's models,

however fundamental, have often been criticized for their static view of culture. In this regard, Warner and Srole's concept of straight-line assimilation is an improvement, since it takes the gradual inter-generational adjustment to the culture of the host society into account. Nevertheless the idea of straight-line assimilation is criticized, since it considers ethnic culture to be static (ibid.).

Two followers of Herbert Mead maintained that the way a person is treated by a society depends on the way that society defines the person (Alba & Nee 144). In this regard, their theory has been an advancement of the former one-way theories with their exclusive emphasis on the immigrant. According to them, the host society, too, can play an important role in accelerating and/or blocking the structural assimilation. For example, in a society where there is “ethnic stratification”, the minority group considers their position as the inferior (ibid.).

The concept of assimilation has often been criticized for being ethnocentric. In spite of that, it still plays a key role in understanding ethnic situations and the contemporary immigration in American society.

3.2.3 Assimilation Dream in the Margin

In the 1930s the Jewish immigrants' children tried to improve their life conditions through climbing the social ladder. Nathan Zuckerman begins his narrative in *American Pastoral* with a flashback that takes us back to the Jewish neighborhood of Newark at that time. Born to a Jewish family in Weequahic, Newark, Nathan explains what was expected of the young children of his generation. His words summarize the spirit of the time:

The clock of history reset and a whole people's aims limited no longer by the past – there was the neighborhood, the communal determination that we, the children, should escape poverty, ignorance,

disease, social injury and intimidation – escape, above all, insignificance. You must not come to nothing!

Make something of yourselves! (AP 41)

In the 1930s, children of the Weequahic neighborhood mostly came from immigrant Jewish families. A hardworking people, they had a dream of a better life for their children. The children were also taught that success is not possible without effort and hard work.

Seymour (Swede) Levov, the protagonist of *American Pastoral*, is an epitome of the spirit of the time. As Nathan attends his 45th high school reunion in 1995, Swede's brother, Jerry informs Nathan of Swede's death. Nathan, already nostalgic, starts a journey back in time to the Newark of his childhood. He pictures the athletic Swede, a hero that permitted them their American dream:

The Swede ... The name was magical; so was the anomalous face. Of the few fair-complexioned Jewish students in our preponderantly Jewish public high school, none possessed anything remotely like the steep-jawed, insentient Viking mask of this blue-eyed blond born into our tribe as Seymour Irving Levov through the Swede, the neighborhood entered into a fantasy about itself and about the world, the fantasy of sports fans everywhere: almost like Gentiles (as they imagined Gentiles), our families could forget the way things actually work and make an athletic performance the repository of all their hopes". (AP 3)

Swede's heroic position is more understandable in view of the spirit of the time and its demands. After the Depression, it was the time for Americans to regenerate, the time which Nathan remembers as “the energy” (AP 40). A popular “doctrine” of the time was the superiority of the “tall, blonde, blue-eyed 'Nordics' or 'Aryans' [the English and the Germans]” (M. Gordon 97). Swede possesses all those popular Nordic features: “a boy as close to a goy as we were going to get” (AP 10), as Nathan states.

Encouraged by the spirit of the time, the neighborhood is indulged in a dream of its own which is epitomized by Swede. With “his unconscious oneness with America” (AP 20), Swede symbolically signifies the possibility of a successful assimilation. The Jews of the neighborhood liked to believe that by possessing those *Swede-like* features, they are likely to become Gentile. “Forgett[ing] the way things actually work”, the neighborhood lets itself be drawn into this “fantasy” (ibid.). By calling it a fantasy, Nathan calls its realistic aspects into question.

Through a character like Swede, the neighborhood is able to link itself to the American main stream and to forget about its position as a minority group. According to Nathan, “the first post-immigrant generation of Newark's Jews had regrouped into a community that took its inspiration more from the mainstream of American life than from the polish shtetl their Yiddish-speaking parents had re-created around Prince Street in the impoverished Third Ward” (ibid.). Later he contemplates, “I don't imagine I'm the only grown man who was a Jewish kid aspiring to be an all-American kid during the patriotic war years” (AP 19-20). Children of the Jewish immigrants longed for whatever had an American touch. Lawrence Epstein finds the reason in a determination to relinquish the past and obtain a completely American identity (243). Nathan assumes the nationalistic atmosphere and the passion for assimilation are equally encouraged, inspired and strengthened by “the patriotic war” (AP 20).

While Jews of the neighborhood look up to Swede, Swede himself looks up to Johnny Appleseed, a mythical figure, as his role model. Johnny Appleseed “wasn't a Jew, wasn't an Irish Catholic, wasn't a Protestant Christian – [but] just a happy American. Big. Ruddy. Happy.” (AP 316). In the brief summary of Johnny's character there are no “racial”, ethnic, historical or physical descriptions. Johnny represents an ideal, indicating subtly the possibility of achieving a society where “race” and ethnicity no longer have a place. In this society, a new identity is possible through “hard work, determination,

and material prosperity” (Shostak, “Introduction” 15). Swede’s dream indicates his wish to be judged only by his merits and not by his ethnic identity.

Derek Parker Royal, comparing Swede to Jay Gatsby, believes that Swede seeks “an idealized version of American life” where he can “reinvent himself” without “any predetermined notions of identity” (190). In such an ideal society, everybody is judged by parameters other than “race” and ethnicity. Therefore, *assimilation* would have to be a very ethnocentric concept in order to be relevant at all. In contrast, the Newark of their childhood was too “racial-” and ethnic-centered to provide them with rich possibilities (Kimmage 56). This ethnocentrism is reflected in the neighborhood’s idealism of Swede's Nordic features.

Having Johnny Appleseed as his role model, Swede shows his longing for an *ideal*, a utopia where his status as a member of a minority group does not really matter. The character of Johnny Appleseed has another significant function. He also represents the state of pastoralism, which Swede believes in as an ideal.

Originally invented by “the Greek poet Theocritus and the Latin poet Virgil” (A. Gordon 151), pastoral is a form of poetry or a work of literature that depicts life in the countryside or “the life of the shepherds, especially in an idealized or romantic form” (“pastoral, n 3 a.”). According to this definition, romanticization or idealization is an important aspect of the pastoral. Johnny Appleseed best represents this romantic aspect, because he is strongly tied to nature and the countryside: “Had a big stride and a bag of seeds and a huge, spontaneous affection for the landscape, and everywhere he went he scattered seeds” (AP 316).

Being mythical, Johnny is timeless. In fact, the concept of history is non-existent in the pastoral. Identifying himself with Johnny Appleseed, Swede wishes to get rid of history and the past. Important decisions of his life, including his marriage to Dawn Dwyer, an Irish Catholic and their move to the

Old Rimrock are strongly touched by this idealism. It is only after these changes that Swede believes he has fully assimilated into the American mainstream. He expresses his satisfaction in an exchange with Dawn: “We don't *have* to live like everybody else – we can live anyway we want to now. We did it. Nobody stopped us. They couldn't. We're married. We can go anywhere, we can do anything. Dawnie, we're free!” (AP 308). This perfect world gets shattered by a bomb Merry, their underage daughter, explodes in the local post office in protest against the Vietnam War. Merry's bomb is a mocking intrusion of history into that historyless Johnny Appleseed idealism. This loss is foreshadowed in Nathan's narrative by the fate of the character in Swede's childhood book, *The Kid from Tomkinsville*, who, despite his efforts and qualifications as a baseball player, lost the last big game.

Examining and reconstructing Swede's life events, Nathan tries to find out “Why are things the way they are?” (AP 70). Merry's terrorist attack calls into question not only the ideals of Swede's generation but also the generations of their parents and grandparents, ideals such as “liberty, peace, security, [and] a decent liberal democracy” (Lee 45) for which the Jews immigrated to America in the first place. Merry, daughter of an assimilated father, pursues ideals which can be thought of as counter-ideals of his father and his generation.

Merry represents the cultural gap into which she was born. This cultural gap is a result of his father's immediate abandonment of ethnic belongings. Merry tries to fill this gap by trying different religious and ideological affiliations in childhood and adolescence. Since assimilation takes place in steps and rather moderately (Cuber 552), Swede's quick adoption of the “WASP” cultural model cannot fill in the instant gap caused by his quick renunciation of the Jewish culture he was born to. His daughter's early stuttering has a symbolic significance in this regard. Language in use is shaped by the social context in which the speaker or writer is engaged. Swede “envisioned his life as a stutterer's thought, wildly out of control” (AP 93), as Nathan remarks. This remark highlights the precedence of

thought over spoken language. If we accept that a reflection of social contexts can be traced in spoken language, we can take Merry's stuttering a symbolic reflection of the cultural gap and the "out of control" identity chaos she encounters.

Swede belittles the role of history by his belief in America "because [he thinks] it promises individuality freed from [the] past and a will to choose" (Shostak, "Introduction" 15). Finding the reason for Swede's failure in "the loss of his Jewish identity", Timothy Parrish suggests that the Jewish cultural identity is also a product of history and because of that it cannot be reduced to an "arbitrary 'subject position'" by the mere "adoption of a particular role" (133-141). As a result of this reduction, Swede encounters a paradox. Granted that through assimilation one would automatically be part of the host society, Swede realizes for the first time that some aspects of the host society including its history are not adoptable. Being introduced to the history of the Orcutts in Morris County, he wonders:

His family couldn't compete with Orcutt's when it came to ancestors – they would have run out of ancestors in about two minutes. As soon as you got back earlier than Newark, back to the old country, no one knew anything. Earlier than Newark, they didn't know their names or anything about them, how anyone made a living, let alone whom they've voted for. Every rung into America for the Levovs there was another rung to attain; this guy was there" (AP 306).

Park and Burgess reminds us that the key to the establishment of a "common cultural life" and assimilation is not only "sharing ... experience[s]" but also history (Park & Burgess 735). As the word "share" suggests, establishing such a common cultural life without the persistence of an ethnic history should be impossible. Swede does not *share* histories, he rather tries to replace one with the other. He not only disclaims his Jewish tradition and history but also adopts the "WASP" cultural model by

marrying a Gentile and moving out of the area which defined them through “communal memory”, common language, religion and values as Jewish American (Kimmage 29).

Swede, unlike the happy ruddy Johnny Appleseed, who was only a happy American, tries to forge a “WASP” identity. In this regard, he betrays his pastoral idealism, because in his submission to “WASP” ideals, he fails to go beyond any ethnocentric or “racial” visions (Posnock 104). Definition of assimilation in *American Pastoral* is based on the assumption that America is “a WASP nation founded on a myth of pastoral innocence” (Posnock 90). Yet there is a paradox in the heart of this thinking; the innocence of pastoralism comes from its indifference to ethnic or “racial” issues or preferences. Defining America as a dominantly “white” Anglo-Saxon protestant nation is at odds with pastoralism.

3.2.4 House of Sand and Fog

The house of Mr. Behrani in the movie *House of Sand and Fog* (2003) reminds me of the Old Rimrock house in *American Pastoral*. This is my reason for giving this section the title of *House of Sand and Fog*. Both houses fail to fulfill the function their owners demanded of them. Nevertheless their functions are completely different. Mr. Behrani, the Iranian exile, buys the house in memory of their house at the Caspian Sea in an attempt to save the past. Swede Levov, in contrast, buys the Old Rimrock house to escape from the past. These two intended functions remind us of the receding nature of home as an image. This image arouses memories, shared and personal. It also awakens a sense of loss and yearning for a place that is always receding (Burstein 76). The same is true about Swede's ideal image of home. Wishing to fulfill his pastoral dream of becoming only “a happy American” (*AP* 316), Swede finds his ideal house at the age of sixteen:

The stone house was not only engagingly ingenious-looking to his eyes – all that irregularity regularized, a jigsaw puzzle fitted patiently together into this square, solid thing to make a beautiful shelter – but it looked indestructible, an impregnable house that could never burn to the ground and that had probably been standing there since the country began. Primitive stones, rudimentary stones of the sort that you would see scattered about among the trees if you took a walk along the paths in Weequahic Park, and out there they were a house. (*AP* 190)

The fact that the house is simply made of stones gives it a natural air. The house is old, giving Swede the impression that it is as old as the country itself. Therefore, owning this house would mean owning American history. Although this house is not the same house Swede later buys, its image as a prototype or what it signifies is a determining factor in his purchase of the Old Rimrock house. Against Swede's naïve identification with the “WASP” values, the Old Rimrock house is a reminder of the “narrow, bigoted area [where] the Klan thrived out ... [where] people had crosses burned on their property” as Lou Levov, Swede’s father, avers (*AP* 309). This warning sheds light on the drastic difference between the fantasy world Swede is drawn to, the “quaint Americana” (*AP* 68) as Jerry, his brother, calls it and the real America his father tries to make him see. The history which Swede intends to own and share is a history in which racism has been embedded.

Swede is often criticized by his brother for his belief in an archaic romantic life style (pastoralism) that does not fit in with the realities of the time. Jerry maintains that his brother took Merry “out of real time and she [by planting the bomb in the local post office] put him right back in” (*ibid.*). Merry's act is the opposite of whatever the idealism of pastoralism stands for. It has the same effect that circumcision has in *The Counterlife*. It makes Swede realize “what the world is about, which isn't strifeless unity, ... [giving] the lie to the womb-dream of life in the beautiful state of innocent prehistory, the appealing idyll of living 'naturally'” (*CL* 323).

The opposition between Swede's pastoralism and Merry's terrorism is in fact the opposition between two generations which were nourished by different orthodoxies. While Swede's generation was inspired by books such as *The Kid from Tomkinsville*, Merry reads Marx, Marcuse, Malcom X and Frantz Fanon. This opposition is indeed an opposition of the two eras characterized by different principles and values. As Sigrist-Sutton observes, Swede and Merry are the mimic men of their times. Merry, strongly influenced by the “French theorist whose sentences, litanized at bedtime like a supplication” (AP 261) “mimics the third world Other”, whereas Swede “mimics middle-class Anglo-America” (Sigrist-Sutton 56). For all the emphasis Fanon laid on the determining role of people in making history (Gilly 2), Merry (as his follower) tries to take history into her own hands. In this respect she maintains the “counter-pastoral” against the historyless mythic pastoralism which her father believes in. Merry stands for the generation which gets their inspirations not from the American mainstream as her father's generation did but from the revolutionary ideas of resistance and change. Nathan compares the differences between their own generation and their parents' to the differences between their own generation and their children's:

The shift was not slight between the generations and there was plenty to argue about: the ideas of the world they wouldn't give up; the rules they worshiped, for us rendered all but toothless by the passage of just a couple of decades of American time; those uncertainties that were theirs and not ours ... What was most cramping in their point of view a few of us did find the audacity to strain against, but the intergenerational conflict never looked like it would twenty years later ... There was a plenty of haranguing to ensure obedience; the adolescent requirements, stipulations, prohibitions – restraints that proved insuperable. One was our own highly realistic appraisal of what was most in our interest, another the pervasive rectitude of the era, whose taboos we'd taken between our teeth at birth; not least was the

enacted ideology of parental self-sacrifice that bled us of wanton rebelliousness and *sent underground* [my italics] almost every indecent urge. (AP 42)

Nathan confirms that the inter-generational conflict has always been an ever-present theme, yet the conflicts were not as critical as they became between his own generation and the next. He recalls not only the restrictions set by the parents (as words like “prohibitions” and “restraints” clearly suggest) but also the respective understanding on the part of his own generation and the deep belief in their righteousness and good will. According to Nathan, children of his generation were committed to the sanctity of the rules set by the parents, whose whole life was devoted to the children. In the light of those rules, the children knew right from wrong.

Nathan's mentioning of the repressed “urge[s]” which were “sent underground” (ibid.) implicitly suggests the reason for the new generation’s rage. The revolutionary resonance of the word *underground* is a reminder of the underground guerrilla Weathermen, Merry is a member of. Supporting the people's struggle in Algeria to liberate the country from French colonizers, Fanon believed that application of violence against an oppressive power, that sustains itself through violence, is inevitable (“On Violence” 17). The violence Merry applies against her own folk is understandable in the knowledge that Merry is a reader of Fanon. Inspired by Fanon, she brings back home the violence her country applies against the Vietnamese in the name of nationalism.

Judith Butler reminds us “to take the self-generated acts of the individual as our point of departure in moral reasoning is precisely to foreclose the possibility of questioning what kind of world gives rise to such individuals” (qtd. in Sigrist-Sutton 60). Laura Tanenbaum draws our attention to the context shaped by the extreme violence of the Vietnam war itself and by the “repressive state response to dissent” which, according to her, has been overshadowed by “the narratives of the period with

radical violence” (46). Both Butler and Tanenbaum emphasize the inseparability of the individuals and the era which produces the individuals. The rageful Merry Levov is a product of her own time in the same way that Swede Levov is a product of his own time. To understand Merry Levov's violent actions, it is necessary to consider the historical context in which she grew up. In her time, the nationalistic aspirations of the patriotic war have already been substituted by the anti-nationalistic rage of a generation that identifies itself with the colonized subjects (Sigrist-Sutton 63). This is what Jerry tries to remind Swede of:

You have no idea what this country is ... This country is *frightening* ... This isn't Old Rimrock, old buddy ... Unnatural, all artificial, all of it. Those *assumptions* you live with. You're still in your old man's dream world, Seymour You longed to belong like everybody else to the United States of America? Well, you do now, big boy, thanks to your daughter. The reality of this place is right up in your kisser now. With the help of your daughter you are as deep in the shit as a man can get, the real American crazy shit. America amok! America amuck!” (AP 276-277)

According to Jerry, Merry's bomb should have a disillusioning effect on her father, giving him a taste of the real America. Her action counteracts her father's adherence to an illusory utopia. Dawn, Swede's wife, blames him for pulling her into his dream world and ruining her life: “You were like some *kid!* You had to make me into a *princess*. Well, look where I have wound up! In a madhouse! Your princess is in a *madhouse!*” (AP 178). Merry, through materializing the Weather Underground's motto “bringing the war home”, actually brings the reality home, the reality which neither Dawn, nor Lou Levov or Jerry Levov could make Swede see. The reality of the country becomes a burlesque of the “collective dreams” of America which drew “the Yiddish-speaking immigrants” to America, dreams which, according to Joseph C. Landis, rested on the edge of an illusion, missing a sense of reality (143).

Merry is the only person in Nathan's narrative who has truly integrated into American social life. She not only shares the sentiments of her time and reacts to them but also takes part in American history. These are achievements that her father missed. Unlike her father, Merry is willing to pay the price of adopting a "wholly 'American' identity", that is nothing except "inauthenticity, exile, the disintegration of the home" (*Philip Roth: American Pastoral* 16).

The Yiddish-speaking immigrants referred to America as "goldene medine" (Wade 197). They regarded America as a country of "opportunities, freedom, and openness" (qtd. in Wirth-Nesher & Kramer 2). For Swede; however, America turns out to be the antithesis of those promises. Looking at the "mammoth signboard" of the "FIRST FIDELITY BANK", he ponders: "That's what was left, that lie. *Last*. LAST FIDELITY BANK ... A sign in a fairy tale" (*AP* 237). It is the observation of this historical burlesque that makes Marcia Umanoff, the professor of literature, laugh at the dinner party of the Levovs, "to laugh, to relish, as some people, historically, always seem to do, how far rampant disorder had spread, enjoying enormously the assailability, the frailty, the enfeeblement of supposedly robust things" (*AP* 423). Marcia's laughter mocks the banality of all that idealism, including pastoralism of Swede and Dawn and even Lou Levov's belief in the righteousness of the old teachings in the face of change. There is a certain amount of truth in Rita Cohen's attacks on Swede Levov, as she claims: "Nothing is further from your understanding than the nature of reality" (*AP* 139). In an attempt to get "the beast out of the bag", she seduces Swede to sleep with her and as an answer to his questioning of her aim, she replies: "To introduce you to reality" (*AP* 143). The turn of history and the outdatedness of the ideals in which Swede believes *are* part of the reality.

I would like to end this section with a reference to the image of *House of Sand and Fog*. The historical house of the Levovs plays an ironic role as it turns out to be a house of history in the real sense of the word. The Old Rimrock house, which Swede purchases initially as an escape from his

ethnic past, gives birth to a character who plays a significant role in the history of America. During her terrorist attacks, she kills four people. As a result, the house, that represented “WASP” values, becomes literally a house of “the counterpastoral history” (Shostak, *Philip Roth- Countertexts, Counterlives* 246). The house is also significant for representing the lost dreams of its owner, who was the hero of a generation of Jewish American immigrants. Swede’s fall can be interpreted as a failure of the American dream and “the pastoral image” associated with it, which promised immigrants a “reborn identity” (Shostak, “Introduction” 16). Loss of these aspirations changes this pastoral image to an “indigenous American berserk” (AP 86). I use the metaphor of the *House of Sand and Fog* to signify this loss.

Conclusion

The Mimic Men and *American Pastoral* are products of two different social contexts, yet both novels share one thing in common: both novels examine the questions of assimilation and displacement. As they both delve into the life story of their protagonists, the tension between personal history and a collective past uncovers the heart of an identity conflict.

The exilic colonized subject in *The Mimic Men* experiences a metaphoric castration of his ethnic identity, due to the Eurocentric attitudes he is taught by colonial education. As a result of this, he is unable to claim an independent identity. The novel offers writing as the only solution to the problem of displacement and identity disintegration. Through writing, the (post-)colonial subject enters the symbolic. Identity conflicts that had been formerly obscured and muted through the dominance of colonial discourse are expressed in the form of language. In addition, by bringing the notion of home to the realm of the symbolic, the perception of home goes beyond the past and the present. Through the relocation of home as a metaphor, the subject is able to reclaim it.

In *American Pastoral*, identity crisis is a result of a discrepancy between a naïve belief in “the melting pot” as “an ideology of immigrant assimilation” (“Melting Pot”) and assimilation as a real-life experience. Assimilating into the American mainstream mostly means an attempt at the adoption of the “WASP” models and a rejection of ethnic culture. Rejection of ethnic belongings, however, does not necessarily mean a complete assimilation into the “WASP” society. It might rather cause identity conflicts and a cultural gap. The cultural gap created by the quick abandoning of ethnic culture also reminds us that assimilation cannot be achieved over a generation. Assimilation is rather a slow inter-generational process based on concessions and compromises of all the parties involved; the immigrants and the host society. In addition, the discrepancy between what the post-immigrant American Jews aim for (that is assimilation) and what they receive (which is a partial identity) reveals the absurdity of the idea of the American dream as an ideal.

4 MIMICRY AND IMPERSONATION

V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* and Philip Roth's *The Counterlife*

In this chapter I will look at the post-colonial concept of mimicry in the work of V. S. Naipaul and its existential counterpart, impersonation in the work of Philip Roth. In the conclusion I will have a comparative analysis based on the topics discussed in this chapter. Both concepts play significant roles in the works of the two authors; inasmuch as the identity of the discussed characters are intensively influenced by them. An understanding of mimicry and impersonation requires respectively a comprehension of what gives birth to them in the first place, namely colonialism as a discourse and racism as a social phenomenon. This would help us with grasping the behavioral pattern which the discussed characters follow in response to the challenges they experience concerning diaspora and its consequences. In addition, understanding such a pattern contributes to finding an answer to the research question I raised in the introduction. In fact, due to the immense importance the two concepts have in the identity discourses of the two diasporas (the Jewish Diaspora in America and the Indian diaspora in Africa), understanding them would shed light on the nature of the relationship between experiencing diaspora as a form of displacement and cultural uprooting and the pressing appeal of cultural/ethnic deviance.

I have divided this chapter to two parts. The first part is about mimicry and its depiction in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (abbreviated as *BR* in bibliographical references). The second part deals with the concept of impersonation and its depiction in Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* (1987) (abbreviated as *CL* in bibliographical references). In this part I also draw upon Sartre's idea of freedom and possibilities in order to show that the freedom of choosing (possibilities) is partial and conditional.

Accordingly, adherence to religious and ethnic traditions on the part of the ethnic or religious minority depends on the way a society receives, considers and tags that minority group.

4.1.1 The Image of Africa in *A Bend in the River*

In *Of Mimicry and Man*, Bhabha defines mimicry as “the desire for a reformed recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite” (130). Accordingly mimicry signifies persistence of an ambivalence in colonial discourse (Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man” 126). On the one hand, from colonizer’s perspective “the Other” is adaptive. Colonizer justifies their action by drawing on this so-called characteristic. On the other hand, “the Other” is represented as a fixed stereotype in discursive practices of the colonizer. This is an intrinsic paradox in colonial discourse. How does this discourse affect colonial subject's view of themselves? How does it affect colonizer's view of themselves? In this part I will try to answer these questions through my analysis of the narratives in the two novels of Roth and Naipaul. I would like to use Bhabha’s idea of mimicry to my advantage.

Bhabha considers mimicry to be a balancing middle point in the paradoxical discourse of the colonizer, standing between the necessity of stagnation caused by fixed stereotypes and difference (Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man” 126):

The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double-vision that is a result of what I've described as the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object. ... [The mimic men are] the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as “inappropriate” colonial subjects. A desire that, through the repetition of *partial presence*, which is the basis of mimicry, articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial, and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority. It is a desire that reverses “in part”

the colonial appropriation by now producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence. (Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man" 129)

Bhabha highlights colonizer's need to represent the differential gaps that stand between them and their subjects. Emphasis on the persistence of these gaps and simultaneous attempt to appropriate their subject calls consistency of colonial discourse into question. Persistence of colonial subjects who only partially represent colonizer not only undermines but also challenges colonial discourse, inasmuch as it proves colonial project's failure in achieving its goal. In this regard, mimicry contradicts colonial apparatus. Colonial project has been betrayed by an oversimplified vision of its own mechanism and objective.

Naipaul's works provide an opportunity to see this mechanism from the point of view of colonial subject. When it comes to mimicry in Naipaul's works, most critics confine themselves to a study of *The Mimic Men*. Nevertheless other works by Naipaul offer an equal quota on the topic of mimicry, if not more. Therefore, here I intend to analyze the other work by Naipaul (*A Bend in the River*) apropos of mimicry. The work is as equally valuable as *The Mimic Men* in this regard and in my opinion it has not yet been fully examined by literary critics. I hope I can do justice to the work by at least shedding light on those aspects that are related to the topic of this chapter.

A Bend in the River is narrated by Salim in the first person. Salim is also the focalizer. He is keen on revealing his feelings and impressions, but sometimes he is like a camera, simply narrating what he sees and experiences, leaving the reader little space for personal interpretation. He comes from a family of Indian descent who have lived on the East African coast for generations. Longing for the unknown and exotic and also inspired by his young friend, Indar, who leaves the country for England to study, he moves to another country in central Africa. The name of this central African country is never revealed

to the reader. A family servant, Ali, joins him after a short period of time. The rest of the narrative is made up of his experiences in this African country, a reflection of the people's life style and, most importantly, its political situation in the post-colonial era. Salim opens a shop where he works as a retailer. An important customer is Zabeth, a “marchande” (a country merchant), who later asks Salim to teach her son, Ferdinand, the ways of the world. Salim is a witness to the changes Ferdinand undergoes as a young boy at lycée and later as a student who attends the poly-technique university and gets an official position in the regime. On the other hand, Ali, the former family servant, drops his old African manners, renounces his name (Ali) and calls himself Metty. Salim makes similar observations of Ferdinand. Ferdinand picks up new mannerisms as soon as he becomes a lycée student. Yet in the face of fear he drops his mannerisms and sobs “I didn't want to come here. I didn't know anyone here. My mother wanted me to come. I didn't want to be in the town or go to the lycée” (*BR* 71).

There is a parallel between the infrastructure and superstructure in the country, as both suffer stagnation. The country enjoys short periods of economic boom, but these brief periods are far from what could be called economic development. Salim observes that the people of the African country believe in the European members of the government rather than their own countrymen.

The Africans are rendered a dependent nation, relying on European aid not only to cope with their economic downfall but also to solve their domestic conflicts. In order to make peace, there is a strong demand for European aid. Salim thinks there is an equal demand for a person like Father Huismans, who can preserve the workings of the African cultural heritage, “the richest products of the forest”. This duty is later carried on by the other “white man”, the young American who ships the relics to America to build “the nucleus of the gallery of primitive art”. After the death of Father Huismans, artworks of the forest (formerly collected with so much care and cherished by Father Huismans) are left

carelessly to fade, since “there was no one there with the knowledge and the eyes that were required” (BR 84). This is the image Salim pictures of the post-colonial African country.

Salim, stunned by the business boom after the civil war, avers “Trade, goods! What a mystery! We couldn't make the things we dealt in, we hardly understood their principles. Money alone had brought these magical things to us deep in the bush, and we dealt in them so casually!” (BR 88). Salim emphasizes the technological dependence of the African country in the post-colonial era. As his selection of the word “bush” suggests, he considers the country’s situation backward. The country is dependent on European countries for even basic products. Despite the *new Africa* the president of this African country tries to display, developments remain shallow. This is what Salim suggests in his description of the Domain as a display of “pride” for which “millions” were invested and which finally ended in rust as “the grass grew high about them” (BR101-2).

Salim divides the life in the African country into two worlds which have little contact with each other. First is the life in the shabby town. This is the life which he shares with other expatriates like Metty, Shoba and Mahesh (a couple he gets to know). Salim specifies this world as stagnant for its lack of contact with the other part of the town where students are fed by colonial discourse. Settlers of the shabby town are only users of “the magical things” which are *brought* to them:

We were simple men with civilizations but without other homes. Whenever we were allowed to, we did the complicated things we had to do, like the ants. We had the occasional comfort of reward, but in good times or bad we lived with the knowledge that we were expendable, that our labour might at any moment go to waste, that we ourselves might be smashed up; and that others would replace us. (BR 86)

In this excerpt, Salim points out not only the instability of life in the African country but also the helpless position of expatriates like him, Mahesh and Shoba who have nowhere else to turn. He underscores their helplessness by comparing their condition to that of ants, one of the smallest insects. A metaphor that reminds the reader immediately of vulnerability and defenselessness. This image is supported by other terms including “expendable”, reminiscent of the expendability of single ants in a colony. The other terms are “waste”, “smashed up” and “replace” which all evoke powerlessness of the people and senselessness of their attempts in face of unpredictable catastrophes such as uprising. Another civil war might break out any time and its constant threat makes changes in the town seem momentary and fruitless. In contrast to this world there is the Domain where the university is located. This is the place mostly inhabited by either Europeans or by people who have afforded a western education. This is the world that Salim associates with Indar, Ferdinand and Raymond (the former adviser of the president). Salim's connection to this world, except for his role as Yvette's lover, is minimal. As a person who has received little education, he finds no way to connect himself to the university life. For this reason he is envious of Ferdinand and Indar. He explains: “I was aware, in the Domain, that I belonged to the other world. When I met people with Indar I found I had little to say” (*BR* 118). Comparing the life in the Domain to the life in the shabby town, the question is which space represents the real Africa. This is the question that engages Salim. He echoes:

I became confused myself. The Domain was a hoax. But at the same time it was real, because it was full of serious men (and a few women). Was there a truth outside men? Didn't men make the truth for themselves? Everything men did or made became real. So I moved between the Domain and the town. It was always reassuring to return to the town I knew, to get away from that Africa of words and ideas as it existed on the Domain (and from which, often, Africans were physically absent). (*BR* 125)

Herewith Salim meditates on the dualism of life in these two spaces. This duality is caused by a binary opposition between theory, or the “Africa of words and ideas” represented by some groups of colonial elites and bourgeois-nationalist elites and the reality of everyday life represented by people who acted based on a traditional system of kinship. While elites (including colonizer and bourgeois) are inspired by the British governmental system, people refer to tribal rules. The opposition between the Domain and town is also based on this binary opposition, as each space represents one of these groups. Indar and Ferdinand, as the middle class, have access to colonial education either by attending Poly Technique or by studying in London and their idea of progress in Africa is an adaptation of colonial discourse. Yet this world of ideas has no connection with Salim's world in the shabby town ruled by “the politics of the people” (Guha 40). The fact that the ideas and theories are only limited to the Domain underlines their ineffectiveness and irrelevance to the everyday realities the people in this former colony deal with. The country is torn apart as a result of the discordance between these two groups symbolized by their spatial disjunction.

This divide between the Africa of ideas represented by the elite and the Africa of tribes and traditions represented by the rest of the people is manifested in the occasional uprisings. Salim like other settlers of the shabby town represents the subaltern. They have received no western education. While colonial power guarantees its power by establishing its regime of truth through colonial education among African elites, the rest of the people find their voice in guerrillas. Liberation army's leaflet with its claim of having access to the ancestors' “truthful laws” is an example of this. I will discuss this in the subsection “The Voiceless” in detail.

As Salim observes Ferdinand repeats the ideas he has heard in the lycée but he is not able to explain them. As an example he asserts that Africa “was rising”, while “the world outside was going down” (*BR* 48). When asked why he believes Africa “was rising” he is unable to answer. In the

aftermath of colonization, cultural recovery of the former colonies has been necessary. Ferdinand is the outcome of a phase of confusion in the after-independence history of the unnamed African country. This is a phase of historical trial and error on the way to cultural independence. Using the metaphor of “black” body, becoming “a speechless body, fixed in its silence” under the gaze of the “white men” (Giordano 89), I would say it has been speechlessness of a cultural identity and cultural independence. In the aftermath of colonialism, the absence of a cultural identity is felt more.

Salim reminds us that the history of the colonies is also written by the Europeans: “All that I know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans” (*BR* 11). Also, early in his narration he declares “Without Europeans, I feel, all our past would have been washed away, like the scuff marks of fishermen on the beach outside our town” (*BR* 12). Independence of African countries is not only a territorial but also a cultural process. Salim unconsciously underscores the urgency of a recovery from Eurocentric bodies of literature. European historiography has contributed to depiction of Africa as a continent that needs Europe on its way to civilization. After independence African cultural identity is torn between the residue of native culture and a massive pile of colonial teachings. Salim cannot think of any other history except the one written by the Europeans. He not only “perceives” himself “as something other than” himself (qtd. in Giordano 89) but also has nothing to say *for* himself and *about* himself. After independence, nationalism has been a common ground where colonization-stricken citizens could be unified (Davidson, *Africa in Modern History* 156). This kind of nationalism should not be confused with the xenophobic, anti-Semitic nationalism that was propagated by National-Socialists under Nazi Germany. African nationalism has focused on freedom and anti-imperialism (Davidson, *Which Way Africa?* 53).

Despite their differences, the two worlds of the town and the Domain share something in common and that is the uncertainty. It is this sense of uncertainty pictured throughout the narrative that

presents altogether an image of the African country in the post-colonial time: Deterioration of the Domain foresees the necessity of an Africa that can define itself independently of European body of knowledge about Africa. In the next part, I will elaborate more on the source of this primary stagnation in the post-colonial African country.

4.1.2 Cultural Degradation versus Nationalism

Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, elaborated on the “racial” inferiority complex inflicted upon him by the European practice of slavery. In order to prove his hypothesis, he provided a handful of examples, among which his study of creole people's use of language is probably the most interesting. Unlike Bhabha, who considers mimicry the outcome of an ambivalence in colonial discourse, Fanon viewed mimicry as the outcome of an outrage instigated in the colonial subject by an inferiority complex. Fanon traced the root of this inferiority complex in “the death and burial of ... local cultural originality” (“The Negro and Language” 9). I would like to draw on Fanon’s term in my reading of exemplary excerpts from *A Bend in the River* to argue that cultural deviance and devastation of colonial subject is the outcome of a state of in-betweenness that has been felt more tangibly after the independence. Attempting to replace African native culture with European civilization, colonizers started to spread their body of knowledge through inclusion of Eurocentric syllabi in colonial education. In Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* (1967), Ralph Singh remembers that as a child on Isabella Island he had to learn about “the coronation of the English king and the weight of his crown” (90). Such examples illustrate Eurocentric character of colonial syllabi. According to Basil Davidson, colonial education apart from its Eurocentric character, has been fundamentally poor and inadequate:

Even in this educational field, the balance of gain was not a simple one. There was public education, true enough: but throughout the colonial period this was never more than sparsely available, even at an elementary level, and was couched most clearly in the concepts and prejudices of the educators ... it taught African inferiority and European superiority. (*Africa in History* 318)

This one-sidedness of educational programs led to the radical disempowerment of native culture. Effects of cultural disempowerment have been obvious even in the post-colonial time. Reforms of the president of the African country in *A Bend in the River* such as establishment of a new religious cult which, according to Raymond, is a “parody of Christianity” (*BR* 194) and Ferdinand’s inability to explain why Africa “is rising” are natural outcomes of this period of transition from legal independence to cultural independence in the African countries, since the first did not necessarily equal the latter. Raymond, the historian, believes the president fights the humiliations of the past, namely his mother's status as a hotel maid in the colonial times by building a shrine and consecrating her as the mother of Africa (*BR* 136). What he fails to see is that with a diminished native culture and the tangible prevalence of colonial discourse, colonial subject is not left with many choices. In the absence of a cultural heritage that could counteract the resulting humiliation and inferiority of colonial teachings, no “cultural enlightenment” could have been realized. Colonial syllabi had little relevance to the real life experiences in the colonies. Those who fought against colonization rather used traditional sources such as religion to propagate their ideas. Only a small group of élites had a chance to study abroad. Having a better knowledge of the world, these élites could have helped the anti-colonialist cause. But in practice a few of them joined the movement (Davidson, *Africa in History* 319-320). Indar, Salim’s friend believes that this group of élites overshadow the non-élites. Unlike the liberation army he is unwilling to resort to his tribal heritage. He maintains:

Home – what for? To hide? To bow to our great men? For people in our situation, people led into slavery, that is the biggest trap of all. We have nothing. We solace ourselves with that idea of the great men of our tribe, the Gandhi and the Nehru, and we castrate ourselves. 'Here, take my manhood and invest it for me. Take my manhood and be a greater man yourself, for my sake! No, I want to be a man myself' (*BR* 152).

The noun “manhood” is a metonym for power in a patriarchal society. His wish to be a man himself expresses a historically suppressed urge to be powerful. Terms such as “trap” and “castrate” in the passage above express a sense of despair and inferiority which is not less than the effect of slavery. He does not find power in a nationalism which is based on “traditional organization of kinship and territoriality” (Ashcroft et al., “Subaltern” 245).

Indar criticizes this culture of sanctifying great men for the castrating effect it has on those who have not had an equal access to western education. His statement is significant in several respects. First it underlines the minimal number of those élites who used their western education to the benefit of their own people. Second it reveals the deep sense of inferiority colonial subjects have felt in the face of western technology. Indigenous lifestyle was neither compatible with the modern technologies nor able to compete with them. Having been confronted with these modern technologies, the indigenous life pattern was devastated (Davidson, *Africa in History* 321). Even before western colonization of African countries some African tribes were in danger of a gradual cultural demolition as a result of Arab slave trade. Salim observes that domestic slaves who have lived with his family for generations refuse to leave their master even at the outbreak of the civil war on the coast. What he describes is only one aspect of a lost life style that is irreversible even in the time of independence. The slaves had literally been dependent on their masters because years of slavery have eliminated any sense of collective identity or a tribal life style they could resort to. Ali, the former slave, joins Salim in the town on the

bend in the river and works as Salim's assistant. Later Ali changes his name to Metty, an indication of the identity crisis he undergoes in his transition from a slave to an independent human being.

The question of proving yourself as a man against the humiliation and inferiority of slavery and in the face of modern technologies is a recurring theme in Salim's narrative. Indar's statement "We have nothing" reflects his sense of despair. Despair gives way to a rage which Indar calls "colonial": "And this wasn't a rage with London or England; it was also a rage with the people who had allowed themselves to be corralled into a foreign fantasy" (*BR 146*).

Indar believes that change does not come to Africa by the old methods used in the colonial times such as "promoting the poems of Yevtushenko or by telling the people about the wickedness of the Berlin Wall", as he formulates it. Indar declares his disregard for the dysfunctional theories or the "Africa of ideas and words" that have no real meaning to the African society. He finds the answer rather in administering "refugees [and] first-generation intellectuals":

My idea was to remove them from the countries where they couldn't operate and send them, if only for a little while, to those parts of the continent where they could. A continental interchange, to give the men themselves hope, to give Africa the better news about itself, and to make a start on the true African revolution. (*BR 154*)

Indar envisions the new Africa as a multi-national community. In this vision there is no mention of colors or nationalities. Indar's proposal can be considered an ironical interpretation of the colonial motto *Miscerique probat populos et foedera jungi* (He approves of the mingling of the peoples and their bonds of union). This Latin sentence from Virgil's Aeneid is written on the old ruins left from the Middle Passage, as Salim observes. Back then, the slaves were force-marched all the way from the

middle of Africa to the ports of departure where they stayed shortly in the settlements, only to be soon transported by ship to the other continents. Indar's emphasis on the role of immigrants (himself being one) and exiles in building the new Africa also encourages 'mingling of the peoples', ironically not for the colonial aspirations but for the construction of a new Africa. In fact, the salvation of Africa is suggested to lie in the core of the same motto that colonizer had formerly used to justify black slavery.

Leadership in colonial Africa might have been a solution for people who have left their fate in the hands of their leaders, as Indar advocates. These leaders from the bourgeoisie, including Gandhi, have spoken for the whole nation and this has prevented the nation from representing itself (Guha 43). Considering Indar's suggestion, exiles and refugees can enrich post-colonial African society by bringing new aspirations and ambitions. This can be a mimicry of what the colonial project foresaw. But in betraying its ends it can also be considered a reversal, a parody and a mockery of the colonial project.

4.1.3 Power- Relations: Modes of Self-Representation

Colonial power produces a specific form of knowledge/discourse. This knowledge confirms colonial regime of truth. It is this regime of truth which sustains colonial power in colonial spaces. This is especially significant in the formation of subject-positions. Colonial discourse like other discourses has been able to construct a place for its subjects. Colonizer can establish its power only through identification of subjects with these subject positions. Subjects act and speak within the limits of colonial discourse and the knowledge it seeks to set up. I read discursive practices of Naipaul's characters as a reflection of power-relations in colonial spaces. In *A Bend in the River* Salim states "All that I know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans ... They formed no part of our knowledge or pride. Without Europeans, I feel, all our past

would have been washed away, like the scuff marks of fishermen on the beach outside our town” (11-12). His statement demonstrates the interplay between knowledge and power. He uses the word “knowledge”, indicating his acceptance of what has been bequeathed to him through colonial education as a set of truth. Having digested his position as colonial subject, he casts no doubt upon the authenticity of the colonizer’s account of colonies, what he calls “our history”. This knowledge is founded, supported and approbated by colonial power. It is power that guarantees the reception of this knowledge as truth. Foucault considers truth permanently enclosed by power (*Power/Knowledge* 131). Colonizers established their power by propagating an attitude of inequality among their subjects. This guaranteed colonial project subjects who believed in the values of their colonial masters and were ready to serve colonial state (qtd. in Davidson, *Africa in History* 320). This was not only a usual method of western colonizers but also Arab colonizers who announced enslavement of defeated Kuffar (infidels) religiously acceptable. Having internalized his subject position, Salim reflects this attitude of human inequality:

During the course of the term there had come to the lycée some boys from the warrior tribes to the east. They were an immensely tall people; and, as Metty told me with awe, they were used to being carried around on litters by their slaves, who were of a smaller, squatter race. For these tall men of the forest there had always been European admiration. ... In fact, there were now Africans who felt as the Europeans did, and saw the warrior people as the highest kind of African. (*BR* 53)

“Lycée” plays an important role as an example of mission schools, where colonial regime of truth were transferred to subjects as knowledge. Racist nature of some of these colonial teachings is evident in Salim's observation. These teachings promoted superiority of the strong over the weak. Affirming “the political order and the binary structure of power that made that position [for the colonizer] possible” in

the first place (Ashcroft et al., “Surveillance” 254), educated pupils left colonial schools with a similar attitude towards Africans of other tribes.

Lycées or universities were not the only places where colonial values were propagandized. Salim is a fanatic reader of scientific magazines and children’s encyclopedias. He starts to praise the beauty of an Arab Dhow only after he sees the British stamps with the picture of Arab Dhow on them (*BR* 15). He does not question validity of European historiography. Even the most nationalist Indian historiographers who have written about Indian history end up imitating European historical narratives (Chakarabarty 340).

Leader of the African country, the so-called “Big Man”, breaks with his humble background by receiving a western education. Being affected by the western nationalism, he propagates the French lexicon, a specific wear style and a specific form of administration. He makes reforms by changing the infrastructure whose main symbol is the Polytechnique University in the Domain. On the other hand, he attempts to represent the oppressed by honoring African traditions such as carrying the chief’s stick (copying the tribal pattern of leadership) and sanctifying his mother (the former hotel maid) as a symbol of oppressed African woman. His government slowly develops into tyranny as he monopolizes power. Having formerly been exploited by Arabs, Europeans and lately by “other Africans”, the African settlers “refused to be ruled by the new government in the capital” (*BR* 67). Formation of the liberation army can be viewed as a form of resistance to this tyranny. Their leaflet, with the headline “The Ancestors Shriek”, is as follows:

The ANCESTORS shriek. Many false gods have come to this land, but none have been as false as the gods of today ... since war is an extension of politics we have decided to face the ENEMY with armed confrontation ... The ancestors are shrieking. If we are not deaf we can hear them. By ENEMY we mean

the powers of imperialism, the multi-nationals and the puppet powers that be, the false gods, the capitalists, the priests and teachers who give false interpretations ... Our soldiers and guardians have been given false desires and false greeds and the foreigners now qualify us everywhere as thieves. We are ignorant of ourselves and mislead ourselves ... We have forgotten the TRUTHFUL LAWS. We of the LIBERATION ARMY have received no education. We do not print books and make speeches. We only know the TRUTH, and we acknowledge this land as the land of the people whose ancestors now shriek over it. OUR PEOPLE must understand the struggle ... (BR 211-212)

If we track pronoun “we”, we realize that it is repeated several times in their leaflet. Use of this pronoun indicates a sense of collective unity. Liberation army is proud of their tribal heritage and they encourage Africans to resort to them. Pronoun “we” gives them a status of authority and validity, what they cannot achieve in the subject position that colonial apparatus ascribes to them. If we accept that discourse as cultural artifact can bring about social changes, liberation army’s leaflet is a functional social work. The leaflet forms a kind of social reality. This is different from the social reality that colonial education attempts to create. The reality created by liberation army forms an authentic subject position for the writers. The choice of pronouns and the type of footing (to use Goffman’s term) in the leaflet are indicators of a language that has been reworked to withstand domination. Liberation army in fact constructs a counter-discourse. Their nationalism stands against nationalism of the Big Man, which is a replica of western political patterns. Criticizing application of western forms of nationalism to non-western societies, Elie Kedourie finds these forms of nationalism at odds with the realities of non-western societies and an important factor in destruction of tribal order and “social and political tradition” in those societies (107). Reclaiming of the national culture has been an important way to resist colonialist grip, because one aim of colonial project has been eradication of tribal cultures (Fanon,

“National Culture” 119). Still resorting to the cultural heritage does not necessarily mean that the subaltern alone determines their historical destiny (Loomba 203).

4.1.4 Eurocentrism: “The Idea of Europe”

In *A Bend in the River*, the main setting is the unnamed African country at a bend in the river in the post-colonial time. In spite of the fact that Europe makes up only a small part of the setting, it is an omnipresent concept in the whole narrative. When Salim talks about the “magical things” that were “brought to us deep in the bush” (BR 88), when he mentions “the doers and makers and the inventors” (BR 44) or when there is a mention of the president’s photographs, printed in Europe (BR 186), the presence of Europe not only as a power but also as an idea is strongly discerned. Colonial time is over but Europe still continues disseminating its Eurocentric standards throughout the former colonies. In that Europe has established a cultural and technological touchstone which overshadows performance of post-colonial subjects. Dominance of meta-narratives have facilitated the establishment of these Eurocentric standards. At dawn of British colonization of Africa the indigenous were overwhelmed by the technology Europe introduced to them. This made them doubt their own indigenous existence. Tsenay Serequeberhan argues that the whole European philosophy, starting with Kant, has aimed at establishing a specific form of human existence as norm or real. In order to define itself as norm, this form has used non-European modes of existence as its counterpart. In other words Europe has created itself as “the real” in contrast to the “unreality” of the non-European world (89-90). All the missionary activities were undertaken with the fervor conviction that all other modes of being should be subdued by one dominant mode of existence which is the European one. This idea has been widely disseminated in the colonized countries through missionary work and colonial education, European historiography and fiction. This idea is also reflected in the Eurocentric narrative of Naipaul’s narrator.

Zabeth, the merchant, draws Salim's attention for the first time to the distribution of spaces in the photographs of the president. She reminds him that “only visiting foreigners were given equal space with the president. With local people, the President was always presented as a towering figure” (*BR* 224). People of his own tribe or even his officials appear as “dots” (*ibid.*). The photographs that the president of the African country prints in Europe are pictorial representations of separation between the “real” and the “unreal” modes of existence that colonial discourse has attempted to create. Devoting the same spatial proportion to himself as the foreigners in printed pictures, the President gets as close as he can to the centerpiece or the “reality”. Local people in the picture represent the periphery. For representing the “unreal” they occupy only a small part of the backdrop in the picture. Paying a visit to Nazruddin in London, Salim avers:

Europe no longer ruled. But it still fed us in a hundred ways with its language and sent us its increasingly wonderful goods, things which, in the bush of Africa, added year by year to our idea of who we were, gave us that idea of our modernity and development, and made us aware of another Europe – the Europe of great cities, great buildings, great universities. (*BR* 229)

Globalization has taken place in different ways. Colonization has been indeed one of them. Through colonization the non-European world was confronted for the first time with the European concept of modernity and its manifestations. As Salim observes modernity provides non-Europeans with a self-image. Associating modernity with Europe, non-European world defines its identity in relation to its lack. Europe's construct of modernity cannot exist “without a shattering of belief, without a discovery of *the lack of reality*” as Jean-François Lyotard asserts (9).

The colonial situation thrives on the binary opposition of colonizer as doer, maker and cultivator versus the colonized as representer of a state of nature. The two construct each other based on what the other one is not. This prevents both sides from having a realistic understanding of each other. Salim, hinged on the idea of a greater Europe, becomes disappointed by his first experience of Europe:

But the Europe I had come to – and knew from the outset I was coming to – was neither the old Europe nor the new. It was something shrunken and mean and forbidding. It was the Europe where Indar, after his time at the famous university, had suffered and tried to come to some resolution about his place in the world; where Nazruddin and his family had taken refuge; where hundreds of thousands of people like myself, from parts of the world like mine, had forced themselves in, to work and live. (*BR* 229)

The hegemony of the idea of a greater Europe has a devouring effect on colonial subjects. “Depressed” at the sight of the East African girls “selling cigarettes at all hours of the night” in London (*BR* 239), Salim cannot reconcile the abstract idea of Europe, which he has known from scientific magazines and children’s encyclopedias with his actual experience of Europe.

Salim's observation of the immigrant's conditions in London is an ironical reminder of Europe's consistent dominance over minds of the non-European world and the former colonial subjects. Immigration provides these subjects with a space where the fantasy of Europe and its reality confront each other. While through globalization cultural differences slowly disappear, homogenization of cultural differences does not necessarily equal cultural exchange. European culture carries on with its powerful impact on the non-European world. In the aftermath of colonization subjects still have a hard time defining an identity independent of the values which they associate with the greater Europe.

4.2.1 Impersonation in Philip Roth's *The Counterlife*

Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's alter-ego, ponders the question of impersonation in *The Counterlife*:

If there even *is* a natural being, an irreducible self, it is rather small, I think, and may even be the root of all impersonation – the natural being maybe the skill itself, the innate capacity to impersonate. I'm talking about recognizing that one is acutely a performer, rather than swallowing whole the guise of naturalness and pretending that it isn't a performance but you. (324)

According to Nathan, self is essentially nonexistent. What is defined under the name of *self* is a performance. *The Counterlife* can be considered Roth's manifesto of selfhood. But probably more than anything else the work is a tribute to Sartre and his *Being and Nothingness*. The novel expands on Sartrean existentialism. While confirming the preceding of essence with existence, the novel sets a parallel between different performances of identity and Sartre's ideas of In-Itself and For-Itself.

While yielding to For-Itself unfolds different possibilities and boosts creativity, submission to In-Itself, the given situation including the past subverts freedom of choice and leads to inertia. According to Sartre, “the possible state does not exist yet; but it is the possible state of a certain existent which sustains by its being the possibility and the non-being of its future state” (150 *Being and Nothingness*). In fact, the possibility, although still non-existent, is a *property* of the existent. By capitulation to In-Itself, one fouls up the possibility of change. Roth's parallel narratives have been attempts to demonstrate how the existent surpasses the present state in order to bring the possible to existence.

The Counterlife is the story of four parallel lives, each two belonging to one of the Zuckerman brothers, Henry and Nathan. In every parallel story, conditions of an emotional regeneration are alternatively realized for each Zuckerman brother. The setting also changes alternately from America to

Israel and from Israel to Europe. Henry Zuckerman, a dentist, considers separation from his wife and moving to Basel where his Swiss mistress lives. This is Henry's pastoral dream. A dream which he finally dismisses as a result of his surrender to In-Self, the given situation. Sartre used the metaphor of "a stone at the bottom of the river" to visualize this state which he called "immanence" (*Being and Nothingness* 113). Nathan Zuckerman, Henry's brother and the narrator, believes that it might have been the termination of this pastoral dream or the elopement with Maria to Switzerland, which later led to Henry's heart disease. Temptation of surrender to the comfortability of a ready-made choice is equal to stagnation that is symbolized by Henry's heart disease and resulting impotence.

In the first chapter named "Basel", Henry dies during heart surgery in an attempt to save his potency. In the next chapter "Judea", surviving and suffering the emotional aftermath of the same bypass surgery that led to his death in the other parallel story, Henry travels to Israel and experiences an epiphany as he hears the Jewish children chanting a Hebrew song in Mea She'arim. He decides to stay in Israel. Later he becomes a follower of the extremist Mordecai Lippman. In a separate chapter, titled "Gloucestershire", an impotent Nathan has a similar fate. He has begun an affair with a married English woman who is dissatisfied with her marital life. Nathan agrees to undergo bypass surgery in order to regain his potency and found a family with Maria. However, he dies during the surgery, leaving his pastoral dream unfulfilled.

In the last chapter, "Christendom", Nathan survives the same bypass surgery which led to his death in "Gloucestershire". In the last parallel narrative he is able to fulfill his dream of living in England with his beloved Maria. Nevertheless, his pastoral dream is frustrated by anti-Semitic encounters. These encounters lead him to another possibility which is impersonation of "a Jew without a home, just the object itself, like a glass or an apple", as he formulates it (*CL* 324). Receding back to

traditions (impersonating an orthodox Jew) is presented as a *possible* against the other possible that is impersonating a secular Jew.

Roth's parallel narratives depict the dilemma of giving in to determinism or free will. Living in America encourages them to impersonate secular Jews. Living in Israel and England encourages impersonation of the other possible that is an Orthodox Jew. By depicting the two different possibles performed by the same characters, both possibles are pictured as their properties. As stated by James Duban, Roth uses the Sartrean contrast between surrender to determinism and free will as a background to speculate the fundamental difference between authentic and inauthentic Jews. According to Duban, Roth defines inauthentic Jews as those who hinge on anti-Semitic bigotry and exclusion of Christianity as a foundation for their faith. In this respect inauthentic Jew is nourished by the same sentiments as an anti-Semite. Both groups are stagnated by their belief in the immutability of their foe. Basing their belief on sentimentality and steadiness of situation, both anti-Semite and inauthentic Jew give in to the comfortability of In-Itself, hence they leave no way for a possible change or development (43-53).

The narrative draws heavily on the Sartrean assumption that man is formed by the meaning he gives to situation and by choosing among possibilities and not vice versa (Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* 42). Moved by the chanting children in Mea She'arim, Henry echoes: "And when I heard them, there was a surge inside me, a realization – at the root of my life, the very *root* of it, *I was them*. I always *had* been them ... as though something I didn't even know I was searching for was suddenly reaching out for me." (CL 60). Henry emphasizes that even without his being *conscious* of the fact that he is a Jew like them, he had always *been* them. Consciousness and awareness of situation is a preliminary to authenticity (Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* 65). Henry's yielding to a given situation makes him an inauthentic Jew. His later cooperation with, the extremist Mordecai Lippman is another example of his passive submission to situation. He lets the situation define him as a Jew rather than actively choose his

possibilities as a man. Nathan as his brother's counterpart exemplifies an authentic Jew in this narrative. He *consciously* ponders his possibilities as a human:

All I can tell you with certainty is that I, for one, have no self ... What I have instead is a variety of impersonations I can do, and not only of myself – a troupe of players that I have internalized, a permanent company of actors that I can call upon when a self is required, an ever-evolving stock of pieces and parts that forms my repertoire. But I have no self independent of my imposturing, artistic efforts to have one. Nor would I want one. I am a theater and nothing more than a theater. (CL 320-321)

Nathan's metaphor of theater and "variety of impersonations I can do" indicates his awareness of the possibilities he can choose among. He doesn't believe in self as an essence but self as a consequence of active selection. Authenticity is in this respect like art, fulfilled by creativity and hence developing in contrast to the fixed state of a "stone", the metaphor that Sartre used for inauthentic Jews (Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* 78).

The idea of self as a performance becomes more complicated as the dimension of the social condition is taken into consideration. Both Zuckerman brothers impersonate a different self in a new situation. This provides a chance to consider this existential view of self in regard to the social interactions that supposedly form the identities (Stets & Burke 8).

Identities are the different manifestations of self in different social positions. "Thus, self as father is an identity, as is self as colleague, self as friend, and self as any of the other myriad of possibilities corresponding to the various roles one may play" (Stets and Burke 8). While the self is not essential, it is manifested as performance in different identities. In other words, identity is the name we give to a property of self being recognized and developed through a performance. In other words, identities are manifestations of situation-based performances or selves. Nathan's idea corresponds with Hannah

Arendt's understanding of human behavior based on historical and political circumstances and their demands as she, too, rejects any essentialistic view on human properties (M. Kaplan 172). This is worthy of consideration with regard to what Henry and Nathan undertake in parallel narratives set alternately in Israel and England. Each brother tries to fill in the identity gap caused by their experience of diaspora by a retreat into ethnic traditions. Through this retreat, the two brothers can claim an identity, but even this identity is contingent on social factors such as anti-Semitism.

4.2.2 “Anti-Semite Creates the Jew”

The Counterlife offers not a single Jewish identity but multiple Jewish identities. While Jewish identity is often defined in relation to Israel as the Jewish homeland, anti-Semitism and aversion to Christianity, the novel's range of Jewish identities is not necessarily contingent on a single place but on a complex set of conditions. One reason for the change of settings in the narratives is that each setting prescribes a different situation. The narratives therefore provide a chance to study the conflict between inauthenticity as a passive recline in situation and authenticity as a result of exerted decision-making and courage. Nathan Zuckerman, the secular Jew in America, becomes a fundamentalist and a propagator of circumcision in England as a reaction to the anti-Semitism he encounters there. Henry Zuckerman transforms into an observant orthodox Jew and a follower of the extremist Mordecai Lippman in Israel. As the narrative unfolds, the relationship between the situations and the self becomes more complicated, since the question transforms from how to have an original self to how to have an authentic identity.

Through different parallel narratives, identity becomes fluid. Every new context demands a new performance. Therefore, there is not merely *one* way of becoming a Jew, but there are rather *ways* of becoming a Jew. Michael Krausz rejects an essentialistic view of Jewish subjectivity in his “On Being

Jewish”: ““There is no essence of the Jewish people as such. Rather, there are people in Jewish positions, or positions that are bestowed as Jewish. Jewishness is understood as *a set of characteristic positions in which certain people are cast or ascribed – by themselves or by others.*”” (qtd. in Shostak, *Philip Roth- Countertexts, Counterlives* 112). By drawing upon different possibilities for materializing Jewish identity, the novel confirms the identity's performative nature. All possibilities are considered equally; each is being trespassed and counteracted by the other possibility. Considering his brother's adventure in moving to Israel, Nathan assumes that Henry intended “to depart from the path that had been posted with his name the day he was born” (*CL* 132). However what seems to be a huge step towards authenticity leads to stagnation in another given situation, as Henry gives in to the comfort of letting his belief be defined by hatred for Arabs. Henry needs a new context in relation to which he can define himself. The context/situation with regard to which he used to define himself was Jersey. In the other parallel narrative “Judea”, this context is Israel. During Nathan’s visit to his brother, he is surprised to hear his brother’s captious opinion of other “hellenized” Jews that live “bereft of any sort of context in which actually to be Jewish” (*CL* 111). As his use of the word “bereft” indicates, Henry considers “context” a necessary factor in the act of self-definition. In fact his inability to imagine an existence independent of the given situation is symbolized by his impotence. Impotence is the symbolic outcome of inauthenticity and the absence of creativity. Encountering anti-Semitism in England has the same effect on Nathan which exposure to the Hebrew song in Mea She'arim has on Henry. England plays the same role for Nathan that Israel does for Henry, signifying once again the entanglement of places and situations and their effect on identities. Henry's exposure to the Hebrew song, sung by the Jewish children is a situation that is hardly imaginable back home in America, where anti-Semites are not “the American Jew's biggest problem” (*CL* 54). In contrast, Nathan in “Christendom”, unconsciously reveals his freedom to choose and retreats to his ethnic roots as a payback for the

humiliations he experiences in England. “England's made a Jew of me in only eight weeks”, Nathan states (*CL* 324). The verb “made” denotes the inauthentic act of self-definition through which the Jew lets himself be defined by “the disdain of others, by having qualities and a fate *attached* to them” (Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* 78). In this respect Henry’s critique of “hellenized” Jews is not appropriate, for hellenized Jews define themselves also in relation to a historical situation. “The Jew is social” as Sartre reminded us (*Anti-Semite and Jew* 97). In fact, the “idea of the Jew” is produced ahead of experiencing him (*Anti-Semite and Jew* 8). But it is not only the anti-Semite that creates the Jew but also the Jew who lets himself be influenced by social stereotypes and labels. An inauthentic Jew does not consciously choose to be a Jew, but rather lets the anti-Semite define him as a Jew. The two brothers' parallel lives are their alternative performances as inauthentic Jews.

4.2.3 Potency, Possibility and Circumcision

In *The Counterlife*, potency is a recurring motif. Throughout his narrative, Nathan makes a connection between potency and self-invention or the possibility of change. The connection between the concept of potency and potentiality/possibility goes back to the two interpretations of the Greek word “*dunamis*” used by Aristotle. One of the four modal paradigms in the ancient philosophy is an Aristotelian paradigm of possibility as potency. Accordingly, “potency is said to be the principle of motion or change either as the activator or as the receptor of a relevant influence” (Knuuttiila). Possibilities are perceived only if they are able to be actualized and if they are “non-contradictory”. The missing part in Aristotle's paradigm is “the idea of simultaneous alternatives” (*ibid.*). *The Counterlife* draws on the idea of possibility as potency without excluding the idea of simultaneous alternatives. Before being touched by the idea of change, both brothers suffer from an impotence that is imposed on them by the beta blockers they take for their heart problem. This physical flaw becomes a symbol of

stagnation and bad faith. Both brothers in alternate narratives are deeply defined by the situations they live in. In the chapter, “Basel”, when Henry and Nathan meet each other in New York, Nathan ponders upon his brother's situation:

Impotence ... has cut him off from the simplest form of distance from his predictable life. As long as he was potent he could challenge and threaten, if only in sport, the solidity of the domestic relationship; as long as he was potent there was some give in his life between what was routine and what is taboo. But without the potency he feels condemned to an ironclad life wherein all issues are settled. (*CL* 30)

Nathan equates potency with possibility and “taboo”. Potency provides possibilities whose choice can disturb the predictability of routine. Potency is implicitly associated with power, the power to “challenge and threaten” (*ibid.*). Conversely, impotence is associated with powerlessness and passivity. Impotence cancels any possibility of break with the routine. The brothers' decision to go for the other possible (to break with routine) has two outcomes in the parallel narratives. Going through a bypass surgery to take a stand against the impotence leads to their death but also alternatively to their pursuit of the other possible. Nathan and Henry's impotence in the first place is suggested to be a result of their stagnation and bad faith. In those narratives they pay for yielding to the comfort of easy choice.

In “Christendom”, Nathan, having survived the bypass surgery, marries an English woman named Maria and moves in with her in England. However, his endeavour is disrupted by a couple of anti-Semitic encounters with his in-laws and English society. These experiences make him recede to his Jewish roots and submit to the circumcision of his unborn son. Circumcising a child inscribes tradition on their body without giving the child a chance to choose their fate. Since body cannot be separated from other matters that are associated with identity, Nathan's decision is in fact an indication of his

concern about identity and prevalence of hostile forces that push him towards a certain direction. According to Nathan, circumcision “makes it clear as can be that you are here and not there” (CL 323). Circumcision functions as a metonymy for impotence and the passive submission to the ready-made possible. Nathan acknowledges widespread presence of anti-Semitism but also his surrender to those factors that try to define him as a Jew. Nathan neither defines himself, nor does he let his son define himself. So the decision marks the son's existence even before his birth. This decision signifies an anxious yielding to bad faith. Hostility and xenophobia become basis for identity of an unborn child before his exposure to such forces. In that Nathan typifies inauthentic Jew.

Conception of identity as the outcome of a willfully-fulfilled property is shattered in face of anti-Semitism. At a restaurant a lady who sits a few tables far from Nathan announces. “Open a window ... You must open a window immediately – there's a terrible smell in here” (CL 291), Nathan knows immediately that “I am that stink” (ibid.). Shortly before this encounter Maria's sister had revealed to him: “I do think Maria ought to have told you that she is from the sort of people who, if you knew anything about English society, you would have *expected* to be anti-Semitic.” (CL 280). These encounters touch a cord with Nathan. Having realized the naiveté of a belief in the possibility of fulfilling pastoral dreams, he remarks: “Virginal they [the newlyweds] may wish to be, but the worm in the dream is always the past, that impediment to all renewal” (CL 310). The term “past” is noteworthy here. The term “past” is the cause of the ready-made possible. The past or what went before affects the present. James Duban, drawing on Roth's essay “Juice or Gravy?” suggests that Roth uses the metaphor of gravy to indicate the stickiness of the past in contrast to the fluidity of future. The past stands for determinism, stagnation and projects that are temporally beyond our reach, while the future for free-will, creativity and possibility of change (76). Nathan believes that the past's effect on the future (and the dreams that are to fulfill in the future) is more powerful than man's will.

If Nathan's Jewish origin is not his main concern in the beginning, it turns out to be his obsession after his argument with Maria's sister. Nathan begins to play the Jew against the “other” of not only his in-laws but also the xenophobic English society that makes a Jew out of him. He asserts that England has made a Jew of him, “a Jew without Jews ... just the object itself, like a glass or an apple” (CL 324). The objects Nathan names are both complete products. They remind us of Sartre’s metaphor of stone for inertia. They both have little potentials for change just as the irreversibly of a removed foreskin. Nathan compares his stance to these objects’. With this hint he abandons the possibility of flight to future or For-Itself. Nathan makes himself an object of the intolerable situation (anti-Semitism). In practicing Jewish traditions he is not motivated by Jewish values but by bigotry and hatred. In that his advocacy of Jewish traditions is similar to an anti-Semite’s yielding to anti-Semitism. Both are characterized by sentiments, stagnation and inauthenticity.

4.2.4 A Jew like a Glass or an Apple

As stated in the last section, both traditional Jew and anti-Semite are characterized by inertia, since their belief is based on a “non-reflective” negation rather than reflective production. Both are results of a passive surrender to bad faith. Nathan’s symbols of the non-reflective Jewishness are glass or apple for their ready-made nature that leaves little place for flexibility.

Selection of different places as the settings of the parallel narratives in *The Counterlife* serves as an opportunity to raise the issue of conflict between Jews of Diaspora and Jews of Aliyah, Jews who do not define their Jewishness with regard to a specific land and Jews who do define their affiliation with regard to a specific place. This covers the main theme in “Judea”. At Carol's request, Nathan travels to Israel to look for his brother, Henry. He finds out that Henry has become a fervent follower of the extremist Mordecai Lippman. On this trip, he juxtaposes a range of different positions on the issue of

Diaspora, also providing different interpretations of Jewishness. This range extends from Shuki, the moderate “patriot” and propagator of peace in the Israeli state, to the extremist Mordecai Lippman, who believes that making peace in Israel is possible only through violence, to Jimmy Ben-Joseph, the propagator of *Forget Remembering [the holocaust]*. This serves to add to the different positions that Henry and his brother consequently have in regard to not only the Jewish state but also to Jewishness.

In his long conversation with Shuki's father, Nathan expresses his position as an American Jew devoid of any urge to define himself in relation to Israel. He believes that “to be a Jew that I was, . . . , which was neither more nor less than the Jew I wished to be, I didn't need to live in a Jewish nation” (CL 53). Nathan acts as Roth’s mouthpiece. Roth considers Holocaust an excuse to behave as a victim, the role that anti-Semite would gladly prescribe to him. Acting as a victim is in conflict with reflective aspirations that encourage flight to the future. In a similar way defining one’s identity based on inheritance or sufferings of a group of people is in accord with In-Itself. Jimmy Ben-Joseph’s motto “Forget Remembering” reflects a similar concern about giving in to the past. Limiting one’s own living space to a specific geography based on a promise in the Old Testament is akin to the same sentiments for which anti-Semite assumes “his place in the world has been marked out in advance, that it awaits him, and that tradition gives him the right to occupy it” (Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* 38). In both these attitudes there is a rigidity that is only comparable to rigidity of solid objects symbolized by glass or apple. These objects symbolize the fixity of In-Itself that is everything which For-Itself is not. Surrender to such an attitude objects creativity that is preliminary to freedom of choosing other possibles.

Conclusion

Colonial subjects and Jews are both victims of discrimination. Colonial subject's mimicry of the colonizer and Jewish surrender to In-Itself are different mechanisms provided with different contexts. If we look at these two mechanisms more precisely we would realize that, in spite of their difference both are initiated as outcomes of subject's reaction to a situation whose basis is discrimination. Mimicry helps us understand colonial subject's attempt at becoming one with colonizer. In a similar way, comprehending condition of modern Jewish identity intersects our apprehension of existentialist concepts of For-Itself and In-Itself. What makes their situations similar is the inferiority based on which both these groups construct their identity. An inferiority which is the direct outcome of a historical discrimination. "Inferiority complex" is the term Frantz Fanon used in "The Negro and Language" to describe the black condition. Sartre applied the same term in *Anti-Semite and Jew* to explain Jewish identity in response to historical conditions. Identity dynamics of colonial subjects mirror the degradation they went through during colonial time and later. Likewise, Jewish identity is constructed by anti-Semite's narration that is based on hatred and fear. Both groups' "sense of self ... as an authentic subject" can be called into question (Daschălu 95) as a result of exposure to hostile forces such as racism and anti-Semitism, since both groups are in danger of defining themselves with regard to the hatred and discrimination. Establishing an authentic self that is unblemished by any of those factors is a challenge for both groups in a world where "racial" and ethnic discrimination still exist. In such a world maintaining creativity and freedom of choice requires *conscious* effort.

5 DEVIANCE IN THE (POST)COLONY

V. S. Naipaul's *A Flag on the Island* and Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*

This chapter focuses on those aspects in which diasporic characters of Roth and Naipaul manifest cultural deviance. I would like to shed light on the characters' deviance in relation to their experience of racism and colonialism. To pursue this objective, I have applied a sociological approach to otherwise post-colonial readings of V. S. Naipaul's *A Flag on the Island* and Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*.

Robert A. Dentler and Kai T. Erikson generally define deviance as a “behaviour which violates institutionalized expectations, that is, expectations which are shared and recognized as legitimate within a social system” (Farrell & Swigert 25). Erikson believes that deviance is never in line with normal practices of a society and for this reason it should be restrained. While deviance has been traditionally considered a waste product of the society, Emile Durkheim considers it “a factor in public health, [and] an integrative element in any healthy society”. According to Durkheim, low crime rate in a society leads to social stasis inasmuch as it suggests the persistence of strong forces of suppressive authority. In addition, he finds it impossible to clear a society completely of its crimes (98-101).

While some sociologists apply this concept mostly in their study of youth, drug and sex crimes, some others like Louis Wirth apply it to the field of immigration. Wirth elaborates on the cultural conflicts experienced by immigrants. He maintains that the immigrant's delinquency is more understandable if it is considered in the dual cultural context they live in, since what they find in their family and community is not a uniform set of “sentiments, traditions, and practices but conflicting currents of culture and divergent social codes bidding for the participation and allegiance of its members” (275). The result is a social-psychological stress whose effect might be uplifted through

“socially unapproved methods” that are considered deviant by the “larger system” (Farrell & Swigert 269).

In line with Wirth's notion, Thorsten Sellin finds the existence of different cultures a source of deviance in itself on the grounds that what is regarded as a norm in one culture can be considered a deviant behavior in the other one (ibid.). Olufunsho Nwabuzor regards post-colonial societies, besides the “formerly colonialist” countries, spaces where the diasporic subject is considered to be a deviant and a threat to the “normative categorizations” of identity. Initiated by the “global migrations of people, goods and ideas” in the colonial time, this situation is still strengthened through exercise of power in those societies, resulting in “psychological distress” and “physical repercussions” (V1-487). An example of this mechanism is the extermination of Jews in Germany under National Socialism. Germany, being formerly a colonial power, implemented a similar discriminatory ideology in the construction of the normative, according to which Jews were considered deviant (Keim 109-188). Having this in mind, we can have a better understanding of diasporic characters of Roth and Naipaul, whose non-conformity to the normative of their society makes them be considered deviant or betrayer. In the following section, I will elaborate on this in detail.

5.1.1 Deviance in Philip Roth and V. S. Naipaul

In the works of Roth and Naipaul, deviance is predominantly a response to discriminatory social laws that target people of color and ethnic minorities and prevent them from integration into society and social and economic progress. The most obvious example of this is racism that is still persistent in post-colonial spaces. Diasporic subjects are most vulnerable to those discriminatory laws, because they often slip through the hegemonic category of “white race”.

Kirsten McKenzie, in *Scandal in the Colonies*, maintains that “colonial spaces” rendered a “power of inversion” which enabled people in those spaces to “reinvent themselves” and to forge new identities (qtd. in Jackson and Manktelow 4). People still “reinvent themselves” in those spaces that are nowadays *post*-colonial. But why should they reinvent themselves?

In this chapter, I propose that mimicry, passing and conversion as different forms of ethnic/“racial” cultural deviance are strategies developed by the deprived or cultural outsiders to overcome discrimination. These strategies are inevitable in (post-)colonial sites, due to the prevalence of “racial” and/or ethnic discrimination in those spaces. We should keep in mind that deviance in this sense is twofold. It facilitates evading discrimination on the one hand, but, on the other hand, it means an abandonment of the former ways of life which are rooted in ethnic/“racial” culture. In its study of deviance, this chapter tries to acknowledge these two aspects, as they are represented in the works of Roth and Naipaul. The first part concerns Naipaul's *A Flag on the Island* (abbreviated as *AFI*), whereas the second part deals with Roth's *The Human Stain* (abbreviated as *HS*).

5.1.2 Deprivation and Conversion in *My Aunt Gold Teeth* and *A Christmas Story*

In the works of Naipaul, the theme of deviance is intensely related to the experience of colonization. In *A Flag on the Island*, one can see the impact of colonization on the religious behavior of colonial subjects as a manifestation of “material and social conflicts” (Viswanathan 4) in the (post)colonies. A good example of this is conversion. The colonizer introduces cultural variety and new religion to the colonies through “missionary activities” (Viswanathan 1) and education in order to establish its power over the colonies. In this part, I draw upon Naipaul's *A Flag on the Island* to demonstrate how conversion in (post-)colonial spaces, while strengthening colonial power, also functions as a means of accessibility to the same privileges which “white” colonizers have access to. These conversions or

religious transgressions make up a form of cultural deviance due to the disintegrating effect they have on the cultural unity of the colonized. Here, I would like to point out that the application of a single term such as colony or postcolony in the analysis of the short stories and the novella of the collection is not always possible on account of some missing information, such as place and date. Therefore, I prefer to use the term (post)colony in my study of the work.

Conversion is not only the change of “one belief system” for the other, it is also an acceptance of the institution that is behind the new belief system, as Achille Mbembe maintains. He uses the metaphor of “stripping down to the skin” to show “the abandonment of familiar landmarks, cultural and symbolic” and their replacement with new thoughts and conduct on the part of the convert as a requirement in the act of conversion (228). The convert is therefore vulnerable to a set of conflicts, including social and cultural conflicts.

Cultural conflicts caused by an exposure to colonial discourse are manifest in most of the short stories and in the novella of the collection *A Flag on the Island*. This is probably depicted at best in *My Aunt Gold Teeth* and *A Christmas Story*. At the beginning of his narration in *My Aunt Gold Teeth*, the narrator attests: “Presbyterianism was not the only danger the good Hindu had to face in Cunupia. Besides, of course, the ever present threat of open Muslim aggression, the Catholics were to be reckoned with. Their pamphlets were everywhere and it was hard to avoid them” (AFI 10). The narrator delves into the life of his Hindu aunt, unveiling the development of her secret devotion to Christianity, which is described as “schizophrenia” and “addict[ion]” (AFI 11). Aunt Gold Teeth's mingling of Hinduism and Christianity is an example of the colonial subject's mimicry of the colonizer. Still in returning the eye of power, her act of piety is not authentic anymore due to the difference it entails. Aunt Gold Teeth does not convert to Christianity, but instead, by bringing Christian elements to her Hindu practices, she hybridizes both religions, “rewriting” and “redistributi[ng]” both the old and the

new belief systems (Mbembe 229). Aunt Gold Teeth, in fact, manifests her subjectivity somewhere between a complete loss of her religious identity as a Hindu and her weak devotion to it. In that, her mimicry is a transgression of both belief systems.

In *A Christmas Story*, Randolph (the former Choonilal) converts to Presbyterianism, a change which enables him to get a teaching position in a Presbyterian school. Juxtaposing his old religion with the new one, Randolph is convinced of the superiority of Christian rites over Buddhist rituals, which he finds “backward” (AFI 26). Devotion to his new religion cuts him off from family and relatives. His conversion is a manifestation of domination of colonial dialectic according to which Buddhism and other religions in the (post)colonies are considered “false religions” (qtd. in Samaroo 99), originating from an underdeveloped civilization (Samaroo 94). Randolph, as a colonial subject, reflects this attitude in his evaluation of the way his relatives view him for his social advancement, imagining himself “getting *above* (my italics) them” (AFI 29).

As Randolph asserts, conversion gives people “of limited means and limited education ... a distinct advantage” (AFI 25), a means of climbing the social and economic ladder; since only by becoming a Christian one can have access to educational institutions in the (post)colony (Samaroo 103). The colonial system imposes social sanctions on its unconverted subjects by providing exclusively those who are converted with education. Randolph touches implicitly upon the discriminating nature of colonial system. His conversion to Presbyterianism eliminates the deprivations he suffered as an underprivileged colonial subject. An emphasis on the possibilities that are open to him through his new religion highlights the role of deprivation in the conversion of Hindus in Trinidad. Religion literally becomes, in the hands of the colonizer, a means of augmenting power over the colonies.

In the exclusion of Randolph by his family, one can see traces of an absolutism according to which Presbyterianism is regarded as a fringe religion to their Hinduism. Charles Glock, in “The Role

of Deprivation in the Origin and Evolution of Religious Groups”, defines deprivation as different ways a subject feels underprivileged compared to other group members, followed by a desire to remove those sanctions. Charles Glock names three different types of deprivation: social deprivation as an “absence of societal rewards such as power and status”, organic deprivation as subjection to a physical and mental disability and psychic deprivation as a “feeling of [not] being satisfied with or accepted by society”. He concludes that religious conversion is a way of surmounting these three types of deprivation. In other words, religions, however fringe and deviant, will attract followers as long as they are able to lift such sanctions (149-50). On the other hand, existence of such fringe religions fortifies the established religions by uniting followers of the established religions against those fringe (deviant) religions (qtd. in Perrin 139-40). In pursuit of eradicating social and economic deprivation, the colonial subjects cross religious boundaries. Conversion to Christianity, even if bringing very humble advantages, was necessary to find a niche in the colonies (Mac Dermott 255). Eliminating any signs of Hinduism in the colonial world, therefore, becomes a necessity for those subjects whose livelihood depends on an improvement of their social status.

The exchange of religions for material advancement added even more complications to the life of Indian Hindus in the Caribbean, since a change in their religious beliefs could also imply a change in their lifestyle, abandonment of old customs and also cutting family ties. Passage from Hinduism to Presbyterianism also initiated a transition from an agricultural lifestyle to a bureaucratic one, from extended family to single family and from collectivism to individualism. While all the family members work on the land, Randolph's conversion helps him find a teaching position at a Presbyterian school. Besides causing internal conflicts, this also leads to his exclusion from the family. He finds Buddhism and its customs inferior, embarrassing and primitive: He thinks that “the leg-revealing” dhoti makes “the wearer ridiculous”. He finds the “cow”, the Hindu object of admiration, “far filthier than the pig”,

but he does not deny that eating beef has been a burden on him. He takes pleasure in his new religion, but he is also afraid of looking like “the over-zealous convert” in the eyes of his own people whom he now distances himself from, referring to them as “these people” (*AFI* 26-30). As we delve more into the life story of the new convert, it turns out to be an ironical confession of doubt and cultural conflict.

The way a society regards a minority group can also be a reason for the rejection of those group members who pick up “outgroup behaviors” (Cheryan et al. 3). Adoption of behaviors that are typically linked to the colonizer can cause banishment and exclusion of the betrayer by their kin. The main reason for those rejections and exclusions on the part of kin is that such deviations strengthen “status hierarchies”. Involvement in a high status group is an automatic negation of customs which are associated with the lower status group. Therefore, family members who adopt behavior of the “high status” group (in this case the “white” colonizer) are detested and banned on account of hindering the group status advancement (qtd. in Cheryan et al. 3-4). Randolph's conversion to Presbyterianism obviously puts him in the same league with the “white” colonizer. This causes different reactions from his relatives. When Hori, a relative, talks ironically of Randolph's “progress”, Randolph interprets Hori's ridiculing inquiries as an expression of contempt for someone who is “getting above themselves” (*AFI* 29). Ironically, Hori's prosperity in the truck business makes Randolph nervous and sad. Conversion to Presbyterianism does not bring about the progress he had expected to achieve. Altogether, conversion to Christianity as one of “the colonial practices of ... [the] civilizing mission” as Bhabha ironically calls it (“Sly Civility” 96) jeopardizes solidarity and integrity of the Hindu family in the Caribbean.

The persistence of missionaries in the colonies even after their independence is a cultural instance of neo-colonialism. The aim of such missionaries was obviously enlightenment and improvement of “living standards” (Nkrumah xv), whereas in reality these missionaries, as “the ecclesiastical arm of the

western colonial power” (Cooper 4), guaranteed continuity of colonial establishment in the postcolony. By providing education only to converts, they strengthened inequality of access to a better social status. Randolph, after attending Kedar's wedding, reflects on his own position, comparing it to his. Being over forty he does not have the opportunity to get married, a change that “would have come to me at the age of twenty or thereabouts”, he ponders (*AFI* 31). He also wonders if his “superiors” and his students bestow on him the same respect that his relatives have for his profession. In those moments of helplessness, Randolph calls the righteousness of his conversion to the new religion into question. Submission to the colonial cause and doubting it at the same time is an inevitable experience. Living these contradictions, he is torn between two cultural currents and religions. These contradictions on the part of the colonial subject undermine the success of the colonial project.

5.1.3 Deviance and Decadence in *A Baker's Story* and *A Flag on the Island*

On deviance in the (post)colonies, there has not been much said, and those texts which have dealt with this topic have focused mostly on acts of deviance committed by the “white” in the colonies. One example is *Subverting Empire: Deviance and Disorder in the British Colonial World* by Will Jackson and Emily Manktelow. The author's argument is based on the assumption that colonial spaces, as sites of reinvention, enable “white” people to make a new life in the colonies (4). In this part, I focus merely on acts of deviance committed by colonial subjects in the colonies. I would like to suggest that the colonial subject's partial repetition of colonial discourse through mimicry is a cause of deviance in and of itself. The colonial subject's internalization of “white” cultural and “racial” hierarchy as the norm also means making an effort on the part of the colonial subject to proceed socially in alignment with that hierarchy. However, the attempt to fit into that hierarchy sometimes leads to the application of deviant methods. These deviant methods have a double effect: on the one hand they boost colonial

power, because they serve to establish norms set up by the colonizer, on the other hand they stealthily manipulate those norms in favor of the deviant's social progress by making that stigma invisible.

In the short stories and the novella of the collection *A Flag on the Island*, mimicry is represented in different forms, including conversion as in *A Christmas Story* (see above) and internalization of “racial” hierarchies as in *The Baker's Story*. In *The Baker's Story*, the “black” narrator explains how he could get rich by devising strategies to outwit the “racial” hierarchy. *The Baker's Story* is the story of a baker who realizes that in order to be successful in his business he should hide himself from the customers by standing in the kitchen and instead placing Chinese as sales people at the counter. When the baker asks Percy, a “black” person like himself, “why he didn't like black people meddling with his food in public places”, he gets the reply: “It don't look nice” (AFI 122). Percy accepts the “white supremacy” and “black” inferiority as the norm, or a “truth” (Ashcroft et al. *Key Concepts* 85). Discovery of the dominant “racial” codes on the island as a reason for his business failure leads to the development of a manipulative strategy to outwit those codes.

Mr. Blackwhite, in *A Flag on the Island*, does something similar in his texts. He is a famous local author on the island who tries to publish his stories in the United States. The problem with his stories is that his texts are all about “white” people, while he is himself “black”. As his stories get rejected one after another by American publishers, the postman who brings his manuscripts back to him reads them aloud to Mr. Blackwhite's neighbors. They discover his stories are all about “only lords and ladies” (AFI 160), a reminder of Victorian novels. The irony lies in the existence of many social problems that exist on the island which the author does not find intriguing enough to write about. Mr. Blackwhite, already obsessed with his English lords and ladies, comes back from England with even more English manners. Frank, the narrator of the story, remarks: “The trouble, ..., Blackwhite, ... is that you are not

black at all ... you are not only white. You are English. All those lords and ladies, Blackwhite. All that Jane Austen” (AFI 163).

Blackwhite, as his name suggests, represents the binary nature of the colonial situation which is based on an opposition between center and periphery. Having internalized a Eurocentric perspective, he repeats the tyrannical “discourse of power” as a “superior cultural model” (Ashcroft et al., *The Empire* 8-9). Blackwhite's toing and froing between Eurocentrism and native culture revival represents the entrapping effect of colonial discourse by producing subjects whose identity depends a lot on the colonizer. This lack of an independent identity is also symbolized by the flaglessness of the island. Colonial discourse is the only available resource to the subject and in that it is quite unitary (Mbembe 25). As a result, Blackwhite rewrites and repeats the colonial “discourse of English literature” as the only “universal” truth. In this unitary view, there is no place for difference and even universalism equals Eurocentrism (Ashcroft et al., “Universality and Difference” 71-72).

Blackwhite tries to shift his focus from lords and ladies to a revival of local culture and language. This change, however, remains superficial, as he hangs a sign on his door, saying PATIOS TAUGHT HERE. Blackwhite's shift to local culture, while he still writes in the English language, is an allusion to the writers of Negritude movement. Negritude here is an inclusive term with reference to all people of color suffering from the oppression of colonialism, as Damas envisaged it (Diagne). Blackwhite stands for those Caribbean authors who, being supporters of “the nativist position” (Jeyifo 64) are still fed by the “white” self-indulgence (Diagne). Negritude in the hands of these writers is lessened to mere “sentimentalism and romanticism” without any “constructive” effect on the life of colonial subjects (Ischinger 25). “Once you were all white, and that wasn't true. Now you are trying to be all black and that isn't true either. You are really a shade of grey, Blackwhite” (AFI 174); Frank reminds Blackwhite of a realism missing in his approach to the problem of native culture. This is a confirmation of Fanon's

view of Negritude as a counterpart of “white cultural supremacy”, another form of racism which functions based on the same binary oppositions that “white” racism is nourished by (Bhabha, “Forward” xxiii).

The color “grey” deconstructs the binary opposition of “Black/White” by being a mixture of “black” and “white” and yet being none of them. Gray symbolically represents a realistic approach to the matter of “race”, denying both “white supremacy” and Negritude as two extremes of one axis. Gray represents an ideal. Blackwhite is, nevertheless, far from this ideal, swinging between the two extremes of mimicking the colonizer and a sentimental return to the native culture that does not go beyond an encouragement to learn Patios. Ironically, the author himself does not use Patios as a literary means. He continues writing his stories in English as he is asked to do by his English patrons (Mahesh 302).

Mr. De Ruyter tries to convince Blackwhite to attend Cambridge or Oxford, listing its advantages: “You will cross the Atlantic. You will sail down the Thames. You will see the Tower of London. You will see snow and ice. You will wear an overcoat. You will look good in an overcoat” (AFI 185). After coming back from England, he enthusiastically pursues native cultural revival. However, shows of tribal dances performed in his place lack originality. His manners and conduct are obviously British. His endeavour lacks any sense of originality, being rather a reflection of a reflection. His new pursuit ends up being an act of mimicry and a mockery of Negritude; it proves dysfunctional in its use of similar assumptions that the “white” colonizer has used in their study of colonial subject that is racialization.

The tension between these two extremes (a superficial adherence to the native culture and submission to colonial discourse) is heightened, as the news of a forming hurricane reaches the island. The settlers indulge in performing what seems to be a tribal dance, demonstrating the long hidden “tribal subconscious”. Frank observes:

We all began to dance. We saw dances such as we had seen in the old days in Henry's yard ... We danced with earnestness. We did contortions of which we had never thought ourselves capable. We saw Blackwhite dancing with Leonard, Blackwhite not white, not black, but Blackwhite as we all would have liked to see him, a man released from endeavour, released from the strain of seeing himself (portrait of the artist: the tribal subconscious), at peace with the world, accepting, like Leonard. (*AFI* 211)

The dancing performance as a collective act has a unifying effect, deconstructing division of the colonial world between the two ends of the axis. The hurricane never fully forms, yet its idea is present. It is the good tidings of change in the postcolonies. It symbolizes a world where “racial” hierarchies and dominance have become extinct, where the idea of a greater Europe is not the colonial subject's obsession anymore, a world where there is no “black” or “white” but a shade of gray. In this apocalyptic epiphany, the novella rejects any narcissistic binary division of “races” as a conclusive solution to the colonial problem as exemplified by the Negritude movement; instead, it finds the solution in the construction of “a society without race” (Sartre, *Orphée Noir* xl ff.).

5.2.1 “White Supremacy” and Formation of Folk Devil

Coleman Silk, protagonist of *The Human Stain*, is a retired professor of classics and dean of faculty at Athena College in the Berkshires. When two of his students do not show up in the classroom, he asks his students: “Do they exist or are they spooks?” (*HS* 6). The term “spooks” gains a specific importance here for its double meaning, since the two students turn out to be “black”. After being accused of racism by the two African American students, Coleman resigns. Soon after, his wife dies of a stroke. Coleman believes that the shock of accusations against him has caused her death. He starts an affair

with a 34-year-old janitor of Athena College, named Faunia Farley. This is when Nathan Zuckerman, the famous author, makes friends with Coleman. This time Coleman is criticized by the Athena feminist academics, including his former colleague Delphine Roux, who sends him an anonymous letter warning him against “exploiting an abused, illiterate woman half ... [his] age” (*HS* 38). Coleman's secret is disclosed as Nathan delves into the life of the former professor. Coleman Silk has been a “black” American passing as a Jew. As the story unfolds, questions about Coleman's life give way to a critique of the American society and war politics.

It is 1998 and Nathan begins his narration of Coleman Silk's tragedy against a background of Bill Clinton's impeachment over an affair with Monica Lewinsky. This story in the background functions as a support for the critical questions which the narrative gives rise to. In his evaluation of Coleman, Nathan ponders:

Delphine Roux – I won't pretend I understand why she should care so passionately who you are screwing in your retirement, but since we know that other people don't do well with somebody who fails at being conventional, let's assume that she is one of those other people. But you're not. You're free. A free and independent man. A free and independent old man. You lost plenty quitting that place, but what about what you've gained? It's no longer your job to enlighten anyone – you said as much yourself. Nor is this a test of whether you can or cannot rid yourself of every last social inhibition. (*HS* 41)

Nathan's statement unfolds two important points. First is the role of conventions, or norms, in confining individuals; second is the role an individual plays in taking fate into his own hands by transgressing those social norms or conventions. It is obvious that Nathan, the celebrator of authenticity, should find freedom precious, since he knows that authenticity is contingent on freedom. Coleman's freedom has not been achievable without trespassing against those norms. The “racial” incident turns him into an

outcast, while at the same time making him less vulnerable to the limitations under which other people around him would suffer. Nathan compares and contrasts Coleman's achievement to the price which he has paid, concluding in an affirmative tone that “social inhibition” is not a confining factor in his life any more.

Proving his hypothesis by referring to mythology, Nathan claims that society is always in need of a “monster” to function as a scapegoat, as the embodiment of all evil things, to stand as an “Other” to their “virtue” (*HS* 42). Social types are recognized only within a framework of values and norms. This framework is a regime of truth, where a person is either recognized or challenged. Although an individual’s account of themselves can be diverse, it cannot take place as long as it is not recognizable within a specific regime of truth. So individuals try to make their account recognized by submitting to the norms based on which that regime of truth recognizes types. Attempting to be recognized within the social framework, individuals are not only subjected to the regime of truth that has made this recognition possible in the first place but also function as its agent (Butler 22-26). Recognition of others can also take place only within this framework. I would like to bring this view into my analysis of the social status of African Americans. In chapter two I underlined the dominance of colonial values in the aftermath of colonialism. In line with it I will argue that black passing is another manifestation of the dominance of colonial values in the American society.

Racial passing in the classical form is defined in relation to African Americans who live as white as their skin color allows them. There is a reverse relationship between African American’s equal integration into the American economy and passing (Godfrey & Young 1). Unlike earlier predictions passing has not decreased in the post-segregation era. It has just gained other forms. Nowadays other forms of passing such as white passing for black and gay passing for straight are more common. But this does not mean that racism against African Americans has stopped to exist in the American society.

Racism manifests itself in different areas including criminal justice as the US Senate member Tim Scott illustrated in his speech in 2016.

I consider racial passing a form of delinquency caused by regular experience of racial discrimination. According to general strain theory (GST) experience of stress and strain causes negative feelings such as depression and anger. These feelings urge the subject to look for some “corrective actions” which could possibly be realized in the form of crime or delinquency (Brezina). Stress can be caused by different factors. GST categorizes these factors into three main types. First type is signified by its preventive effect on reaching a valued objective in long term or short term. Second type consists of factors that either take away the positively valued objective or threaten to do so. Factors of third type are signified by exposure to an unpleasant stimuli. Acts of racial discrimination mostly belong to the third type (Burt 26). But we should not downgrade the importance of the two other factors. Fulfillment of dreams such as getting a proper education in the Jim Crow era or pursuing a successful academic career in the time of racial segregation have been equally difficult for a black person. Explicit racial discrimination and segregation in educational field are preventive factors. In this regard black passing would provide blacks with a way to conquer preventives or boycotts legitimized by the dominant regime of truth. In a social system where only white people are defined and recognized as norm, the coloured would attempt to gain recognition by either challenging that social system or through delinquency. Racial passing has been a delinquent way to deal with a systematic discrimination of other colors.

Coleman Silk's role in the spooks case carries him into the center of a moral panic about racism. This permits the Athena society to label him as a “monster” figure, a folk devil. This also paves the way for their next acts of labeling. The irony of Coleman's story lies in his passing as a Jew. He hides his “race” as a “black” man in order to overcome the racist labeling and the consequent stigmatization

associated with that “race”. While passing as a “white” Jew, he is labeled a racist and later a sexual predator. These acts of labeling hint at the instability of “terms of identity, the very terms of recognizability” (Franco 67) which define us as a social subject. These terms are unavoidable as far as they facilitate categorization of social subjects. Coleman achieves individual freedom by “let[ting] them think” (*HS* 133) he is a “white” Jew. His strategy enables him to receive recognition in a dominantly white system. He uses this recognition, however, to outwit those codes and to secure a partial freedom.

Coleman Silk’s instance can be studied not only as a case of discrimination indicated delinquency but also as a manifestation of social labeling and stigmatization whereby the discriminatory system strengthens its regime of truth. Every society is in need of an “Other”, a deviant, a folk devil. Folk devils are “social types” constructed by society to demonstrate what the normal example should be like. Folk devils are, in fact, “visible reminders of what we should not be” (S. Cohen 2). This is why we know the folk devil even before their appearance. They are “the reverse image, the alternative to all we know: the negation” (Hall et al. 161). According to Steven Hayle, the term does not necessarily denote the persistence of an evil feature in that “social type” but rather underlines how that type is regarded and labeled by society (1126). Nathan Zuckerman, the narrator of Coleman’s instance, calls this mechanism the “tyranny of the we that is dying to suck you in, the coercive, inclusive, historical, inescapable moral *we* with its insidious *E pluribus unum*” (*HS* 108). Coleman's substitution of “race” with “the cultural category ... of the Jew” brings the essentialism of these categories into question (Shostak, *Philip Roth- Countertexts, Counterlives* 153), echoing James Baldwin's assertion that “white being, [is] absolutely, a moral choice (for there *are* no white people)” (180). By burying him as a Jew, Coleman's children “whiten him into invisibility” (Basu 61).

While theorists like Ruth Frankenburg consider “race” rather a “social-mental construct” (69) affected by social, political and historical factors (148), Babacar M’Baye reminds us of the “structural racism” which, despite the idea of “race” as a social construct, is still persistent in American society and is even overshadowed by the “myth of post-racialism” (1).

Karin Brodtkin highlights the slipperiness of the concept of “race” in American society by drawing upon some examples from American history. Referring to Jews as an ethnic group that has fallen from time to time under the categories of “black” or “white”, she states that the Jews have developed a “kind of double vision” which is caused by their “racial middleness” (1-2). In 1946, when Coleman decides to pass as a Jew, the Jewish American people were newly accepted as the “white race”. They were still subject to anti-Semitism. Still Coleman prefers this middle status to being “black”, being content with the relative freedom that it would grant him (B. Kaplan 176). Coleman's strategy enables him to outwit and overcome the effects of black stigmatization and racial discrimination.

Passing signifies a kind of crossing through boundaries of “race”, gender or class to substitute oppressive effects of one identity with the benefits of another identity (Ginsberg 3). Passing racial, sexual, gender or class orientation aims to avoid defamation or discreditation in general (Hitch 124, Rohy 219, Goffman 42), but racial passing as a specific form of passing is closely connected to the legacy of colonial values.

In America, capitalism and the question of “race” mutually depend on each other (Loomba 110). Both Stanley Cohen and Cornel West emphasize the role of media in the maintenance of racism (*Folk Devils* xxxvi, “The New Cultural” 71). As “agents of control” (S. Cohen 33), the media strengthens the prevalent ideology which is also represented by cultural institutions. This in turn intensifies internalization of “racial” stereotypes. Black has often historically been linked with delinquency. Black

has in fact acted as an scapegoat, representing the “monster” of American society to use Nathan’s metaphor. Over-representation of black minorities at different stages of juvenile justice system is still an actual topic. In *Bizarre Foods: White Privilege and the Neocolonial Palate*, Casey Kelly argues that the popular culture's utilization of the concept of “Otherness” restores it to its older position, normalizing “white dominance” worldwide. Showing how the US media minimizes “racial”/ethnic tolerance to the consumption of exotic things (his example is exotic dishes), Casey Kelly criticizes this form of “neoliberal multiculturalism” for its disregard for the colonial heritage. The impact of this heritage is still felt not only in the construction of the relationship between “‘first’ and ‘third’” world but also in the construction of “the Other” based on a Eurocentric view of binary opposition between us and them in the country (43-61). Depiction of tolerance at the consumption level hides the racist realities of everyday life. As long as this tolerant image of the American society is prevalent, the “white” can enjoy their unquestioned status, whereas the coloured remain stigmatized.

Coleman's sister, Ernestine, informs Nathan that Coleman's decision to pass as “white” was made “years before the civil rights movement”, even before “those amendments [that] eliminated segregation in the public schools and in the National Guard” were completely put into practice. Finding Coleman's passing a common practice for “black” Americans at that time, she refers to movies about the topic such as *Pinky* (1949) and *Lost Boundaries* (1949) (HS 322-323).

Ernestine’s reference to *Pinky* and *Lost Boundaries* links Coleman’s life story with the other cinematic characters depicted in the mentioned movies. *Pinky* is a light-skinned “black” girl who comes back to her old neighborhood after graduating from a nursing school in the North. She confesses to her grandmother that she had passed for white during her studies and that she is in love with a white doctor. *Pinky* has the intention to head back to the North, but her grandmother (Granny Johnson) persuades her to stay and nurse Miss Em, a wealthy old white lady. Miss Em dies, leaving her mansion

to Pinky. Miss Em's relatives sue Pinky but the court votes in her favor. Pinky decides to transform the mansion to a clinic and nursery school. Unlike Pinky who decides against passing, Dr. Scott Carter and his wife, the black characters of *Lost Boundaries* decide to pass for white for the sake of a better job opportunity. United States enters World War II, as a result of which Scott applies for officer status with the Navy. However due to a background check, he is rejected. This event compels Scott and his wife to tell their children the truth about their passing. Being a literary descendent of *Pinky* and *Lost Boundaries*, *The Human Stain* repeats a similar thematic. Doc Chizner, under whose supervision Coleman boxes, reminds him that his boxing talent is not recognized if others take him for "black". In comparison, Bert Fensterman, a "white" Jewish classmate of Coleman (with lower qualifications than his) follows his academic aspirations without being subjected to the same "prejudice" aimed at "colored students". Discrimination against "colored students was far worse than it was against Jews", as Ernestine Silk explains (*HS* 86). After being called a "nigger" in Washington, D. C. (*HS* 105), Coleman decides to abandon not only his studies at Howard but also his family ties.

What these cinematic and literary works share is their depiction of racial passing not just as a problem of "racial" identity but as a reaction to the social, geographical and economic restrictions that are imposed on African Americans. In *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, Peggy McIntosh compares the "white privileges" to "an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions". These privileges are invisible and weightless because they are taken for granted by the white population (97). Normalization of "white" and privileges associated with it maintains *stigmatization* of the coloured, since it automatically marks the coloured as other (Goffman 11-13). We should not forget that social, economic and geographical limitations go hand in hand with an injured human dignity, when it comes to racial discrimination.

5.2.2 A Crow with a Strange Voice: Stigmatization of the Black

Stigma, originally a Greek word, was first used to refer to a sign on the body of its possessor to signify their wickedness. The term was later used to signify a profoundly disgraceful characteristic. Ascribing this characteristic to “the Other” confirms the normalcy of the rest of the people. This attribute is neither necessarily disgraceful nor honorable in and of itself (Goffman 11-13). Labeling the stigmatized as delinquent stabilizes the deviant feature as an *identity marker*. The stigmatized is considered to have a “spoiled identity”. In order to avoid the problems of stigmatization, the delinquent tries to control information about himself. One example of this is passing, i. e., attempting to hide the stigma from other people (Thompson & Gibbs 33-34).

We should keep in mind that in construction of folk devils as deviants, already existing social problems find a chance to present themselves (qtd. in Thompson & Williams 5). “Black” students' accusation of Coleman Silk for his use of the term “spooks” highlights the *pre-existing* problem of racism in that society. Experiencing similar instances of racism had led Coleman to pass as “white”. These incidents indicate the prevalence of “racial” hierarchies. By projecting racism on a single person, the Athena society reclaims their social values.

While different issues become causes of transitory moral panics, there is one dominant hegemony which controls the transition of them. Racism is part of the ruling hegemony in the US. This hegemony is fueled by “identical and integrated interests” of “political and media elites” (S. Cohen xxxvi). Those who pay most in those politically critical situations are marginal groups, including “blacks”. Their identity becomes a “social property” (S. Cohen 2). Coleman's rejection of his “race” is prompted by the same society that accuses him of racism. Pondering how he can explain his racial passing to Steena, Coleman concludes:

he could ... ask her to understand how he could not allow his prospects to be unjustly limited by so arbitrary a designation as race. If she was calm enough to hear him out, he was sure he could make her see why he had chosen to take the future into his own hands rather than to leave it to an unenlightened society to determine his fate – a society in which, more than eighty years after the Emancipation Proclamation, bigots happened to play too large a role to suit him ... All he'd ever wanted, from earliest childhood on, was to be free: not black, not even white – just on his own and free The objective was for his fate to be determined not by ignorant, hate-filled intentions of a hostile world but, to whatever degree humanly possible, by his own resolve. Why accept a life on any other terms? (*HS* 120-121)

As the passage demonstrates, Coleman's decision to pass as “white” is a strategy to overcome the racial discrimination that he thinks are still present in the post-Emancipation America. His ready-made expectation of getting rejected for his “race” and the consequent resolution that is passing, are an indication of the persistence of the possibility of rejection based on “racial” hierarchies in American society of the time.

Experiencing racial discrimination in the past might cause anxiety in the stigmatized person when dealing with a situation that a non-stigmatized person considers quite harmless. Subjection to intolerance and hostility creates “expectations of rejection” in the stigmatized person when dealing with both non-stigmatized members of society and “social institutions” that have discriminated against them (Mendoza-Denton et al. 896 -897). Therefore those who have been subjected to racism continue to be obsessed with their “race”. Coleman Silk sees “racial” meanings in his girlfriend's poem, where no other meaning other than what is said is intended. He is struck by the word “neck” in Steena Palsson's poem; “first mistook [it]... for 'negro’”, in “the dim hall light”, assuming Steena has discovered his secret. Spending hours pondering upon the meaning of her poem, he thinks that “not everything he had eradicated from himself had vanished into thin air” (*HS* 112-114).

Similarly, his two “black” students are ready to interpret “spook” as a derogatory term referring to a “black” person rather than a term for “ghost”. Coleman's two “black” students suffer the same obsession and social stigma that compels Coleman to conceal his “race”. Coleman's decision to pass as a Jew would obliterate any grounds for the probable rejection-expectation-oriented anxiety in the future or “pretexts” for which he might be stigmatized (Wise 108). On the other hand, his recourse to passing, abstaining from revealing the secret to Steena until she met his family and later keeping it a secret from his wife, Iris, in order to avoid the probable anxiety, reveals deficiencies of a society where, according to Nathan, “rigid distinctions between classes and races [are] sanctified by the church and legitimized by the schools” (*HS* 122). Such a society leaves no other option for its stigmatized member except forging an unstigmatized identity. Even movies such as *Pinky* and *Lost Boundaries* do not question the solidity of “racial” categories. Instead they merely advertise an America where all citizens, no matter what “racial” identity they have, can have equal access to the means of success (Wald 86-87). Both movies highlight the absurdity of visionary characteristics in defining “racial” identity hence “the constructedness of the visual epistemology of race” (Wald 94).

Personal histories of racial passing written either by passers themselves or passers’ close relatives share two points. Most of these narratives emphasize the important role racist confrontations and low-paid jobs play in making such a decision. One of these self-narratives is “I’m Through with Passing” by an anonymous author, published in 1951 in *Ebony* magazine. The author explains in her 6-page article why she decided to pass and what made her stop passing, besides mentioning her friends’ view of passing: “A lot of my friends, too, had often said if they only had a chance to pass, they would do so without a moment’s hesitation just to be free from color problems, poor-paying jobs and all the other vicious injustices that all too often go with being a Negro” (22). The author explains her own motivation for passing mainly as a way “to get a better-paying job” (23). Next, she considers a series of

racist talks she heard in her “white” workplace after she had passed as a white the reason for her being through with passing (ibid). Gail Lukasik, author of *White like Her: My Family’s Story of Race and Racial Passing* explains in a TODAY talk show how she discovered her mother’s secret namely the fact that she spent her life passing as white. She asserts that her mother’s decision to pass was motivated by a better life with “better opportunities, employment-wise or just in society in general” (“Meet the Woman Who Learned That Her Mother Passed for White”).

Besides these personal histories, there have been other works of literature on the topic. These works are in fact forebears of Roth’s *The Human Stain*. The most classic work is Nella Larsen’s novel *Passing* published in 1929. The two female characters of the novel, Irene and Clare, are both light-skinned women who enjoy the prosperity that marriage has offered them. Clare, who is passing as white, is ironically being married to a bigot. Due to passing she feels lonely. Therefore she asks Irene to join Harlem society. An offer which Irene accepts despite her doubts. Later Irene realizes that Clare has an affair with Brian, Irene’s husband. In the final scene of the novel, Clare’s husband confronts her with the “racial” lie she has lived. Clare falls out of a window. Larsen’s novel underlines the fragility of a life based on passing, while highlighting the constructedness of concepts such as “race”. In their fight for freedom, passers mirror unsubstantiality of the binary opposition between black and white. In this respect passing is a mockery of the ideology which uses this binary opposition to racialize people.

In *The Human Stain*, it is not only Coleman Silk who passes. Prince, the segregated crow in the Audubon Society can be a symbolic epitome of passing. There are clear similarities between the crow and Coleman. Prince is black like other crows, yet his voice is strange. A crow that “doesn’t know how to be a crow” and who cawed “not in a true crow caw but in that caw that he had stumbled on himself and that drove the other crows nuts” (*HS* 243). There is a parallel between his fate and Coleman’s. Both are isolated outsiders who do not belong to any category. Coleman’s double life is symbolized by

Prince's behavior. Prince does not accept his status in the realm of crows in the same way that Coleman does not accept the status which is dictated to him by a powerful ideological system.

Faunia finds “Status” a “good name for a crow ... good name for anything black and big” (*HS* 168). The name suggests a fight for status. As strange a name as it might sound for a crow, the word “Status” is also a reminder of Jim Crow laws. The name “Status” for a passer symbolically indicates that passing has simply been a method of achieving equal social rights. In a society that is still maintained by the myth of white supremacy, racial passing is not an act of free will. It is to avoid “the tyranny of the we and its we-talk and everything that the we wants to pile on your head”:

At Howard he'd discovered that he wasn't just a nigger to Washington, D.C. – as if that shock wasn't strong enough, he discovered at Howard that he was a Negro as well. A Howard Negro at that. Overnight the raw I was part of a we with all of the we's overbearing solidity, and he didn't want anything to do with it or with the next oppressive we that came along either Never for him the tyranny of the we that is dying to suck you in, the coercive, inclusive, historical, inescapable moral *we* with its insidious *E pluribus unum*. Neither the they of Woolworth's nor the we of Howard. Instead the raw I with all its agility. *Self-discovery—that* was the punch to labonz. Singularity ... The sliding relationship with everything. Not static but sliding. Self-knowledge but *concealed*. What is as powerful as that? (*HS* 108)

Nathan believes that Coleman's power lies in his ability to escape any categories that society tries to impose on him, a potential afforded by his light skin color. Sticking to a collective identity underlined by Nathan's use of the pronoun “we” is a sacrifice of individuality, freedom and the flexibility that comes with it. On the other hand, collectivism brings about “solidity”. Nathan implicitly refers to the price of singularity which is uncertainty: “the sliding relationship with everything” in contrast to

“solidity” that connotes certainty for all that the pronoun “we” dictates to the individual. However, this is rather the preliminary to “self-discovery”.

In the passage above, Nathan specifically refers to the idea of melting pot as illustrated in the phrase “E pluribus unum” (meaning one out of many) on top of which stands the idea of white supremacy. The statement inscribed in the seal of the United States of America is subsequently a stumbling block to the manifestation of diversity and change, since based on its motto all differences should eventually coalesce into one unified mass. Accordingly the idea of melting pot is associated with stasis.

The power of the deviant is in the renunciation of the “we” and its resulting freedom: However the resulting freedom also means unclassifiability. Here, I would like to draw attention to the close connection between the two concepts of difference and deviance. Lemmert, in his theory of sociopathic behavior, places emphasis on difference as an important factor in the labeling process. Almost equalizing the two terms of deviation and difference, he believes that “differentiation”, or the fact that some people act differently from the rest of the population where they live might cause social reactions such as isolation, punishment and exclusion (Stebbins 30–31). As an example, an overt gesture of hospitality might be interpreted as intrusion in an individualist society.

Undoubtedly, immigration can potentially cause deviance on the grounds that it brings social and cultural differences to light. What keeps a society coherent is its ability to label behavioral differences. In the absence of labels, social coherency is broken. This is why Nathan declares: “Simply to make the accusation is to prove it. To hear the allegation is to believe it. No motive for the perpetrator is necessary, no logic or rationale is required. Only a label is required. The label is the motive. The label is the evidence. The label is the logic” (*HS* 290). Construction of a folk devil is, in this respect, comparable to witch hunting, for in both cases the persistence of the label is the logic itself. On the

other hand, the rise and dissipation of new moral panics demand the emergence of new labels. Nathan observes that in '98 “an enormous piety binge” followed “terrorism” which in its turn followed “communism” (*HS* 2). In the image Nathan pictures of the American society, there is an urgent demand for folk devils in the emergence of these moral panics. Accordingly, such a society needs a scapegoat for the social follies by virtue of projection. There is no logic behind this operation. The anonymous author of “I’m Through with Passing” narrates how an obviously decent colleague of her opposed his son’s contact with a “black” friend without any convincing reason: “...I asked him if the colored boy was a bad sort for his son to be going around with. He answered that as far as he was concerned all Negroes were bad company for his son” (27).

Projecting follies on a folk devil as a scapegoat would mean that the removal of that single individual supposedly restores sanity and coherence to society. For a long time American society has considered minorities embodiment of its follies. Kelly Welch argues that a significant feature of American culture is its racialization of criminal activities. This attitude is traceable even among practitioners of criminal justice system due to “racial profiling” (276). Reminiscent of archetypal rituals of sacrifice, “the pure and impure” go hand in hand in performing this ritual as they are “akin in their common need of the enemy” (*HS* 316). According to Nelson Primus, Coleman's counselor, when it comes to norms academics are in league with the rest of the society in penalizing the delinquent. Nelson Primus hints implicitly at another aspect of the American society. In his use of the phrase “eager to expose and punish”, he refers to the purifying function of scapegoating. The most obvious example of scapegoating in the novel is the “fac.discuss” posting incident. The anonymous writer, using the rumors surrounding Dean Silk after his controversial fatal accident, pictures Coleman as an abusive demonic figure. By projecting violence on a single person, the society *unites* “in the execution of violence against a specified enemy” instead of fighting a broad extensive war which would involve the

whole society (Andrade). Societies use scapegoat mechanism to get rid of their own obsession with taboo things.

Like the other Zuckerman novels, *American Pastoral* and *Zuckerman Unbound*, there is a historical framework surrounding Coleman Silk's tragedy. Elaborating on the problems from a historical perspective, Ernestine (Coleman's sister) indicates "People age. Nations age. Problems age. Sometimes they age right out of existence" (*HS* 326). She refers to the transitory obsessions of each era. In this regard, delinquencies committed in an era are also determined by that era and its requirements. Additionally, this accentuates the relative and transitory nature of social laws and values. To prove her case, Ernestine gives the example of "race": "Today if you're a middle-class intelligent Negro and you want your kids to go to the best schools, and on full scholarship if you need it, you wouldn't dream of saying that you're not colored ... White as your skin might be, now it's advantageous not to do it" (*HS* 326). The historical setting of the novel including Clinton's impeachment due to his love affair with Monica Lewinsky can also be viewed in a similar way. Clinton functions as a scapegoat bearing the whole nation's obsession with extramarital sex, an obsession projected on a single individual to deny its commonality among the rest of the society.

History exercises huge control on human fate and will. History of black Americans represents American culture. This history reflects the obliteration of individual will by the hegemony of a social discourse whose racial bias has compelled people of color to develop strategies like passing in order to climb the constructed "racial" ladder. Unlike Bhabha's "hybridity" that threatens and deconstructs the hegemonic power, passing as a form of "liminality" boosts the institutionalized racism by engagement in an "act of erasure" that permits the powerful to continue their domination over the powerless (Negrea 60) The next part examines the collective (familial) effects of passing as a strategy in response to racial stigmatization.

5.2.3 Cursing Communal Memories

I approached passing as a personal strategy to overcome stigmatization of the colored in the Post-Emancipation America, a strategy which obviously outwits “racial” hierarchies but in reality furthers its cause. In this section, I try to demonstrate what it also means in terms of cutting familial connections.

While in America colonial values such as superiority of a group of people over others for their skin color are still prevalent, discriminatory practices have become accepted norms. The normalization of these attitudes leads the victim group to link accessibility of rights to power which in turn causes “internalization of discriminatory norms” by the discriminated (R. Hall, *An Historical Analysis* 37-38). This has brought many light-skinned “black” Americans to act “white”, discriminating against the dark-skinned “blacks”. Before the Civil War, slaves with a light skin color escaped and maintained their freedom by passing as “white”. Passing was also a common practice among light-skinned “blacks” in the Reconstruction period and under the Jim Crow laws as a means of gaining “socioeconomic” privileges that a society based on white supremacy had denied them (Nerad 958). What most studies of passing obviously ignore is its inner-group and familial implications. Passers have been traditionally considered “racial” betrayers, “Oreos” or “sellouts”, because they do not act in the interest of their community (Kennedy 3-4). Ronald Hall, himself being discriminated against by light-skinned “blacks” for his dark skin tone, finds it difficult to forgive those “blacks” who prefer to pass for “white”. Hall asserts that passers “have cursed the memory of every dark-skinned person on their family tree” (“Blacks who Pass” 475).

Passing is a state of in-betweenness. It consists of passing in and passing out; the passer leaves his community behind to be accepted in the new group. However, complete identification with the new group is impossible, inasmuch as the passer cannot always join in the new group's stigmatization of the

group he has left behind. This has been one main reason for those passers who rejoined black community which they had left behind.

Passing means a loss of “sense of communion and collectivity” (Hobbs 159). In *The Human Stain*, the psychological impacts of Coleman's passing is mostly discernible in the way his family members, specially his mother, react to his decision. Coleman's disclosure of his decision to marry Iris and to cut the family roots:

was murdering her [mother]... that's what he saw he was doing to her, the boy who'd been loved as he'd been loved by this woman. Murdering her on behalf of his exhilarating notion of freedom! ... You can't do this to a wonderful mother who loves you unconditionally and has made you happy, you can't inflict this pain and then think you can go back on it. ... Once you've done a thing like this, you have done so much violence it can *never* be undone. ... If, in the service of honing himself, he is out to do the hardest thing imaginable, this is it, short of stabbing her. (*HS* 138-9)

The passage powerfully depicts the emotional side of passing, which is the renunciation of family ties. The grief imposed on Coleman's mother can be viewed as the outcome of a “loss” inflicted by “the workings of a racial system” whose oppressed subjects have to find their deserving place by manipulation of the same workings. While grief is one product of this loss, anger is the other one (Rosenblatt 59). Walter, Coleman's brother, reacts differently to his brother's decision. He boycotts his brother and demands the other members of the family to do the same. According to Ernestine, Walter “was insulted and flared up – not just for Mother but for all of us” (*HS* 319).

Another example of passing's negative effect on community and family is in Nella Larsen's *Passing*. Clare Kendry decides to pass after years of being sexually and physically abused by her alcoholic father and later her father's family. Still after having established a comfortable life, Clare

attempts to return back to the Harlem black community. In a letter to Irene she gets her isolation across: “I’m lonely, so lonely... you can’t know how in this pale life of mine I’m all the time seeing the bright pictures of that other that I once thought I was glad to be free of... It’s like like an ache, a pain that never ceases” (3). Clare’s life, despite financial comforts, is described as “pale” for the sacrifice of friendships and communal ties. Clare’s view of her life in the past is characterized by a sentimental longing or nostalgia, nevertheless it reveals a deep lack in her present life namely the communal aspect, specifically seen in the light of her marriage to a bigot. It is this sense of lack which compels her to write a letter to Irene.

Every passer’s decision to break up with communal ties manifests the effect of “societal realities of racism” on the family (Boyd-Franklin & Karger 273-274). Through the mechanism of passing one can see the impact of racial discrimination on familial and communal relationships. This impact discloses how social discourse of racism controls private spheres. Passing as a strategy to manipulate “racial” hierarchy not only boosts racism as an ideology but also jeopardizes family relationships. This does not mean that passing necessarily leads to cutting familial and/or communal ties but it certainly highlights effects of racial discrimination on “racial” identity and expensive costs of sacrificing it (Hobbs 14).

Conclusion

Passing and conversion are responses to the discriminatory nature of colonial discourse, which is still present in post-colonial spaces. These strategies both intend to conceal what is considered to be a stigma or a deviant characteristic according to the “white” cultural values. They are practiced by diasporic subjects whose identity does not accord with the “white normative categories” of identity. Construction of the colonial subject through these episodes of conflictual re-positioning demonstrates

the dominance of “white” hegemony in (post-)colonial spaces and its internalization by the subjects. Furthermore, the subject's ability to cross through “racial” borderlines that mark the distinction between deviance and norm according to “white racial” codes, proves that those values are unstable, relative and sheer constructs.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Diasporas have brought about drastic changes to the concept of identity. Since people's self-perception is strongly associated with their homeland, displacement and uprooting can immensely affect their self-image and their understanding of who they are. The aftereffects of such a change, including cultural conflicts, can impact generations onward. Using post-colonial studies as its theoretical framework in its examination of the fictional characters of Philip Roth and V. S. Naipaul, this study has attempted to analyse not only the effects of this change on diasporic subject's identity but also the ways it might lead to ethnic and social deviance.

With a focus on cultural conflicts that result from living in post-colonial spaces, this analysis sheds light on the inevitable price of mass migrations and movements, paid with a loss of ethnic cultural identity. By applying a sociological approach, the work attempts to add a new dimension to its study of a post-colonial phenomenon. This study approaches strategies of conformity to the “white” colonial discourse, including mimicry as a probable source of cultural confusion and deviance on the part of diasporic subject.

Diaspora studies has mostly attempted to elucidate global mass migrations and displacement with an emphasis on “geographical and sociocultural heterogeneity” (Pierre). This comparative study, in contrast, has focused on intersecting concepts and notions that make movements, despite their particularities, a universal experience. To accomplish this goal, the work has drawn upon the idea of home, the post-colonial concept of mimicry and its corresponding existential concept of impersonation and the sociological notion of deviance.

Applying these concepts and notions in its study of the few selected works of Philip Roth and V. S. Naipaul as representatives of Jewish American and Indian-Caribbean diaspora literature, the work

has sought to go beyond dissimilarities to highlight the impact of global movements on human identity and to uncover the human subject in general in response to those movements and their dynamics. Comparison of the fictional characters of Roth and Naipaul, despite their different diasporic backgrounds, is one way of revealing diaspora as a subjective yet common experience marked by ethnic and “racial memory”, unspoken “losses” and “longings”, to use Khachig Tölölyan's words (8). Looked at from a wider perspective, a study of the two diasporas reveals a universal truth about the nature of displacement and its impact on self and identity. The comparative use of literary works and fictional characters in this study hints at the significance of literature in understanding this human phenomenon on a global scale.

Each of the central concepts discussed in the three main chapters of this work approaches the issue of diaspora from a different perspective. In Chapter One, the two diasporic subjects' perception of home as a construct and their complicated relationship to it unfolds deeper problems, including identity crisis and a distorted sense of self.

In Chapter Two, an analysis of the concepts of mimicry and impersonation in the works of Naipaul and Roth indicates identity's contingency on social context. Rejecting an essentialistic view of identity, this analysis also highlights the performative nature of identity. Accordingly, diasporic subject's identity performance is very much influenced by the experience of colonial discourse and its still present traces including racial discrimination and anti-Semitism in post-colonial spaces.

Chapter Three examines complicated mechanisms such as racial passing and conversion, by which dominance of colonial discourse in the postcolony is manifested. Existence of deviant mechanisms such as racial passing proves predominance of “white” cultural values in spaces, where these defense mechanisms are practiced. By defining norms, colonial discourse ostracises whatever stands out of its circle. On the other hand, the fact that a person can cross through “racial” borderlines

indicates that “white” supremacy and values associated with this ideology are sheer constructs and subject to change.

Prevalence of colonial discourse in postcolonial spaces is a source of ethnic and racial discrimination. Ethnic or racial discrimination often hampers social economic progress and diasporic subject is often a victim of this kind of discrimination. To pave the way for their social economic progress, diasporic subject attempts to conform to the “white” normative categories of identity that are established through the dominance of colonial discourse in the (post)colony. This might lead to the application of deviant methods on the one hand and transgression of one's own cultural belongings on the other hand. Both outcomes bolster “white” hegemony by undermining ethnic or “racial” identity. In addition they point at internalization of the subject position that colonial discourse defines for its subjects.

Fictional works of Roth and Naipaul covered in this study are accounts of identity crisis and estrangement as a result of colonial experience, slavery or self-imposed movements including work under indenture in the (post)colonies. Characters of Roth and Naipaul suffer from an identity crisis that is a result of submission to a prescribed cultural model. Western culture establishes itself in the post-colonial spaces by disseminating a hegemonic Eurocentrism. Examples of this are prevalence of “WASP” ideals in American society as demonstrated in the works of Roth and canonization of European literature in the postcolony as illustrated in the narratives of Naipaul. These examples emphasize the important role Eurocentrism still plays in the construction of our contemporary world, a role that is simply overshadowed by the prefix 'post' in the term post-colonial. This is what Homi Bhabha highlights as “the on-going colonial present” (“Articulating the Archaic” 128).

Encountering “white” supremacy as a practiced ideology in postcolonial spaces, with all its resulting confusions and conflicts, increases the danger of taking part in actions which eventually help

its cause. Marginalization and discrimination are common experiences of diasporic subjects in such places. On the other hand, encountering this ideology provides diasporic subject with a unique chance to develop a hybrid identity. Still hybridity cannot always be considered a positive or a productive state, since for some diasporic subjects it also means transgression of ethnic belongings.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This dissertation has drawn upon some fictional works of Philip Roth and V. S. Naipaul. In order to understand the nature of global movements and the common patterns behind them, comparative studies of other works of diaspora literature can be beneficial. Additionally, a study of other corresponding notions and concepts is worthy of attention, but this was not possible due to this study's restricted span.

This study has attempted to combine sociology with literary studies in order to enrich its understanding of diaspora. Interdisciplinary studies of diaspora broaden our scope of analysis, while enabling us to consider its impacts and consequences from different dimensions. For this reason, other interdisciplinary approaches to diaspora studies is of additional interest.

Another worthwhile aspect to explore in the works of Philip Roth and V. S. Naipaul could have been representation of gender identity and its connection to the experience of diaspora. Unfortunately, due to its limited scope and span, this study does not extend to a consideration of this subject. This might have been an interesting topic for those scholars who work in the field of gender studies.

Zusammenfassung in deutscher Sprache

Diasporisches Ausgesetztsein und kulturelle Abweichung

Eine komparative Lesart von Philip Roth und V. S. Naipaul

1. Einleitung

Die großen Migrationsbewegungen unserer Zeit haben zur Herausbildung hybrider Identitäten geführt, die weder in den nationalen oder ethnischen Kulturen vormaliger Herkunftsländer noch in denen der Aufnahmeländer beheimatet sind. Der Träger einer solchen Identität wird oft von beiden Seiten her als Überläufer und Abweichler kritisiert. Diese Kritik vernachlässigt jedoch den interaktiven Prozess, im Zuge dessen dieser kulturelle „Unhold“ – eine Art Frankensteinischer Kreatur, dessen Existenz nicht mehr eindeutig einer der Gruppen, die im Rahmen seiner Entstehung ausschlaggebend waren, zugeordnet werden kann – konstituiert wird. Diese Kreatur ist das diasporische Subjekt, ein Hybrid, der „eine partielle Präsenz“ darstellt, welche „beinahe dasselbe, *aber nicht ganz*“ ist (Bhabha, „Von Mimikry und Menschen“ 127). Dieser kulturelle Hybrid stellt eine „Differenz“ dar, die durch das Verweilen am „Rand einer 'Zwischen'- Wirklichkeit“ zu Stande kommt (Bhabha, „Verortungen der Kultur“ 20). In der vorliegenden Studie wird die Spannung, welche diesem Dazwischen-Sein anhaftet, welches weder das eine noch das andere ist, untersucht. Zu diesem Zweck werden drei Romane von Philip Roth als einem Vertreter der jüdischen amerikanischen Literatur mit zwei Romanen von V.S. Naipaul, der die indisch-karibisch koloniale Literatur repräsentiert, verglichen. In jedem Kapitel wird ein den Texten beider Autoren gemeinsamer Aspekt beleuchtet, welcher einen Aushandlungsraum für

Identitätsspannungen und -konflikte darstellt. Diese insgesamt vier Aspekte sind Heimat, Mimikry, Nachahmung und Devianz.

Da die Ergebnisse der vorliegende Studie den Zusammenhang zwischen kultureller Hybridität (Dazwischen-Sein) und Dynamiken von Identität vor dem Hintergrund des Konzepts der Diaspora untersuchen, stellen sie einen Beitrag zu den Diaspora Studien dar. In der Arbeit wird Literatur nicht als rein nationales Phänomen angesehen, um so besser aufzuzeigen, wie Dynamiken von Identität sich durch Migration als einer weltweiten kulturübergreifenden Erfahrung verändern. Durch den vergleichenden Ansatz wird außerdem eine Analyse der Verbindung zwischen derartigen Dynamiken und dem Ausgesetztsein gegenüber postkolonialen Räumen ermöglicht, die sich nicht in voreiligen und binären Einteilungen im Sinne von Zentrum und Peripherie verliert. So gesehen ermöglicht der Vergleich die Sichtbarmachung postkolonialer Diskurse an Orten, wo diese zunächst nicht zu existieren scheinen.

2. Diaspora und Postkolonialismus

Der Begriff der Diaspora ist flexibel, wurde aber von postkolonialen Theoretikern entwickelt, um die Dominanz national orientierter Paradigmen infrage zu stellen. Ferner wird er mit Bewegungen in Verbindung gebracht, die durch Orte hindurch verlaufen und auch mit Entwurzelung (Procter 151). Die epistemologische Bedeutsamkeit des Konzepts der Diaspora betonend, argumentiert Mark Shakleton, dass in den Diaspora Studien solche Bewegungen hinsichtlich der Anpassung an veränderte Umstände, von Entwurzelung, Transformationen und der Konstruktion neuer Formen des Wissens sowie von Weltanschauungen untersucht werden (*Diasporic Literature and Theory* ix). Dabei muss berücksichtigt werden, dass sich die jeweilige Ausprägungen der Diaspora bezüglich den ihr zugrundeliegenden Faktoren unterscheiden. Während die jüdische Diaspora im Wesentlichen aufgrund antisemitischer

Anfeindungen zustande kam, sind die indische Diaspora in Afrika sowie in der Karibik und die afroamerikanische Diaspora vor allem Ergebnisse des Kolonialismus. Der Kolonialismus führte als radikale diasporische Bewegung zur unmittelbaren und nachhaltigen Ausbreitung europäischer Siedler über die gesamte Welt. Es kam zu einer Reihe großer Migrationsbewegungen. Im Zusammenhang damit und durch „ökologischen Imperialismus“ wurden die Kolonien als Mittel zur Nahrungsproduktion umfunktioniert (Ashcroft et al., „Diaspora“ 81-83). Die Rolle des Imperialismus bei der weltweiten Durchmischung von Kulturen und Identitäten wird auch von Edward Said betont („Movements and Migrations“ 336).

Die Diaspora ist ein Ort, an dem unterschiedliche „Subjektpositionen“ zusammengebracht, miteinander kontrastiert, affirmiert oder zurückgewiesen werden. Ein Aufeinandertreffen dieser Art kommt beispielsweise dadurch zustande, dass der kolonial bedingte Migrationsfluss von der Metropole in die Kolonien umgekehrt wird (Ponzanesi 208-209). Als Konsequenz dieser Umkehrung wird die Metropole selbst zum Schauplatz postkolonialer Begegnungen (Brinkler-Gabler & Smith 8). Wer den Dynamiken eines solchen kulturellen Umschlagplatzes ausgesetzt ist, dessen kulturelle Loyalitäten werden infrage gestellt. Dies gilt sowohl für Menschen, die erst in die Metropole eingewandert sind, als auch für jene, die dort bereits leben. Beide sind diasporische Subjekte (Brah 208-209). Hierbei handelt es sich um eine universelle Eigenschaft, welche allen Schauplätzen dieser Art über historische und standortbedingte Differenzen hinaus zu eigen ist.

3. Theoretische Prämissen

Ein weiteres Charakteristikum der Diaspora ist das Dazwischen-Sein. Herkömmliche Vorstellungen kultureller Zugehörigkeit, welche stark an konkreten geographischen Orten und / oder bestimmten Gemeinschaften orientiert sind, erscheinen im Kontext der Diaspora und der von ihr geschaffenen

Umstände anachronistisch. In seinem Werk *Die Verortung der Kultur* beschreibt Homi K. Bhabha den Zustand diasporischer Subjekte stattdessen als „hybrid,“ „liminal“ und „dazwischen.“ Als neue Vorstellung von Identität kann dieser Zustand auch neue Möglichkeiten hervorbringen und dem Subjekt eine plurale Weltansicht nahebringen. Das Vorherrschen dieses Zustands stellt herkömmliche binäre Vorstellungen von Identität in Frage (McLeod 247-252). Demgegenüber ermöglicht das Dazwischen-Sein das Entstehen neuer Konzepte, Identitäten und Erzählungen. Bhabha zeigt anhand der Kunst Pepon Osorios, der selbst Migrant ist, wie Migranten sich aus ihrer Erfahrung zweier Kulturen „einen hybriden kulturellen Raum“ (Bhabha, „Verortungen der Kultur“ 11) zusammensetzen. Innerhalb der Postkolonialen Studien wird Hybridität als Resultat einer ambivalenten Funktionsweise des Kolonialismus angesehen. Sie entspringt dem Versuch des Kolonialisten, das Kolonialsubjekt zu zivilisieren und es dabei dennoch als ein *Anderes* zu belassen. Hybridität ist somit Schauplatz eines Aushandlungsprozesses, welche den Kulturen ihre Reinheit entzieht (ibid.). In „Zeichen als Wunder“ bezeichnet Bhabha die Identität des Kolonialsubjekts als hybrid, weil sie nicht der Zuschreibung entspricht, die der Kolonialist den Kolonisierten unterschiebt. Bhabha behauptet, Hybridität sei:

der Name für die strategische Umkehrung des Prozesses der Beherrschung durch Verleugnung (das heißt, der Produktion diskriminatorischer Identitäten, durch die die „reine“ und ursprüngliche Identität der Autorität sichergestellt wird). [...] Sie entthront die mimetischen oder narzißtischen Forderungen der kolonialen Macht, führt ihre Identifikationen aber in Strategien der Subversion wieder ein, die den Blick des Diskriminierten zurück auf das Auge der Macht richten. (165)

So gesehen ist Hybridität ein Zeichen dafür, dass dem Kolonialisten die Verfügung über die Kolonisierten, welche von seiner Repräsentation immer nur teilweise abgebildet werden, entgleitet.

Ein Konzept, welches mit Hybridität in Verbindung steht, ist das der Mimikry. In „Von Mimikry und Menschen“ sieht Bhabha Mimikry als Resultat einer Ambivalenz innerhalb des kolonialen Diskurses an, welcher das Kolonialsubjekt zugleich als gezähmt und dennoch als ein Anderes ansieht. Mittels dieser angenommenen Differenz durchbricht Mimikry die koloniale Macht, da sie eine abweichende Kopie kolonialer Normen erschafft (86). Mimikry stellt demnach einen Widerstand gegen die Macht des Kolonialisten dar, was paradox ist, da der koloniale Diskurs selbst Ursprung dieses Widerstands ist. Diese Einsicht rührt daher, dass Bhabha Frantz Fanons Konzept der Mimikry, welches dieser in seinem Werk *Schwarze Haut, weiße Masken* entwickelt, dekonstruiert. Fanon betrachtet Mimikry als ein Aufwallen der Kolonialsubjekte gegen den rassistisch begründeten Minderwertigkeitskomplex, die ihnen durch die Institution der Sklaverei eingepflegt wird („The Negro Language“ 9). Während Fanon aber noch dachte, dass sich koloniale Macht dadurch herstellt, dass die „schwarzen Subjekte“ dazu gebracht werden, den Kolonialisten nachzuahmen, sieht Bhabha Mimikry aufgrund ihres ambivalenten Charakters als eigentliche Quelle von Widerstand an (Loomba 149). Bhabha zufolge macht Mimikry den kolonialen Diskurs ambivalent, da das Kolonialsubjekt (das „schwarze Subjekt“ bei Fanon), *dadurch* dass es den kolonialen Diskurs mimit „beinahe dasselbe, *aber nicht ganz*“ (Bhabha, „Von Mimikry und Menschen“ 127) wird. In der „Wiederholung [...] diskriminatorische[r] Identitätseffekte“ (Bhabha, „Zeichen als Wunder“ 165) entsteht eine neue Identität. Indem diese neue Identität produziert wird, unterwandert der Kolonialismus sich selbst. Deshalb bezeichnet Bhabha Mimikry als „Diskurs [...] der defensiven Kriegsführung,“ welcher voller „Zeichen spektakulären Widerstands“ sei (Bhabha, „Zeichen als Wunder“ 179).

4. Ethnisch-kulturelle Devianz bei Roth und Naipaul

Roth und Naipaul ist häufig der Vorwurf des „Selbsthasses“ gemacht worden, weil sie ethnischen Traditionen gegenüber kritisch eingestellt sind (Shostak 145, Ford-Smith 392). Ihre Werke handeln anerkanntermaßen immer über sie selbst, was auch daran zu erkennen ist, dass sie autobiographische Elemente aufweisen (Shostak 159 & Leela 36). Da beide in der Diaspora leben, ist es keine Überraschung, dass ihre Werke die Zerrissenheit zwischen zwei Kulturen immer wieder thematisieren.

Roth hat Amerika in seinen frühen Werken als einen Ort der satirischen Erniedrigung dargestellt. Allerdings hat sich dieses Bild später zu dem einer Entwurzelung verschoben, von der es keine Erlösung gibt. Diese Entwurzelung ist das Ergebnis der Geschichte der amerikanischen Juden, in der sich Identität konstant zwischen zwei Polen, jüdisch zu sein und Amerikaner zu sein, bewegt (Omer-Sherman 236). Letztendlich verdeckt diese Schwierigkeit, zwischen unterschiedlichen jüdischen Identitäten innerhalb oder außerhalb des Staates Israel zu wählen, jedoch lediglich eine umfassendere Problematik: Einen letztlich unvermeidbaren Mangel an Ganzheitlichkeit der jüdischen Identität der Gegenwart (Omer-Sherman 272). Roth sieht die jüdische Identität als ein Konstrukt aus Fragmenten, welche den Juden im Laufe ihrer Geschichte zugefallen sind („The Jewish Intellectual“ 58). Deshalb gibt es auch keine Essenz des Jüdischen. Vielmehr handelt es sich beim Jüdischsein um etwas, das performativ hergestellt wird und nicht um etwas Gegebenes (Shostak 131).

So stellt Roth einen Essentialismus in Bezug auf jüdische Identität in Frage. Es gibt aus seiner Sicht auch keinen Grund, in Gesellschaften, in denen es keinen Antisemitismus gibt, sich dauerhaft als Juden zu identifizieren (Omer-Sherman 266), weil es der Antisemit ist, welcher den Juden in der Diaspora als „das Andere“ festlegt. Antisemitismus tut genau das mit den Juden, was der kindliche Ausspruch: „Sieh nur, ein Neger“ bei Fanon mit den „Schwarzen“ macht. In beiden Fällen wird die Selbstwahrnehmung der Betroffenen als autonomer Subjekte dadurch in Frage gestellt, dass sie als

Objekte repräsentiert werden (Daschläu 95). In seinem Werk versucht Roth zu zeigen, dass in einer offenen Gesellschaft ohne Antisemitismus kollektive Zuschreibung von Identität durch ein individuelles Selbst ersetzt werden (Omer-Sherman 272). Aber selbst wenn es eine essentielle jüdische Identität geben sollte, was Roth bezweifelt, so sei diese eher geprägt durch eine Geschichte des Geteiltseins als einer Geschichte der Einigkeit im Rahmen eines gemeinsamen Staates. Diese Identität würde also auf der Erfahrung der Juden in der Diaspora beruhen (Steiner 4 – 25).

Naipaul wird oft dafür kritisiert, die Karibik als geschichtslosen Raum darzustellen. Was seine Kritiker jedoch nicht verstehen, ist, dass Naipaul dem Kolonialismus bei der Erschaffung dieser geschichtlichen Leere, welche unweigerlich zu einer Identitätskrise führt, eine wichtige Rolle zuschreibt (Nandan 78). Michael Angrosino meint, dass Naipaul geographische Entwurzelung und den Verlust von Identität mit kolonialer Unterdrückung in Beziehung setzt (2).

Naipauls widersprüchliche Position bezüglich einer „Authentizität der Ränder“ ergibt sich natürlich aus dem Leid der postkolonialen Situation (Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back* 90). Ein wichtiges Element in dieser Hinsicht sind die Versuche von Naipauls Charakteren sich selbst Identitäten zu konstruieren (Zhou 36). In seinem Frühwerk, welches *A House for Mr. Biswas* und *The Mimic Men* umfasst, wird Identität als etwas angesehen, das auf einem geeinten und zusammenhängenden Selbst basiert. Später wird diese Sicht durch eine Vorstellung von Identität als einer fließende Vielheit von Möglichkeiten ersetzt, die alle zeitweise als Identifikationsfläche dienen können (Zhou 108). Dass Naipauls Charaktere diesen ambivalenten beziehungsweise hybriden Zustand annehmen, entwurzelt sie und führt zu kultureller Schizophrenie (Cichoń 48), versetzt sie aber auch in die Lage, bei der Rechtfertigung ihrer Handlungen pragmatisch zwischen unterschiedlichen kulturellen Rahmen zu alternieren (Mohan 25).

5. Fazit

Die Diaspora hat sehr verändert, wie Identität heute gelebt wird. Da die Auffassung der Menschen bezüglich ihrer Identität, stark mit Vorstellungen von einer Heimat verbunden sind, kann Entwurzelung das Bild vom eigenen Selbst sehr beeinflussen. Spätfolgen solcher Veränderungen können oft noch für nachfolgende Generationen unmittelbar spürbar sein. Mithilfe postkolonialer Theorie als konzeptuellem Rahmen untersucht die vorliegende Studie über eine Analyse fiktionaler Charaktere in den Werken von Philip Roth und V.S. Naipaul die Auswirkungen solcher Veränderungen auf die Identität diasporischer Subjekte und beleuchtet wie sie in ethnischer, „rassischer“ und sozialer Hinsicht zu Devianz führen.

Die vorliegende Studie fokussiert auf kulturelle Konflikte, welche sich ergeben, wenn Menschen einem postkolonialen Raum ausgesetzt sind. Sie beleuchtet die Folgen von Migration in Bezug auf den Verlust ethnischer, „rassischer“ und kultureller Identität. Durch die Anwendung eines soziologischen Ansatzes gewinnt die Studie eine neue Perspektive auf einen postkolonialen Gegenstand. Dabei werden Strategien der Anpassung an den von „Weißen“ artikulierten kolonialen Diskurs (inklusive Mimikry) als wahrscheinliche Ursache kultureller Verwirrung sowie von Devianz seitens diasporischer Subjekte innerhalb (post)kolonialer Räume angesehen.

Die Diaspora Studien beschäftigen sich mit globaler Migration und Entwurzelung. Dabei wird von geographischer und soziokultureller Heterogenität ausgegangen (Pierre). Im Gegensatz dazu fokussiert die vorliegende Studie auf sich überschneidende Vorstellungen, welche das Phänomen der Migration trotz seiner Vielschichtigkeit als universale Erfahrung greifbar machen. Zu diesem Zweck wird auf die Vorstellung der Heimat, das postkoloniale Konzept der Mimikry, der Nachahmung, und der soziologischen Kategorie der Devianz zurückgegriffen. Indem in der Studie diese Konzepte auf einige Werke Philip Roths als einem Repräsentanten der jüdisch amerikanischen Literatur und V.S.

Naipauls, der die indisch-karibische Literatur vertritt, angewandt werden, wird der Einfluss von Migration auf Identität auf einer Ebene sichtbar gemacht, welche spezifische Unterschiede transzendiert. Der Vergleich fiktionaler Charaktere bei Roth und Naipaul entpuppt sich trotz Unterschieden bezüglich der konkreten diasporischen Hintergründe der Autoren als Weg, die Diaspora als subjektive aber den Autoren dennoch gemeinsame Erfahrung zu beleuchten, welche von ethnischer und „rassischer“ Erinnerung, unausgesprochenem Verlust und einem Verlangen nach etwas gezeichnet ist, das am Rande des Möglichen steht (Kachig Tölölyan 8). So nimmt die vorliegende Analyse das Universale an der Erfahrung von Entwurzelung und deren Einfluss auf das Selbst und dessen Identität in den Blick. Der Vergleich literarischer Werke und fiktionaler Charaktere bringt auch die Bedeutung zum Vorschein, welcher Literatur beim Verstehen menschlicher Phänomene weltweit zukommt.

Jedes der Konzepte, welche in den drei Kapiteln der vorliegenden Arbeit zugrunde gelegt werden, nähert sich der Diaspora aus einer anderen Perspektive. Im ersten Kapitel wird analysiert, inwiefern die Wahrnehmung zweier diasporischer Subjekte bezüglich ihrer Heimat und ihrer Verbindung zu dieser zu tieferen Problemen wie Identitätskrisen und Persönlichkeitsverzerrungen führt. Im zweiten Kapitel wird anhand der Konzepte Mimikry und Nachahmung gezeigt, wie sich Kontingenz bei Naipaul und Roth auf soziale Kontexte auswirkt. Ein essenzialistisches Verständnis von Identität ablehnend, wird stattdessen die performative Dimension von Identität in den Fokus gerückt – und dies im Wissen darum, dass die Performanz der Identität bei diasporischen Subjekten stark vom kolonialen Diskurs und dessen Hinterlassenschaften innerhalb des postkolonialen Raumes beeinflusst wird. Im dritten Kapitel werden komplizierte Mechanismen wie *Passing* und Konversion analysiert, durch welche sich die Dominanz des kolonialen Diskurses innerhalb der Postkolonie manifestiert. Abweichendes Verhalten seitens diasporischer Subjekte stellt einerseits die Vorherrschaft „weißer Werte“ heraus, verweist jedoch ebenso auf deren Brüchigkeit.

Die Vormachtstellung des kolonialen Diskurses innerhalb postkolonialer Räume ist oft Ursache gegen diasporische Subjekte gerichteter ethnischer und „rassischer“ Diskriminierung. Sie behindert deren sozioökonomisches Fortkommen. Um dieses jedoch zu sichern, unterwerfen sich diasporische Subjekte „weißen Normen“ von Identität, welche auf der Dominanz des kolonialen Diskurses innerhalb der (Post)Kolonie beruhen. Dies führt unter Umständen einerseits zur Anwendung abweichender Methoden und andererseits zur Übertretung ethnischer und „rassischer“ Normen. Jedoch wird in jedem Fall die „weiße Hegemonie“ gestärkt, während Vorstellungen bezüglich ethnischer und „rassischer“ Zugehörigkeit seitens diasporischer Subjekte geschwächt werden.

Indem er Werte und Normen setzt, macht der Diskurs des Kolonialisten alles, was von ihm abweicht, verächtlich. Die Anwendung abweichender Methoden durch die Kolonisierten respektive diasporischen Subjekte, welche „weißen Normen“ nicht ausreichend entsprechen, überdecken tiefgreifende Anomalien. Die Konstruktion kolonialer Subjekte in Episoden konfliktträchtiger Positionierung und die daraus hervorgehende Unbestimmtheit stützen nicht allein die „weiße Vorherrschaft“ und fördern deren Internalisierung seitens koloniale Subjekte. Sie stehen auch für deren Unfixiertheit und Entwurzeltheit.

Die fiktionalen Werke von Philip Roth und V.S. Naipaul, die in der vorliegenden Studie untersucht werden, behandeln Identitätskrisen und Entfremdungen, die auf der Erfahrung des Kolonialismus, der Sklaverei oder der Arbeitsmigration, wie etwa im Zusammenhang mit vertraglicher Knechtschaft innerhalb der (Post)Kolonien, beruhen. Die daraus resultierende Identitätskrisen führen zu einer kulturellen Herabwürdigung und der Internalisierung des hegemonialer Vorstellungen seitens der Kolonisierten bezüglich „Rasse“ und Kultur (Ashcroft et al. *The Empire Writes Back* 9). Die Vorherrschaft westlicher Kultur etabliert sich innerhalb der Postkolonien aufgrund des anhaltenden Eurozentrismus. Beispiele dessen sind die kulturelle Attraktivität von „WASP-Idealen,“ wie man sie bei

Roth findet, aber auch der Export des europäischen Literaturkanons in die Postkolonie, was bei Naipaul eine Rolle spielt. Die Beispiele veranschaulichen, welchen großen Einfluss der Eurozentrismus noch immer auf die Welt, in der wir leben, ausübt. Und dieser Einfluss besteht über das formale Ende des Kolonialismus hinaus fort, was durch das Präfix „post-“ in den Begriffen postkolonial oder Postkolonialismus angezeigt wird.

Insofern das diasporische Subjekt „weißen“ kulturellen und „rassischen Werten“ innerhalb postkolonialer Räume ausgesetzt ist, erhöht sich die Gefahr, dass es von der „weißen Rassenhierarchie,“ welche den postkolonialen Diskurs intakt hält, in Mitleidenschaft gezogen wird. Diesen Werten ausgesetzt zu sein, bezahlt das diasporische Subjekt mit Marginalisierung und Diskriminierung. Andererseits erhält es so die Möglichkeit, sich eine hybride Identität zu basteln, die unentscheidbar zwischen Gegensätzen changiert (ibid.). Jedoch ist Hybridität nicht zwingend positiv. Für einige bedeutet, hybrid zu sein, Standards ethnischer Zugehörigkeit zu verletzen und führt somit zum Ende einer vormaligen sozialen Ordnung und Moral (Werbner 454).

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