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## NOTIONS OF SUBJECTIVITY IN EMERGING POSTCOLONIAL SPACES

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### ABSTRACT

The literary narratives related to subjectivity encompass the following themes and concepts: identity, language, ethnicity, culture, memory, re-memory, hybridity, sense of dispossession, colonialism, imperialism, post colonialism, psychic trauma, hyphenated-identities, marginalization, and finally subjectivity at geographical, cultural, emotional and psychological levels

### Introduction

Identity has increasingly become an important keyword in contemporary world. In terms of nationality, language and the rights as a true citizen of the country, home and the culture remain one of the most urgent as well as hotly disputed topics in literary and cultural studies. It has also been subjected to a searching critique. Studies have shown how individual writers represent themselves using one or another element that constitutes their identity. In postcolonial globalized world this condition implies the (re)conceptualization of "home" as linked to the dynamic margins /periphery and the center/metropolis on a local and global scale.

After the decolonization, the winds of change had blown away the British Empire. The imperial past was presented in universities and the media as a criminal enterprise. New trends in literature had changed the perception of nation and culture. While colonialism impoverished the country politically and economically, critical issues of nation and nationalism were fore grounded and articulated in postcolonial spaces

The revaluation of periphery or social exploitation, marginal groups and positions, aspects became part of critical writing in a newly

decolonized world. This phase compelled Sir V.S. Naipaul one of the foremost postcolonial writers, to examine the alienation and rootlessness that migrants face. His novels are viewed as representing a turning point in his development and effectiveness as a postcolonial writer and post-colonial literature as well. He documented the migrations of peoples, the unraveling of the British Empire, the ironies of exile and the clash between belief and unbelief. He exempted neither colonizer nor colonized from his scrutiny. He wrote of the arrogance and self-aggrandizement of the colonizer yet exposed the self-deception and ethical ambiguities of the liberation movements that swept across Africa and the Caribbean. His statements on half -made societies have drawn harsh criticism while his works were paramount in changing people's perceptions of the dominating culture.

An Indian by ancestry, a Trinidadian by birth and an English man by education, V.S.Naipaul's quest for his own identity largely remained an enigma. In his homeland the Caribbean, through cultural roots in India, and his place of education in England, he attempted to search for his own identity. Having left behind the circumscribed world of Trinidad he turned his gaze towards England in search of his own world at the adolescent age. He was never entirely rooted in England. His writings

and interviews have always focused on the loneliness, sense of exile and alienation, the perpetual disturbance. His remark clearly reflects this: "London is my metropolitan center; it is my commercial center and yet I know that it is a kind of limbo and that I am a refugee in the sense that I am always peripheral". In the absence of a geographical home he chose an English identity based on language, ethnicity and culture. Like the postcolonial writers who share two centers of equal value, Naipaul attempted to restore his identity by writing from his fragmentary memories from the past. Most of his works therefore appeared to be "a struggle to face the new identity". He then had to acquire a permanent exile. His writing can be summed up in four stages -placelessness and alienation; colonial predicament; nostalgia and writing for self-discovery. By accepting his homelessness, he (re)creates a new identity in exile.

An expatriate novelist, the marginality experienced as a result of his race, region and history became the central thematic concerns of his novels. His characters were mostly autobiographical. Importation of slaves and indentured laborers to West Indies without means to improve their living conditions resulted in mimicry, racial resentment and violence. His views were prophetic -that he saw in the 1960s and 70s, before anyone else did, that a series of crisis was about to hit Africa and India; then in 1980s and 1990s he saw that trouble was brewing in the Islamic world. This acknowledgment of human frailty, starting with his own broadens his observational powers to explore what he terms as "the beginning of things".

Exiled writers who are homeless and borderless tend to present their 'subjectivity' or identity in the act of writing literary works. Their works are not based on the concept of modern literature as in the case of English, French or German literatures, which were individually, unified national literatures based on one culture, one language and one ethnicity. Post-colonial literature thus became different from modern literature in that the postcolonial writers assert their cultural and ethnic identities against their colonizers by using their 'colonizers' language. The postcolonial subject

or subjectivity is represented as being split in their dreams and of illusions.

### **Conclusion**

We cannot talk of West Indies literature without the mention of Derek Walcott or V.S. Naipaul. It was often said that "the island is full of sweet sounds ' but why were there "no voices"? There were at least three factors-the centrality of English, the centrality of colonialism, and the outcome of the unconscious acceptance of the norms and values of the colonizing culture. West Indian colonization is unique because all their racial and social complexity are completely created by the Empire. Naipaul makes it clear that the society plays a major role in molding an individual's potentialities by providing avenues for development. It is his personal anguish experienced by the inferiority of post colonial societies as "lost souls, lost countries" that defines his attitude and sets a tone for all his novels.

In the domain of postcolonial literature, different ethnic groups with specific ethnic, cultural and history; the condition of identity becomes complicated because of their search for 'home' of their own.

This new literature opened up possibilities in revitalizing what had seemed faded, dormant and close to decay. This revaluation of postcolonial fiction signals the relationship between center and periphery through reincarnation of 'twice born fiction'.

Naipaul produced some ground breaking works. His passing away in August at the age of 85 went almost unremarked ending an itinerant and a writerly journey in search of cultural 'truth' explored in an imaginative way. An enthusiastically prolific writer he left behind not just great books but a true legacy.

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