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Orientalism in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*

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Dedication

Words. So very soft, can to a degree reach pureness if left cautiously in dictionaries as they genuinely are. Yes, they combine letters with an ambition of two clashed sides. The pleasant one is favorable and friendly. The atrocious other is hazardous as a timed bomb that kills and not badly injure. How powerful well united letters can grow into the presence of that who knows how to amusingly jiggle with them. They can set endless contentment, bliss, and delight in those whom we love, enjoy, and appreciate. For that, I dedicate my humbly combined letters to the people who are deserving, and worthy enough.

To

The ones who have been constantly implanted with unconditional love. They have watered me massively. I bloom because of their gentle rain. Then I cry tears of joy and then I shout Mom, Dad I will forever need your water, please never go dry.

To

The long companions of my heart, soul, and body. They share my blood, my agony, and my joy. For my older sister Hanane whom I still recall the very first English words she taught me. You are my strong, and you are my beautiful. To the one who can calmly pronounce Choledocholithiasis. You are my best Doctor, Amina you have already cured the Cancer of the world. I love you beyond all words. To my two brothers, the never melting candle of my own darkness. Your light leads and I follow behind. I adore you both solidly.

To

My friends, the warm sunshine of my life. I would infinitely express my deepest affections towards them. They certainly make life a little more bearable. To our delightful fights, joy, humor, and love. To my dear friend Asma, to my one and only Maroua, to my right side Nessrine, to my adorable daisy Nouara, to the best mom Noussaiba, to my little angel Romaiassa, and to my latest additions Abir. I love you all most computationally.

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Abstract

This dissertation aims at analyzing the “Orientalist” ideas pertinent in V. S Naipaul’s novel *A Bend in the River* (1979), and at highlighting the debate around the author’s attitudes towards Third World nations, especially Africa. In 1978, Edward Said’s work *Orientalism* was published and quickly influenced the study of literature written by postcolonial authors. Yet, some of their literary texts were the cause of a huge debate among critics as they easily fit “Orientalist” ideology of their Western counterparts. One of the most controversial novels to ever exist is V. S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* (1979), as many view it as modeled upon Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Throughout the pages of the novel, V.S. Naipaul introduces us to an Africa of ashes where the situation after independence is worse than it was in colonial times. Africa and Africans are darkly portrayed as savage people who live in a land of distraction. This attitude, however, created a debate among critics on whether Naipaul is in fact an “Orientalist” or not. In order to understand the concept of “Orientalism” and to highlight the controversy around Naipaul, the study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a detailed overview of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), as well as the manifestation of “Orientalist” ideology in literatures about Africa written by both Western and Third World writers along with the responses of African ones. Chapter two deals with the critical reception of Naipaul’s ideology about Africa and Third World nations expressed in his works in general. Chapter three deals with the analysis of the stereotypical images of Africa and Africans in Naipaul’s novel *A Bend in the River* developed by a postcolonial author himself.

Key words: Other, Orientalism, East, West, Africa, V. S. Naipaul, Representations.

Introduction

One of the most massive literary tragedies to ever occur are those written about Africa and Africans. It all began at the Western side of the world where books have assisted in transmitting hegemonic discourses that described the continent as a land of darkness, misery, and gloom. To the West, Africans resemble deviating child-like living things, as something between monsters and humans.

The colonization of Africa had been continually sustained through reinforcing stereotypical images in an attempt to legitimize the West's colonial rule upon the continent as superiors governing inferiors. What should also be stressed is the fact that most of the accessible records of Africa's history which are passed on by Europeans are far from being unbiased as they tend only to serve their ways of thinking away from what Africa actually is. Thus, the continent has been brutally deformed in all aspects of culture, history, and identity. By doing so, Europeans were finally able to create a new distorted Africa of their own. This should not come as a surprise given that many Africans are compelled to learn such damaging teachings. Unfortunately, some even believe the falsified descriptions about themselves and their homelands.

Responding to such misrepresentations, many African writers such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa' Thiongo decided to urgently revolt and help their societies to once again regain their confidence by eliminating all Western misconceptions that distorted the image of a true Africa. The writers strived with their words to oppose the unfavorable picture of the continent and Africans promoted by some European writers such as Joseph Conrad. In other words, African writers sought to attach the wide gap between Blacks and Whites and eventually, through words, they were able to affirm Africa's unique characteristics with its own extraordinary history. However, African writers' task was not easy as many well known

writers, including those from the Third World, deeply distorted the image of the continent. In the minds of so many people, Africa still remains dark, chaotic, and barbaric.

Among the Third World writers to deform the image of Africa is V. S. Naipaul who still and even after his death, remembered with rare brilliance fused with remarkable talent that has gained him an endless reputation among critics. Nevertheless, what Naipaul also seems to have is sharp, bitter accusations towards Africa and Third world nations in general that forever pinned him in the center of controversy. Indeed, Naipaul's biased prejudiced notions bypassed Africa and were also directed to other Third World countries including his own home land Trinidad. According to V. S. Naipaul Third World nations are not capable enough for self rule. For him, they will forever need guidance from a superior power. These ideas were the cause for many critics to accuse him of having sympathetic views about colonialism but never to those who have been brutally suffering under it. This is mostly evident in his novel *A Bend in the River* (1979) as it conveys an Africa of despair and agony, an Africa of weakness, and lost hopeless souls.

Hence, this dissertation aims at highlighting the debate around the author's attitudes towards Third World nations, especially Africa, and at analyzing the "Orientalist" ideas pertinent in V. S Naipaul's novel *A Bend in the River* (1979). The attention will be put on how could it ever be possible for a Nobel Prize winner from the Third World to still have a belief in the "White Men's Burden" and whether Naipaul really supports the legend of the Dark Continent. Despite Naipaul's ethnic origins, the voice that speaks to us portrays a post-colonial Africa with its most horrible scenes of chaos, violence, warring tribes, ignorance, and poverty. What Naipaul offers us is a land of disappointments, hopelessness, and bloodshed. Naipaul introduces the Blacks as the nation of laziness, brutality, and chaos. A close examination of *A Bend in the River* (1979) will undoubtedly expose his assumption that

Africans will forever be chaotic, and will forever be in need to be governed for they do not know how to govern themselves.

For this purpose, the research utilizes Edward Said's theory of "Orientalism". According to Said, the "Orient" is a constructed notion. It is introduced to be everything the west is not. The "Orient" is usually portrayed in a sequence of negative aspects such as: lazy, irrational, and naïve. This is in fact done for the purpose of supplying the West with a fake sense of superiority and domination. Edward Said's theory will be used to examine how V. S. Naipaul managed to depict Africa and the Third World from an Orientalist's perspective.

In terms of structure, this thesis consists of three chapters. The first Chapter entitled "Orientalism, in the Case of Africa and Africans" contains four sections. The initial section entitled "Understanding Orientalism" defines the concept of "Orientalism", and provides detailed descriptions of its attributes and related terms. It also highlights the political roots of the term "Orientalism". The second section, "Edward Said's *Orientalism*," analyzes Said's concept of "Orientalism" using authentic information collected from various interviews with Said himself. It also details the way in which Said adopts the Foucauldian theory of discourse and power in an attempt to explain the relationship between the "Occident" and the "Orient". The Third section entitled "Orientalism and Africa" explores how "Orientalism" can also be applied to Africa, not only to the East. The last section entitled "Attitudes of Writers towards Africa: Conversion between Glorification and Racism" presents two opposing attitudes regarding the representation of Africa and Africans.

The second chapter entitled "Critical Reception of V. S. Naipaul" goes even deeper as it scrutinizes Naipaul and critics' views of his portrayals of both Africa and the Third World in many of his other works. Indeed, Naipaul's novels created a tense debate among critics regarding his attitudes towards the Third World. Joseph Walunywa, Bruce Kin, and Irving Howe believe him to be a great observer, and a truth teller. However, many others such as

George Lamming, Edward Said, and Achebe tend to think otherwise. For them Naipaul is in fact a harsh racist. Therefore, the chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses critics who absolutely abhorred Naipaul and completely regarded his ideas about the Third World as repulsive, Eurocentric, and racist. The second section presents critics who actually went side by side with Naipaul. The latter supported, defended, and even glorified him as an exceptional reality portrayer.

The third chapter entitled “Orientalism in *a Bend in the River*” consists of three sections. The first section, “Introduction to the author and his book,” provides an overview of both V. S. Naipaul and his novel *A Bend in the River* (1979). The second section, “Africa as a Land of Ruins,” investigates the “Orientalist” views that Naipaul promotes about Africa. The novel conveys strong signs of racism, stereotypes, and biased notions about the land depicting it as disastrous, dark, and gloomy. The final section, “Africans as Genetically Inferior,” highlights signs of “Orientalism” in the novel but this time about Africans themselves introducing them as irrational, beastly, and children of nature.

Chapter One: Orientalism, in the Case of Africa and Africans

Distinct theories and ideologies throughout the years have had vital importance on postcolonial studies. Yet, the emergence of one of the most prominent books of the twentieth century, Edward Wadie Said's *Orientalism* (1987), has caused major debates in the literary arena. What Said managed to accomplish is an honorable attempt to "correct" the course of history which is likely to be remembered for years to come. Reading through the pages of Said's *Orientalism* will perfectly demonstrate western misrepresentations of the "Oriental Other" (Marruchi 3). As the title entails, this theoretical chapter explores with an acute focus Said's influential work *Orientalism*. The initial section entitled "Understanding Orientalism" defines the concept of "Orientalism" and its attributes and related terms. The next section entitled "Edward Said's *Orientalism* provides authentic information collected from famous interviews by Said himself, in addition to extensive details about his (1978) book *Orientalism*. The section also highlights the link that Said establishes between the Foucauldian theory of discourse and power and his work *Orientalism*. The following section entitled "Orientalism and Africa" concentrates on the application of "Orientalist" mentality in creating prejudices about Africa and Africans. The last section named "Attitudes of Writers towards Africa: Conversion between Glorification and Racism" focuses on the different representations of Africa in different literary works by both Western and African writers.

I.1. Understanding Orientalism

Originally, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the term "Orientalists" first took on a purely political meaning. It was used to refer to Indian politicians who disproved the "Anglicists". The latter viewed that India must be controlled by the British only. On the contrary, Indian "Orientalists" stressed on the fact that India must be under locally established rules only (Thomas).

As a scholarly field, however the word “Orientalists” has become used to specify the works of an “Orientalist”. An “Orientalist” is a person who decided to study, and broadly examine languages, cultures, or civilizations of the East. In a broad sense, “Orientalists” are Westerners who are interested in the study of Easterners (Pun75). The definition of the term remained the same until after the Second World War (1939-45). With the outbreak of the decolonization movement, and chiefly through the work of Edward Said, the term began to mean more than the work of an “Orientalist”. It has become used to refer to a particular system of dealing with the “Orient”, based on Western views that justify the separation and the subjugation of the East. (Macfie 4). The next title will solely deal with Edward’s Said’s “Orientalism” but logically, the terms related to it will be explained first.

The term “Orient” fully contradicts with the term “Occident”. It is borrowed from the Latin word *Oriens* that can be explained as “East or rising” (Pun 75). In most cases, the “Third world” and the “Orient” hold the same meaning. “Third World” is a term generally used to refer to those nations of Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia still following behind. They are labeled as “developing countries” with features such as a damaged economy, high percentages of poverty, and an exaggerated usage of natural resources. Similarly, the word “Orient” refers to countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In academic disciplines, the word “Oriental,” accordingly, mainly means the “Eastern”. It was generally used by the West to define peoples, cultures, and goods that belong to the East. In Western thinking, however, the word “Orient” is used to refer to a misconceived East that is regarded as backward, lazy, and incomplete. The “Occident”, however, is all that is related to the West as more advanced, cultivated, and civilized, Europe and the United States (Pun 75).

In fact, the “Orient” was shaped throughout the years by art and literature made by Western artists and writers. “The Orient is not an inert fact of nature, but a phenomenon

constructed by generations of intellectuals, artists, commentators, writers, politicians, and more importantly, constructed by the naturalizing of a wide range of Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes” (Ashroft et al. 168). That is to say, the “Orient” was never allowed to exist by its true nature; for it was wrongly represented, and bitterly introduced through the eyes of the Westerners. The true “Orient” was deeply buried by delusional stereotypical images. Thus, the concept of the “Orient” or the “non-West” is nothing more than a fantasy, an illusion that was shaped far away from reality, in which Westerners decided to associate terms such as uncivilized, naive, and illiterate with the Easterners, making themselves appear as the only source of civilization fully believing that they possess the ultimate right to educate the uneducated and civilize the uncivilized (Pun 75). Evidently, the term “Orientalism” has become a theoretical concept that is used by intellectuals to refer to the Western conceptions of the “Orient” or the “East” (75).

I.1.1. Edward Said’s Conception of Orientalism

Orientalism is a 1978 book by Edward W. Said, in which the author constructs the concept of “Orientalism” to express, explain, and illustrate the West’s general, condescending description of the East, the “Orient”. The convoluted nature of *Orientalism* as a book triggered Jhally Sut to identify it as “profoundly significant”. According to him, Said’s book will always be observed as a turning point in the intellectual history, this is due to the fact that *Orientalism* brought about a radical change in the study of the Middle East and bolstered to build new fields of study such as Postcolonialism (2).

In an interview conducted by Michaël Zeeman, Said was interrogated about precise details regarding his life. Targeting him with rather disturbing statements, Zeeman said: “I would say it, you were born in a country that no longer exists, you were brought up a Christian in a predominantly Muslim world, you lived most of your life in New York as an Arab in a predominantly Jewish city. Now that is quite confusing, nonetheless, there is one

person combining these things” (Zeeman, 00:00:55 – 00:01:20). Said’s reaction was absolutely alluring. Said identifies himself firstly as an intellectual person who admires moving from one place to the other, “between things” in his words. His address does not quite mean that much, rather he describes himself as an “energy in motion”. Said genuinely believes that a rational effort can overcome any obstacle. In his case, it might be political. As a matter of fact, the loss of Palestine created an enormous need to exist in different countries of his own formulation.

Said’s life in such an atmosphere created the basic idea of his book *Orientalism*. The book is actually a response to sensitive questions that coloured the life of its author. These included questions such as “what were those troops doing here, why were we treated so differently, despite our feelings of being fully equal?” The procedural standards against the “Orient” prevented him from having his well-deserved recognition back in his university life, those standards kept him distant and denied. It was the doctrine of “Orientalism” that caused that. (Said, 00:01:28 –00:22:56). According to him, his eagerness to write *Orientalism* commenced for two reasons, the first of which was an immediate thing, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the aftermath of the conflict which brought up an immense wave of faulty distorted images about the “cowardice” of the Arabs and the failure of the Arab nation. The second reason had to do with the mistaken representations of the “Orient” in the art of the very great artists and novelists that had no reference in reality. About this Said says: “Those representations of the “Orient” had very little to do with what I knew about my own background in life” (Said qtd. in Sut 2-3). This indicates once again that the concept of the “Orient” is highly imaginative, and wrongfully constructed by the “West”.

As it is shown, *Orientalism* undoubtedly had intimate contact with Said’s own personal reality. And he conveys that saying:

I remember one of my earliest experiences, which had a lot to do with the writing of *Orientalism*. When I was walking in the Gezira Club of which we were members. It was a famous enclave built by the British. The members were mostly foreign, although there were some local members. I was thrown out by the secretary, who was a friend of my father's... He said, "Don't you know that Arabs are not allowed here?" And I said, "Yes, but we're members". And he said, "Don't argue with me boy, get out!" it was that sense of forbidden space that really sowed, I think, the seeds of my rebellion against the hieratic and the fetishistic and the ritualized and the idolatrous. I felt the need always to go against those prohibitions and those statues and those forbidden places. The urge to enter those places where I wasn't wanted, which is what I felt I was doing in *Orientalism*. (qtd. in Marrouchi 2)

Therefore, *Orientalism* is not merely an external motivation, but also an internal one that directly relates to his own identity. His thoughts on refusing the unfair situation is what prompted him to write *Orientalism* (1978).

The publication of the book made a massive impact that for two decades it has sustained to be an ideal scene of controversy, admiration, and criticism. With a sharp analytical tone, Said presents the concept of "Orientalism" as a tangled "discipline by which the "Orient" was, and is approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice" (73). This rapprochement does not simply mean dealing with the "Other", but also holds a frame of knowledge motivated and constructed by desires and power. Thus, According to Said, the "Orient" is a constructed notion by "making statement about it, authorizing views about it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it" (3). In other words, "Orientalism" is a Western way of dominating, controlling, and having authority over the "Orient". Moreover, Said further states that: "In brief, because of Orientalism, the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action" (3). In this sense, everything that links or

gathers the occident with the “Orient” is characterized by suppression, authority, and supremacy of the former upon the latter.

The chief altercation of “Orientalism”, then, revolves around questions of knowledge of the other. Here “Orientalism” attempts to apprehend the reasons behind biased, prepossessed notions about the “Orient”. Besides that, the fundamental argument of “Orientalism” is that when we obtain knowledge about such notions, the motivations are neither “objective, nor innocent but the end result of a process that reflects certain interests” (Sut 2). In this sense, the image of the “Other” is highly derived by political and imperial purposes. Particularly, Said stresses the fact that when the West observes the countries of the East, it is through a glass that falsifies twisted impressions of both the area and its nation. Said identifies this as “Orientalism”, a term that has been used as a framework to understand what is not known, and what might be unfamiliar or bizarre, to make the people of the East emerge as everything that is distinct, distant or even dangerous. Said’s input to our perceptions and insights about what is acknowledged as stereotyping has been undeniable and still is unquestionable (2).

In fact, the complexity of Said’s “Orientalism” lies in the fact that it surrounds three complex interwoven connotations. Firstly, “Orientalism” can be defined as an “academic field of study about the Orient” (Pun 76). In his book *Orientalism*, Said himself defines it as “Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the “Orient” and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism” (Said 2). This definition amplifies that “Orientalism” is an academic field of study that is completely concerned with all that is associated with the “Orient”.

Secondly, “Orientalism” according to Said is “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the “Orient” and, most of the time

the “Occident” (2). This mainly means that the intellectuals of society, such as the philosophers, writers, and artists eventually approved such blurry distinction between the West and the East. Hence, contributing is separating the two (Pun 76). In fact, Said points out that “Orientalism” is “a willed imaginative and geographic distinction made between East and West” (201). Here Said stresses the fact that the line that has been created to separate the two sides was nothing more than an imaginative one framed by forces of the West.

Thirdly, “Orientalism” refers to intellectual forms of “Western hegemony” (Pun 76). According to Said, “Orientalism” is “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3). Here Said is linking the concept with imperialism. With the initiation of European colonization, the Westerners approached only backward parts of countries of the East. Hence, they identified themselves as implicitly superior, better, and higher race. What is more important is that they have used such ideas to initiate, and justify their colonial appetite, and their deeds of oppression pretending that it was done only as an act of charity to civilize those who needed to be civilized (Pun 76). In the light of all this, “everything that the westerners knew, more or less, about the “Orient” came from books written in the tradition of Orientalism” (Said 94). These books made the “Orient” appear as silenced space; the “Orient” was something quite easy to be dealt with. It was there “available” to satisfy the imperialistic tendencies of the West, to receive power and domination without any signs of resistance and this does not reflect the real state of things.

Fundamental to understanding “Orientalism” is explaining how it functions for Westerners. It is mostly used, as Said suggests, to expand European world vision, and the tendency of the West to classify foreign cultures as exotic (Winder 616). That is to say, the “Orientalist” ideology was used by the colonizer to justify its hegemony. Thus, 19th century’s writers were able to establish knowledge that shaped the “Orient” and granted full control

over it (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 54). This knowledge that was presented allowed for invalid justifications, and built a long bridge towards oppression.

Basically, Said identifies two distinct forms of “Orientalism”. These are “Latent Orientalism” and “Manifest Orientalism”. First, Said formulates a barrier between the two. He states: “The distinction I am making is really between an almost unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity, which I shall call latent Orientalism, and the various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literature, history, sociology, and so forth, which I shall call manifest Orientalism” (206). Here, Said stresses on the fact that “Latent Orientalism” and “Manifest Orientalism” are totally interrelated. Nonetheless, each has its own functionality. In the sense that, “Latent Orientalism” is the views held up against the East. They might be unconscious. Still, they need the “Manifest Orientalism” to successfully transmit them through “Oriental” literature, art, and so on.

Similarly, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia further clarify these two forms of “Orientalism”. They argue that “Latent Orientalism” attributes those “almost unconscious” beliefs held by the West against the East. These beliefs are characterized by inferiority, racism, biases, and preconceived stereotypical notions. The “Latent Orientalism” is then transcribed through the “Manifest Orientalism”. The latter is presented in “Orientalist” knowledge that is found in numerous arts and literature, and any slight change in the “Latent Orientalism” will inevitably influence the “Manifest” one (qtd. in Khalid 22). This knowledge can also be in a form of a discourse. Said has given vital importance to the latter.

In fact, Said views “Orientalism” primarily as a discourse, he also believes that the tie between it and power is unbreakable. Foucault believes the same as he shares in his theory, “the Foucauldian Theory of Discourse and Power” that power is granted through discourse by wrongfully representing it about the “Orient”. That is to say, when formulators of discourse release labels such as “irrational” and “uncivilized” power and control is placed in their

possession as the ones who must “civilize” and “rationalize” those who are not. Said In his book *Orientalism* adopts the “Foucauldian theory”.

I.1.2. Orientalism and the Foucauldian Theory of Discourse and Power

Said as mentioned above, views “Orientalism” as a discourse. He regards it as “a manifestation of power and knowledge” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 60). This particular Discourse was actually defined by Hall Stewart in his (1912) book *Formations of Modernity*. He states:

“By “discourse”, we mean a particular way of representing “the West”, “the Rest”, and the relations between them. A discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about i.e. a way of representing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed. (Hall and Giben 291)

In this sense, the discourse that was represented by the “Occident” about the “Orient” consciously or unconsciously affects our judgments about the target, the East. After such discourse is released, the presence of other opposing discourses that attempts to correctly “represent” will be abnormally limited.

According to Said the fabrication of extravagant discourses about the “Orient” was both an outcome of and a booster to western “hegemony” over the “Orient”. He states: “The relationship between “Occident” and “Orient” is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (Said 9). In the sense that, all what gathers the “Occident” with the “Orient” are power, dominion, and control of the West upon the East. Hence, Said stresses on the fact that without analyzing “Orientalism” as a discourse “one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage-and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily,

ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” (Said 3). That is to say, for Said the connection between power and discourse is firm. Therefore, it must be deeply analyzed in order to understand how the West controls the East. Hence, Said decides to adopt Michel Foucault’s theory of discourse and power. The theory is a form of discourse analysis that concentrates on power relationships in a community being conveyed through language. Foucault believes that the formation of discourse is connected to power that is released to control a certain community. Said, as Foucault, believes the same. This means that the producer of such a discourse is the one in ultimate control. Hence, the relation that combines the “Occident” with the “Orient” places power in the hands of the former, a power that was the end result of knowledge formulation about the “Orient”; a power that offers authority and control (63). Said believes that “Knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge” (Said 36). The creation of more knowledge is fundamental for direct access to more power. This knowledge does not necessarily reflect truths but is forcibly acknowledged by the “Orient” until eventually power is gained by the rulers and representations are inescapably accepted by people.

Similarly, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia argue that a colonial discourse is a “system” of announcements about both the colonizer and the colonized, despite the fact that the represented knowledge about the “Other” is produced and created by the colonizers, it is however may grown to be a discourse that the colonized would eventually believe. As, for example, when Africans decide to actually go with using “the imperial view” about themselves as being “intuitive” and “emotional”(Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 63). This will forcibly establish a gap between them and the “rational” Europeans. (63).

Edward Said’s “Orientalism” is generally connected to the countries of the East. Nonetheless, what “Orientalism” also concentrates on is the relationship between imperialism and “Oriental” writings. Hence, “Orientalism” also deals with Africa and Africans. Major part

of this thesis deals with the application of “Orientalist” mentality in creating prejudices about the continent and its peoples.

I.2. Orientalism and Africa

In the broad sense, the “Orient” is commonly associated with the East. However, a good part of theories of “Orientalism” focuses on European colonization and western literary productions about the colonized people in general. Africa had been as well brutally colonized by European authorities. Therefore, Said’s work also examines Africans and Africa and how they are treated as the “Other” by the West (Mazrui 68). North Africa was regarded as a large district of the European continent while the rest of Africa was looked upon as an empire of brutality and savagery. In fact, when Europeans form maps, they surprisingly drew sketches of animals to identify African towns (70).

Biased prejudices about Africans being inferior human beings are the results of “Oriental” writings. The White Man’s Burden by Rudyard Kiplin calls for imperialism under the justification of “civilizing them”, or bringing them into the light (Jeffries 51). In addition, Charles Darwin and many other writers of the time concluded that Africans are a flawed race. Racism, as such, has become the major reason for the European domination of Africa. Thus, many believed that Whites were simply better than the rest. Social Darwinism, for instance, provided new excuses for the imperial conquest of Africa. “Survival of the fittest” suggests that the White race is far more better than the other races. The rest are powerless and fragile and, therefore, they deserve to be controlled. In this regard, Colonialism, domination, and control of other races were a natural outcome of the Darwinist ideology (Rutledge 245).

Similar falsified images were further developed along the decades of colonialism. For instance, Roslayn Poignant demonstrates how “African Savagery” was molded by the West. Cannibalism, for example, was an illusion created by colonial powers to establish a gap between the enlightened self and the “cannibal other” (qtd. in Camara 23). Another

stereotypical sign can be found in the portrayal of an African child as a big-headed, large nose, and skinny chest in pictures appearing in many places. Even though the act is a charitable one that aimed to rescue African children from famine it, however, remains an over-generalized representation of African infants as an image of despair incarnated ever lastly in the minds of millions (Camara 23). According to Babacar Camara, no single opportunity is forgotten while introducing an Africa that is incapable to govern or survive without the support of an external “A” power (24).

In literature, representations of Africa have been widely ambivalent. On the Western side, Africa is regarded as an empire of darkness and savagery with awful scenes of lawlessness and bloodshed. It is portrayed as dangerous for its self and for other people as well. On the native side, Africa is depicted as a unique place with its own traditions and an unforgettable history. Yet, few postcolonial authors provided an even ambivalent description of Africa that is both admirable and exotic at the same time. This conversion is indeed a significant subject of study. Therefore, the following section will attempt to explore the ever going “literary clash” between authors who admire the continent and authors who denounce its peoples and those who set between the two extremes of admiration and denouncement.

I.2.1. Attitudes of Writers towards Africa: Conversion between Racism and Glorification

I.2.1.1. Western Racist Representations of Africa

Ironically, it is to be said that no other race is civilized but the Whites and no other race could ever accomplish what the White race has attained. This ideology served to establish a position of perfectness and superiority to the Whites. In the nineteenth century, the promoters of “Monogenesis” and those of “Polygenesis” had a very intense debate. The promoters of “Monogenesis” claimed that even if people of color have had less significance when compared with the whites, they, however, still were daughters and sons of Adam and Eve.

Their arguments were profoundly religious. By contrast, the promoters of “Polygenesis” strongly disagreed. They believe that races are distinct from each other. They, of course, had them in ranks with Whites on top. Unfortunately, such division is timeless (Milbury-Steen 4).

Western representations of Africa began after three gatherings that combined the White race with the Black one. In this matter, Christine Gledhill, in her book *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (1997), argues that there are three fundamental occasions in which the “West” confronted people of color. The first occurred in the sixteenth century when European merchants encountered the West African Monarchies. This first meeting, started the racist representations of other races. The second happened when Europe colonized Africa. A division of the entire continent between Western powers driven by those falsified descriptions of Africans. The third stage was characterized by massive waves of African immigrants to Europe and America after World War II. Western conceptions about Africans were to a great extent formed by those three eventful meetings (Gledhill 239).

Western domination over Africa started, as maintained above, with the creation of incorrect representation. Indeed, Stuart Hall defines representation as “an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or present things” (15). A representation can be very simple and straightforward when defining objects or things such as lamps, chairs, doors....etc. Yet the convoluted part is that we also shape concepts of rather abstract things (Hall 7). One of which is the representation of races.

Admittedly, a racist representation commenced when humans were separated into various races, some were classified as the superior ones, others were significantly “lesser”. This biased reasoning continued to believe that such backward and primitive nations were in a

crucial need to be guided into the goodness of advancement for they would never be organized on their own (Palmberg 7).

Indeed, literary Western books were not innocent. In fact, major works promoted the same ideas. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), matches very well with the process of "Othering". Within the book, Africa was represented as the center of evil and as a source of ultimate darkness. Conrad argues with intensity that African natives were born to be enslaved and dominated; they are lazy, silent, and a hopeless defenseless race. For Conrad, westerners are the only source for civilization, while barbarism and misery were associated with Africans (Aziz et al. 40-41).

There you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were. No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity like yours the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. (Conrad 51)

Obviously, Africans here are dehumanized. They are represented with brutal depictions that not only humiliate them but also establish an everlasting image that continuously casts them as "Others". Eventually, Conrad was able to create an imaginary line that reinforced the "Othering" process. Correspondingly, Africa was always portrayed as a hideous and dreadful continent where ethics and morality are viewed as needless and avoidable by Africans. This wasteland is seen as a place where all is permissible. Its barbaric nature grants a lawless, out of control society where anything can be done (Hevešiová 48). Undoubtedly, Africa was seen as nothing more than a wrecked, awful place that was fully undeveloped. Hence the generosity of the colonizers was to bring the darkness into light. Surprisingly, such ideas were used to defend the long invasion of the continent (Poncian 72).

What can be said here is that Conrad generated a story in which the racist portrayals he created are far away from reality. Unfortunately, it is Conrad's Africa that is being held up in Westerners' conceptions. By doing this, he has created a social separation and reinforced biased depiction; that of a civilized Westerner and that of a lesser African (44).

The European African connection formed some of the most horrifying racist texts by Western writers who despised the African heritage and depicted its people as inhuman, unpowered, and worthy of enslavement. However, among the misrepresented nation appeared those who refused the unfair situation. Achebe, Ngugi, and others used words to fight words. Their efforts gave birth to masterpieces that forever silenced biased texts. Africa, in their works, is realistically portrayed as a unique nation with a solid culture.

I.2.1.2. Third World Writers' Realistic Representation of Africa

An African writer is someone whom we might not notice nor remember: Henrique Abranches, Isaac Moumé Étia, and Koulsy Lamko are few examples. An African writer is someone whom we do notice, admire and recall: Chinua Achebe, J. M. Coetzee, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o included. The "Orient", Africa, or, as it is occasionally labeled the "Dark Continent" was and is still joined with everything that is lazy, silent, backward, and inexperienced. Africa is eventually tired of biased and offensive representations. Darkness, after all, is not awful, darkness is to be celebrated, and embraced, and so it was with African writers who reacted powerfully against such embracing, dishonest accusations.

One of the first writers who was perfectly able to defend Africa's image and reverse the distorting representations was the well-known Chinua Achebe. Eventually, Achebe was filled with intellectual fatigue and irritation. He felt a deep need for a change that immediately began in his masterpiece *Things Fall Apart* (1958). In it, Achebe was able to change the image of Africans as barbaric, savages, and beasts, to present us with a distinct and unique culture that contains tremendous beauty. Moreover, Achebe's Africans are perfectly capable

of governing themselves without any external support. In the end, the charm of a true African culture was finally exposed to the world (Onyekachi 16). In fact, Achebe is an educator, a realistic author who not only corrects what is misunderstood but also proudly and unashamedly represents the negative traits that need to be eliminated. He fearlessly introduces both perfections and imperfections of African culture “He nevertheless reveals those intolerable aspects of his Igbo culture that needed to be eliminated without hesitation” (15).

Additionally, Achebe bravely notifies the West that Africans are always of much value and that they have always owned a culture of their own even before the arrival of the colonizer. This culture contains “great depth”, endless importance, and a distinguished beauty that is almost impossible to be overlooked or ignored (16). In “The Novelist as Teacher” (1975), Achebe points out that he would be “quite satisfied” if his novels “did no more than teach [his] readers that their past with all its imperfections was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God’s behalf delivered them” (Achebe 45). Recognizing his commitment as an engaged writer, Achebe’s pure determined goal is first to act as a teacher. Indeed, art for him is undoubtedly important, but so is education. In truth, he wanted to make the society once again aware of his value by helping it to “regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement. And it is essentially a question of education, in the best sense of that word” (Achebe 44).

In fact, when portraying Africa, some Western writers have had all of their works based upon tales narrated by “Christian missionaries, adventurers and political representatives of the colonial powers” (Showkat 613). Writers like Joseph Conrad, Graham Greene, and Joyce James portrayed a dark barbaric Africa that needs to be saved and brought up into the light of Western civilization. Achebe replies by stating that “the story we. [Africans] had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else no matter how gifted or well-intentioned” (qtd. in Showkat 613). Thus, it is evident that the vast majority of European writings depicted a world

where Africans know nothing but savagery and viciousness. Africans, in these writings, were completely disgraced and fully muted in their own story. On the other side, Europeans represented themselves with great glorifying words. As a rule, they were the higher race and the civilized one that has an honorable duty to “humanize” the rest (Abaker 706). The continuing process of European exploitation is a result of those biased portrayals of Africa and Africans. Similarly, Africa is always deleted, but when mentioned, Africa is represented as politically incapable (Camara 21).

Fortunately, Achebe and other writers were strong-willed to share their own thoughts about a true Africa. Through their subversive works, stereotypes were finally exhibited to be misleading (Abaker 707). In *Arrow of God* (1964), Achebe was able to generate characters that are equipped with endless decency and grandeur towards their conventional lifestyle. Furthermore; the people there possess a massive sense of pride along with great eagerness and thirst to battle the colonizer at any cost. In fact, the characters finally gained back their voices and were strong enough to actually stand against the enemy (Abaker 708). As previously mentioned, European writers attempted to justify the subjugation act by explaining that it was done only to substitute primitive forms of government in Africa. Achebe’s reply came quickly by portraying strong and unique institutions with pure, honorable laws that spread justice all around (709).

In addition to Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o has had his share as well. Through his novel, *The River Between* (1965), Ngugi was finally capable of showing a buried African man who was nearly muted in Western works. Ngugi also managed to present an alternative perception of Africa. Thus, while Conrad portrayed Africa as a terrible menace for those entering it, Ngugi somehow was able to deny such biased suppositions. Conrad’s dehumanization of Africans was completely opposed by Ngugi. In most of his novels, native communities are introduced as well structured, whole entities entirely rich in cultural

traditions. Most important, Ngugi's representation of the colonizer is relatively eliminated from his novels. In fact, by muting the White man's voice into restricted spaces, Ngugi was more able to fulfill his subversive discourse and to direct his attention to the silenced Africans (Hevešiová 44-55).

Closer examination of the literatures of the two cultures can show that claims about the absence of an African cultural and political heritage are false. In the works of John Henry Clark, an African American writer, Africa and Africans were long known for their organizational systems and were quite familiar with civilization and prosperity before the arrival of Europeans to the continent (Camara 21). Medieval Africa has been characterized by noticeable great civilizations that gave birth to an active, balanced political rule. On the contrary, Medieval Europe was marked by vulnerability and weakness (wars and famine).

Recently, not only written literature but also mega-budget movies were also used to redefine the image of Africa that has been entirely distorted. An example is the masterpiece, *Black Panther*. The movie was released on February 16, 2018, by the world company Marvel Studios and it was the cause of a huge success as it contained one of the most talented Black actors in the cinematic field, Chadwick Boseman, Michael B Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o, and others persistently worked on presenting rooted epic African heritage. The movie perfectly blended traditions with technology, portraying Africans as conservatives, yet advanced as well. Moreover, since the movie combined elements of fiction and the supernatural, it was capable of affirming Africa's uniqueness among the world (Aiyesimoju 96).

Notwithstanding, some writers, who belong to the third world, had an ambivalent attitude with regards to the representation of Third World nations and Africa. One of these writers is the most controversial V. S. Naipaul. V. S. Naipaul comes from ancient Asian

decent, more particularly India, he, however, was born in Chaguanas, Trinidad, and Tobago. As an adult, he decided to move to London and permanently settle there. Naipaul's confused attitudes towards his homeland, the Third World, and Africa are surprisingly shocking. In an interview with Elizabeth Hardwick he stated: "I do not write for Indians" he says, "who in any case do not read. My work is only possible in a liberal, civilized Western country. It is not possible in primitive societies" (V. S. Naipaul 45). Naipaul's words precisely state that civilization is specific to westerners only. In fact, he goes further as his pessimistic offenses reach the African continent as well. He tends to ask himself: "What is the future in Africa?" then he answers by only to answer that "Africa has no future" (49).

In most of his novels, V. S. Naipaul indicates that emergent nations, or Third World countries in general, are not "genuine and authentic human beings" (Eid, "Naipaul's A Bend" 1). In fact, he further implies that their social and economic chaos is inevitable and that Third World nations are a mess with no formal position in the world. One problematic view of Naipaul is admitting that independence and self-government have wiped out Third World nations' last aspire for civilization. The leftovers are backward, ignorant countries that drown in total pandemonium. Similarly, what Naipaul has given introduced to us is a wrecked society that is not able to manage itself; it must be heavily supported and guided all the way through by a foreign, more advanced westerner power. Hence, his arguments certainly do not conflict with the White Man's Burden theory that defends the subjugation of other minor countries (1). However, the massive controversy of V. S. Naipaul lies in the fact that there are critics who indeed attempted to defend his deeds. Hence, the second chapter will be fully devoted to investigate both opposing views regarding V. S. Naipaul.

Chapter Two: Critical Reception of V. S. Naipaul

Undoubtedly, V. S. Naipaul is one of the most conspicuous writers of the twenty first Century. Naipaul is the author of numerous literary masterpieces such as: *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961), *In a Free State* (1971), *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), and many others. His works were the subject of study for a very long time. With regards to his attitudes towards his native homeland, Third World peoples and Africa, Interpreters and commentators of V. S. Naipaul's pieces, both fiction and non-fiction, are broadly divided into two opposing groups. To some, Naipaul is a possessor of exceptional brilliance and excellence whose hands crafted themes about humankind's pain and agony with much honesty and fairness. To others, he is racist, brutal, and untrustworthy with words (Chaubey 36). As the title entails, this second chapter endeavors to explore the controversial reception of V. S. Naipaul's works. For this purpose, the chapter is divided into two sections. The first Section named "The Pro Third World Sentiment in Receiving V. S. Naipaul" provides the critical views of Naipaul's detractors. Among these are George Lamming, Edward Said, Chinua Achebe, and many others. The second section entitled "The Pro Naipaulian Reception" principally deals with the critical vision of his defenders that are generally supportive to the point of glorifying him. Hence, the chapter is fully directed to investigate the ever-going debate that remains, till now inseparable from Sir V. S. Naipaul.

III.1. The Pro Third World Sentiment in Receiving V. S. Naipaul

Through his shocking pro colonialism ideology, V. S. Naipaul achieved massive prominence and fame in the west that was never attained in the world where he belong, the Third World. In truth, he was honored with admirable gifts including: the Bennett Prize, the Booker Prize, and the Hawthornden Prize. He was even knighted by the queen herself. Indeed, Very large number of western critics distinguished Naipaul to be unquestionably as one of the most brilliant, skillful writers in English (Nixon 3-4). However, the former

glorifications tend to vanish among commentators from the other half of the world. African, Arab, and even some western critics think otherwise. They describe him as “a despicable lackey of neo-colonialism”, “a cold and sneering prophet” (qtd. in Nixon 4). Referring to a detected racism in his works.

With regards to his convictions about Third World, critics of Naipaul, who will be discussed in the following paragraphs, harshly criticized the writer for racist, intolerant opinions against those who have been once brutally colonized. Naipaul’s objections against the Third World were first directed towards his own home land, Trinidad an obvious example is *The Middle Passage*, published in (1962). The book exposes the Trinidadian socio-political concerns in a highly racist manner. His anger towards Trinidadians was personal and full of hate. Later on, he composed a trilogy about a post-colonial India including *Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1970), and *India: A Million Mutinies* in (1990) (Chaubey 45-46). These novels emphasized racial prejudices and considered Indians to be highly illogical and senseless.

Then, V. S. Naipaul decided to drift his attention away from his home land and India to other parts of the Third World reflecting his new interest in Islam and Islamic nations. His piece, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (1982), is, in fact, inspired by his seven months expedition trip to Asia. In it, Naipaul examines the cultural, political, and economic situation in four separate Islamic countries; Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In this travel book, Naipaul portrays Islamic nations as incapable to blend with the modern side of the world (Chaubey 45-46).

In his book *London Calling V. S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin* (1992), Rob Nixon intensely raises a set of important issues related to the popularity of V. S Naipaul. Nixon could not help but wondering how can someone gain an unlimited fame and reputation as an extraordinary writer while releasing some of the most daring controversial pieces of writings

that have ever existed. Nixon emphasizes on two important aspects in Naipaul's productions. The First is Naipaul's shocking descriptions of the ex-colonies, or the so-called Third World, as "irrational", "primitive", "simple", "futureless", "without history", "bush", "sentimental", and "parasitic". Nixon wondered about the choice of such racist idioms and words that perfectly fit western prejudices (6). He states: "The choice of idiom makes his readings of such societies easily assimilable to imperialist discursive traditions that run deep in Britain and the United States" (Nixon 6). He concludes that Naipaul's selections of words once again prove his racist ideologies towards everything that is not white. For him, the Third World has never had a history and also will never have a future. Their primitiveness simply prevents from doing so.

The Second is his harsh views about the atrocity and the duplicity of Islam, Africans as Cannibalists with an innate capacity to wreck, Indians as brainless, childlike, and naïve, and the feebleness of the Caribbeans to achieve advancement (6). In an attempt to explain this, Arnold Rampersad implies that the young V. S. Naipaul could have been traumatized as an infant by the Afro-Trinidadians' aggression against Indians. He states: "the young Naipaul must have been bruised by the pervasive hostility of Afro-Trinidadians toward Indians, and that such experiences of racial bigotry crucially underlie his angry rejection of his homeland" (qtd in. Nixon 9). According to Rampersad, this can probably justify Naipaul's denial of his motherland.

In his article "James with Naipaul in Charleston, South Carolina: Modern Perception of The Tradition of the Transatlantic South" (1999), Clifford T. Manlove points out that despite his pertinent analysis and rigorous portrayals of the Third World, Naipaul is in fact "Veiled by white civilization" (39). The literature he offers is no different from that of the Western one. He claims to be a speaker of truth, yet he hides behind a white mask and spills his racist Eurocentric views everywhere.

In *The Enigma of V.S Naipaul* (2002), Helen Hayward argues that Naipaul leans to claim having large commiseration with the abhorrent aftermath of colonization and the difficult conditions of the so-called Third World. Nonetheless, Hayward also argues that his output appears to widely contradict the latter idea. In other words, Naipaul genuinely believes that Third World countries are unable to adequately govern themselves by themselves (106). He declares in an interview with Charles Michener: “I’m desperately concerned about the countries I’m in, but that there’s nothing to be done. Except we mustn’t romanticize them, people must do things for themselves” (Naipaul70). His words clearly suggest that Third World nations are the ones to blame. They do not deserve any sort of sympathy, and must not be romanticized. That is to say, we must not glorify something that is not great.

In his article “George Lamming and V. S. Naipaul in the light of Politics of Postcolonialism” (2012), Mehmet Recep holds that Naipaul is actually the “Mouthpiece of a Eurocentric view” (102). Recep argues that Naipaul is in fact a speaker on behalf of all racist Western views about the Third World. Moreover, Recep maintains that Naipaul should not be accepted among the postcolonial circle because, as he believes, Naipaul has never dared to openly speak about the dark truths of colonialism, nor has acknowledged the horrible deeds of the West. Indeed, Naipaul has never been caught up expressing any kind of compassion towards those who once suffered. He, instead, fiercely blamed, and condemned them with bitter words full of hatred and acrimony (102).

Apparently, Sir V. S. Naipaul has never failed to put himself in the middle of wild controversy. For many critics, Naipaul’s writing is considered to be full of “Orientalist” notions, Eurocentric views, and biased judgments towards Third World. Daurius Figueira emphasizes that in his book *Exiting a Racist Worldview: A Journey through Foucault, Said and Marx to Liberation* (2004). Figueira contends that Naipaul is “the supreme example of a person carrying the white man’s “Orientalist” racist burden” (276). Moreover, he adds that V.

S. Naipaul shockingly blames the victims for the abhorrent atrocity committed upon them. Figueira believes that if one acknowledges and submits to his discourse then one is more likely to accept his thoughts of the non-Whites as genetically inferior (277).

In the same line, in her book *Europe's Myths of Orient* (1986), Rana Kabbani shares a point with Daurius Figueira as she also accuses Naipaul with reinforcing "Orientalist" images about the Third World. She states: "No contemporary European writer would have dared such a [stereotyped] description . . . but Naipaul feels within his rights to offer whatever description suits his prejudice for after all, he is "involved" with this East, having emerged from it and having made good" (130). In other words, Kabbani argues that Naipaul's origins informed him and allowed him to state what must be unsaid about the Third World.

Edward Said, in his article "Intellectuals in the Post-Colonial World" (1986) also argues that V. S. Naipaul is a great admirer of the west and a supporter of "Orientalist" ideas against the Third World. Said famously says: "The most attractive and immoral move, however, has been Naipaul's, who has allowed himself quite consciously to be turned into a witness for the Western prosecution" (53). In short, Edward Said believes that V. S. Naipaul's racist, and "Orientalist" portrayals of the Third World were not accidental. On the contrary, they were quite conscious and purposefully committed in order for him to be accepted in the Western literary world. Further, Said harshly blames Naipaul for reinforcing "Orientalist" images as he pictures the cultures of the Third World as savage, primitive, and undereducated (53). Additionally, Said asserts that despite the fact that Naipaul is representing himself to be a speaker of the Third World; he in fact failed to properly perform the mission (53).

Additionally, Said in his book *Reflections of Exile and other Essays* (2000), adds that Naipaul is in fact a "Native informer" (119). He is a figure of the Third World relied upon to constantly satisfy the White audience by deriding his own people (119). In an interview with Connor Cruise O'Brien and John Lukacs, Said said: "[Naipaul] has had ascribed to himself the

credentials of a man who can serve as witness for the Third World; and he is a very convenient witness. He is a Third Worlder denouncing his own people, not because they are victims of imperialism, but because they seem to have an innate flaw, which is that they are not Whites” (Said 465). That is to say, for Said, V. S. Naipaul directs his blames and judgments upon Third World nations for being genetically lesser than the Whites not as people who suffered from long years of colonialism.

In his book *V. S. Naipaul: A materialist Reading* (1988), the Trinidadian academic Selwyn Cudjoe agrees with Edward Said and describes Naipaul as someone who “has clearly aligned himself and his writing on the side of the dominant class” (266). Cudjoe adds that Naipaul is in fact quite tolerable with “the ideology and culture of the former colonizers” (136). Cudjoe attributes to him a “solidarity of imperialism” (122). This caused many critics to consider him as a supporter of colonial rule.

Apart from the Third World in general, Naipaul moves into another specific direction, now it is Africa that attracted his mind with its cultural diversity, its rich rotten history and an undeniable civilization. Indeed, the Third World was deeply touched thoroughly by Naipaul’s racist depictions, Yet Africa and Africans were even more targeted. His hatred towards them is highly subjective and full of shame.

Derek Walcott, for instance, accuses Naipaul of being bigoted against Africans. It is quite effortless to expose how many Africans and non-Western characters in his pieces to be represented as shameful, corrupted and sometimes even cold blood assassins (qtd.in King 204). He also states that Naipaul’s pieces are completely corrupted by his “repulsion towards Negroes” (qtd. in Stavans 127). In short, Derek’s view about Naipaul is triggered by how repulsive he can be.

Similarly, John Keith, in his article “The Negro as Performance in V. S. Naipaul” (1996), replies to a rather provocative line from Naipaul’s novel *The Middle Passage* released in 1967. The line goes as follows: “like monkeys pleading for evolution, each claiming to be whiter than the other, Indians and Negroes appeal to the unacknowledged white audience to see how much they despise one another” (MP 87). John Keith holds that Naipaul is in fact going back to one of the aspects of Darwinism which would propose that both Negroes and Indians are placed in an early phase of evolution before the humankind. That is to say, Negroes and Indians have common ancestors with apes. In fact, this is precisely what Fanon Frantz has mentioned in his book *Black Skin White Masks* (1986). He states that some Westerners “have tried to prove that the Negro is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man” (17). Likewise, John Keith further argues that Naipaul’s line suggests a desire of Blacks to achieve “Whiteness”. This suggestion can be regarded as racism towards the Black race (157).

Achebe is another figure who really dislikes Naipaul. Keith Booker believes that Achebe’s reasons for disapproving Naipaul are highly logical and quite apparent. Naipaul’s portrayal of Africa in most of his books is shadowed by dark images. Africa, to him, is a hopeless land filled with animal like savages and absorbed by evil winds (Booker 162). This of course offended Achebe. In his book *Home and Exile* (2000), Achebe argues that Naipaul has used the conception of “universal civilization” to confirm the assertion that it was Europe that expanded civilization all over the globe (85). Achebe states that: “Although he [Naipaul] was writing about Africa, he was not writing about Africans” (88). Achebe’s words show that Naipaul has never been sympathetic or compassionate about Africans. His novels were indeed about Africa, but Africans were completely disgraced. In *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (1990), Achebe, again, describes Naipaul as the “new purveyor of the old comforting myths” (28). In other words, Achebe believes Naipaul to be a

contemporary promoter and an enlarger of aged fantasies, legends, and illusions filled with inaccurate, untrue, and simply falsified judgments about Africans.

Similarly, Dorsia Smith believes that all what linked Naipaul with Africa were his racist remarks that unsympathetically criticize Africa for generating disorder, clash, cruel and rotten rulers. For Naipaul, all Africans are corruptive, naïve, and chaotic. (81). Smith adds that V. S. Naipaul's stories tend to reinforce the West/Africa binary where it is impossible for African Nations to ever accomplish advancement, tranquility, and peace without the West's assistance and control. Hence, Naipaul once again supports the claim of him being overly sympathetic towards the colonization of Africa (84).

Reviewing Naipaul's book *The Mask of Africa* (2010), novelist Robert Hariss expressed his embarrassment by the way Naipaul reinforces Western stereotypes about Africans. In *Sunday Times* magazine he declared that the book is "Repulsive". He states: "I am afraid such passages [the ones dehumanizing Negroes] reminded me chiefly of Oswald Mosley, standing for election in Notting Hill in 1959 and accusing Black African men of eating dog food and keeping White women locked in basements." (Harris). Harris's words are ironically said to show the intense degree of Naipaul's reinforcement of "Black stereotypes" that truly do not exist.

In his racist depictions upon Africa, many critics accused V. S. Naipaul of depending upon Conrad instead of factual history. Fawzia Mustafa, for instance, in his book *V. S. Naipaul* (1995), argues that the writer has no historical references or what so ever. That is to say, a good number of Naipaul's assumption about Africa is informed by western literary texts including Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Naipaul confirms this by stating:

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 ... And I found that Conrad - sixty years before, in the time of a great peace had been everywhere before me. Not as a man with a cause, but a man offering a vision of the world's half made societies ... [it was] a kind of truth and half a consolation. To understand Conrad, then, it was necessary to match his experience. (qtd. in Fawzia 3)

In short, those words explicitly state his exaggerated reliance upon Conrad in the process of crafting his own pieces. If observed closely, Naipaul says that matching Conrad's "experience" is essential. Further, he has also used the adjective "untrammelled" to show he is absolutely not limited by history or what so ever but only following the man who was there sixty years before him. Similarly, For Fawzia Mustafa such declaration firmly proposes that Naipaul's "map" in writing is actually depended on Conrad as a substitute of "colonial history" (3).

In the same line, Rob Nixon has also accused Naipaul of being over "reliant" on Conrad. He states in the matter: "The three regions that have most preoccupied Naipaul the Caribbean, India, and Africa have all been shadowed to some degree by "Conrad's presence" (88). Evidently, what *Heart of Darkness* has introduced about the Third World contributed to a large extent to block the possibility of representing Africa in another way. Nixon blames Naipaul of rather deliberately following Conrad by reinforcing what *Heart of Darkness* has once initiated (91).

In fact, Naipaul's degrading depictions have also targeted his own native country Trinidad and the Caribbean in a broader sense. This caused many critics to accuse him of abandoning his own people. At a time when all intellectuals glorified independence, V. S. Naipaul cautioned that self-rule was mostly awful and a breakdown. For instance, the Caribbean for him was an area of destruction where society was detached by race and overwhelmed with hate and anger (King 194-195). Politics in such an atmosphere could

never be peaceful. This vision of Naipaul affected critics' views of him as many blamed him for betraying his own home land.

George Lamming, in his book *The Pleasure of Exile* (1995), accused V. S. Naipaul of turning his back upon his own roots. About Naipaul's adoption of the satire as a suitable genre to talk through the disenchanting postcolonial situation of the Caribbean Lamming states:

His books can't move beyond a castrated satire ... When such a writer is a colonial, ashamed of his cultural background and striving like mad to prove himself through promotion to the peaks of a "superior" culture whose values are gravely in doubt, then satire, like the charge of philistinism, is for me nothing more than a refuge. And it is too small a refuge for a writer who wishes to be taken seriously. (255)

In other words, George Lamming believes Naipaul's satires to be a failed attempt for political or social correction. He further adds that Naipaul is in fact embarrassed by his cultural background and is willing to do everything it takes to be accepted among the "superior" ones even if that makes him a philistine person who tolerates hostility towards any culture that is not Western.

His rejection towards his home land is further intensified when he claimed England to be his legitimate home after receiving the Nobel Prize in the year of 2002, absolutely rejecting his Trinidadian blood. He declared that to Bernard Levin in an interviewer asking about his birth place. Thus, when Levin asked "You were born in Trinidad?" V. S. Naipaul's reply was: "I was born there, yes. I thought it was a big mistake" (Naipaul V. S. 93). Thus, it is obvious that Naipaul has never been proud of his original roots. In fact, he did everything he could to erase them.

Dr Haider Eid, an associate Professor, expressed his anger about praising Naipaul with the Nobel Prize. In this concern he said that by offering Naipaul the Prize "the Swedish Academy, not innocently, gave credence not only to neo-colonialism, but also to racial

arrogance disguised by brown skin” (“The Toxic Legacy”). In other words, Eid Haider believes that Naipaul is in fact a defender of Neo-colonialism and that comes after his limitless support to the previous colonial powers. They, for him were not a direct cause for destroying colonies but rather a hope for achieving civilization. Further, for Eid, Naipaul is someone who has turned his back upon his own race, background, and nation. He states: “V. S. Naipaul, the writer who had a problem with the color of his own skin, is dead yet I will never forget the pain I endured reading his novels in preparation for my Masters degree. In his work could be found a toxic cocktail of 19th century racial ideology mixed with sexism, Islamophobia and Orientalism” (“The Toxic Legacy”). Thus, to Naipaul, Third World nations will never be equal to Europeans because they never produce what they constantly consume.

Apart from this, Rob Nixon points out that some of the assertions made by Naipaul’s supporters can be rapidly declined. The claim, for instance, that he has denounced the West just as he did with the Third World is thoroughly mistaken. Thousands of words have brutally targeted the nations of the Third World while fewer than twenty pages were directed to “nicely criticize” the West (34). Moreover, Nixon further adds that Naipaul’s excessive use of the words “primitive” and a “simple society” to describe nations of the Third World is meant to emphasize the split between the two cultures (110).

As shown, we see, across the years, V. S. Naipaul’s works has undoubtedly become the reason behind a great controversy. Naipaul’s pieces constitute a story of an author who seems unable to belong to anywhere. Thus, even though most of his writings fuse both Western and non-Western cultures and continents, he offers dreadful remarks about the Third World, Africa, and his own motherland Trinidad. Still, many others believe him to be among the greatest. Therefore, as we will explore in the following section, seen from another perspective, Naipaul is a rare gifted author with writings that deserve careful attention and close readings so as to discover the admirable things he intends to convey.

III.2. The Pro Naipaulian Reception

A great part of the controversy around V. S. Naipaul is that many critics regard him as honest and realistic rather than racist or “Orientalist”. Thus, many of his readers and critics appreciate his objectivity and truthfulness and tend to glorify him as one of the greatest writers who ever lived. Irving Howe for instance speaks of him with huge admiration. When he was asked “what he [V. S. Naipaul] is then?” Howe answered “I would say: the world’s writer, a master of language and perception, our sardonic blessing”. Howe’s choice of those descriptive words expresses an explicate state of deep acclaim and recognition. He seems to have a great appreciation for Naipaul as he further states:

For sheer abundance of talent there can hardly be a writer alive who exceeds V.S. Naipaul. Whatever we may want in novelist is to be found in his books: an almost Conradian gift for tensing a story, a serious involvement with human issues, a supple English prose, a hard-edged wit, a personal vision of things. Best of all, he is a novelist unafraid of using his brain. (Howe)

Howe praises Naipaul’s talent as being exceptional in contemporary literature. He is, according to Howe, the type of a novelist that contemporary readers cherish.

Howe also believes that Naipaul is strongly concerned with postcolonial nations’ distinct troubles yet in a unique manner. This is evident in his novels such as: *Guerrillas* (1975), *In a Free State* (1971), and *A Bend in the River* (1979). According to Howe, Naipaul is absolutely unconstrained by any glorification for the Third World, nor does he show any sort of longing for colonialism. He simply tells the truth as it is. “He is a tough spirited writer”. In fact, many other critics believe the same. Indeed, V. S. Naipaul has been brutally criticized but also his share of admirers and defenders were as equally important.

Reviewing *A Way in the World* (1994), Brent Staples asserts that Naipaul’s writings are fully free from racialist biases. She states:

Few writers of Naipaul's stature have been so consistently and aggressively misread on account of ethnic and racial literary politics. Much of the criticism stems not from what Mr. Naipaul writes but from expectations about what he ought to write, given that he is a brown man (of Indian descent) born into the brown and black society that is Trinidad ... In V.S. Naipaul's case, a strictly racial reading amounts to no reading at all. (1)

In other words, Staples argues that V. S. Naipaul has been completely misunderstood, misinterpreted, and entirely misjudged. Brent attributes this misunderstanding to the fact that being non White, Naipaul has always been expected to aside with his ethnical roots even if that means hiding truths about their troubling situations.

Similarly, Harold Barratt, in his article "In Defense of Naipaul's *Guerrillas*"(1988), defends Naipaul against accusations made by Selwyn Cudjoe who maintained that V. S. Naipaul had obviously directed his writings to favor the Western side. Further, Cudjoe accused him of having soft views about colonialism that sound defensive. Barratt however, argues that Cudjoe's criticism of Naipaul is in fact highly polemical. Moreover, he asserts that the accusations such as "racism" and "irresponsible" views are far away from reality and that they disappear as soon as you closely examine the novel (97).

Victor Ramraj also defends V.S. Naipaul as he finds it a bit odd that many people accused the writer by racism. Ramraj had closely read what Naipaul writes and did not find any signs of the former denunciations. Thus, about Naipaul's accusers he says: "but it is probable that most of Naipaul's critics would not be interested in finding that he treats most of his Blacks, radical, homosexual, Muslim and Third World characters with sympathy, compassion and insight, and that he reserves his scorn for both white liberals and reactionaries who have fixed ideas about others" (qtd. in Bruce King 201). In other words, Ramraj completely thinks the opposite about Naipaul's ideology. For him, Naipaul does not show any

sort of hatred or hostility towards Africans and Third World nations. On the contrary, he handles them with total sympathy and sorrow. Further, Ramraj adds that Naipaul's hatred is in fact directed to those who stereotype others.

Moreover, Lillian Feder as well believes that critical views upon Naipaul are largely "inappropriate and at times simply wrong". She suggests that "such approaches dehumanize Naipaul: they strip him of his ambivalence, his spontaneity his "eye", the immediacy of his experience, and his ever-changing reactions, and they recreate him as the off spring of their own formulas" (5). That is to say, Feder intensely disapproves Naipaul's dictators' comments by calling them to be falsified and incorrect. Naipaul for her is a spontaneous, experienced writer with honest, real, and truthful views. His critics, she believes, have imposed certain reading on his works judging not the deeply buried messages but the superficial ones that actually disguise more humanitarian views about the Third World.

Peter Campbell as well joins V. S. Naipaul's list of defenders. Campbell, in his article "Bashing Naipaul: History, Myth and Refusals to See" (2017), passionately explains that all the previous accusation have defamed Naipaul as a leading recorder of colonial rule's dreadful consequences upon its former colonies. Campbell further adds that Naipaul's notable and acknowledged brilliance and gift are being lessened by such accusations that are, as he states, "simply wrong" (65). He also clarifies that all of the attacks are coming from writers who possess narrowed knowledge about his works, or simply failed to rightly comprehend the knowledge which they do own about him (65).

Responding to Rob Nixon's assertion that Naipaul's work does not adequately critic Western colonialism as much as it criticizes Third World people, Bruce King highlights a polemic attitude in Nixon. King states: "when faced by such "Third World" inadequate achievements as tyranny, racism, or corruption, blame the West. While this might not be a good way to solve problems and improve the conditions of those governed, it does help keep

the “authority” of Nixon and those with similar views” (199). This implies that, according to Bruce King, by accusing a famous writer with a horrible deed, Nixon is actually seeking fame out of this. This will not solve any Third World’s problems but it will surely place Naipaul’s critics under the spotlights for a very long time.

Similar to King, John Luckas also disagrees with Edward Said’s proposition that Naipaul has given up upon his own people. John Lukas holds that Naipaul is a striking intellectual, and, contrary to Said’s views, he does not serve the White man’s desires (Luckas 453). He adds that not only Naipaul’s fascinating mastery of the English language that makes him stand up, but also the fact that, unlike the rest, Naipaul was not interested in injustices but all what captured up his mind was reality. Thus, he states that Naipaul “does not write principally about the trains not running on time, or the streets being dirty, or the garbage not being collected, though obviously he is not above noticing such things. His principal concern is not with injustice, or justice, but with truth” (Luckas 453).

Joseph Walunywa, in his article “The Non-Native Native in V. S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River*” (2008), assures Naipaul’s place as a prominent critic of colonialism by objecting Achebe’s position towards Naipaul as a racist. Walunywa does so by arguing that Naipaul and the novel’s protagonist Salim should not be regarded as representing each other. Furthermore, Walunywa adds that Naipaul does not make use of the book to reinforce neo-colonialism. On the contrary, Naipaul does the opposite. He criticizes the phenomenon by utilizing Salim showing how difficult it can be to overcome the boundaries that colonialism sets and to erase the influence it exerts on young people. In other words, Naipaul had attempted to illustrate how a particular force of colonialism can submissively affect a person (2-3).

William Pritchard, the author of “Naipaul Unveiled” (2008), agrees with Walunywa’s idea. He explain that all what Naipaul does in his novel *A Bend in the River* (1979), is perfectly handling the theme of freshly independent nations from colonial control honestly.

For Pritchard, Naipaul concentrates on the massive disappointment that those countries had to endure under the dishonest, corrupt native rulers (437).

Lewis Bernard, in his article “Question of Orientalism” (1982), contends that V. S. Naipaul is not an “Orientalist” but rather one of the most skillful writers of our recent time. Bernard accentuates that Naipaul’s rare master pieces are the results of an excellent observation accomplished by a competent bystander of the human hardships and their often foolish behaviors (2). For him, Naipaul faithfully describes people’s agony with tremendous compassion. Bernard believes that when all that was said was truth and honesty, Naipaul is mistakenly judged as an “Orientalist” for that (2).

Similarly, Jay Chaubey, in his article “V. S. Naipaul: An Author with a Contentious Intellect” (2013), argues that no one can deny that Naipaul is the master of observation and depiction. He contends that Naipaul always portrays the situation of post-colonial countries and the effects of colonialism with impressive descriptive (39). Chaubey makes a comment that despite the fact that Naipaul is being placed in harsh criticism among examiners, still, his unquestionable craft in prose writings, his extraordinary mind, and his remarkable application of evidence in fiction surely make him an author to be remembered (47).

Concerning the Nobel Prize controversy, Yashoda Bhat affirms that granting Naipaul the Prize is highly desirable and deserved. His honorable duty was writing faithfully about three distinct nations: Trinidad, India, and the Third world. His fiction is concerned with actual depiction of post colonial countries. Bhat states that “Naipaul’s novels are a documentation of them” (53). Thus, the Nobel Prize validates his genius regardless of what others are expecting him to say.

Emphasizing Naipaul’s craft as a realistic author, Yashoda Bhat describes Naipaul as a writer of significant importance about the colonial reality. In his book *Postcolonial Situation in the Novels of V.S. Naipaul* (2004), Champa Mohan adds that Naipaul’s writings are full of

important themes entirely related to the dilemmas, obstacles, and bad situations of the previously colonized nations. Thus, Naipaul's writings offer vital analysis of the negative complications developed in such societies (8). "His critical observant eye and his uncompromising commitment to truth lay bare the hard facts about the ex-colonial societies" (9), says Mohan. He further adds that instead of offering excuses for colonialism Naipaul, emphasizes that independence has not changed a thing and that the colonial rule is continuing to show authority through new forms of control known as neo-colonialism (9).

Many critics complained about the fact that Naipaul's novels are too pessimistic, dark, and unpleasant to read. They accuse him of predicting bitter, depressed future for those who have been once colonized. Yet, many of his defenders say the opposite. Serafin Roldan for instance, argues in an article entitled "Pessimism and Existentialism in V.S. Naipaul" (2002), that the real reason of the overwhelming pessimism that covers large portions of Naipaul's narratives is not because of Naipaul's "bad intentions" nor because of his atrocious "meanness" but because of its connections with post-colonial worlds as pessimism fits perfectly with the corruptive atmosphere of those areas (153).

In the same line, Dr. Satyajeeet Kosambi considers that V. S. Naipaul is indeed a writer of a vital importance. His authentic depictions of newly independent nations are concerned with the massive reliance of the Third World on their former colonizers. Dr. Kosambi asserts that although V. S. Naipaul's writings seem to be darkly pessimistic and bleak, he boldly awakens all Third World countries and makes them aware of what is actually happening to them due to their "mimicry" of Western ideology and their extensive dependency upon the West. He continues to say that Naipaul has done nothing but being sincerely truthful in targeting Third World issues and problems. His literary life's journey is ample and praise worthy. He will forever last in the golden spot, with no one else to surpass him (247).

From what has been revealed above, one has to admit that what Naipaul was doing is unmasking the newly emerged postcolonial individuals who possess massive power and control but still functioning more worse than the colonizers ever did. What Naipaul was trying to deliver is that those individuals should hold the responsibility of their own actions instead of desperately blaming the ex-colonizers. Naipaul has exposed all the serious political and social corruption of all the troubled nations but, most of all, he attempted to heavily write about selfish, egocentric dictators hidden as democratic peaceful rulers (Roldan, *V.S. Naipaul's A Bend* 135).

Naipaul's case demonstrates that in the tale of each writer lies two different stories. One glorifies and appreciates the other blames and criticizes. V. S. Naipaul's literary journey was full of controversial tales. For some, both Naipaul and his writings have brought up sufferings to Third World nations almost as colonialism previously did. For others, he was the owner of extraordinary brilliance and skills that are worth remembrance for years to come. Indeed, V. S. Naipaul is surely dead yet his controversy is still alive and will remain so for many years to come. As shown, his racist depictions were way more intense in the case of Africa and Africans in a direct, barbaric way. As a literary figure, he was more famous for his controversial piece *A Bend in the River* (1979) which is regarded to be as one of the daring representative novels to ever exist due to what it carries from racist, intolerant, and prejudiced depictions to biased, Eurocentric ideas against both Africa and its people. Therefore, the next chapter will be fully concerned with the Analysis of the Novel, *A Bend in the River* by investigating the "Orientalist" signs found in it.

Chapter Three: Orientalism in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*

Assuredly, V. S. Naipaul is a conspicuous author of a postcolonial time. Nonetheless, the writer has been perpetually connected with “Orientalism” by major intellectuals. This is a heavy allegation for someone who has been awarded with the Nobel Prize in 2001. Ironically, Naipaul lived in a previously colonized country; a fact that makes the preceding allegation even heavier (Pal and Dangwal 146). His novel *A Bend in the River* (1979), which was a subject of critical debate for a long time, is a pessimistic and fatalistic tale about Africa. In it, Naipaul introduces us to a helpless place that is unable to let go of the past, nor attain a proper future. Indeed, *A Bend in the River* is a novel about Africa, but it is definitely not about Africans (Ashikur 274).

The story starts off by a young Indian Muslim man named Salim who made a reckless, yet brave decision by moving into Africa. During his pursuit of a better life, he encounters many hardships, discomfort, and misery. This miserable fortune served to shape a gloomy image about life in Africa and hence affect Salim's views about it and its inhabitants. The present chapter offers a profound analysis of the novel's representation of Africa and Africans. It principally seeks to unveil hidden “Orientalist” notions. The chapter breaks up into three sections. The first starts by introducing both V. S. Naipaul and the case study *A Bend in the River*. The second section is fully devoted to detect “Orientalist” ideas that pertain the novel portraying “Naipaul's Africa” as a landscape of chaos, disappointments, and ultimate despair. As for the last section, it attempts to examine the extensive “Oriental” representations of Naipaul's “Africans” being depicted as lazy, savages, and inhuman peoples.

II.1. Introduction to the Author and his Book

For almost his entire literary career, Sir V. S. Naipaul's narratives have essentially addressed Third World communities (Africa, India, and Trinidad). Naipaul's main ambition

was to make the unknown side of those nations recognizable to the other half of the world. Nonetheless, V. S. Naipaul's manner of representation turned out to be unacceptable and highly unsuitable to Third World nations by many of his readers and critics. His narratives were interpreted as bold, insensible, and improper (Mustafa 1-2).

Naipaul's distinguished career seems to be observed as identity pursuing narratives since he always appears unable to blend, fit, or belong to any of his homeland countries. Hence, concise factual about V. S. Naipaul's life is inevitable and necessary to fully understand his hidden motives when it comes to his controversial contentious writings. A 2001 Nobel Prize winner, V. S. Naipaul was born on August 17, 1932 in Chaguanas Trinidad. Naipaul's forefathers drifted from India to Trinidad around the year 1845. They established communities that firmly preserved their aboriginal culture and were very much discernible from the vast majority of the Afro-Caribbean communities. In fact, the two groups experienced clashes and mutually thought of each other as less civilized. As an infant, Naipaul has had a childhood full of hardships and misery. Fortunately, he was able to leave towards London after he had deservedly gained a scholarship to Oxford University.

Notably, Naipaul's past experiences of multiculturalism, colonialism, and exile identified him as a man with no single home. Furthermore, it is the complexity of Naipaul's background that caused controversial ways of observing post-colonial nations (Zhou13). Obviously, one cannot deny the indestructible nature of V. S. Naipaul. His impressive rare brilliance and crafted skill have marked him among the finest English writers in history. Thirty masterpieces of him have successfully combined fiction with history, autobiography, and travel writings. His fascination with writing is undeniable. If observed closely, V. S. Naipaul's experiences are mirrored through most of his characters (Zhou14). After his 2001 Nobel Prize, many wondered about the timing of the award that was surprisingly declared one month after the 9/11 attacks. This came also after Naipaul's two controversial books on Islam

entitled: *Among the Believers* (1981) and *Beyond belief* (1998) were published. Many critics believed that the prize was handed to him purposefully by a “proud anti-Islamist” westerner (Zhou14) due to the latter books’ seeming anti-islamist ideology. Relatively, the controversial writer has become accused of having extreme hatred towards Islam.

Instead of admiring the cultural heritage of his homeland and racial background, V. S. Naipaul surprisingly refuses any linkage with original roots (Zhou15). This is actually inspired by his colonial education and admiration of Britain as idealized in British literary texts. Homi K. Bhabha, for instance, views that Naipaul had given up upon depicting a true postcolonial situation in order to satisfy his aesthetic desires. Bhabha also states that Naipaul is an admirer of Conrad’s texts and his debatable thoughts about the “civilizing mission” as well (qtd. in Zhou 20).

Admittedly, Naipaul writes about dark skinned people in ways no other postcolonial writer could ever dare to do (Cahubey 35). Africa has always succeeded in attracting Naipaul’s attention as a writer. Indeed, many of his well-known novels spoke about the continent as a primary subject. These include *In a Free State* (1971), *Half a Life* (2001), *The Return of Eva Peron with the Killings in Trinidad* (1980), *The Masque of Africa* (2010), and most importantly his brilliant novel *A Bend in the River* (1979). Among them all, *A Bend in the River* was the one to mostly cause Naipaul to be labeled as a pessimistic author that not only represents a hopeless Africa but also portrays its people as inherently inferior. Many critics thought of it as a “descendant” of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902) (Narayan 393-394). The novel, indeed, is modeled upon his 1975 essay “A New King for the Congo: Mobutu and the Nihilism of Africa” as an accurate base to establish a historical authenticity for the novel (Mustafa 142).

The story revolves around the experiences of an Indian Muslim man named Salim. The protagonist sought a better, more balanced life. Therefore, he decides to move from East

Coast Africa to the very deep parts of the continent, in a town at the bend of an unnamed river. The town's economy is devastated; food is dangerously low and barely feeds the people. Still, Salim seems to be highly ambitious and looks forward for his new work as a shopkeeper to prosper. Metty is Salim's old family servant who decides to follow Salim's steps and join his business. After the new life in Africa, Salim meets up with new people including his friends Shobha and Mahesh. Salim occasionally speaks about a woman named Zabeth; one of his everyday clients. Hoping that her son too will improve his life, Zabeth believes that her child Ferdinand must acquire traits of a foreigner, and this means keeping a good company with Salim (Pandey 253). The story took place in an unnamed, self-reliant African town. In fact, V.S. Naipaul purposefully done so to make the story stand for larger portions of Third World countries (qtd. in Mishra 133)

From the very beginning, Naipaul introduces us to a broken country confronted with misery and discomfort. The story's representation of the continent's misfortune implies that only Africans are to blame. The horrible aftermath of colonization is completely ignored. Instead, for Naipaul, the political and socio-economic backwardness of the continent relates solely to its backward peoples (3). Aesthetically, *A Bend in the River* is a genius novel. Yet, what the novel also portrays is a land of failure. Salim is shown to be disparately disappointed and the story ends with him barely escaping, wishing to never return back to the town. *A Bend in the River* talks about Africa in four parts. In each part the protagonist depicts a world of failure and destruction, and as the parts continue the tensivity of harshness only increases. Not a single part attempts to represent Africa in an honorable manner (Pandey 253-254). Naipaul's depiction of the land is highly exaggerated. Therefore, the next section will discuss the several instances where the novel portrays Africa as an unsettled dark land.

II.2. Africa as a Land of Ruins

Among the many aspects that convey Naipaul's racial views, characterization is the most noticeable. In his Article "An African Reading of Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*" (1991), Kenneth W. Harrow thinks that his characters are bold and fearless (322). The protagonists spoke and expressed on behalf of his own views. Therefore, Salim is actually Naipaul in the flesh (322). This is to allow his characters to assuredly articulate his own views about western supremacy and dominance and native's backwardness (322).

The characters express racially biased views that the author himself developed during the 1965-1966 tour in Africa. This tour, actually, had largely determined his egocentric ideas. In an interview with Elizabeth Hardwick he admitted:

I saw there [Democratic Republic of the Congo, the former Belgian colony, Congo Free State] a rich town, abandoned by the Belgians. Street lamps rusty, sand everywhere, collapsed verandas. The Africans were camping in the houses, just the way the ancient English camped in the abandoned villas of the Romans. Here again in Africa one was back in the 5th century. Native people camping in the ruins of civilization. You could see the bush creeping back as you stood there... When you have watched the bush returning, you are different from a young man from Harvard or London who is traveling, doing his project. (V. S. Naipaul 46)

In fact, Naipaul had extensively used descriptions like these in his novel *A Bend in the River* (Pandey 253). The Narrator, as previously mentioned is an Indian Muslim man who travels to a town at the bend of the river. Just as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Naipaul does not reveal any names attributed to African places. Describing the town, Salim says "Too many of the places on the way have closed down or are full of blood ... And then I had to talk even harder, and shed a few more bank-notes and give away more of my tinned food, to get myself and the Peugeot out of the places I had talked us into" (BR 3). Here the narrator obviously suggests

that exploitation and bribery are inseparable aspects of life in Africa as he was forced to use them illegally to get himself out. Having vainly tried his chances for economic prosperity, Salim describes Africa as a land of disappointments and frustration (Pandey 253). “As I got deeper into Africa the scrub, the desert, the rocky climb up to the mountains, the lakes, the rain in the afternoons, the mud and then, on the other, wetter side of the mountains, the fern forests, and the gorilla forests...There can’t be a new life of this” (BR 10). Thus, suddenly, the richest continent in the world, a sleeping giant, is portrayed as nothing more than an illusion full of setbacks. Naipaul’s choices of words and terminology are highly exaggerated for the target of implying how unusual, strange, and awful that place truly is.

For Salim, as for Naipaul, Africa is the last place to start a new life. “Nazruddin, who had sold me the shop cheap, didn’t think I would have it easy when I took over. The country, like others in Africa, had had its troubles after independence. The town in the interior, at the bend in the great river, had almost ceased to exist” (BR 4). For Salim, All African countries resemble each other in their chaos and in their wreckage. Nothing remains after their independence except the fact that they almost “cease to exist”. Further, for Salim Africa and even at its best conditions would still stay behind. “And even at that time, when the roads were more or less open, the drive took me over a week” (BR 4). That is to say, Africa is introduced in a full desperate state that can offer nothing but agony and misery to whomever decides to set foot on it. Moreover, Naipaul’s Africa is always set side by side with Europe, where the latter is always glorified and improved than the former. The sky of the superior world is “pale blue” whilst the African sky is “red with thick horizontal bars of black cloud ...” (qtd. in Kenneth 326).

Judging from the few details that the narrator provides, the story is supposedly set in Zaire. For instance, Haider Eid believes that since the country is Francophonic and with the massive resemblance that links president “Mobutu” with the “Big Man”, a primary character

in the story, the events might be set in Zaire (“Naipaul’s *A Bend*” 3). Actually, Zaire is a place that has become a stereotypical emblem that stands for the rest of post-colonial African countries. Zaire is introduced in a complete pandemonium where everything was characterized by lawlessness and chaos. The narrator says “It is a chaotic, ambiguous world” (BR 3). For Naipaul, such circumstances are imminent results of independence. African countries for him were doing much better under the hands of their former masters (Mishra 134).

The narrator also describes the town at the bend of the river as a washed-up buried corner. He says “The streets had disappeared; vines and creepers had grown over broken, bleached walls of concrete or hollow clay brick ... The ruins, spreading over so many acres, seemed to speak of a final catastrophe. With its ruins and its deprivations, Nazruddin’s town was a ghost town” (BR 29-30). For Rahman Ashikur, the novel is crowded with the aspects of darkness as a predominant feature of Africa (297).

Kumar Kashyap, in his article “Politics of Postcolonial Representations: Orientalism in the Mimic man and *A Bend in the River*” (2015), contends that the representation of Africa in the novel is in fact highly “Orientalist”. Africa is darkly painted with things that truly do not exist, things that were meant to reinforce the previously existing prejudgments of Africa as the dark, exotic continent (184). For instance, the following passage reflects a falsified image about Africa that is modeled upon Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. “Nazruddin’s shop was in a market square in the commercial area. “It smelt of rats and was full of dung ... I had also brought the goodwill, but that was meaningless, because so many of the Africans had gone back to the bush, to the safety of their villages” (BR 10). In this passage, the narrator describes the place where he works. For him it is simply a “sea of junk” (BR 46).

The narrator’s depiction of Africa is abnormally fabricated when describing the landscape as it is only described as exotic and as something bizarre and horrifying at the same

time. He says “The bush muffled the sound of murder, and the muddy rivers, and the lakes washed the blood away” (BR 60). The word muffled is purposefully chosen. It indicates that in Africa you will not hear the screams of those being murdered and that is because the bush obstructed and muted the sound in some way. As for their blood, Africa’s “moody water” will wash it away. In fact, it is even depicted as a hell hole that can only be threatening and dangerous (Kashyap 184). Shockingly, the place is visualized as an everlasting trap “you can always get into those places. What is hard is to get out” (BR 4). Further, Salim depicts his journey in Africa as a total torture and compares it with the journey of the slaves. He states: “Each day’s drive was like an achievement; each day’s achievement made it harder for me to turn back. And I couldn’t help thinking that that was how it was in the old days with the slaves” (BR 4).

It is Naipaul’s expert hands that are capable of describing with such intensity and details life in postcolonial Africa. However, His skillful writing perfectly fits western prejudices and speaks with tones of superiority (Kenneth 322). Thus, as for colonialists, Africa in Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* is introduced to only provide economical advantages. All of its new foreigners are solely aiming for financial earnings and are not interested in any sort of social interaction or what so ever with Africans. The only appealing aspect of that town beside the river is trade. In addition to that, Naipaul appears to address another issue. The absence of security has always worried him, yet his concerns were highly selfish and egotistical as they appear to only touch his foreign characters, never African natives (Yildyz and Gormez 31). In other words, the uncontrolled disorder and chaos in Africa have no importance as long as it does not harm foreigners. He says: “... two things order and money were enough to give us confidence” (BR 200).

In addition to this, V. S. Naipaul expresses his worries about Africa being modern again. For him, the advancement of the Dark Continent is unattainable. He, rather, reinforces

the depiction of Africa as something totally abandoned; something that was placed under the ground and entirely forgotten. “You felt the land taking you back to something that was familiar, something you had known at some time but had forgotten or ignored, but which was always there. You felt the land taking you back to what was there a hundred years ago, to what had been there always” (BR 9). Here, Africa is portrayed as a land of the past which no good could ever come from it. It is a washed-up, omitted place with no obvious hopes for it to join advancement.

Kadiatu Kanneh, in his book *African Identities: Race Nation and Culture in Ethnography, Pan-Africanism and Black Literatures* (1998), explains that for Naipaul, change in Africa is always dependant on exterior powers without whom Africa will forever be behind the bush, Africa is as it was a hundred years ago (3). “This isn’t property, this is bush. This has always been bush” (BR 23). Evidently, Naipaul’s narrator keeps describing Africa as a place where humans cannot possibly live. It is a land where only bushes and dirt exist, and it will forever remain like that. No signs of civilization or what so ever could ever occur.

Most important, Naipaul depicts Africa as an arena of violence and bloodshed (Ashikur 277). The continent is stormy and turbulent and that is mainly because “in postcolonial Africa, everybody could get guns; [and] every tribe could be a warrior tribe” (BR 68). The narrator extends his biased views by describing that even the army that should be responsible for peace is chaotic and lawless as well as. He calls them as: “bands of thieves and troublemakers” (BR 78). Furthermore, he portrays an Africa where murder is considered a normal scene “The bleeding arms and legs lying on the streets were a common sight. It was as if a pack of dogs had got into a butcher’s stall” (BR 36). Salim’s depiction of the army and the widespread of weapons Africa eliminates the slightest signs of peace and tranquility. Only violence is to be found “Now everything was happening in the town itself. There was a lot more blood as a result and the violence, which at first seemed directed against the authorities

alone, became more general. African stalls and shops in the outer areas were attacked and 71 looted. People began to be killed in horrible ways, by rioters and police and shanty town criminals” (BR 212). Here, the narrator obviously suggests that Africans are the only cause of violence. In his article, “Post Colonialism and Dark Vision in Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River*” (2018), Rahman Ashikur observe that what Naipaul tries to convey is that not only do Africans refuse to be ruled over, but also are incapable of ruling their own selves (274). Furthermore, in the quote V. S. Naipaul used the expression “There was a lot more blood” implying that the current situation in Africa is way more turbulent than it once was under colonial rule.

Harrow Kenneth warns that such portrayals might deceive people. He contends that such images of Africa might become the only Africa people know, a place where no signs of civilization are to be found (328). This is evident in descriptions such as this one, “Shacks, acres and acres of them, the rubbish mounds, the presence of the river and the forest all around, the ragged groups outside the drinking booths, the squatters’ cooking fires on the pavements in the centre of the town” (BR 123). The Africa the narrator paints is only colored with black. In fact, the departure of colonial powers is depicted as an unfortunate event, causing Africa to return once again to the bushes (Kenneth 328). “Bush had overgrown the ruins; it was hard to distinguish what had been gardens from what had been streets” (BR 4).

II.3. Africans as Genetically Inferior

What Naipaul says about Africans is no different from what he says about Africa. Yet, in order to understand the function of his racist descriptions of African people, it is necessary to recall back the roots of this dehumanizing manipulative attitude. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, an agreement has been settled by all leading European forces regarding the invasion of Africa. In fact, a lot of powers attempted to convince their nations with the deed. Faked descriptions were portrayed describing the peoples and places they have bumped

into. Again, Africans were represented as “disorderly, lazy, careless, cowardly, naive, and insincere” (Kenneth 323). Moreover, they were seen as infants who funded loud noisy music festivals wearing only bizarre, unusual clothes while circling around and mumbling simple unsophisticated languages. Harshness increased when they were portrayed as having tails or other animal attributes to make them closer to beastly creatures (322). Indeed, no huge change was noticed in the following years as many wrong ideas were still delivered through western literature. Following Western tradition, V. S. Naipaul writes about Africans not as victims of brutal subjugation, but as people who are genetically inferior (Pathak et al. 24).

In *A Bend in the River* (1979), Naipaul depicts Africans as the only responsible for their misfortunate life. The long existence of colonization with its horrible effects upon them is completely ignored (Mishra 132). The beginning of the novel starts with a rather unpleasing phrase “The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it” (BR 10). *A Bend in the River* proposes that Africans are merely “nothing” and decide themselves to “become nothing”. Naipaul portrays African people whose life only contains darkness and filth: “Beer was part of people’s food here; children drank it; people began drinking from early in the morning ...” (BR 44).

Salim is an immigrant from east Africa. He is also a Muslim with Indian ancestors. With Such a complicated background and though he had lived in cost Africa for a very long period of time, Salim never felt to be truly African. He states: “Africa was my home, had been the home of my family for centuries. But we came from the east coast, and that made the difference. The coast was not truly African” (BR 17). V. S. Naipaul shows his leading character as someone who truly believes himself to be superior and more civilized than his African companions. Salim, in fact, is portrayed as an unusual admirer of the west. As he passes by the ashes of the town, Salim’s eyes glimpsed a Latin phrase deeply patterned in an ancient stone near the river. The text goes as follows: “*Miscerique probat populos et foedera*

jungi” (BR 26). The obvious remark is that Salim does not know Latin, but since the letters represent the western culture, he immediately considers the text to be of great importance (Walunywa 15). “I knew the words by heart”, he further states. “I gave them my own pronunciation, and they ran like a nonsense jingle in my head” (26). This implies that those words were delightful enough to the point where they became as sounds of light music in his head.

Also, when Salim’s behaviors are closely analyzed it can be asserted that Salim is in fact a racist. One of the most memorable characters in the story is Zabeth. She is purely native and for that Zabeth is being represented as boorish and backward. People that come from the bush are always portrayed as lesser human beings. Naipaul occasionally appears in Salim as he introduces the woman as a charmer, a witch with an atrocious awful body smell. In reality, she is imagined as a man, not a woman (Pandey 253).

She had a special smell. It was strong and unpleasant, and at first I thought because she came from a fishing village that it was an old and deep smell of fish. Then I thought it had to do with her restricted village diet. But the people of Zabeth’s tribe whom I met didn’t smell like Zabeth. Africans noticed her smell. If they came into the shop when Zabeth was there they wrinkled their noses and sometimes they went away. (BR 15)

In short, Salim will not even bear to clarify the source of her scent, nor does he bother himself to ask about it, he only satisfies his egocentric self by associating the woman with filth and dirt.

In addition to that, Salim is constantly underestimating Africans. He believes that “Africans don’t know how to live” (BR45). Furthermore, he describes bleak ways of living when he informs us that Africans will never learn how to pay out their wealth properly and preserve their households (Pandey 253). They, Salim maintain, “Did not know how to spend

money sensibly or how to keep a house” (BR 45). Salim extends his prejudiced vision when he keeps constantly comparing Africans and outsiders. Shortly after being reunited by Metty, Salim encounters a couple named Shobha and Mahesh. Only because they were foreigners, Salim describes them as: “people I [Salim] felt closet too, and I soon thought of them as friends... They were an extraordinary good-looking couple; it was strange in our town, to find people so careful of their dress and appearance” (BR 34). The text clearly expresses signs of humiliation and disgrace towards Africans implicitly suggesting that they were the opposite of what Shobha and Mahesh looked like. For Salim, meeting people who are properly dressed in Africa is strange and unfamiliar (Yildiz and Gormez 31).

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, Salim’s narration is entirely dominated by western ideology. He explicitly expresses this when he says:

All that I [Salim] know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans ... If I say these things it is because I have got them from European books. 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. (BR 18)

The passage evidently demonstrates an apparent recognition and gratefulness for western educational achievements and the incompetence of the non-Europeans to compose their own original history (Mishra136).

Just like Salim, the majority of characters are foreigners. They all had different backgrounds. Some of them were Indians, others were Italians, and some others had Belgian roots. They are brought together for economical benefits. Africa served their financial needs and, as expected, they were here only for the sake of money. What seems to be disgraceful is how selfish Naipaul’s foreigners were. Occasionally, they expressed deep greed towards the Natives who sometimes appear in gold jewelry (Yildiz and Gormez 31). “Gold how could it

alter the man, who was only an African? But we wanted gold ourselves; and we regularly paid tribute to the Africans who wore gold” (BR 138). The passage conveys the idea that only when Africans possess gold that foreigners interact with them. Their value is actually recognized only when they own something that the whites need. Also, Africans are portrayed as inconsiderable of the true value of gold.

Other than that, the novel shows that the humiliation and the degradation of Africans is something natural. In fact, Mahesh describes Africans as “Malins” in the French sense (BR 63). Salim does not say otherwise. In fact, he encourages the idea. “The people here were “Malins” the way a dog chasing a lizard was “Malin”, or a cat chasing a bird. The people were “Malins” because they lived with the knowledge of men as prey” (BR 63). Clearly, Naipaul’s descriptions can definitely be regarded as a racist one. The word “Malins” is used purposefully in French because in English Mahesh would have used “bad-minded” and “wicked” (Yildiz and Gormez 31).

Africans are being disgraced and scorned whenever a chance accounts for that. Even Metty, who is supposed to be a bit more compassionate with Africans considering the similar struggle he went through while being a servant, shockingly abuses them verbally whenever quite possible. Metty mistakenly had a child with a native woman. When he admits his deed to Salim, he rather humiliates her (Yildiz and Gormez 32). He states: “She is an animal...She’s only an African woman. I will leave her” (BR 122). In fact, the novel is filled with this kind of biased attitudes that can be viewed in many of Naipaul’s foreign characters (32). Indar who basically grew up with Salim on the east coast has reacted in the most outrageous manner when asked by Salim whether he has tried the steamer yet. He answers as: “You’re crazy. Cooped up with river Africans for seven days? I flew yup” (BR 131). The quote demonstrates that Indar would rather fly for days and miserably endure extreme

traveling hardships instead of accompanying some Africans in a steamer. The very thought of being with them is quite unbearable.

A Bend in the River, however, offers a single foreign character that actually admires Africa. This one is “Father” Huismans. Describing Africa, he states: “Africa is a wonderful place, full of new things” (BR 70). Yet what the novel also offers is his death. As a matter of fact, his murder was deliberately exaggerated with awful descriptions that go as follows: “his body is mutilated, his head is cut off and spiked” (BR 92). The outrageous assassination of “Father” Huismans is portrayed by V.S. Naipaul willfully to prove how savages Africans can be. “The only message of his death was that to be careful ourselves and remember where we were” (BR 93). In fact, the narrator states that all inhabitants of Africa are sharing “Father” Huismans’s faith: “Some of us had our own clear ideas about Africans and their future. But it occurred to me that we did really share his faith in the future” (BR 93). As an admirer of Africa, Father Huismans is paid back with a brutal murder that eventually cost him his own life. (Yildiz and Gormez 32).

Salim’s sense of superiority is actually enlarged by his ties with the colonial power. When Zabeth selected him to inform her son, Salim actually believed that it was not because she trusted him, but she has always thought that education was something only outsiders could offer. He says “If Zabeth chooses me for this job, it wasn’t only because I was a business associate she had grown to trust. It was also because I was a foreigner, and English-speaking as well, someone whom Ferdinand could learn manners and the ways of the outside world” (BR 42). Here, Naipaul implies that there is a single method to reach enlightenment and that can only be possible through the westerners’ culture (Pandey 253). “And for Zabeth, as for so many Africans of her generation, education was something only foreigners could give” (BR 41). Salim also says. In truth, Zabeth’s son, Ferdinand, represents Africa’s final hope. Yet, ironically, Naipaul appears to depict him as hopeless. In fact, the novel introduces

him as an admirer of the west growing more arrogant as he learns how to imitate them. In truth, Naipaul's African characters are all depicted as admirers of an outside culture. Frankly, he thinks they should be. Africans are weak and fragile and their culture is exotic thus they have no other way but to imitate their masters and their improved ways (Eid, "Naipaul's A Bend" 3).

Emphasizing his connection with the colonial powers, Salim is endowed with one of the typical traits of whites, that is arrogance. Thus, in a persevering manner, he attempts with full strengths to avoid an intimate connection with Ferdinand (Zabeth's son) who basically rescues him in the final scenes. Yet, Salim does not mind Ferdinand's friendship with Metty (Salim's servant); this kind of connection does not seem odd, not at all. On the contrary, he believes it to be a suitable and successful relation considering the fact that both of them belonged to a lower class. He believes they would match quite well together "Metty was a shop assistant and a kind of servant; Ferdinand was a Lycée boy with a future, yet the friendship between the two men was like the friendship between equals" (BR 53).

In reality, Salim has never actually considered Ferdinand to be meaningful to him. He states: "I haven't been seeing much of Ferdinand, and now I saw even less of him. Metty lost a friend" (BR 109). Salim never thought of him as a friend right from the beginning. It is only Metty's loss and never his. A disgrace attitude by Salim is reinforced when Ferdinand starts to attend the Lycée there. Education somehow made Ferdinand more connected to his African identity and his roots were once again watered. However, Salim feels bothered and highly upset by the fact that an African man is receiving education (Yildiz and Gormez 32). "... The thought of a Lycée full of Ferdinands made me nervous" (BR 55). He can never allow himself to associate Africans with fruitful education nor personal achievements. He finds such idea absurd and highly unbelievable. "Yet I couldn't help thinking how lucky Ferdinand was, how

easy it had been made for him. You took a boy out of the bush and you taught him to read and write; you leveled the bush and built a polytechnic and sent him there” (BR 109-110).

Additionally, in the story, Africans are portrayed as people who will never be able to maintain their aboriginal culture in the face of modernity. Instead, they are represented as strongly willing to mimic their colonizer’s ways and culture (Mishra 134). Moreover, V. S. Naipaul proceeds to dazzle, as his primary narrator labels Africans as a bunch of worthless hypocrites. This reckless deception Salim describes in the following lines:

I noticed this alteration in the African staff in other places as well. It made you feel that while they did their jobs in their various glossy settings they were only acting for the people who employed them; that the job itself was meaningless to them; and that they had the gift when they were left alone, and had no one to act for of separating themselves in spirit from their setting, their job, their uniform. (BR 114)

Naipaul here obviously links Africans with deceptive insincere behaviors. Salim believes them to be hypocritical and dishonest. They only work when their boss is around. If not there, they resume to laziness again. Doing the job right is actually never desired by them (Yildiz and Gormez 33).

Generally, *A Bend in the River* is filled with stereotypes that can be traced in almost every page. Yet, unsurprisingly, foreigners are prototyped. Thus, In contrast to Africans who are portrayed as the emblem of corruption and criminality, foreigners are glorified and placed in well put together images. Salim for instance adores reading; he admires science magazines quite much (Kenneth 331).

The kind of reading I had become addicted. I liked receiving these bits of knowledge; and I often thought, while I read, that the particular science of field I was reading about was, the thing I should have given my days and nights, adding knowledge to

knowledge, making discoveries, making something of myself, using all my faculties. It was good as the life of knowledge itself. (BR 48)

By contrast, an African intellect in the Lycée is represented as a burglar who spends time stealing the academy's register and attempts to scam with it (Kenneth 331). "I said to the man before me, I will keep this book. I will give it back to the people to whom it belongs. Who gave you the book? Ferdinand? He looked helpless" (BR 62). Salim shall give the book back, for he is a man of law according to Naipaul. However, Africans are nothing more than a bunch of deceiving thieves. Africans, and even at their best as Ferdinand, shall never be like Salim or other outsiders. Inside of them lies a genetic flaw. They are simply helpless and have no choice; they can never run away from fate, and their fate is already destined to doom.

Not only does Naipaul scorn ordinary people, but he also mocks political figures. In the novel, there is a concealed mysterious person referred to as the "Big Man". He is everywhere, wherever they go, he is there. His enormous photographs with European writings were all over the places. He wanted to be remembered as the very first native leader to be in absolute control of the country (Pal and Dangwal 150). Yet, Naipaul proposes an African chief who needs to be fully guided saying "He needs a model in everything" (BR 188). He needs to be instructed and shown how things must be done. He can't possibly figure that out on his own. The "Big Man" applies politics that he observed in Western systems. Of course, he can never understand; he only echoes the voice of westerners, and by doing that Salim believes that "He was creating modern Africa. He was creating a miracle that would astound the rest of the world. He was by-passing real Africa, the difficult Africa of bush and villages, and creating something that would match anything that existed in other countries" (BR 108). The "Big Man" took up a decision to build what is called the "New Domain", an establishment by European teachers for educating African young adults. Ferdinand belonged to that place as well, the Lycée. All of the educators were Europeans; none were natives (Eid,

“Naipaul’s A Bend” 4). Ironically, Naipaul’s character Zabeth states at the beginning:

“education was something only foreigners could give” (BR 41).

In reality, Salim speaks about the place as a new chance for bettering Africa. He says, “After each setback, the civilization of Europe would become a little more secure at the bend in the river; the town would always start up again, and would grow a little more each time. In the peace that we now had the town was not only re-established; it grew” (BR 93). Ironically, the only place that can improve Africa for Salim is an establishment with a European building style with non-African teachers. This implies, once more, that Africans need to be governed by their “masters” if they wish to attain civilization. “The new domain has carried modern changes that in turn gave birth to order, stability, and money. Different new cities emerged; automobiles and distinct transportation tools were being placed. Modernized communication devices were taking parts in Africans’ daily life and things were getting a lot better” (BR 254).

Evidently, Naipaul did not only represent the rulers of Africa as helpless imitators of what the west already has, but also makes his narrator Salim a subjective thoughtless criticizer of undeniable achievements. He states: “The president had wished to show us a new Africa. And I saw Africa in a way I have never seen it before, saw the defeats and humiliations which until then I had regarded as just a fact of life” (BR 108). Salim never appreciated the ruler’s efforts. Yet, when the advancement began to become more obvious Salim is both amazed and confused. He behaves as if he will never be able to think of Africans as having the right or the ability to attain transformation and advancements. In fact, to affirm the mentioned belief, Naipaul ends the story with Africa being in bloodshed and hostile civil combats. Ironically, Naipaul is smart; he surely does not wish to appear as a total hater. Therefore, in the novel, we actually witness two foreigners who flattered the native ruler. Salim’s friends Raymond and Indar state:

He is the great African chief, and he is also the man of people. He is the modernizer and he is also the African who has rediscovered his African soul. He's conservative, revolutionary, everything. He's going back to old ways, and he's also the man who's going ahead, the man who's going to make the country a world power by the year 2000. I don't know whether he's done it accidentally or because someone's been telling him what to do. But the mish-mash works because he keeps on changing, unlike the other guys. (BR 160)

However, Naipaul only makes this admiration last for a while, because at the end of his narration all the recognition and appreciation are once again taken away from Africa's ruler. Chaos and instability take the scene and Africa is all over again represented in complete disorder (Ashikur 280). "My own feelings were more complicated. I saw a disordered future for the country. No one was going to be secure here; no man of the country was to be envied" (BR 109).

That place near the river is depicted with a type of rulers who are even worse than the colonizers who had once ruled them. This proclaims strong racist judgments towards native politics. In fact, Africa should have never attained self-rule, and this, undoubtedly, attempts for justifying enslavement, oppression, and victimization of unsteady regions (Eid, "Naipaul's A Bend" 10). Naipaul states: "During the colonial era there was miraculous peace ... when men could, if they wished, pay little attention to tribal boundaries" (BR 30).

Usually, separation from colonial rule is something that the colonized population painfully fights for. In literatures, plenty of scenes portrayed millions courageously sacrificing their lives for restoring back what was once bitterly stolen from them. Amusingly, what occurs in *A Bend in the River* is quite antagonistic to all anticipations. Suddenly independence brings more troubles to the country; more than the colonizer ever did (Eid, "Naipaul's A Bend" 2). Salim states: "At the independence, the people of our region had gone mad with

anger and fear all the accumulated anger of the colonial period, and every kind of awakened fear. The people of our region had been much abused, not only by Europeans and Arabs but also by other Africans; and at the independence, they had refused to be ruled by the government in the capital” (BR 75).

In the novel, self-government and liberty are looked upon as a bad and unfortunate event. Africa was better under the previous colonial rulers. As soon as they left, Africa is worse than before.

Madly, colonization is actually flattered in some parts of the novel. Salim evidently confirms the matter when he says “The British have given the place the finest administration you could ask for” (BR 26). The reasonable closure that must be concluded from V. S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* then is that Africa has to be forever guarded and contained by Europe. It is both a necessity and duty to be preserved, looked after, and conserved by Europeans. In fact, decades after their official withdrawal from Africa, European colonization in *A Bend in the River* is virtually still present. Their acts are constantly praised and glorified, even when not needed. While African brutality appears to be impulsive and innate, Europeans, and even after escapement, are destined to only transmit peace and order (Samantrai 59-60). Even the “Big Man” insists on their support when all gets out of hand. He is aware that only Europeans can “save them [Africans] from suicide” (BR 79).

A Bend in the River (1979) is truly *Heart of Darkness* in disguise, or even harsher. Naipaul’s tale begins with Salim’s entrance and concludes with his departure. In truth, Salim’s abandonment of the continent is represented as the only road to once again reunite with civilization. It is a necessity for him to “rejoin the world” (BR 228). The closing paragraphs deepen the dread in which all becomes concerned, all will be attacked by the “African violence”. Naipaul concludes with horrifying lines “You mustn’t think it’s bad for you. It’s bad for everybody. That’s the terrible thing. It’s bad for Prosper, bad for the man

they gave your shop to, bad for everybody. Nobody's going anywhere. We're all going to hell, and every man knows this in his bones. We're being killed" (BR 281). As the outsider leaves, Africa remains expecting another approaching, furious combat. Thus, Salim says "Then there were gunshots ... The barge was no longer to be seen. The steamer started up again and moved ... Away from the area of battle" (BR 287). The ending of the novel naturally leaves its readers in ultimate shock, curious denial and unusual despair. It writes in their heads with letters of total darkness that Africa will forever remain in ashes and never be able to achieve peace again. The absolute blackness of V. S Naipaul establishes a questioning. Would Africa be able to own some light ever again?

Conclusion

The emergence of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1987) was the cause of a great disaccord among critics. Its vital importance upon postcolonial studies is undeniable. Going through the book's pages demonstrated Said's successful attempt in exposing the Western misrepresentations of the Third World being misconceived and portrayed in Western literary pieces as backward, lazy, silent, inferior, and incomplete. Said's *Orientalism* appeared primarily as a reaction to those highly "Orientalist" texts. In the case of Africa, "Orientalist" ideology is used to manipulate its peoples, to take advantages of the land and perpetuate colonial subjugation.

Still, "Orientalism" is not only an attitude advocated by western writers, it is also advocated by non westerners. One example is V. S Naipaul. In fact, his racist prejudiced ideologies were expanded to nations beyond Africa. V. S. Naipaul articulated unusual opinions towards Third World Nations including his own home land, Trinidad. In truth, his convictions about them were not very different than those about Africa. Many of his works contained cruel descriptions about the Third World. For him, these countries are senseless, primitive, lazy, and unable to govern with no foreign assistance. Indeed, his harsh views successfully gave him the title of a writer who deceived his own roots. Thus, although he constantly maintained to be an unbiased observer of Third World countries, he failed to stand by his claims and his Eurocentric views became obvious in his negative portrayals of the nations as unauthentic human beings with no obvious opportunities for advancement. Hence, V. S. Naipaul was able to collect many detractors as all believed him to be a speaker of the Western fantasies. Nonetheless, many critics defended him by standing up against all allegations. For them, V. S. Naipaul was an actual truth teller and a remarkable reality observer.

However, V. S. Naipaul remains a perfect example of an “Orientalist” writer. Instead of foregrounding his own people, Naipaul shockingly reinforced stereotypes about them through racist, intolerant descriptions that were highly noticeable in his portrayals of Africa and Africans. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* (1979), is among the best one hundred novels throughout history. Unexpectedly, the novel completely disregards depicting the abhorrent corollary of colonization. Instead, it enlarged stereotypes and drew an awful conclusion that Africans will never be able to reach advancements. Despite Naipaul’s ethnic origins, the voice that talked to us portrays a post-colonial Africa with its most horrible scenes of chaos. In addition, what V. S. Naipaul also focused on, is placing the entire blame on Africans themselves. For him, they are the only ones to be condemned for their current social and political catastrophes. To him, Africans are naive, chaotic, irrational, and a bunch of hopeless savages.

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Résumé

Ce mémoire vise à analyser les idées “Orientalistes” pertinentes dans le roman de V. S. Naipaul: *A Bend in the River* (1979), il cherche aussi à mettre en lumière le débat autour du comportement de l’auteur envers les nations du Tiers-Monde —en particulier l’Afrique. En 1978, l’ouvrage d’Edward Said “Orientalism” a été publié et a rapidement influencé l’étude de la littérature écrite par des auteurs postcoloniaux. Pourtant, certains de leurs textes littéraires ont été l’origine d’immenses débats parmi les critiques car ils correspondent facilement à l’idéologie “Orientaliste” de leurs homologues occidentaux. L’un des romans les plus controversés est *A Bend in the River* (1979) par V. S. Naipaul; beaucoup le considèrent comme modelé sur *Heart of Darkness* par Joseph Conrad. Au fil des pages du roman, V.S. Naipaul nous introduit dans une Afrique des cendres où la situation après l’indépendance est pire qu’elle ne l’était à l’époque coloniale. L’Afrique et les Africains sont sombrement dépeints comme des peuples sauvages qui vivent dans une terre de distraction. Ce comportement, cependant, a créé un débat parmi les critiques sur la question si Naipaul est en fait un “Orientaliste” ou non. Afin de comprendre le concept d’Orientalisme et de mettre en évidence la controverse autour de Naipaul, l’étude actuelle est divisée en trois chapitres. Le premier chapitre donne un aperçu détaillé de *l’Orientalisme* par Edward Said (1978), ainsi que de la manifestation de l’idéologie “Orientaliste” dans la littérature sur l’Afrique écrite par tout ensemble —des écrivains occidentaux et du Tiers-Monde aussi—, ainsi que les réponses d’écrivains africains. Le deuxième chapitre traite de la réception critique de l’idéologie de Naipaul sur l’Afrique et les nations du Tiers-Monde exprimée dans ses œuvres en général. Chapitre trios concentre sur l’analyse des images stéréotypées de l’Afrique et des Africains dans le roman de Naipaul *A Bend in the River* (1979) —développé par un auteur postcolonial lui-même.

Mots clés: Autre, Orientalisme, Est, Ouest, Afrique, V. S. Naipaul, Représentations.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى تحليل الأفكار "الاستشراقية" في رواية ف. س. نايبول "منعطف في النهر" (1979)، وإبراز الجدل القائم حول مواقف المؤلف تجاه دول العالم الثالث، وخاصة أفريقيا. في عام 1978، نُشر كتاب إدوارد سعيد بعنوان "الاستشراق"، حيث كان له تأثيراً سريعاً على دراسة الأدب الذي كتبه المؤلفون الما بعد استعمار يون. بالرغم من ذلك فإن بعضاً من نصوصهم الأدبية كانت سبباً في نشوء جدل واسع بين النقاد، حيث أنها تتناسب وبسهولة مع الإيديولوجية الاستشراقية التي يتبناها نظراً لهم في الغرب. ومن بين أكثر الروايات إثارة للجدل حتى الآن هي رواية ف. س. نايبول *منعطف في النهر* 1979، حيث يرى العديد من الناس أن الرواية اقتبست من رواية قلب الظلام للكاتب جوزيف كونراد. أثناء قراءتنا للرواية سنتعرف على إفريقيا بطريقة مظلمة، حيث وضع القارة بعد الإستقلال اسوأ بكثير مما كان عليه في الفترة الاستعمارية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، نايبول يصف الإفريقيين كشعب همجي يعيش في أرضٍ مدمرة. هذا الموقف بطبيعة الأحوال أدى إلى نشوء جدل واسع حول ما إذا كان نايبول في واقع الأمر مستشرق أم لا. ولفهم مفهوم "الاستشراق" وإبراز الجدل حول نايبول، تتضمن الأطروحة ثلاثة فصول. يقدم الفصل الأول نظرة مفصلة على كتاب الاستشراق لإدوارد سعيد (1978)، مع مظاهر الإيديولوجية الاستشراقية الواضحة عن إفريقيا في الأدب الغربي وادب العالم الثالث، الفصل يبين أيضاً ردود فعل الكتاب الإفريقيين على اتهامات الغرب السابقة. أما الفصل الثاني فهو مخصص تحديداً لإبراز الجدل النقدي حول إيديولوجية نايبول بشأن أفريقيا وشعوب العالم الثالث التي أعرب عنها في أعماله عموماً. أما بالنسبة للفصل الثالث فهو مخصص تحديداً لتحليل الصور النمطية لأفريقيا والإفريقيين في رواية نايبول "منعطف في النهر" التي طورها ككاتب ما بعد الاستعمار.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الأخر، الاستشراقية، الشرق، الغرب، إفريقيا، ف. س. نايبول، التمثيلات.