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The Study on Religion and Modernity as Travel Literature of William Dalrymple and V. S. Naipaul

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Abstract – India has been a favorite destination for people all over the world. It has been frequently visited by a lot many writers among whom a few are renowned travel writers of this century. Travel literature may be cross-cultural or transnational in focus, or can involve travel to different regions within the same country. The present study is a step towards this unexplored area. All the secondary sources, journals, articles and reviews would be of immense help in this work. Greater symmetry with regard to religion specifically can be found in the work of writers who have acknowledged the influence of Naipaul on their development as writers, especially Amitav Ghosh and Amitava Kumar. Along with symmetry, there is a clear sense of mission in these writers' works that challenges Naipaul's passivity. For some Indian literary secularists, at least, the task of the writer is not merely to diagnose the problem but to participate in some fashion in resolving it. Dalrymple though an outsider has truly encapsulated the paradigm of Indian religion in its true entirety through his novel Nine Lives. The present thesis examines India and its people in the travel writings of V.S. Naipaul and William Darlymple at length.

Keywords – Naipaul, Darlymple, Travel, Religion, Society, Modernity

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INTRODUCTION

On the issue of religious tolerance in India, Naipaul has made various comments that bring into doubt his commitment as a layman. Typically Naipaul described himself as a secularist &modernist involved in insight and interpretation rather than — ideas, and usually opposed some sort of categorical fixity — whether regional, political, or philosophy. For starters, with a clear warning in this context, he starts the −Prologue to Beyond Belief: "This is a book about people. It's not an opinion-book. It is a collection of tales. "And he urges the reader to look directly at his nonfiction research as a travel story, presuming an air of critical neutrality:

The writer as a tourist then retreats slowly in these travel books or mine 's cultural explorations; the country's citizens come to the fore; & I become again what I was at the beginning: a narrative person. Throughout the 19th century, the fictional narrative was used to accomplish something certain literary forms — the novel, the essay — can't accomplish easily: to send news about a shifting world, to explain emotional states. I consider it curious that the travel form — in the beginning too far from my own instincts — had brought me back there to dig for the story; if the descriptions were falsified or coerced, it might have undone the book's value. These stories contain enough complexities. We are the book's point; the reader will not be asking for "conclusions. "2

Note again the commentary on the directive — do not look for arguments in this book, and do not think about marking my position. But, for two reasons, the insistence on turning to – narrative rather than – conclusions, however, falls flat. Firstly, Naipaul's Prologue directive fails to recognize the many ways in which narratives and arguments can be complementary rather than opposed. And secondly, by having turned here to the travel narrative genre as an alternative to more openly politicized forms of writing (like journalism), Naipaul overlooks the several ways that the travel narratives itself have long been ridden with ideological baggage, as illustrated by a range of post-colonial critics.

Because the non-fiction works of Naipaul shift very much between personal and societal observations, this segment would explore all aspects of Naipaul 's interaction with faith &secularism. As far as broad social issues are concerned, Naipaul has recently been convicted of being an ally of communalists in India, and support for the BJP as

a political party & RSS' hostility to Islamic civilization in South Asia poses a serious problem in an attempt to claim him as a secularist. For example, he seemingly approved the illegal destruction by right-wing Hindu mobs of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya in 1992. This event led to widespread riots and more than a thousand deaths around the country. However, Naipaul is quoted as saying: "Ayodhya is something of a passion. Any passion should be inspired. Passion leads to creativity. "3 Such statements are irresponsible, as they could be used just as easily to endorse all manner of extremist religious and political activity. Indeed, one can well picture an outsider saying this about Hitler and the German National Socialists in the 1930s: full of "passionate strength."

There it is necessary to remember at first that the supportive support of the Hindu right by Naipaul might be recent, but his animosity to Muslim society goes back 30 years or more. Naipaul discusses the past of Mughal domination in South Asia before the British in books like India: A Damaged Civilisation and the more recent Reading and Writing. He claims that the Mughal era was a time of desecration and waste, a sort of dark ages ruled by a religious fixation rather than a thriving phase for combining arts, industry, architecture and culture. Naipaul rejects writers like Kabir, Amir Khusrav, Ghalib & Iqbal and shrugs at the indulgence of Mughal architecture, posing that against the poverty of those who lived from outside walls of the palaces. In this vein, Naipaul even recoils against the Taj Mahal because perhaps it was built with slave labour: −the Taj was so extravagant, so degenerate, and thus brutal at the end, which was extremely elongated to it. 4 Finally, and most importantly, against the enlightened rule of certain Mughal emperors, Naipaul vividly describes a rather idiosyncratic account of the sacking of the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar in the 16th century, where he speculates: − Many men would've been killed; all the kin's talent, energy and intellectual capacity. By creating a desert, the conquerors themselves would have secured, almost invited, their own subsequent defeat by others (6-7) In fact, Naipaul 's vision of a blindly destructive Islamic incursion is by no means accurate, as seen by historian William Dalrymple in an essay in Outlook India ("Sir Vidia Gets it Badly Wrong"; March 15, 2004). Dalrymple explores recent scholarships that investigate the true nature of the Hindu society at Vijayanagar, including its collapse, before complicating Naipaul 's arguments regarding the existence of the late medieval Indo-Islamic community. On Vijayanagara, Dalrymple draws upon Phillip Wagoner's research and claims that to a large degree the city-state was itself Islamized:

Far from being the static, backward-looking bastion of the Hindu rebellion envisioned by Naipaul, Vijayanagara, in reality, had grown in all kinds of surprising ways , taking on many of the administrative, tax collection and military methods of the Muslim sultanates that surrounded it — notably stirrups, horseshoes, horse armour and a modern form of saddle, all of which allowed Vijayanagara to hold on. (Dalrymple 2001, 2004)

The interaction between the Muslim −invaders alike and the Vijayanagara Hindu kingdom was much greater than Naipaul 's account allows, extending to the kinds of clothing that the Hindu kings were wearing there. In addition, Dalrymple claims that Hindu-Muslim hybridity became a two-way path, demonstrating the multiple forms Islam adopts elements for Hindu culture and, to some degree, also faith in the Indian subcontinent. Most importantly, once the Delhi sultanate defeated the kingdom, the Mughals had not annihilated Hindu arts and crafts, as Naipaul suggests. Instead, the artists were re-employed on big ventures at Mughal centers such as Bijapur and Fatehpur Sikri, where the extensive research is written in Hindi rather than Persian language, and where Gujurati-Hindu sculpture graces the palace gardens. Naipaul's description of the Mughal-Islamic presence in India is, in short, as Dalrymple puts it, “jaundiced,” and this jaundiced hostility has only intensified in Naipaul's recent comments on this and related questions.

Finally, the concern one has with Naipaul‘s image of the Mughals is also applicable to his two sizable books on Islam outside of India, where he expresses severe, strident criticisms of Islamic history and the Muslim world. For Naipaul, global Islamic fundamentalism amongst the —converted peoples‖ is especially devastating because it leads to violence against local history, language, and literature. To be fair the characterizations of madmen, prophets, and revolutionaries, alternately as "hysteria" or "fanaticism," are found in many of Naipaul's works dealing with non-Muslims in Trinidad and Latin America. One thinks, for instance, of the many narratives in his 1994 book A Way in the World that foreground ideological or racial obsessions. Or perhaps the explorations of terroristic violence in Half a Life and, earlier, The Killings in Trinidad. In Naipaul‘s historical analysis, fanaticism—whether Islamic or ethnic or —postcolonial‖— produces rigid convictions again and again ruin the prospect of modernization of backward societies. In the aforementioned Beyond Belief, Naipaul describes the dangerous ability of religious partisans to erase history and destroy distinctions in space: Indonesia and Pakistan become extensions of Arabia, and their local histories become debased. But there's some confusion in Naipaul on this point, as the erasure of the past can also be a sign of modernization (or indeed, secularization).[5]

GOING WITHIN, GOING BACK: NAIPAUL'S "PROLOGUE"

In "Prologue to an Autobiography," Naipaul describes his experience of Hinduism as a space of complacent enclosure associated with ritual practice. For Naipaul this is effectively the traditional and ritualized Hinduism of his family life in Trinidad, a theme which recurs often in many Naipaul texts (from A House for Mr. Biswas, to the recent essay "Reading and Writing"). It is a religion in the family and of the family, markedly Hindu and even markedly Brahminical. And it is frustrating to Naipaul because it prevents modernization and independence of thought and action, the independence that is essential to defining oneself as a writer. And while Naipaul works hard to distance himself from the baggage of his Hindu background in early books like An Area of Darkness, in "Prologue to an Autobiography," that experience presents itself as a kind of blot on Naipaul's secular self.

But at the beginning there was little in the way of ambivalence, just an unblinking hatred of linguistic blindness, inexplicable ceremonies, and his father's "appetite for Hindu speculation":

I came from a savants-abundant culture. Be that as it may, I was brought as an unbeliever to the universe. I deplored the programs that were rigid. We were too long, and at the end came the nourishment distinctly. I didn't understand the language— maybe our elderly people expected our comprehension to be instinctive — and no one explained the prayers or the ritual. One role looked like another. I was not interested in the images; I never tried to know their significance. There was also a spiritual incapacity in my lack of conviction and distaste for ritual, this again a betrayal of inheritance, as my father's appetite for Hindu speculation was great. So it happened that I remained almost completely ignorant of Hinduism, despite growing up in a customary household. So what did I do due to Hinduism? Perhaps I had a certain way of thinking that was encouraging. I can't say; my uncle often said that my rejection was an appropriate form of Hinduism. Examining myself, I found the sentiment of the division of individuals that I tried to explain, a vaguer sense of caste, and a fear of the unclean..8

It's notable that even in this statement of strong unbelief, Naipaul finds himself unable to fully extricate himself from the Hindu fold, as his uncle accepts his rejection as "an admissible type of Hinduism." Moreover, Naipaul is willing to explore the trace of ritual sensibility that lingers on in his own orientation to the material world. He goes on explain his revulsion at mundane practices he finds to be unclean:

Given all, I am shocked that people should put food on plates that they themselves use for animals; as it frightened me at school to see young men eating popsicles and palates, local frosted lollies; as it scares me to see women sipping ladles with which to mix their dishes. This was more than distinction; we had to defend against these uncleanlines.[9]

In effect, Naipaul is admitting the unconscious power of certain taboo behaviors that have the same force on him as on any orthodox Hindu. He is not trying to exorcise himself of the feelings. Rather, he is conceding that he is helpless to his feeling of repulsion at the sight of lollipop-sharing or ladle-sipping—while affirming that he continues to find these practices repulsive. To contemporary sociologists of religion like Talal Asad, these confessions of the body are as much —religionǁ as a conscious declaration of faith – religion as a disciplinary practice of the body, or a habitus[10].

In a later chapter of An Area of Darkness, Naipaul credits Gandhi with being able to see the ills of Indian society. This might seem odd given Naipaul's bitterness about Gandhi in India: A Wounded Civilization, and indeed there seem to be some claims about Gandhi in this work that are contradicted by his later work. But Naipaul is driving at a different point in An Area of Darkness. Here, he argues that Gandhi was able to see India clearly, in large part because he too was an outsider:

He looked at India as no Indian could; his vision was straightforward and this directness was, & revolutionary. He knows just what the tourist does; he is not missing the evident. He sees the beggars & brazen analysts and Banaras 'filth; he sees the physicians, attorneys, & journalists' atrocious sanitary behaviors. He recognizes the callousness of the Indians, the lack of knowing. No Indian mentality avoids him, no Indian problem; he looks down at the roots of a decayed, stagnant culture. And the image of India that comes out of more than thirty years of his writings & exhortations still holds: this is the indicator of his disappointment.

He saw India so precisely, for he was partly a colonial. Since he was forty-six he ultimately settled in India, after spending 20 years in South Africa. There he had seen a community of Indians removed from India's setting; comparison made for self-analysis clarity, criticism & discrimination. He emerged a colonial blend of East and West, Hindu and Christian.[11]

It needed the straight simple vision of the West; and it is revealing to find, just after his return from South Africa, how Gandhi speaks Christian, Western, simplicities with a new, discovering fervour; 'Before the Throne of the Almighty we shall be judged, not by what we have eaten nor by whom we have been touched but by whom we have served and how. Inasmuch as we serve a single human being in distress, we shall find favour

in the sight of God.' The New Testament tone is not inappropriate. It is in India, and with Gandhi, that one can begin to see how revolutionary the now familiar Christian ethic must once have been.[12]

Naipaul isn't implying that Gandhi had actually converted to Christianity, but rather that his "ethic" is informed by his exposure to Christian rhetoric. The argument seems a bit speculative, for while Gandhi certainly knew quite a number of devout Christians in England, he quotes many different scriptural traditions freely in his various essays and speeches.

Whether he is arguing that India desperately needed a crypto-Christian Gandhi to come in as an "outsider" in order to shake up the old religious mores of Hindu society, or that Gandhi himself had fallen prey to a kind of religious fanaticism, it's clear that Naipaul's approach lacks symmetry. There is no shade in the face of the Naipaulian gaze; all the societies he studies seem equally symptomatic. Moreover, there is a steadfast sense that religion is responsible for the slow, troubled emergence of real modernity in the Indian outlook, and that religious practices are so engrained as to be unchangeable.

The Indian Religion has since the beginning enticed the Indian as well as the western writers along the globe. Among those writers a few noteworthy are Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Butler Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Herman Hesse, Aurobindo Ghose,S Radhakrishnan, Peter Heehs and William Dalrymple. Nine Lives by William Dalrymple which comes after a long gestation, is a concord of travelogue and oral history where the writer's search for spirituality in modern India continued. It's an effort to snatch a glimpse of how Indian spirituality is an alternative to worldly materialism in the rapidly developing Capitalist society. The Scottish travel writer who writes primarily on Indian subjects begins his sacred journey from South India where he meets a Jain Nun Prasannmati Mataji who is walking the path tread on by the fist nun Aryika Chandana and bases her life on the core belief of Jainism which is to conquer all temptations and inner enemies like anger, greed & pride by practicing non-attachment with the material world practicing aparigraha(to give up all the attachments of life) and by living a peacefully disciplined lifestyle. Life 's aim is to attain moksha by riding oneself with the negativity that is obstructing the spirit. One can achieve this by living in the human form a life of harmlessness and renunciation, and by causing no harm to any sentient being.

The story of the Singer of Epics, Mohan Bhopa and his wife Batasi, Pabusar residents (Rajasthan) talks of a great medieval Rajasthani epic, The Epic of Pabuji: a six hundred year old book, a beautiful tale of love, comedy, sacrifice, defeat, martyrdom and revenge. Historians have analyzed Pabuji's epic story in relation to the other epic stories of Ramayana & Mahabharata, and the conclusion drawn is that the Pabuji tradition is "one multilayered & collective narrative construction of various Rajasthani performers, transmitted in oral and written form. A long narrative poem called phad (an illustration of the highlights of Pa 's story) Mohan Bhopa, a Nayak (considered to be a low caste) belonged to a family where his ancestors lived the life of nomads who are never trusted by people of other castes. Mohan, even today can't eat and drink in many houses of the village, but when he recites the phad his position turns out to be very important. Among his hearers are also the Rajputs and Brahmins who are proud and happy at Mohan's fame and success everywhere.

Sufi saints believe all religions were one once, today we just see various manifestations of the same divine reality Sufism, which is a general term for Muslim mysticism was also influenced by Hindu mysticism. Dalrymple thinks it to be an amalgamation of Hinduism and Islam. Many Sufis who regard Hindu scriptures to be divinely inspired accepted its teachings and even took on the yogic practices of the Hindu sadhus.

The last Dalrymple visits the Bauls of Bengal which are a group of mystic minstrels from Bengal and constitute both religious sect and a musical tradition. They can be easily noticed by their distinctive clothe called alkhalla and musical instruments generally an Ektara. Their faith again presents a contrast to Hindu religion as they don't believe in God's existence in a stone or bronze idol. They have no faith in after life. They believe God to be existing in every human body for which one has to find a guru an adhere to the path of love. Bauls defy distinctions based on caste and religion as Bauls have no particular notion or compulsion to bind them to religion. They can be seen sitting at odd places like teashops or under banyan tree singing their ballads of love and mysticism. Their songs help them to transcend the material life and take them to a different spiritual level, helping the listeners to discover path to the heart of man. Man can experience and realize God in the purest form of joy.

Dalrymple though an outsider has truly encapsulated the paradigm of Indian religion in its true entirety through his novel Nine Lives.

Throughout Naipaul's fiction, women's activist activists were frequently deeply concerned about the work and position of women. Ladies are fragile in their transnational and transcultural anecdotal setting. Be that as it may, there was hardly any study of the reasoning behind such delineation. His root lies in a few facts on the off chance that ladies are so presented. The people around them distort them and divide them. By the way, this paper plans to focus specifically on the roles that ladies play in Naipaul's A Bend in the River (1979) in a multi-ethnic culture. A Bend in the River is set in an unknown African nation that is "ridiculous,

uncivilized, degrading and enigmatic" in Helen Hayward's words: "the shrub stifled the sound of murder, and the muddy streams and lakes washed away the blood" (BR, p.60) "(Hayward 2002). In reality, it depends on occasions that a multi-ethnic community is addressed in Zaire. Multi-ethnic culture' means a decent variety of race, gender, sex, language, religion, sexual orientation, or disability within one society. In its narrower context, which is increasingly acceptable for post-colonial concerns, it refers to a decent ethnic variety within one society. ."(Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies 2004) Thus, in a multi-ethnic culture in Africa as described by Naipaul, the condition of women is precarious, now and again more grounded than the ladies of a single society, and sometimes they have more access to guys that women do not have in a single society. The epic depicts Zabeth, Yvette, Shobha, and Kareisha as portals for Salim as well as perusers, and the road to the strange world to which each of these characters has a location. Throughout the life of Salim, they take on various jobs. V. S. Naipaul's work obviously has sexism's manifestation. Compared to women's feminist pundits, Helen Pyne Timothy and John Parras have botched no way to point out how humiliating and mangled, exploited and skewed women in Naipaul are. To be sure that his treatment of ladies in A Bend in the River has earned him shame, yet he has always been portrayed as a sexist. Nevertheless, this paper aims to show that his female characters, though barely focused, are important. A Bend in the River verifies the sympathy of perusers for Salim, who is the storyteller in the book, and his actions are the chief enthusiasm of the text. Be that as it may, the criticality of the ladies in the novel is not compromised by this. A Bend in the River (1979)'s utter first line, "The universe is the thing that it is; people who are nothing, who allow themselves to turn out to be nothing, have no place in it" (1) clarifies that spot is important to the world's comprehension. Salim doesn't visit the spots in which he lives or doesn't live, the spots that somehow or other resonate with him, which form his history, present and future. Others he knows personally, while others he sees through ladies ' eyes, including Zabeth, Yvette, Shobha and Kareisha around him. The characters that this paper is preparing to address have a position with an almost post-freedom disarray multi-ethnic culture. The locals of this general public are upholding a patriotism which, as Franz Fanon argues in The Wretched of the Earth, neglects to achieve freedom across class lines, as their expectations are essentially those of the colonized bourgeoisie. The local bourgeoisie subsequently ascends to power just to the degree that it seeks to recreate the bourgeoisie of the imperial standard-supporting "motherland." At the point where Salim is landing in the area, he thinks it's mostly pulverized. Limit is located throughout the web. Salim meets Zabeth in this situation, Yvette, Shobha and finally Kareisha at that point. Zabeth, probably the earliest customer in Salim's store, comes from the town's area. Bruce King's comments concerning him: “Salim is an East African Muslim who belongs to a family that has come from northern India in the distant past and who identifies with Indian culture and peoples although, like the Arabs, having family slaves from the past.”(King 2003) He is ghostly by “anxieties of homelessness, of living in more than one culture, of needing to find a narrative order for experience.”(King 2003)

Sex does not really rear its head in V. S. Naipaul’s prolific output until his fourth novel, *The Mimic Men.* This was published in 1967 when the ethnically Indian, Trinidad-born author was already thirty-five years old. Once the subject had been let loose on the printed page, however, it continued to hover over his next novel *In a Free State* (1971) only to burst and throb like a kind of disease throughout Naipaul’s sixth novel *Guerrillas* (1975). Its shocking final scenes of rape and murder gained the author a new form of notoriety. His next novel *A Bend in the River* (1979) still contained graphic scenes of the sexual violation of a woman. But by the time of his latest novel, the then almost 70-year-old, Nobel laureate had backed away from the erotic excesses of *Guerillas*. Nevertheless, *Half a Life* (2001) still has a strong undercurrent of concern for sex and issues of sexuality.

Naipaul completed *Miguel Street* in 1955. It is written with a Dickensian simplicity of style through the eyes of a child who has only a child’s understanding of the power of sexuality. Similarly, even within the broad scope of *A House for Mr. Biswas,* which covers a lifetime, much of it within a large Hindu extended family, sex is very much a thing hidden from the eyes of the reader. Mr. Biswas, for example, finds himself a father-to-be with only one cryptic sentence suggesting that he had made love to a wife who had been more or less foisted on him by her family, “By now Shama’s head was on his soft arm, and they were lying side by side” (115). Later a feast of oysters may be read with hindsight as the aphrodisiac Biswas needs to work up the requisite passion. A few scattered but vague references to unusual sexual practices among the multitude of couples that live under the Tulsis roof round off the book’s observance of sexuality.

Naipaul made a great leap into the post-*Lady Chatterly’s Lover* era of British sexual openness when *The Mimic Men* appeared in 1967. While the words “Love, love, love” were being given a much more sensuous spin with the music of the Beatles, Ralph Singh the protagonist of *TheMimic Men* gets himself into all kinds of sexual situations and, for the first time in Naipaul, the reader gets to see what happens. This period might be called, “Explicit Confusion.”

In *Mimic Men* we meet prostitutes in London; we hear of Ralph’s incestuous relationship with his aunt Sally; we meet Sandra his nipple-painting wife, and the drunken woman who, when asleep, displays “one titta thisaway and one titta thataway”

(MM 19). We hear of Ralph's father's porn, and the assortment of European women Ralph picks up on trains to and from Oxford. There are fumblings with blouses and breasts. Liena tries to seduce Ralph. There are more prostitutes on the island of Isabella; explicit scenes with Lady Stella ("Such small breasts as she leaned back!" (276)); and finally and grotesquely, the degraded prostitute described above. Looming offstage, its bizarre sexual details largely unknown to the average reader, is the bizarre Asvamedha Queen-Horse copulation ritual. Innocence has been thrown to the wind.

In this phase of Naipaul's writing, sex has become intertwined with politics in a number of significant ways. Occurrences in the sexual arena are mirrored by events in the political flow, and vice versa. The ekphrastic placement of the Asvamedha ritual at the dead center of the book -- at the end of the middle chapter of the second of the three major sections -- emphasizes its underlying importance and sends out ripples of sexual and political intrigue throughout the text. The ritual encompasses Ralph's troubled relationship with his father (whose followers are presumed to have carried it out), his then adolescent understanding of sex, and the fictional Caribbean island of Isabella's roiling political strife. "After this deed our island changed… The killing of the racehorse…became an acceptable rallying point of righteous underground emotion" (169).

In Naipaul's latest novel *Half a Life* (2001), we can find a character that has taken Fanon's idea of "becoming white" by having sex with white women to its logical conclusion. Ladies man Marcus, who is black, intends to marry a white woman and, by a process of selective breeding and with the understanding that black genes are recessive, he expects one day to walk around London with his "white" grandchild. Written a few years after the death of Naipaul's first wife Pat and his marriage only two months later to Nadira Knannum Alvi, Willie the Indian central character -- despite earlier sexual misfortunes -- ultimately finds erotic fulfillment. In 1984 Naipaul had spoken in *The New Yorker* of having found sexual satisfaction in middle age. As Theroux reports it: "'The sexual ease came quite late to me,' Vidia said to the interviewer, of Margaret, [his longtime mistress] while Pat toiled in the kitchen making the lunch. 'And it came as an immense passion'" (Theroux 314).

Half a Life abounds with the falling away of sexual unease and with this "immense passion." Willie meets Ana, a woman who had read and liked his book: "But as soon as he saw her all his anxieties fell away, and he knew he was conquered…. And what was most intoxicating for Willie was that for the first time in his life he felt himself in the presence of someone who accepted him completely" (HL 117). "Those were the days of my intensest love-making with Ana. I loved her…for the luck and liberation she had brought me, the undoing of fear, the granting to me of full manhood" (136).

CONCLUSION

India, One of the world's biggest democracy has a more than five thousand year old culture that has various social & cultural origins. The Indian subcontinent 's cultural origins can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilizations, whose remains even today are cherished. India has remained under the control of the British Empire since the late 16th century until today when independence is a 67 year possession, India is a place with different languages, faiths and societies. Our cultures, values, lifestyles, preferences and practices are also quite different. Till date a lot of work and research has already been done on India and its society. Dalrymple though an outsider has truly encapsulated the paradigm of Indian religion in its true entirety through his novel Nine Lives.

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2. Naipaul, Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted People,, xii

3. Quoted in William Dalrymple, "Sir Vidia Gets It Badly Wrong."

4. Outlook India, March 15, 2004. Accessed online at: http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fodname=20040315&fname=Naipaul+%28F%29&sid=1&pn=1.

5. Quoted in William Dalrymple, —Sir Vidia Gets It Badly Wrong.‖ (2004)

6. Amitav Ghosh alludes to the modernism of the new Islamic movements in his Naipaulian nonfiction work, In an Antique Land. At one point he encounters an Imam during his studies in Egypt. The Imam can't fathom the idea of the Hindu custom of cremating one's dead, and attacks it as —primitive,‖ much as an unreconstructed western anthropologist might have, fifty years ago: —'Why do you allow it? Can't you see that it's a primitive and backward custom? Are you savages that you permit something like that? Look at you: you've had some education; you should know better. How will your country ever progress

if you carry on doing these things?'‖ (Ghosh, 1992, 235).

7. *Naipaul, India: A Wounded Civilization,* 15.

8. *Naipaul, India: A Wounded Civilization,* pp. 86-87.

9. *Naipaul, An Area of Darkness*, pp. 32-33.

10. Ibid., 33.

11. See Talal Asad's Genealogies of Religion for an example of an anthropological approach to religion beyond the (Christian-centered) orientation to expressions of —belief.‖ Talal Asad, Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

12. *Naipaul, An Area of Darkness*, 73.

13. *Naipaul, An Area of Darkness*, 74.

14. *Ghosh, Incendiary Circumstances*, 197.

15. Ibid., Incendiary Circumstances, 198.

16. *Ghosh, The Shadow Lines*, 204.

17. *Kumar, Husband of a Fanatic*, xxiv.

18. Ibid., 210.

19. *Naipaul*, *Finding the Center*, 3.

20. It's intriguing to think of the centrality of the typewriter here, given its contested status in the halls of the 'serious' writer in 1952. Elsewhere Naipaul talks about how he found using a typewriter very natural. In this he wasn't especially unusual, but perhaps the typewriter belies his obsession with writing as a "noble thing," as a vocation separate from all others.

21. This failure is also everywhere evident in the volume of recently published letters called Between Father and Son. Seeparsad Naipaul repeatedly suggests they collaborate on volumes, or asks his son in London for help in finding publishers. But Vidia clearly has his eyes on his own career.

22. "The Hindu who wants to be a pundit has first to find a guru. My father, wanting to learn to write, found MacGowan. It was MacGowan, my father said, who had taught him how to write; and all his life my father had for MacGowan the special devotion the Hindu has for his guru." (Finding the Center, 55).

23. Ibid., 31-32.

24. Naipaul, *Finding the Center*, 69.

25. Emile Durkheim explores the idea of "effervescence" in the conclusion to The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.

26. Naipaul, *Finding the Center*, 72.

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