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## AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND LIFE WRITING IN NAIPAUL’S WORK

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**Abstract:**

*This paper will present the elements of autobiography on which almost all Naipaul’s novels, travel logs and short stories are based.*

*The paper also emphasizes the strong connection between Naipaul’s writings and his personal experiences. His personal feelings like the feeling of uprooting, the impact of colonialism on personal identity, the search of “home”, the hybridity and Indianness which can be sensed in his works are also found here.*

*The paper intends to answer the following questions:*

- 1. Which is the relation between autobiography and life writing?*
- 2. How relevant are Naipaul’s books and travel logs in the context of this paper theme?*
- 3. Which is the relation between Naipaul’s travel writing and the field of autobiography?*
- 4. How does Naipaul manage his search for his Indian identity?*

*The intention of this paper is clear: to analyse the meanings of the fields of life writing and autobiography as seen in Naipaul’s non-fiction and to prove that autobiographies can also be literary works and not just dates from someone’s life.*

*In terms of structure the paper is divided as follows:*

*An introductory part where the fields of autobiography and travel writing are presented in detail.*

*The first part of the paper presents Naipaul’s life and literary activity. The main focus of this part is the idea that most of his works are based on his life experience and life writing.*

*The second part of the paper of the paper presents Naipaul’s works in which the autobiographical elements are dominant.*

*The third part emphasises the relation between autobiography and the main themes from Naipaul’s works*

*Finally, the conclusions underline once again the idea that Naipaul’s work is closely linked to his life.*

**Keywords:**

*Autobiography, Life writing, Travel writing, Naipaul’s travel books*

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## INTRODUCTION

Noi sustinem ca “In aproximativ ultimi treizeci de ani, scrierile teoretice despre autobiografie s-au inmultit, autobiografiile scrise din perspective feminine sau din perspectiva membrilor minoritatilor etnice au proliferat, si acest gen a devenit o baza propice pentru scriere experimentală. Autobiografia poate reflecta unele din principalele preocupari ale postmodernismului, care are legatura cu cunoasterea trecutului nostru si a relatiei cu acesta. Asemenea aspecte se regasesc din abundenta in scrierile din viata personala. Literatura de calatorie se incadreaza in acest domeniu care are numeroase directii de explorare.”<sup>1</sup>

Asa cum am precizat mai sus autobiografia este o componenta relativ noua a postmodernismului. Domeniul vast al literaturii s-a concentrat pe alte stiluri de scriere care ofereau mult mai multa diversitate ignorand-o aproape total pe acesta. De cele mai multe ori autobiografia era ceva fara nici o baza literara care era strict apanajul femeilor si care era considerata doar un simplu sir de date fara valoare. Situatia autobiografiei s-a schimbat o data cu aparitia memoriilor, a jurnalelor de calatori si a relatarii personale a vietii cuiva.

Conform noua „The Concise Oxford Dictionary” da mai multe definitii pentru memorii si autobiografi. Concluzionind, avem de a face cu „o relatare istorica sau o biografie scrisa din perspectiva cunoasterii personale sau a unor surse speciale ” o relatare personala a vietii cuiva, cu intentia de a fi publicata si care ar putea lua o forma literara. Forma literara nu este obligatorie.

In general vorbind, memoriile – sau autobiografiile, dupa caz – sunt categorii speciale ale jurnalului, avind anumite surse si functii. Autobiografiile nu sunt scrise ca sa ramana anonime. Mai mult, ele au fost scrise de artisti sau personalitati non-artistice care folosesc cuvintul, sunetul si arta lor pentru a se justifica in fata contemporanilor lor sau chiar a posteritatii. Ele nu sunt o justificare prin propria forma, ci prin evenimentele pe care le descriu sau comenteaza. Este foarte posibil ca acestea sa devina opere literare ca atare, si autorul lor sa fie mai tirziu considerat ca propriul caracter, dar functia initiala de memorii nu a fost niciodata estetica.

Autobiografiile scrise de diferite personalitati sunt semnificative doar din perspectiva actiunilor acestora sau a evenimentelor la care au participat. Astfel, avem autobiografiile lui Saint-Simone, Churchill si De Gaulle, Chaplin si Louis Armstrong – pentru a mentiona doar cateva dintre ele. Intrebarea este: Sunt ele opere literare? Poate ca nu, dar au toate sansele sa-si mentina acest statut. De fapt, Philippe Lejeune a afirmat ca o autobiografie este „o naratiune retrospectiva produsa de o persoana reala care are legatura cu propria existenta, concentrandu-se pe viata personala, si in special pe propria personalitate.”(Lejeune, 192-222).

Qasim afirma ca, daca „subiectul sursa” decide sa-si scrie autobiografia pentru a-si prezenta viata sau un eveniment intr-o forma narativa, cu unicul scop de a-si prezenta experientele unei audiente sau pentru a justifica fapte sau evenimente, atunci viata si diferitele experinte ale lui VS Naipaul in cele mai neasteptate locuri: in locul sau de nastere Trinidad si Tobago, in Jamaica si Venezuela, la care ar trebui sa adaugam natiunile de pe continentul asiatic - India, Iran, Pakistan, Indonezia si Malaezia – plus un numar de tari Africane si Europene precum si Statele Unite si America de Sud, sunt dovada clara in acest sens.

[...]

Naipaul, calatorul international, ofera o atotcuprinzatoare imagine a conditiei umane din propria lume, in amestecul deosebit de fictiune si autobiografie, operele sale fiind confesiuni fara nici o indoiala. In *Finding the Centre* (1984), el marturisea:

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<sup>1</sup> Paicu A. (2022). *Naipaul's (de)colonizing of the Empire: The Indian Travel Narratives of a Globe Trotter*. Ed. Sitech. Foreward. Pag. 7. Romania (traducere proprie din teza de doctorat)



„Un scriitor dupa un timp isi poarta lumea cu el, propria povara a experientei, experientei umane si experientei literare (una detaliind-o pe cealalta); si chiar cred – mai ales dupa ce am scris „Prolog la Autobiografie” - ca m-asi fi putut conecta cu mine si cu trecutul meu oriunde m-asi fi dus.”

Este deasemenea interesant sa mentionam parerea scriitorului despre calatoriile sale si modul in care experientele traite in timpul acestor calatorii se reflecta in operele sale de fictiune: „Calatoream de parca asi fi fost in vacanta, si apoi ma impotmoleam, cautand inspiratie. Am avut probleme cu „Eu-l” calatorului; am crezut ca fiind calator si scriitor avem control deplin si propriile pareri.” (*Reading and Writing*, 30)

La un nivel mai teoretic, importanta autobiografiei a fost subliniata in numeroase rinduri de diferiti teoreticieni.

[...]

Referindu-se la diferitele definitii ale autobiografiei, Paul John Eakin se refera la superficialitatea acestor incercari de a defini autobiografia, pe care, totusi, el o vede ca „instructiva” deoarece ele prezinta parerile despre „cel mai alunecos gen literar”, si e de acord ca „sinele si propriile experiente pot fi cumva prezentate in text”. (Eakin, 1999: 1-2, 99).

Pe de alta parte, sunt critici care considera ca autobiografia ar trebui indepartata total din literatura (Frye, 2000: 72), altii mergind chiar mai departe ca modernistii care vesteau sfirsitul autobiografiei (Sprinker, 1980), sau altii mai intelegatori, ca Linda Anderson care sustinea ca autobiografia trebuie sa fie tema principala in dezbaterile stiintifice ale secolului XX pe langa subiecte ca – psihoanaliza, poststructuralismul, feminismul – care sustineau „natura evidenta a subiectului si cunoasterii”.

[...]

De fapt, opera de fictiune a lui Naipaul abunda in elemente autobiografice edificatoare, de la amintirile din tinerele din Trinidad la perioada Oxford si mai tirziu la calatoriile in jurul lumii, care fac personajele sale usor de recunoscut.”<sup>2</sup>

Asa cum mentionam in abstract prima parte a lucrarii prezinta viata si activitatea literara a lui VS Naipaul:

#### MAIN TEXT:

“Background and early life

"Where there had been swamp at the foot of the Northern Range, with mud huts with earthen walls that showed the damp halfway up ... there was now the landscape of Holland ... Sugarcane as a crop had ceased to be important. None of the Indian villages were like villages I had known. No narrow roads; no dark, overhanging trees; no huts; no earth yards with hibiscus hedges; no ceremonial lighting of lamps, no play of shadows on the wall; no cooking of food in half-walled verandas, no leaping firelight; no flowers along gutters or ditches where frogs croaked the night away."

— *From Enigma of Arrival (1987)*

V. S. Naipaul was born to Droapatie (*née* Capildeo) and Seepersad Naipaul on 17 August 1932 in the sugar plantation-town of Chaguanas on the island of Trinidad, the larger of the two islands in the British crown colony of Trinidad and Tobago. He was the couple's second child and first son.

Naipaul's father, Seepersad, was an English-language journalist. In 1929, he had begun contributing stories to the Trinidad Guardian, and in 1932 he joined the staff as the provincial

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<sup>2</sup> Paicu A. (2022). *Naipaul's (de)colonizing of the Empire: The Indian Travel Narratives of a Globe Trotter*. Ed. Sitech. Ch. Three Naipaul and life writing. Pag. 65- 73 Romania (traducere proprie din teza de doctorat)



Chaguanas correspondent. In "A prologue to an autobiography" (1983), Naipaul describes how Seepersad's great reverence for writers and for the writing life spawned the dreams and aspirations of his eldest son.

In the 1880s, Naipaul's paternal grandfather had emigrated from British India to work as an indentured labourer in a sugar plantation. In the 1890s, his maternal grandfather was to do the same. During this time, many people in India, their prospects blighted by the Great Famine of 1876–78, or similar calamities, had emigrated to distant outposts of the British Empire such as Trinidad, British Guiana, Jamaica, Fiji, Mauritius, Natal, East Africa, Malaya, the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and the Dutch colony of Suriname. Although slavery had been abolished in these places in 1833, slave labour was still in demand, and indenture was the legal contract being drawn to meet the demand.

According to the genealogy the Naipauls had reconstructed in Trinidad, they were Hindu Brahmins—embraced from the knowledge of his mother's family; his father's background had remained less certain. Their ancestors in India had been guided by ritual restrictions. Among these were those on food—including the prohibition against eating flesh—drink, attire and social interaction.

In Trinidad, the restrictions were to gradually loosen. By the time of Naipaul's earliest childhood memories, chicken and fish were eaten at the family's dining table, and Christmas was celebrated with a dinner. The men wore only western clothes. The women's saris were being accessorised with belts and heeled footwear, their hemlines rising in imitation of the skirt, and they were soon to disappear altogether as an item of daily wear. Disappearing as well were the languages of India. Naipaul and his siblings were encouraged to speak only English. At school, other languages were taught, but these were usually Spanish and Latin.

Naipaul's family moved to Trinidad's capital Port of Spain, at first when he was seven, and then more permanently when he was nine.

#### 1943–1954: Education: Port of Spain and Oxford

Naipaul was enrolled in the government-run Queen's Royal College (QRC), an urban, cosmopolitan, high-performing school, which was designed and functioned in the fashion of a British boys' public school. Before he turned 17, he won a Trinidad Government scholarship to study abroad. He reflected later that the scholarship would have allowed him to study any subject at any institution of higher learning in the British Commonwealth, but that he chose to go to Oxford to do a degree in English. He went, he wrote, "in order at last to write...." In August 1950, Naipaul boarded a Pan Am flight to New York, continuing the next day by boat to London. He left Trinidad, like the narrator of Miguel Street, hardening himself to the emotion displayed by his family. For recording the impressions of his journey, Naipaul purchased a pad of paper and a copying pencil, noting, "I had bought the pad and pencil because I was travelling to become a writer, and I had to start." The copious notes and letters from that time were to become the basis for the chapter "Journey" in Naipaul's novel The Enigma of Arrival, written 37 years later.

Arriving at Oxford for the Michaelmas term, 1950, Naipaul judged himself adequately prepared for his studies; in the judgement of his Latin tutor, Peter Bayley, Naipaul showed promise and poise. But, a year later, in Naipaul's estimation, his attempts at writing felt contrived. Unsure of his ability and calling, and lonely, he became depressed. By late March 1952, plans were made for his return to Trinidad in the summer. His father put down a quarter of the passage. However, in early April, in the vacs before the Trinity term, Naipaul took an impulsive trip to Spain, and quickly spent all he had saved. Attempting an explanation to his family, he called it "a nervous breakdown". Thirty years later, he was to call it "something like a mental illness."



Earlier in 1952, at a college play, Naipaul had met Patricia Ann Hale, a history student. Hale and Naipaul formed a close friendship, which eventually developed into a sexual relationship. With Hale's support, Naipaul began to recover and gradually to write. In turn, she became a partner in planning his career. When they told their families about their relationship, the response was unenthusiastic; from her family it was hostile. In June 1953, both Naipaul and Hale graduated, both receiving, in his words, "a damn, bloody, ... second." J. R. R. Tolkien, professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, however, judged Naipaul's Anglo-Saxon paper to have been the best in the university.

In Trinidad, Naipaul's father had had a coronary thrombosis in early 1953, and lost his job at the *Guardian* in the summer. In October 1953, Seepersad Naipaul died. By Hindu tenets, it fell to Naipaul to light the funeral pyre—it was the mandatory ritual of the eldest son. But since there was not the time nor the money for Naipaul to return, his eight-year-old brother, Shiva Naipaul, performed the final rites of cremation. "The event marked him," Naipaul wrote about his brother. "That death and cremation were his private wound."

Through the summer and autumn of 1953, Naipaul was financially depleted. His prospects for employment in frugal post-war Britain were unpromising, his applications to jobs overseas repeatedly rejected, and his attempts at writing as yet haphazard. Working off and on at odd jobs, borrowing money from Pat or his family in Trinidad, Naipaul reluctantly enrolled for a B. Litt. post-graduate degree at Oxford in English Literature. In December 1953, he failed his first B.Litt. exam. Although he passed the second written examination, his viva voce, in February 1954, with F. P. Wilson, an Elizabethan scholar and Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford, did not go well. He was failed overall for the B.Litt. degree. With that also ended all hopes of being supported for academic studies at Oxford. Naipaul would later say that he 'hated Oxford'.

#### 1954–1956: London, *Caribbean Voices*, marriage

"The freelancers' room was like a club: chat, movement, the separate anxieties of young or youngish men below the passing fellowship of the room. That was the atmosphere I was writing in. That was the atmosphere I gave to Bogart's Port of Spain street. Partly for the sake of speed, and partly because my memory or imagination couldn't rise to it, I had given his servant room hardly any furniture: the Langham room itself was barely furnished. And I benefited from the fellowship of the room that afternoon. Without that fellowship, without the response of the three men who read the story, I might not have wanted to go on with what I had begun."

— *From, "A Prologue to an Autobiography" (1983).*

Naipaul moved to London, where he reluctantly accepted shelter in the flat of a cousin. Pat, who had won a scholarship for further studies at the University of Birmingham, moved out of her parents' flat to independent lodgings where Naipaul could visit her. For the remainder of 1954, Naipaul exhibited behaviour that tried the patience of those closest to him. He denounced Trinidad and Trinidadians; he castigated the British who he felt had taken him out of Trinidad but left him without opportunity; he took refuge in illness, but when help was offered, he rebuffed it. He was increasingly dependent on Pat, who remained loyal, offering him money, practical advice, encouragement, and rebuke.

Gainful employment appeared for Naipaul in December 1954. Henry Swanzy, producer of the BBC weekly programme, *Caribbean Voices*, offered Naipaul a three-month renewable contract as presenter of the programme. Swanzy, on whose program a generation of Caribbean writers had debuted, including George Lamming, Samuel Selvon, the 19-year-old Derek Walcott and, earlier, Naipaul himself, was being transferred to Accra to manage the Gold Coast Broadcasting System.



Naipaul would stay in the part-time job for four years, and Pat would remain the critical breadwinner for the couple. He was married to Patricia Ann Hale from 1955 until her death in 1996.

In January 1955, Naipaul moved to new lodgings, a small flat in Kilburn, and he and Pat were married. Neither informed their families or friends—their wedding guests were limited to the two witnesses required by law. Pat continued to live in Birmingham but visited on the weekends. At the BBC, Naipaul presented the programme once a week, wrote short reviews and conducted interviews. The sparsely furnished freelancers' room in the old Langham Hotel flowed with the banter of Caribbean writers and would-be writers, providing camaraderie and fellowship. There, one afternoon in the summer of 1955, Naipaul typed out a 3,000-word story. It was based on the memory of a neighbour he had known as a child in a Port of Spain street, but it also drew on the mood and ambience of the freelancers' room. Three fellow writers, John Stockbridge, Andrew Salkey, and Gordon Woolford, who read the story later, were affected by it and encouraged him to go on. Over the next five weeks, Naipaul would write his first publishable book, Miguel Street, a collection of linked stories of that Port of Spain street. Although the book was not published right away, Naipaul's talent caught the attention of publishers and his spirits began to lift.

Naipaul died at his home in London on 11 August 2018. Before dying he read and discussed Lord Tennyson's poem Crossing the Bar with those at his bedside.

His funeral took place at Kensal Green Cemetery.<sup>3</sup>

Noi spunem în *Naipaul's (de)colonizing of the Empire: The Indian Travel Narratives of a Globe Trotter* ca “Inceputurile carierei literare ale lui Naipaul – cand avea aproape douazeci si trei de ani – s-au materializat in primul sau roman, *Miguel Street*, publicat in 1959, dupa *The Mystic Masseur*. A fost scris in doar sase saptamani, in 1955, atunci cand Naipaul lucra part-time la BBC Caribbean Service, si ii introduce cititorului memoriile si vecinii copilariei din Port of Spain.

[...]

Urmatorul lui roman, *The Mystic Masseur* a fost publicat in 1957. Tonul lui era similar cu cel din *Miguel Street*, dar locul de desfasurare acestuia era in zonele rurale indiene ale Trinidadului. Spune povestea lui Ganesh, un prapadit care a avansat de la statutul de profesor falit la masseur si mai tarziu la antreprenor, ajungand in cele din urma la autor si politician. Succesul acestui roman nu poate fi contestat. Un critic din *The Sunday Express* numea *The Mystic Masseur* “cea mai proasta si mai vesela satira pe care am citit-o vreodata.” Cronicile din *The Sunday Times* il numesc pe Naipaul “un scriitor sofisticat, destept si tinar care este pe primul loc in scoala Vest-Indiana.” (French, 179). Alti critici nu au fost la fel de indulgenti, ca Diana Athill care spunea ca succesul cartii se datora in intregime unui interes pasager pentru noile carti din colonii si mai ales din Indiile de Vest; la acel timp, “era mai usor pentru un scriitor sa primeasca critici datorita faptului ca englezii il considerau de culoare decit in cazul unui scriitor autohton, si cititorii erau mai usor de influentat de aceste critici atunci dacit sunt azi.”

Cel de-al treilea roman, *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958), a a fost premiat cu Somerset Maugham Award. Aceasta satira prezinta procesul de alegeri din Trinidad, si descrie circumstantele de *commedia del'arte* ale procesului democratic si consecintele schimbarilor politice. Este, deasemenea, o incursiune in Trinidad-ul multicultural, subliniind efectele pe care alegerile le au asupra diferitelor grupuri etnice din Trinidad, care ii includ nu numai pe co-nationali lui Naipaul – hindusi – dar si pe musulmani si europeni.

[...]

*The Suffrage of Elvira* a fost urmat de *A House of Mr. Biswas*. Recunoasterea internationala a urmat publicarii acestuia in 1961. Ca si in cazul romanelor lui Naipaul unde domina elementele

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V.\\_S.\\_Naipaul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V._S._Naipaul)



autobiografice, acesta prezinta lupta Indo-Trinidadianului Mohun Biswas pentru succes, esecurile lui, si ultima lui realizare aceea de a detine o casa proprie chiar daca esuase in casnicie. Naipaul isi prezinta propriul punct de vedere postcolonial despre o lume coloniala disparuta, lumea tatalui sau.

In 1963 Naipaul publica *Mr Stone and the Knights Companion*, cu totul diferit fata de ce publicase pana atunci. Este un scurt roman despre un batrin ale carui zile sunt toate la fel; ce face deosebit acest roman este faptul ca toate personajele sunt numai englezesti. Asa cum ne-a obisnuit Naipaul in cartile sale si aici elementele autobiografice domina: relatia sa cu prima sotie, Patricia, si timpul petrecut la Cement & Concrete Association. Cartea este un studiu al singuratatii autorului in Londra de dupa razboi si in acelasi timp un portret al casniciei, punind accent pe zilele singuratice petrecute la birou si situatia nesatisfacatoare a casniciei sale. Unul dintre cuvintele cheie ale romanului ar fi o *cautare a renasterii*, si toata actiunea romanului se centreaza pe renastere si semne ale unei iminente extinctie. Locul de desfasurare al romanului reflecta intocmai viata goala si intunecata a domnului Stone.

Multiculturalismul este trasatura principala a romanului *The Mimic Men* (1967). Protagonistii sunt un amestec neobisnuit de rase: Indian (Singh), Chinez (Hok), Francez (Deschampsneuf), African (Browne). Subiectul central este identitatea, care inevitabil duce la problema rasei, si la multiplele si cateodata neplacutele situatii de viata intr-o societate care poate fi descrisa ca eterogena. Este ceva special in aceasta societate multiculturala si multi-etnica? A disparut total populatia indigena? Exista o singura solutie la aceste intrebari pentru personajele cartii: sa-si imite stapanii atit in port cat si in atitudine. Intervievat de Shankar Israel, Naipaul s-a referit la conceptul sau de „imitare” pe care l-a vazut in toate societatile postcoloniale despre care a scris: „Oamenii pe care i-am vazut erau oameni mici care imitau respectabilitatea clasei superioare. Ei au fost sclavi si nu poti scrie despre ei in maniera in care scria Tolstoi, chiar si societatea lui inapoiata – deoarece societatea lui era intreaga si cea pe care o stiam eu nu era.”

Colectia de povestiri scurte a lui Naipaul *A Flag on the Island* (1967), include un numar de selectii din romanele sale si alte povestiri scurte publicate in Anglia sau in Statele Unite.

[...]

Naipaul a primit premiul Booker pentru *In a Free State* in 1971. Structura romanului nu este asa de neobisnuita daca luam in considerare jurnalele lui de calatorie: Naipaul include trei povestiri scurte – titlul celei de-a treia povestire fiind *In a Free State* – intr-un tot narativ.

[...]

*A Bend in the River* (1979) a fost pe lista scurta a Booker Prize in 1979. Locatia romanului este o natiune africana anonima, si naratorul ei este un proprietar de magazin indian musulman ale carui comentarii recente despre progresele africane sunt cele ale unui spectator distant. Unii dintre revieweri considera acest roman ca „un roman magnific” si *A Bend in the River* a fost descris ca „o capodopera completa”. Altii au fost mai putin entuziasti si au criticat parerile si punctele de vedere exprimate in *A Bend in the River*. Acelasi Wheatcroft l-a acuzat pe Naipaul de neo-colonialism, si de „resentiment comun ancestral” impotriva negrilor, in timp ce Whitaker mentioneaza tendinta lui Naipaul de a atribui o „rau-vointa misterioasa” fata de africani.

[...]

Romanul autobiografic *Enigma of the Arrival* (1987) se desfasoara in Anglia si contine parerile lui Naipaul despre contradictiile peisajului englezesc: mai intai vazut ca inghetat si neschimbat dominat de prezenta mistica a sitului Stonehenge, imprejurimile casutei lui Naipaul din Anglia se arata treptat in constanta schimbare, locuitorii acesteia vazindu-si de viata lor izolati de lume. Naipaul analizeaza si schimbarea de locuri – Trinidad este inlocuit de New York, New York este inlocuit de Oxford – si de intelegerea ulterioara a pozitiei lui intr-un mijloc inconjurator nou.

[...]



Aflat și el pe lista de premii Booker prize, *Half of Life* (2001) își desfășoară acțiunea pe trei continente: India, Africa și Europa (Londra, Berlin și Portugalia). Descrie destinul lui Willie Somerset Chandran, fiul unui tata brahmin și a unei mame dalite care pleacă din India către Anglia pentru a deveni scriitor și ajunge în Berlin după ce petrece 18 ani în Africa.

[...]

*The Middle Passage* (1962) este rezultatul călătoriei lui Naipaul în Trinidad, British Guiana, Suriname, Martinique și Jamaica în 1961. Un detaliu interesant despre carte este – în afara propriilor comentarii despre țările vizitate, este ca face referințe la alți scriitori de jurnale de călători, cum ar fi Sir Patrick Michael Leigh Fermor, faimosul scriitor englez de jurnale de călătorie care a fost căsătorit cu o descendentă română a celebrei familii regale Cantacuzino.

Toate temele din jurnalele lui de călătorie se regăsesc în acest ultim jurnal de călătorie: sclavie și rasă, colonialism și post-colonialism, locul pe care îl are *the South Asian Other* în țările de adopție. De multe ori Naipaul călătorul a fost comparat cu Conrad. La fel ca predecesorul său faimos Naipaul a fost un călător care a reușit să surprindă dimensiunea la care o cultură străină – cu depozitul de obiceiuri și tradiții – este asimilată sau nu într-un mai mare tot.

Doi ani mai târziu, *India: An Area of Darkness: A Discovery of India* a fost publicată. Este o relatare detaliată, aproape deprimată și pesimistă a primei călătorii a autorului în India, primul său jurnal de călătorie a trilogiei sale Indiene. Stilul anecdotic și descriptiv al naratiunii este dominat de deziluzia autorului și de sentimentul de dezradăcinare.

Al doilea volum al trilogiei *India: A Wounded Civilization* a fost publicat în 1977. Era suma celei de-a doua vizite în India în timpul Gandhian Indian Emergency period (26 iunie 1975-21 Martie 1977). Nu există nici un sentimentalism în legătură cu acest portret al Indiei secolului 20, rezultatul secolelor de ocupație și opresiune străină, fie că este vorba de patru sute de ani de conducere musulmană sau de un secol și jumătate de conducere britanică.

[...]

*India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) este cea de-a treia parte a Trilogiei Indiene a lui Naipaul și este o relatare mult mai optimistă a autorului, o împacare a acestuia cu patria ancestrală, care este acum „țara celor un milion de revolte”, o țară profund marcată de cunoașterea sinelui și o viață intelectuală incipientă.

Acesta este ultimul din ciclul indian, și mult mai optimist în exprimare decât primele două. Naipaul este martorul excentricității vieții indiene de zi cu zi, comentând des modul deosebit al indienilor de a trata sărăcia evidentă și dezordinea atât de neobișnuite în ochii vesticilor. Este o carte mult mai optimistă decât primele două. În ultimul capitol, *The House on the Lake: A Return to India*, autorul face sumarul celei de-a treia vizite în India, aceasta fiind o împacare cu trecutul și un fel neașteptat de a cere iertare.

[...]”<sup>4</sup>

Ultima parte a acestei lucrări se concentrează pe sublinierea câtorva aspecte care nu au fost menționate anterior și care fac parte din conceptul pe care le-am mai menționat la începutul lucrării și care este definitoriu pentru activitatea literară a lui VS Naipaul: relatarea personală a vieții.

„Așa cum noi menționăm în *Capitolul trei: Naipaul și life writing* o deja faimoasă sursă web se referă la definiție mai științifică, prin afirmatia că *fluiditatea* termenului de „relatare personală a vieții” se referă la un domeniu mult mai vast care include „autobiografie, biografie, memorii, jurnale,

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<sup>4</sup> Paicu A. (2022). *Naipaul's (de)colonizing of the Empire: The Indian Travel Narratives of a Globe Trotter*. Ed. Sitech. Ch. One I am the sum of my books. A bio-bibliographical sketch. Pag. 33-41, România (traducere proprie din teza de doctorat)



scrisori, marturii, auto-etnografie, eseuri personale si mai recent, forme digitale cum ar fi bloguri si email” – mai precis tot ce nu este considerat de domeniul fictiunii.

Definitia oferita de PMLA este chiar mai precisa incluzind o varietate de forme si notiuni – cum ar fi memoriile, jurnalele, media, forme hibride, reviste, filme, fotografii, gen, relatari ale vietii proprii. (*MLA Newsletter* 29.1 Spring 1997: 11). Doi ani mai tirziu, PMLA Convention Program includea: „Life writing and the Visual” (jurnalul, albumul de familie, multimedia si relatarea vietii femeilor); „Life writing and Nature” (reprezentari ale sinelui in desert sau gradina); „Life writing and Addiction” (sex, anorexie si alcoolism). Este evident, ca relatarea personala a vietii si studiile culturale se imbina perfect.”<sup>5</sup>

## CONCLUZII

In concluzie, intrega opera a lui VS Naipaul are o conxiune strinsa cu experienta sa de viata.

Varietatea stilurilor abordate de acesta si profunzimea perceperii lumii inconjuratoare nu ar fi existat fara experianta sa de calator de calatorii.

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<sup>5</sup> Paicu A. (2022). *Naipaul's (de)colonizing of the Empire: The Indian Travel Narratives of a Globe Trotter*. Ed. Sitech. Ch. Three Naipaul and life writing. Pag. 65-66, Romania (traducere proprie din teza de doctorat)



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