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The Network of Intertextual Relations in Naipaul's *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*

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RESUMO

Esta dissertação mapeia a rede de relações intertextuais em *Half a Life* (2001) e sua continuação *Magic Seeds* (2004), os romances mais recentes do Prêmio Nobel de Literatura de 2001, V. S. Naipaul, como contribuição para o estudo da obra do autor. A noção de intertextualidade permeia os estudos literários, e o termo tem sido largamente empregado desde que foi cunhado por Julia Kristeva nos anos sessenta. Desde então as mais variadas, e muitas vezes divergentes, teorias sobre intertextualidade compartilham a idéia de que um texto só adquire significado pleno na interação com outros textos. A abordagem metodológica proposta é baseada na teoria da transtextualidade de Gérard Genette. Esta escolha implica o estudo de intertextos, paratextos, metatextos, arquitextos e hipertextos que constituem a interface entre os dois romances e outros escritos.

O nome do protagonista "William Somerset Chandran" constitui o fio que guia o estudo das várias relações transtextuais nos dois romances. A partir do prenome do protagonista – William – este estudo situa os romances no contexto da tradição do *Bildungsroman*, e argumenta que estes estabelecem uma paródia arquitextual do gênero na medida em que subvertem seu cerne, ou seja, a formação do caráter do protagonista. O nome do meio do protagonista – Somerset – remete à ficcionalização do escritor Somerset Maugham na narrativa, ao mesmo tempo em que esta desmistifica a ótica ocidental sobre o hinduísmo popularizada por Maugham em *The Razor's Edge*. O sobrenome do protagonista – Chandran – leva ao estudo do conjunto de referências à origem indiana de Naipaul e o papel desta na produção do autor. Este nome se reporta ao romance de Narayan *The Bachelor of Arts*, cujo protagonista também é nomeado Chandran. Narayan é um escritor de destaque na literatura anglo-indiana e referência recorrente na obra de Naipaul.

Os temas de migração e choque cultural apresentados nos dois romances têm sido presença constante na obra de Naipaul. Esta pesquisa mapeia a relação de continuidade entre os dois romances em questão e o conjunto da obra de Naipaul, salientando o papel da ambientação geográfica da narrativa, marcada pela jornada do protagonista através de três continentes. A teoria da transtextualidade é uma ferramenta operacional para a pesquisa, a qual examina a densidade das referências geográficas, históricas e literárias em *Half a Life* e *Magic Seeds*, visando aportar elementos para o estudo da produção literária de Naipaul, na medida em que estes romances recentes condensam e revisitam a visão de mundo deste autor.

Palavras-chave:
Naipaul – *Half a Life* – *Magic Seeds* – intertextualidade

ABSTRACT

This thesis traces the network of intertextual relations in the two latest novels by the 2001 Nobel Prize winner V. S. Naipaul: *Half a Life* (2001) and its sequel *Magic Seeds* (2004) as a means of contribution to the study of the author's work. The notion of intertextuality is a pervasive one within literary studies, the word itself started to be widely used in the sixties, following the definition of Julia Kristeva. Nuanced and even conflicting as the varied theories of intertextuality may be, they all share the idea that a text is not isolated or self-sufficient, but acquires full meaning in the interplay with other texts. A methodological approach based on Gerard Genette's theory of transtextuality is proposed for the analysis. This choice implies the study of intertexts, paratexts, metatexts, architexts and hypertexts that constitute the interface between the two novels at hand and other texts.

The protagonist's name "William Somerset Chandran" sets the thread of several transtextual instances pervading the two novels. Taking the cue of the protagonist's first name – William – this thesis places the novels within the context of the Bildungsroman tradition and argues that these novels establish an architextual parody of this genre, subverting its core meaning of character formation. The protagonist's middle name – Somerset – leads to the discussion of the way the writer Somerset Maugham is fictionalized in the narrative and how it undermines the metropolitan ethos towards Hinduism as exposed in Maugham's novel *The Razor's Edge*. The protagonist's last name – Chandran – spawns a set of references to Naipaul's Indian ancestry and the role it plays in his fictional and non-fictional production; this name alludes to Narayan's novel *The Bachelor of Arts*, whose main character is also called Chandran. Narayan is a leading figure in Anglo-Indian Literature and a recurrent reference in Naipaul's writings.

The themes of displacement and culture clash tackled by these novels have haunted the author throughout his career. The research maps out the two novels' relationship with the realm of Naipaul's previous writings; as well as brings to the fore the role of setting in the narratives, marked by the protagonist's dislocations in three continents. The theory of transtextuality provides the operational tool for the research, which examines the density of geographical, historical and literary references in *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* with the purpose of shedding light into Naipaul's literary production, inasmuch as these two recent novels condense and revisit the author's worldview.

Key words:
Naipaul – *Half a Life* – *Magic Seeds* – intertextuality

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INTRODUCTION

The object of this thesis is the analysis of the network of intertextual relations in the two latest published novels by the 2001 Nobel Prize winner V. S. Naipaul: *Half a Life*, released in 2001, and its sequel *Magic Seeds*, which appeared in 2004. The themes tackled by these novels have haunted the author throughout his long career. The overall purpose of this work is to introduce the reader to Naipaul's literary world through the mapping of intertextuality in these two recent novels as they condense and revisit the author's worldview.

Naipaul's writings have appeared at regular intervals throughout half a century, from 1957 to 2004, amounting to around 30 titles, with several re-editions and compilations. Few contemporary authors writing in English have gained a readership as extensive as Naipaul. Few have been as prolific in both fiction and non-fiction and managed to create and sustain such an idiosyncratic and powerful literary voice. Since the appearance of his first novel, *The Mystic Masseur,* in 1957, readers recognize the same voices, materials and narrative stances as they are creatively reworked in subsequent publications. Although 11 of his major works are available in Portuguese, there has been relatively little academic criticism on his work in the scope of Brazilian universities. Naipaul's works have been steadily published in Brazil by Companhia das Letras since 1987, when *The Mimic Men* was offered

to the public under the title *Os Mímicos*.[1] I chose to study his most recent production, two novels, for two interconnected reasons. The first one is that, in spite of the fact that every now and then the "death of the novel" is announced, the novel is nowadays recognized as a major genre, perhaps the most representative literary product of our times. The second one is to try and fulfill one of the requirements of an academic thesis, which is to somehow contribute to the building of fresh knowledge about literature. Being so recently published, there are still few detailed critical readings of the novels at hand. The lack of many critical texts about *Half a Life* and, particularly, *Magic Seeds*, nonetheless proves to be a double-edged blessing, insofar as there are not plenty of authoritative critical studies to resort to for support. There remains the challenge and the relative freedom to make both discoveries and mistakes alone.

Naipaul has been acclaimed for his in-depth analysis of the lasting impairment of postcolonial societies, especially the deprivations of individuals in the Third World who inherited a history of exploitation. Paradoxically he has also been deemed reactionary and loyal to imperialist values. Hence the relevance of reading and studying Naipaul's works in Brazil, a society whose history and literature are closely intertwined with the European matrix. The author has engaged with a wide scope of interlinked issues and contexts: the issues range from personal history to the historical determination of postcolonial states; from the complexities of racial groups, religious communities, and nationalities to the broader concerns of human spiritual needs, intellectual life, and from fictional to non-fictional accounts of reality. Most of Naipaul's commentators – including his fiercest critics[2] – have maintained that what underlines this broad canvas is his quality as a writer; that regardless of whether one agrees of disagrees with his cultural evaluations, whether one takes a stand with

[1] These releases are not consequence of the Nobel Prize, since 8 out of the 11 titles were published prior to 2001. *Half a Life* appeared in Brazil in 2002 entitled *Meia Vida,* also by Companhia das Letras. It was translated by Isa Mara Lando. *Magic Seeds*, published last year, has not yet been published here. See appendix J for full list.
[2] Chinua Achebe, Fawzia Mustafa, Robert White among others. Section 2.1 provides more details of postcolonial critical views on the work of Naipaul.

postcolonial criticism or not, one must acknowledge the original literary achievement of his production.

In Naipaul's writings, there is always an area of darkness looming in edge of town; colonists come and conquest, empires rise, shrink and fall, and new societies emerge, but always the darkness remains, waiting to cover over whatever remains of the fragile civilization. This is an unsettling vision, shaped by the author's familiarity with the margins of metropolitan civilization. By "darkness," and "areas of darkness" Naipaul refers to ignorance – as well as areas still to be fully integrated in the benefits from modernity. It also refers, more specifically to his native Trinidad and the fragile societies of the former colonies. In his Noble Lecture[3], he states:

> When I became a writer those areas of darkness around me as a child became my subjects. The land; the aborigines; the New World; the colony; the history; India; the Muslim world, to which I also felt myself related; Africa; and then England, where I was doing my writing. That was what I meant when I said that my books stand one on the other, and that I am the sum of my books (2004, p.190).

The words above not only summarize the author's themes, but also point to the objective that informs this research. The author's statement "my books stand one on the other, and that I am the sum of by books" buttress the analysis of his two most recent novels as a means to condense and revisit the author's previous production.

Naipaul's distrust of the colonizers, it seems, is only matched by his distrust of the colonized. In the same way as he rejects nostalgia for the heyday of the empire, he also rejects as a most naïve utopia the vision of a bright new world made up of emerging nations

[3] The title of the lecture is "Two Worlds". It is reprinted in the collection of essays *Literary Occasions*, London: Picador, 2004, pp.181- 195.

from ex-colonies, in a stark contrasting view from the celebratory concepts of hybridity that spanned from the work of Homi Bhabha.[4] If he shows sympathy for the casualties of colonial history, he also distrusts the possibility of emancipation outside the modernity forested by metropolitan societies. In *Half a Life* this issue is touched in regard to the independence guerrillas in Africa, and in *Magic Seeds*, in relation to the Maoist revolutionary activities in which the protagonist engages.

Such opinions have obviously done little to endear Naipaul to the postcolonial approaches to literature, and critics have often portrayed him as reactionary, and blamed him for not upholding the widespread optimistic vision of the Third World's possibilities. The surge of scholarly interest in literature produced in the former European colonies and among the Diaspora population has yielded an overwhelming number of articles, essays, fiction, critical writings, and anthologies designed to explore the cultural, historical, and literary linkages among the former colonized peoples. In the early sixties when academic criticism had not yet turned postcolonial, long before "hybridity" and "in-between-ness" became current vocabulary in literary criticism, Naipaul published *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), a novel about the life of a troubled and poor family of Indian migrants in Trinidad. The subject was then unfamiliar to Western readership. *A House for Mr. Biswas* offered a broad canvas of the tapestry of ethnic groups that formed the island's population and the peculiar "in-between-ness" of that society. By the end the house quest acquires a metaphoric resonance: the protagonist's repeated – and mostly failed – attempts to find a stable location in a ramshackle and random world echoes traces of colonial history and memories of coercive dislocations.

[4] See section 2.1 for specific information about Bhabha's work relation to Naipaul's.

In his fiction, travel books and essays, Naipaul has charted the emotional and intellectual geopolitics of what he calls "half-made societies". Diverse as the narrators of Naipaul's fiction are, the ways in which characters reveal themselves in relation to social history suggest that knowledge is not given, but gradually earned; therefore, when the narrator is "unreliable", his motivation is spelled out and his perspective enlightening. By and large, those narrators seem to be discovering rather than establishing the norms of the writing in the act of narration.

In a spare and compressed narrative *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* takes the protagonist across three continents, in which Naipaul explores the themes of borrowed lives, half-made societies and mimicry, laying bare the bitter-comical ironies of assumed identities. In a short summary, *Half a Life* is the story of Willie Somerset Chandran, whose father, following the call of Mahatma Gandhi, turns his back on his Brahmin heritage by marrying a woman of low caste – a decision he would live to regret. At the age of 20, Willie's flight from the burden of his family painful situation takes him from India to London, where, in the immigrant and literary bohemian scene of the 1950s, he tries to contrive a new identity. Failing to do so, he is rescued from self-doubt and the striving to become a writer by clinging to a woman. Together they go to her African country to live out the last doomed days of colonialism, where Willie remains for 18 years as a bystander in yet another life that is not his own. With the help of his sister he flees to Germany.

Magic Seeds starts in Berlin, where, abiding to the promptings of his sister as well as to his own listlessness, Willie joins a guerrilla movement in India. After seven years of revolutionary campaigns and another year in jail he concludes that the revolution had nothing to offer to the impoverished peasants. Eventually, he returns to England where, thirty

years before, his purposeless wanderings began. In London, he finds himself dependant on friends for lodging and wondering about the how to start to earn a living at retirement age. Willie has allowed one identity after another to be thrust upon him. His life has taken him from his native India to England, Africa in its last colonial years, a stopover in Berlin, back to his homeland and then back to England again. Critical studies of Naipaul have frequently stated that all of his books present an apprehension of one's place in the world and an assessment of the world one inhabits. The plot of *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* indeed portrays contemporary world of mass migration and the challenges it poses.

More or less consciously, all authors rewrite the work of their predecessors, since it is impossible to escape the influence of previous writings. Naipaul's *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* use the conventions and representation techniques of earlier works overtly, arguably exposing its condition of postmodern literary artifact. The vast array of historical, geographical and literary references brought to the fore during the reading of those novels directed me to resort to a theory of intertextuality.

Since Julia Kristeva combined Saussurean and Bakhtinian theories of language and literature, producing the first articulation of intertextual theory, in the late sixties, the term intertextuality has branched out in varied and often conflicting uses. Poststructuralist critics employ the notion of intertextuality to disrupt stable meaning, while structuralist oriented critics employ the same term to locate and try to fix literary meaning. Some theorists of intertextuality problematize the status of authorship, treating the writer of a text as the orchestrator of what Roland Barthes refers to as the "already-written", rather than as its originator. The semiotic notion of intertextuality introduced by Julia Kristeva is now associated with poststructuralist and postmodernism theorists. Kristeva referred to texts in

terms of two axes: a horizontal axis connecting the author and reader of a text, and a vertical axis, which connects the text to other texts. Uniting these two axes are shared codes: every text and every reading depends on prior codes.

The notion of intertextuality nonetheless precedes the authors to which we ascribe its theorization. The theories postulated and popularized by Kristeva in the late sixties are taken from Bakhtin's studies in the twenties, which are in turn inspired by the seminal work of Tynianov in the context of Russian Formalism. In fact, what current literary criticism loosely clutters under this umbrella term is the result of a cumulative process of ideas and insights. In this view, intertextuality can be spotted as a central idea in the words of T.S. Eliot, written as early as 1920: "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists."[5]

Drawing on the influence of Mikhail Bakhtin, Kristeva situates the literary text in relation to all other texts which surround it. This concept is not new in the study of literature – as the citation above testifies – or in any other art form for that matter, as questions of influence and inspiration have concerned art critics for centuries. Intertextuality, however, has become the commonly accepted label for the consideration of relationships between texts.

[5] From the essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", in Eliot, Thomas Stearns. *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. London: Methune, 1920; Bartleby.com, 1996. Opening sentence of the fourth paragraph in part I of the online original version in English at <www.bartleby.com/200/>. [Access on June, 18th 2005]. Also available in Portuguese: "Nenhum poeta, nenhum artista, tem sua significação completa sozinho. Seu significado e a apreciação que dele fazemos constituem a apreciação de sua relação com os poetas e os artistas mortos." "Tradição e talento individual" In: *Ensaios*. São Paulo: Art, 1989.Eliot, T. S. *Ensaios*. São Paulo: Art Editora, 1989, p. 39.

Gerard Genette, in *Palimpsestes: Literature in the Second Degree,*[6] states that there is an underlying principle in the process of transformation: this principle entails that all texts are an echo or expansion of other texts or art forms. Genette deems the mechanisms that operate in this transformation as being of fundamental importance to the literary genesis. As a component of Genette's theory of transtextuality, the term intertextuality is more strictly limited to the literal presence of one text within another. Transtextuality is Genette's terminology for all of the possible relationships between all texts. Within the inclusive term, Genette devises five subcategories: inter-, hyper-, para-, meta-, and archi-texts, which proved handy as a methodology tool in my study. The protagonist's name "William Somerset Chandran", for instance, sets the cue to follow the threads of the five types of transtextuality instances pervading the two novels. In short, the conceptual framework of this paper is based on the theory of transtextuality developed by Gerard Genette, as an expansion and reworking of the notion of intertextuality introduced by Julia Kristeva. This research shows how the two novels encompass the five types of transtextual relationships defined by Genette in *Palimpsestes* (intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality), through which these novels foreground their postmodernist flavor. While keeping the complex transtextuality of the novels at hand, I also point out to their historiographic and metafictional character, and trace the myriad of implicit and explicit allusions to historical events and cultural artifacts in the narrative, as a means to achieve the overall objective of the thesis stated in the beginning of this introduction. In keeping with that objective, Chapter 1 sets the context of Naipaul' production in section 1.1. The next sections – 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 – provide a preliminary account of the narration strategies and commentated summaries of *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*.

[6] GENETTE, Gérard. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree.* Translated by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky. Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1997.

This work is informed by the theoretical notions of transtextuality devised by Genette, but does not focus exclusively on them. They function as a guideline to the mapping of intertextuality proposed and provide the nomenclature used. This theoretical framework is extended and qualified in Chapter 2. Section 2.1 is an overview of the author's critical reception, with an emphasis on the shortcomings of postcolonial criticism to the purposes of this thesis in spite of such approach being embraced by a host of the author's commentators. Section 2.2 reviews the concept of intertextuality, narrowing it down to Genette's terminology in sub-section 2.2.1. The remaining sections, 2.4 and 2.5, respectively, discuss the manifold definitions of the two key concepts employed in this thesis, that of parody and Bildungsroman. This last word, though German, is widely adopted in English and therefore not grafted in italics.

Chapter 3 traces the connections between the most important character's names to extra-textual references and the implications for understanding the novels. Sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 provide a discussion of the array of transtextuality spurred by the protagonist's name – William Somerset Chandran. Section 3.1 follows the first thread. Taking the cue of the protagonist's first name – William – this section analyses the characterization of the novels within the context of the Bildungsroman tradition and its reworking in *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*. It goes without saying that by no means I intend to argue that Naipaul has consciously or intentionally chose the name William as an allusion to the protagonist's name in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. No one can claim to know what goes on an author's mind. The fact is that character's names do provide the critic with hints and may set guidelines of study. That is the case here. I will argue that these novels, although structured like a Bildungsroman – to which Goethe's work is the prototype, are in fact a parody of this genre, and subvert its core meaning of optimism and faith in human betterment.

Section 3.2 follows the second thread. The protagonist's middle name – Somerset – is a central element in the plot of *Half a Life*. The English writer Somerset Maugham is fictionalized in the narrative, and his novel *The Razor's Edge* is a strong intertext in the plot development of *Half a Life*. In this section I discuss how Naipaul's narrative undermines the English writer's metropolitan ethos towards India and Hinduism as exposed in Maugham's canonical novel *The Razor's Edge*.

Section 3.3 follows the third thread. The protagonist's last name – Chandran – spawns a whole set of references to Naipaul's Indian ancestry and the role it plays in his fictional and non-fictional production. Here I analyze the intertext of Narayan's *The Bachelor of Arts*, whose main character is also named Chandran. Narayan is a leading figure in Anglo-Indian Literature and a recurrent reference in Naipaul's writings.

Chapter 4 tackles the way in which the themes that have haunted the literary career of Naipaul recur in his two latest novels. *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* are full of literary echoes and allusions to Naipaul's own writings. Such analysis contributes to the objective of this thesis, that is, provide a gateway to an informed reading of Naipaul's oeuvre. Section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, respectively, focus on the issues of identity of the colonial subject by means of a parallel with his 1967's novel *The Mimic Men*; the recurrence of writing and books in the work of Naipaul; and the impact of modernity in colonial societies.

Chapter 5 offers a mapping out of the geographical, literary and historical references presented in the novels. Section 5.1 is a discussion of the central role of setting in Naipaul's narratives. The plot of *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* unfolds in three continents, following the wanderings of the protagonist in India, London, Africa, and Berlin; back to

India and back to London, from his childhood to the age of 52. There are close connections between settings of the two novels at hand and the settings as previously depicted in Naipaul's former production in fiction, essays and travel writing. Sections 5.2 and 5.3, respectively, tackle the literary and historical explicit appearance in the novels.

Given the informative nature of this study, as well as the multiplicity of data surveyed, I included several appendices that complement the research. Appendix A offers a quick visual grasping of the temporal and spatial structure of the narrative, highlighting the historical events that pervade it. Appendix B is a table of the structure of the two novels under analysis, and provides an initial charting of the issues to be dealt with in the course of this study. It functions as a quick glance reference to visualize the continuity of action between them and the web of intertextuality discussed in the course of this thesis. Appendix C constitutes a chapter-by-chapter table of the two novels, highlighting and providing full cross-reference to the issues discussed in the body of the text. Appendix D consists of four maps. The first one locates the protagonist's dislocations across the world. The second one refers to the intertext regarding London, and the third one regarding India. These maps complement the reading of section 5.1 (Geographical References: The Role of Setting). The fourth map shows the author's Caribbean region, which is also the locale of literary and historical allusions in the novels, as pointed out in sections 5.2 and 5.3. The other appendices provide further information relevant to the discussion of the novels, and widen the scope of the intertextual references traced in the research. Appendices E, F, G and H provide complementary commentary on certain intertextual instances. Appendices I and J offer a list of publication dates. Appendix K is a glossary with brief explanations about Hindi words as well as aspects of Indian culture and history that may prove useful for the Brazilian reader.

Unless stated otherwise, the phrase "the latest novels", or "the two novels", refers to both *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* taken as a narrative unity. The shortenings *HL* and *MS* stand for the two titles, respectively. Dates after the titles of Naipaul's works in the body of the text refer to first editions so that the reader can easily keep track of chronology; citations of these works refer to recent editions listed in the bibliography. In order to keep the writing as simple and straightforward as possible, I chose to write in the first-person throughout the thesis. I assume that my readers are fellow students of literature, familiarized with the jargon of the area but not fully knowledgeable in the intricate taxonomy of Genette. Since Naipaul may not be in the priority reading list of Brazilian students of Literature, I take for granted that the readers of this thesis may have not yet read the two novels under analysis, hence the space devoted to description of their structure as well as the relatively big space dedicated to the author's other texts. I also take for granted that we are not familiar with Indian history, so the addition of the glossary mentioned above may be handy as a starting point for further research. In the course of this exposition I have risked repetition for the sake of clarity and apologize to readers if I have miscalculated and became too heavy-handed. All that said, I hope this research about *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* may prove useful to my fellow students of literature as gateway to the work of Naipaul.

1 CONTEXTUALIZATION

1.1 OVERVIEW OF NAIPAUL'S WRITINGS

The works of the Caribbean author V. S. Naipaul, winner of the 2001 Literature Nobel Prize, consist mostly of novels, but he also writes novellas and short stories. Half of his published work nonetheless is reputedly non-fiction, in the form of essays, historical accounts and travel books. Naipaul's works – regardless of their being labeled as fiction or non-fiction – deal with the difficulty of the former colonies' peoples to build a communal identity and to pull themselves out of poverty (both physical and cultural); with the paradoxes of underdevelopment, with characters who live half-lives, in the painful awareness – or gaining awareness – of their troubled societies, their pathetic mimicry of European behaviors; a sense of homelessness in the world and the difficult process of finding one's stand in the economical and technological modernity. The critical industry that Naipaul's works have sprung has taken on an aspect similar to his own agenda and themes. The bulk of this criticism is done in the realm of postcolonial theories, with a focus on political rather than literary or textual issues.

Although Naipaul's non-fictional texts appear to observe the discursive conventions of history, they contain elements of fiction. Some passages are pure inventions, based, however, on what documents suggest. On the other way round, his fictional texts are fully embedded in historical material. The selection, ordering, plotting, character and setting description techniques in Naipaul's supposedly historical and fictional accounts often render vain those works' labels "fiction" or "non-fiction". The close-knit interconnectedness and blurring of documented historical research and fiction is present in his Indian Trilogy[7], as well as in the travel writing pieces *Among the Believers* (1981), *Beyond Belief* (1998), *A Turn in the South* (1989) and other texts. The constructed nature of historical narrative works is similar to the constructed narrative of the fiction writing. *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969), his book dealing most specifically with historical events in Trinidad Tobago, is an example of this fusion. *A Way in the World* (1994), subtitled "a novel", comprises a mixed assortment of nine narratives including fiction, history, and autobiography and imagined versions of actual lives. The stories are set in Trinidad, South America, Africa and England. Some characters are composite versions of writers and political activists.

The narrator of the interlinked short stories of *Miguel Street* (1959) is a boy who grows up, starts to earn his own money and finally goes abroad to study. This panoramic portray of Port of Spain, the first book he wrote (but the third published), displays a colorful array of interlinked characters with includes Bogart, who got his name from the film *Casablanca*, B. Wordsworth, who sells his poems for a few cents, and Man-man, who is a mystery to the people of the street. The intertextual nature of character's names is a strategy in this first piece of writing that will recur in *HL* and *MS*. The study of these name threads is developed in chapter 3.

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[7] *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) and *India: A Million Mutinies* (1990). See appendix I for a chronology of his publications.

Naipaul's travel writing began when, ten years after he had left Trinidad, he went back there on a three-month fellowship in order to write an account of the Caribbean islands, which resulted in *The Middle Passage* (1962). Since then he has not stopped traveling to and writing about Africa, the Muslim countries, East Asia, South America, the U.S. and, repeatedly, India. His early novels are set in Trinidad and several others in Africa, among which *A Bend in the River* (1979).[8] This novel is basically about the corruptibility of mankind. The story is set in a fictional country fashioned after Zaïre or Uganda. Salim, the narrator, is an Indian Muslim trader whose family has lived in Africa for many generations. Salim sets up a shop in a town on the bend of the river and attains some success, but is doomed to fail in the oppressive environment of the decolonization aftermath. Again Naipaul's protagonist is an outsider, who realizes that his style of life is at its end and that he must give it up to survive.

Recurrent themes in Naipaul's works are the damaging effects of colonialism, added to skepticism about the imported ideas of revolutionaries or the possibility of the former colonies to avoid mistakes made by the Western societies. In this regard, he has been compared to Joseph Conrad due to similar pessimistic portrayal of human nature and the themes of alienation and exile. In the essay "Conrad's Darkness and Mine"[9] Naipaul sees his own background as one of the Conradian dark places of the earth, and says that

> It came to me that the great novelists wrote about highly organized societies. I had no such society; I couldn't share the assumptions of the writers; I didn't see my world reflected in theirs. My colonial world was more mixed and secondhand, and more restricted. The time came when I began to ponder the mystery – Conradian word – of my own background: that island in the mouth of a great South American river, the Orinoco, one of the Conradian dark places of the earth (p.168).

[8] *A Bend in the River* was the first of Naipaul's novels I read – and the one which triggered my interest in the author and the subsequent reading of the majority of his publications, eventually leading to the research presented in these pages.

[9] This essay was originally written in 1974. Cited from the reprint in the collection of essays *Literary Occasions*, London, Picador, 2004. pp.162 to 180.

In this essay, Naipaul comments at length about the impact of Conrad on his sensibility and the influence on his own writing:

> And I found that Conrad – sixty years before me […] had been everywhere before me. Not as a man with a cause, but a man offering, as in *Nostromo*, a vision of the world's half-made societies as places which continuously made and unmade themselves, where there was no goal (p.170).

The travel writing pieces *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (1981) and *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among the Converted People* (1998) are portraits of his journeys to the non-Arab Islamic countries of Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, and Malaysia, in which the author tries to understand the fundamentalist fervor and ideological rage that have marked the Western image of the region. In *An Area of Darkness* (1964) Naipaul's childhood idealized view of the wholeness of Indian culture was dispelled by his first visit to the country, reported in the first book of the Indian Trilogy. The second book, *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) describes the region injured by both the British Raj and the preceding Islamic invaders. The third book, *India: a Million Mutinies Now* (1990), is a reappraisal of his first visits to the country and offers a more optimistic view. Yet, Naipaul was accused of substituting bitter negativity for a nostalgic turn to a revival of Hindu's traditional culture.

Naipaul's first novel, *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), gives an ironic picture of naïve authorship. This is the story of Ganesh, a poor and shrewd young man with writing ambitions. To the people of the Trinidadian community, becoming a writer is a far-fetched accomplishment. Ganesh may have only a hazy notion of what authorship really is, but in rural Trinidad that puts him several steps ahead of the rest of the community. The "books" Ganesh writes are not creative at all; in fact they become part of the holy-man scam – hence the title *The Mystic Masseur*. Yet those books form a platform from which the protagonist

rises to wealth and a certain measure of political power. Ponderings about the act of writing have been since then one of Naipaul's recurrent themes, and are also present in *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*.

The Enigma of Arrival (1987), a book set largely in the English countryside, is a painful reflection on the issues of home and exile. The subtitle of the book calls it a novel, but it cannot be easily categorized. Naipaul has consistently blurred the boundaries of genres; travel, autobiography, narrative, reflection and history often get pasted in a hybrid genre, which he has used repeatedly and has become one of the hallmarks of postmodernist literature. *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963), by the way, is the only novel in which plot is wholly set in England, as well as the only one in which all the characters are English.

Naipaul's 1971 Booker Prize winner *In a Free State* comprises two short stories, the novella that lends its name to the book as well as prologue and epilogue which describe impressions from his travel journal. The common thread that connects it all is the search for the reasons why destructive impulses rise to the surface. The narration in "One out of Many" begins long before the Indian immigrant Santosh arrives in the U. S., covering his background, and the decision to leave his country. Santosh, a poorly educated servant to a diplomat, intends to escape the poverty in India. However, Santosh's journey not only shatters his received views of "the land of opportunity" but also raises irresolvable issues about cultural identity. Santosh, ignorant of American ways, learns about the United States, befriending a black woman, experiencing the Washington race riots, and growing alienated from the new world he thought he could embrace. As in the other narrations, remarkably in *HL* and *MS*, this work presents to the reader the dilemma of cross-culture assimilation.

Among the novels, the titles *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), *The Mimic Men* (1967) and *A Bend in the River* (1979) rank as the most outstanding achievements in Naipaul's career. In *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), often regarded as Naipaul's masterpiece, the main character's longing for a house of his own provides the backbone of the novel. It creates its own intricate universe, portraying the daily life of Hindi Trinidadians in realistic details, naming every object, creating numerous characters with humor and compassion. The house is the leading symbol for everything Mr. Biswas lacks: a solid basis for his existence, a sense of individuality and security in a destitute environment. Although in other novels the house symbolism may not be that central, the depiction of homes – rented rooms, apartments, houses – is very important to set the tone of the narrative and establish characters' personalities and perception of the world. His two latest novels, *HL* and *MS* confirm that housing depiction pervades Naipaul's writing at every level and plays a central role in his literature. This topic is resumed in section 5.1.

In *The Mimic Men* (1967) the "Roman house" not only is the physical setting of the main character's troubled political actions, but it cannot be dissociated from his conscious questioning of those actions. Furthermore, the "Roman house" underlies the protagonist's reflections about his private life, his marriage and process of divorce. The "Roman house" also helps to establish the design of the novel, as it contrasts with the backward London hotel from where the narrator tells his story in flashback, and with the houses of his childhood. House descriptions are recurrent in Naipaul's fiction and it is not surprising that he goes back to them when speaking about his background and its influence in his work in the Nobel Lecture[10] (2001):

[10] The title of the lecture is 'Two Worlds". It is reprinted in the collection of essays by the author *Literary Occasions*, London: Picador, 2004, pp.181- 195.

> My grandmother's house in Chaguanas was in two parts. The front part, of bricks and plaster, was painted white. It was like a kind of Indian house, with a grand balustraded terrace on the upper floor, and a prayer-room on the floor above that. It was ambitious in its decorative detail, with lotus capitals on pillars, and sculptures of Hindu deities, all done by people working only from a memory of things in India. In Trinidad it was an architectural oddity. At the back of this house, and joined to it by an upper bridge room, was a timber building in the French Caribbean style. The entrance gate was at the side, between the two houses. It was a tall gate of corrugated iron on a wooden frame (2004, p.187).

The above citation leads us to a cursory account of the author's biographical data. Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born in 1932, in Chaguanas, a small destitute town in Trinidad, into a family of Indian Brahmin origin. His grandparents were from Uttar Pradesh in north India, who went to the West Indies as indentured workers for the sugar cane plantations established on the island. The Hindu ancestry, along with the patchwork of non-integrated ethnic groups in Trinidad and the social plight of the newly independent country was to have a lasting influence on his writing. The melting pot of diverging traditions in Trinidad, with a composite and impoverished population consisting of remains of the layers of colonizers – from the Spanish to the British, through Portuguese, Dutch, French, added to imported peoples from Africa, China and India, taken there either as slaves or indenture workers – all living under the hazy cultural dominance of the British, and, after World War II, the Americans, was the material of his first writings. The geopolitical isolation of Trinidad – and by extension of all the West Indies as well as other neglected regions of the world – was to become an obsessive theme. On occasion of his Nobel Lecture (2001), Naipaul so describes the problematic standing of Trinidad:

> My background is at once exceedingly simple and exceedingly confused. I was born in Trinidad. It is a small island in the mouth of the great Orinoco river of Venezuela. *So Trinidad is not strictly of South America, and not strictly of the Caribbean.* It was developed as a New World plantation colony, and when I was born in 1932 it had a population of about 400,000. Of this, about 150,000 were Indians, Hindus and Muslims, nearly all of peasant origin, and nearly all from the Gangetic plain (2004, p.183, italics mine).

His father, Seepersad Naipaul, was a correspondent for the Trinidad Guardian, who also tried his hand as a short story writer, and encouraged the son in his writing ambition. When Naipaul was six, the family moved to Port of Spain, the capital, where he attended Queen's Royal College in secondary school. In 1950 he won a highly sought-after scholarship to Oxford, where a nervous breakdown led him to a failed attempt at suicide. While at Oxford he met Patricia Hale, and they married in 1955. A widower in 1966, Naipaul married Nadira Alvi, a divorced Pakistani journalist. On graduation Naipaul started his career as a freelance writer. During this period Naipaul witnessed the Noting Hill bohemian literary scene, and dwelled among the first wave of immigrants from the former British Empire. This scene is reworked in the London chapters of *Half a Life*, as it is elsewhere in his works, especially in *The Mimic Men* (1967). He found his voice as a writer in the mid-fifties, when he started to examine and use materials from his own Trinidadian background. From 1954 to 1956 Naipaul was a broadcaster for the BBC *Caribbean Voices*, and between the years 1957 and 1961 he was a regular fiction reviewer for the *New Statesman*. He traveled extensively as journalist writer and lived in Africa and India for periods of time, though his official address is in the Wiltshire setting of *The Enigma of Arrival*.

1.2 NARRATION IN *HALF A LIFE* AND *MAGIC SEEDS*

Half a Life and *Magic Seeds* tell the story of the protagonist's life from birth to the age of 52. Willie Somerset Chandran's story is a reversal of the Bildungsroman's hero's ascendant trajectory. This section offers a preliminary overview of the structure of the novels and narrative strategies. *HL* and *MS* are novels about incompleteness. Willie's father sets the example for the son of a half-lived life, and Willie follows in his footsteps. Willie has no firm

objectives, no clear ambitions, always leaning on his sister, wife and friends. Somehow the narrative style mirrors his wobbly character. What follows in the next two sections is a commentated summary of the events in the two novels.[11] Before I proceed to the summary, there is room for a few considerations on the language and narrative devices.

The narrator's presentation of the flawed characters – mostly in the third-person – makes it hard for the reader to empathize with them. Much of the material is presented in monologues and letters and, especially, through the characters' thoughts. The story is told sparely, with an economy of means. Nothing is embellished; there are few descriptive excursions. There is no description whatsoever of the protagonists physical features. This feature keeps the reader at a distance.

In several instances the narrator sounds like a fabulist. The scenes are set pieces that invariably end with Willie spelling out the moral, featuring characters who deliver speeches instead of conversation, and who seem less like real people than mouthpieces for the narrator's opinions about everything from colonialism to multiculturalism. In spite of its austere style and ungenerous vision – characteristics shared with *Half a Life*, the sequel *Magic Seeds* is well-paced. Besides, differently from *HL* with its compressed first chapter, *MS*'s twelve chapters are told in sequence. Most of the novels run like a philosophical dialogue between characters. Many of the small episodes are punctuated by Willie's thoughts. There is a kind of narrowness of means, and a disillusioned clarity of analysis of the character's lives. The novels' language is symbiotic with Willie's wobbly character.

[11] A quick glance at appendices A and B before reading this section can prove helpful to keep the whole of the two novels in mind. For a detailed reference to character appearances and chapter-by-chapter analysis and example of narration devices refer to appendix C.

The flat narration style with short coordinated sentences is suitable for someone like Willie as narrator. Having lived 18 years in a Portuguese colony, then in Germany, then in India's countryside, he seems to have lost the command of the English language. The economy and compactness of the way the story moves through events and disparate settings is in accordance with Willie's broken language. Even before going to Africa, on the journey with Ana, Willie's mind is occupied with the confusion that such frequent changes in the setting and language would lead to, he senses the loss of language:

> He thought about the new language he would have to learn. He wondered whether he would be able to hold on to his own language. He wondered whether he would forget his English, the language of his stories.[…] Willie was trying to deal with the knowledge that had come to him on the ship that his home language had almost gone, that his English was going, that he had no proper language left, no gift of expression (2002, p.124).

The narration is made up of extended dialogues that are small monologues, which tells the histories and background of characters through compressed tales. Besides that, nearly all the characters – people that come across Willie's life – have their lives told in this kind of inset tales, in both *HL* and *MS*. The novels consist of tales within tales in witch the protagonist – mostly in the third-person – tells the reader of stories other people told him or which he told other people. These stories often have other embedded stories within them. By doing so, the author allows the voices of many characters to be heard. Chapter 11 of *MS* (called "Suckers"), for example, is told through Roger's voice in first-person narrative, and contains his point of view of contemporary England, which he deems decadent. At times the narration shifts, and the effect that Willie is guiding the story line is dropped in favor of interventions from an omniscient narrator.

According to Lillian Feder in *Naipaul's Truth: The Making of a Writer* (2001) Naipaul has used predominantly realistic narratives in his novels because he is persuaded that there is always a reality to be coped with, a truth to be unveiled, and, more importantly, that there are universal human criteria to be employed in engaging with different societies. His use of distanciation techniques may also be said to be part of his project to discern and express human truths above and behind cultural layers. In the process of reading, one finds certain words and phrases occurring again and again, the repetition establishing the threads of themes that slowly emerge from the novel in a recognizable pattern.

1.3 *HALF A LIFE*: COMMENTATED SUMMARY

Half a Life's narrative develops in three clear-cut parts. Part one is entitled "A Visit from Somerset Maugham" – with three untitled subdivisions. Part two is called "The First Chapter" – with six untitled subdivisions. Part three is called "A Second Translation" – with nine subdivisions. The three parts show a progression – three, six, nine sections, corresponding to events taking place in India, England and Africa, respectively. Parts one and two taken together (India and England sections) make the first half of the novel, and balance the second half of equal length (Part three – Africa).

The first half of the book begins with a story Willie's father tells him. It explains how and why the protagonist went to England and describes his life there. The second half is the account of Willie's life with Ana in Africa as told to Sarojini in Berlin. There are many parallels in the structure of the narration in the two halves. Events and dialogues in the first half of the novel are often mirrored in the second half. In Part one the father tells of his past to Willie, and the story includes the great grandfather's life story as well. In the sequel

Magic Seeds these stories are retaken. In the same way Willie recounts his African years to Sarojini. The same is true of the sequel *Magic Seeds* in relation to the *Half a Life*.

Half a Life is the story of Willie Somerset Chandran up to the age of 41. The narrative moves from India to England and to Africa. The novel begins with an omniscient narrator, but after half a page there is a shift to the first person, allowing Willie's father to recount the story of the origins of Willie's unlikely name, as well as the father's own misled life. As the chapter ends – this story completed – there is another switch back to an omniscient narrator. Near the end of the novel, the narrator allows Willie himself to tell his own tale, returning to the first person (and, again, back in time). The opening chapter brings a story told over a decade's time, shifting and changing as it was told and retold over those years. "This was the story that Willie Chandran's father told. It took ten years. Different things had to be said at different times. Willie Chandran grew up during the telling of this story" (2002, p.36). Willie's father complains that he unfitted himself for life by abandoning his education in response to the Mahatma's call. Though from a well established family, with a promising future, Willie's father became a mendicant – the only escape he could see for the foolish predicament he got himself into. Not only that, he also takes a vow of silence – rendering him unable to explain himself, or to tell his tale. Silence easily passes for wisdom and Willie's father happens to impress a visiting writer – Somerset Maugham.[12] Maugham recounts their meeting in a travel book he subsequent publishes, and eventually, says Willie's father: "foreign critics began to see in me the spiritual source of *The Razor's Edge*" (2002, p.5).

Willie's father got himself into this situation by turning his back on family and tradition and deciding to "marry the lowest person [he] could find" (p.12). At university there

[12] Chapter 3.2 provides a discussion of the consequences of this visit to the development of the narrative.

was a "backward" caste student he has his eyes on. Not because she is attractive or appealing, but because she fits his image of the sacrifice he wants to make. He ends up marrying her, but this is, understandably, a family history that shocks and disappoints young Willie. These are the father's words, which are very striking:

> There was a girl at the university. I didn't know her. I hadn't spoken to her. I had merely noticed her. She was small and coarse-featured, almost tribal in appearance, noticeably black, with two big top teeth that showed very white, She wore colours that were sometimes very bright and sometimes very muddy, seeming to run into the blackness of her skin. She would have belonged to a backward caste (2002, p.13).

The key word here is *sacrifice*. Willie ascribes the family joylessness to his father's twisted way of answering to Gandhi's call. One of Willie's schoolboy stories is about a Brahmin who ritually sacrifices "backward" children for the sake of riches, and ends up sacrificing his own two children. It is this story, titled "A Life of Sacrifice," with its accusation against him that triggers the father – a man who makes a living out of what he calls self-sacrifice – to send his son to England: "The boy will poison what remains of my life. I must get him far away from here" (2002, p.42). The following quotation summarizes the way the father dealt with the boy and his compositions, and it also provides examples of the intertextual references (in italics) to the western influence Willie was exposed to:

> [Willie's father] thought, 'His mind is diseased. He hates me and he hates his mother, and now he's turned against himself. This is what the missionaries have done to him with Mom and Pop and *Dick Tracy*, and the *Justice Society of America comic magazine*, and the *Christ and the Cross movies* in Passion Week, and *Bogart*, and *Cagney* and *George Raft* the rest of the time. I cannot deal rationally with this kind of hatred. I will deal with it in the way of the mahatma. I will ignore it. I will keep a vow of silence so far as he is concerned (2002, pp.45, 46, italics mine).

The father's disappointment with his son does not start in relation to the boy's school compositions, but much before:

> "All my anxiety, when Willie was born, was to see how much of the backward could be read in his features. Anyone seeing me bend over the infant would have thought I was looking at the little creature with pride. In fact, my thoughts were all inwards, and my heart was sinking" (2002, p.33).

Behind the father's self wrought fantasy that he had sacrificed a career for the sake of a life of self-denial lies a millenary Hindu tradition, which partially explains why a huge part of the Indian population understood Gandhi's message in a rather different way from what it was intended: By turning him into the holy man of the nation, those people expressed a fatalistic philosophy that teaches that striving toward self-improvement is pointless and also disregarded Gandhi's attempts to attenuate caste discrimination.

The next chapter in the novel (numbered two, but titled "The First Chapter") focuses on Willie's schooldays, and then on his escape to England, to study. Here, too, stories are important, a form of communication in the household where Willie (like his father before him) does not feel he can express himself directly. Willie writes several compositions which are praised at the mission school but which outrage his father. Willie goes to England eager to get away from what he knows – spiritual and physical destitution. Despite not having finished his mission school education, despite already being twenty, he gets a scholarship to a college in London. The world he enters there is a completely foreign one. He fumbles for friendship and for acceptance, with little achievement.

During this time Willie shows his gifts as a writer. Prompted by Roger, an English friend, he uses Hemingway's "The Killers" as a model, translating situations from

Hollywood movies into vaguely conceived Indian settings. He ends up writing a book of short stories, mixing stories from London with the stories he remembers from home. This book is published with the help of Roger, who is later to become a key character in the sequel novel *Magic Seeds*. The book is a failure, and critical reception is poor. Nonetheless, the fact of having published this book will play a crucial role in *Magic Seeds*. London is bursting with immigrants from the Caribbean and elsewhere. In 1956 racial riots break out: young whites roam the streets harassing non-white immigrants. Willie's way to face the situation is to hide in his college room. Hiding is not a new experience for him: it is what he had already done at home in India on occasion of caste riots.

Another aspect in the narrative is the development of sexuality. Willie blames his sexual inability to the fact that in India marriages are arranged so that Indian men do not deem they need to try to satisfy a woman. The girlfriend of a Jamaican fellow student agrees to have sex with him out of pity, and takes the occasion to give him a kind of cross-cultural lecture. She says that things are different in England, and Willie should try to learn about sex. Willie then consults a paperback called *The Physiology of Sex*, with no practical effect, as he does not get rid of his feeling of ineptitude in the matter.

With no plans for the future and frightened by the riots as his scholarship comes to an end, Willie takes up with Ana – a girl who takes the initiative to start the relationship inspired by his book – and follows her to an African country – not named in the narrative – fashioned after the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. Ultimately he is unable to take advantage of the college opportunity. He finds he could become a writer, but he allows this ambition to be thwarted. He chooses simply to flee again. Here there is a radical cut in the narrative line: "He stayed for eighteen years" (p.126), the narrator tells us, and suddenly

jumps from the beginning to the end of those years, when Willie finally gives up on this life and on Ana, apparently because he is unable to cope with the guerrilla disruption of their community's lifestyle. He goes to Berlin, where his sister Sarojini – now married to a German leftist film-maker – lives. There the reader gets to know the story of his nearly two decades in Africa; the narrator again allowing Willie to tell his story in his own voice – and allowing him to finish the novel, too, bringing the story full circle back to the present.

As a student, Willie's father does not understand the courses he is taking. The education he is subjected to, especially regarding literature, is irrelevant to his life. Nevertheless, he seems to enjoy this lack of understanding and does not make any concrete attempt to overcome it. The father's bonfire of British literary classics is not a productive critical response to a demeaning colonial education. Not only does it not lead him to a more authentic kind of education, but it also shows disrespect for books and disbelief in the possibility of learning to improve one's situation in life. Willie is like-minded. As soon as he arrives in Britain, he is made aware of how ignorant he is about history and practical life in London. Instead of trying to adapt, or rebel against it, he always finds someone else to blame, in this case his mother: he blames his mother's "backward" genetic heritage for his lack of curiosity and ability to learn and adapt to new circumstances. Inheritance is associated with fate. College experience shows him that British ways can be as irrational and odd as Indian ways. Nonetheless, this insight does not bring about the beginning of self-knowledge. He invents a new and less shameful past for himself, and makes up a tale of about his mother being a member of a Christian community and turns his father into the son of a noble man.

The picture we get of the unnamed country in its last years under Portuguese rule (coinciding with historical events) is described in detail. Ana is half Portuguese, half

native. Her family story is embedded in the main narrative. On the social scale, this means that she ranks below the Portuguese but above the mixed-blood persons, who are in turn above the native population. Willie, coming from caste-bound India, soon gets used to the social ranking based on parentage.

The circle in which Ana and Willie move is made up of plantation owners and managers; social life consists of short trips to town for supplies or visits to neighboring farms. Willie explores a settler's life without the guilt or second thoughts. He interacts in the mixed and unbalanced society, and welcomes the opportunity for sexual adventure it offers. When the guerrillas close in and it becomes clear that the Portuguese settler's lifestyle is threatened, their circle goes on behaving as if nothing really dangerous was about to happen, trying to ignore the guerrillas. Willie, always in fear and seeking security above all, admires their attitude. As depicted in the novel, Mozambique is, at best, a "*half-and-half world*". The ambition of the people there, the ideal they strive for, is Portugal, but then they are not fully Portuguese – but children or grandchildren, like Willie, of mixed marriages, or migrants, neither truly native in the country they left nor in the country they live in. Amazing as this seems, Willie takes 18 years to come to terms with the fact that the life he is leading is unsatisfactory. It is Ana's life Willie finds himself living, rather than his own. After 18 years he abandons Ana and his borrowed life. The story of those years takes up the second half of *Half a Life*. Willie is just over 40 years old when the book ends, plausibly still half-way through life, and the narrative is left open. Two years later Naipaul takes it from there and takes Willie to the age of 52 in *Magic Seeds.*

1.4 *MAGIC SEEDS*: COMMENTATED SUMMARY

Magic Seeds picks up the story where *Half a Life* left it off, Willie living with his sister in Berlin. The opening suggests a retrospective approach: "It had begun many years before, in Berlin. Another world. He was living there in a temporary, half-and-half way with his sister Sarojini" (p.1). But the narrative does not maintain this looking-back approach, moving along blindly instead (as if mirroring Willie's inconsistencies) from the time in Berlin to its end in the present.

Sarojini, who lives in Berlin on state subsidy with her German leftist film-maker Wolf, is also an activist and makes films about guerrilla camps. She scolds Willie for his passive attitude, lecturing him on pages-long pamphlet style talk to her monosyllabic brother. Sarojini admires a revolutionary named Kandapalli Seetaramiah and contrasts his "authentic" guerrilla to Lin Piao's,[13] whose "line turned the revolution into middle-class theatre" (p.13), and talks Willie into joining Kandapalli's movement. Things go wrong from the outset, and he actually ends up a as member of a different faction. Although Willie eventually realizes he is with the wrong group, he sticks with them for around seven years. *MS* begins with Willie still living "in a temporary, half-and-half way", leaning on his sister. Nevertheless, he cannot stay in this comfortable Berlin limbo for long. Always a drifter between two worlds,

> One world was ordered, settled, its wars fought. In this world without war or real danger people had been simplified. They looked at television and found their community; they ate and drank approved things; and they counted their money. In the other world people were more frantic. They were desperate to enter the simpler, ordered world. But while they stayed

[13] Kandapalli is the founder of the People's War Group which operates in alliance with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil, guerrilla groups active in the south of India. Lin Piao is a Maoist who edited the notorious Mao's Little Red Book. More information about them in section 5.3.2.

> outside a hundred loyalties, the residue of old history tied them down; a hundred little wars filled them with hate and dissipated their energies (p.10).

And so Willie drifts on, vaguely amused, but always worried about his own safety. India's harsh reality hits him in the Frankfurt airport itself:

> Detail by detail the India he was observing, in the airport pen, and then in the aircraft, the terrible India of Indian family life – the soft physiques, the way of eating, the ways of speech, the idea of the father, the idea of the mother, the crinkled, much-used plastic shop bags (sometimes with a long irrelevant printed name) – this India began to assault him, began to remind him of things he thought he had forgotten and put aside, things which his idea of his mission had obliterated... he felt something like panic at the thought of the India that was approaching (p.26).

On arrival, Willie travels to the railway station by taxi, then by train to a town, then from a larger hotel to a small lodge – and finally joins the revolution. But is the wrong one: the group he joins has broken away from Kandapalli, who is himself falling out of power; and so on it goes, with various revolutionary fighters entering and leaving the narrative, until one day Willie is led to kill a man.

When Willie eventually decides to escape the guerrilla, it is only because another of the revolutionaries agrees to help him that he is able to go through with it. Typically there is external help to take action – as it was regarding Ana, Roger, and Sarojini in the *HL*. Following a series of mishaps, they surrender themselves to the police, though Willie has thought this through so little that he confuses the idea of surrender with the idea of amnesty, and is mildly disappointed – more relieved than worried – to find himself sentenced to ten years in jail. He ends up being rescued by Sarojini after around one year.

The killing episode, in which Willie is prompted to kill a farmer in a confusing guerrilla setting, is in tune with the tone of the narrative. It is not dealt with at length, nor does Willie seem to seriously regret it. He is as numb as always, obsessively concerned with his own quest. After the killing the narrator says:

> When his blood cooled Willie thought, 'I am among absolute maniacs.' A little later he thought, ' […] I had to do that, so that I could live with the people I found myself among. […] I have become a manic myself. I must get away while I still have time to return to myself' (pp.145, 146).

Willie had already expressed the idea that he was involved with maniacs before. This violent spur does not stand out against the routine violence of the guerrilla chapters. The episode functions as a turning point only as far as it alters Willie's routine, but not his overall mental outset. Around six months after the killing episode Willie goes to prison.

The guerrilla chapters show Willie as a failed revolutionary, defeated before he has actually found his battle, relieved to be in jail, with its orderly routine. In the area the guerrilla is active, the group gets the hold over villages and parts of great patches of territory: there is too much land, too far from any cities or even real towns, for the government to control it. The guerrillas have some limited success, with little hope for real revolutionary accomplishment on the long-term. Whatever ideology they fight for is presented in the narrative as a muddled philosophy, the more the failure is evident, the more there is a renewed emphasis on the imported idea of liquidating the class enemy. Since there is no class enemy left in the rundown villages – the peasants just struggle for survival – the people to be liquidated are the slightly better-off peasants.

The guerrilla does not attempt to improve the life of the peasants; instead it forces them to serve the guerrilla men, providing food and shelter. Success is not measured in

actual accomplishment but in the destructive effect on the authorities. That is a boring life, too, but the aimlessness of it, and the ignorance in which Willie is kept by the leaders of the movement, becomes a source of anxiety. Nonetheless he puts up with it all. Much of the time he is a courier, his ability to look at home everywhere, to blend in, makes him the suitable person for running errands.

The narrator presents the movement as the very opposite of a noble cause, the movement is depicted as a perverted sort of revolutionary idealism. For Willie, its main features are numbing fear and boredom. Largely following Willie's experience, the narrative also offers other characters' life stories, suggesting circumstances that lead to such fates and the senseless waste caused by this activity. The other activists come from all sorts of backgrounds; many are lost souls, unable to find a place in the world. Willie and many of his fellow guerrilla men remain outsiders, hardly feeling safe in the loose and vulnerable network that makes up the movement, having a flimsy grasp of the guerrilla tactics and purpose.

Once again it is Sarojini, the wired-up activist, who takes action and manages to get Willie out of prison and back to London. Willie's position as a writer, she reminds him, is still of value and might be useful to his release. Old acquaintances are recalled and connections made. This is done through Roger, a character from the first part of *Half a Life,* the lawyer-friend who also offers him a place to stay in London. Thus Sarojini manages to help him out of the mess Willie finds himself in. Ironically, this fact lands him in permanent exile back in England. There he moves in with an old friend, Roger, and drags along, taking what comes his way but barely trying to shape his life. At London airport, Willie ponders:

> I have been there. I have given part of my life and I have nothing to show for it. I cannot go there again. I must let that part of me die. I must lose that vanity. I must understand that big countries grow or shrink according to the play of internal forces that are beyond the control of any one man. I must try now to be only myself. If such a thing is possible (p.176).

The next London chapters are about Willie's late acknowledgements that he must find a way to earn a living, have a profession. He then wanders the streets, discovering that the first wave of immigrants in the fifties has led to a multicultural London. In chapter 11, Willie passively listens to Roger's complaints about the decline of England, the – according to him – swollen welfare state, and the high taxes. Underlining the nature of these changes, Roger retells of his weekend affair in the country with a woman from a council-estate background.

At the center of the last chapter is the last letter from Willie to Sarojini, rounding up the string of letters that punctuate the two novels. The letter contains a final reckoning of his life so far and his perspectives. He plainly states that the only optimism he ever mustered was a wish to escape, and ponders that happiness lies in having simple and attainable goals.

2 A CRITICAL SURVEY

2.1 NAIPAUL'S SPLIT CRITICAL RECEPTION

The work of Naipaul is central to contemporary cultural and literary debates. Critical approaches to his texts cut across a range of theoretical methodologies, including: postmodernist debates on the construction of history and identity; postcolonial concerns with race, hybridity and political power; the analysis of textual strategies and intertextuality; and cultural concerns relating to representation and documentation. In the preface to the 2004's Routledge Classics edition of his *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha acknowledges that Naipaul's works were his first source of inspiration and that they helped set the basis for his theoretical writings. He writes that "it was the Indo-Caribbean world or V. S. Naipaul's fiction that was to become the diversionary, exilic route that led me to the historical themes and theoretical questions that were to form the core of my thinking (2004, p. xii)". In the same page Bhabha goes on to add that in spite of "the conservative melancholy of the author's own attitude […], his characters made their way in the world while acknowledging its fragmented structures, its split imperatives, and a prevailing sense of a loss of cultural authority" and that "his [Naipaul's] unrelenting despair had led him to create characters that seemed hopelessly bereft, half-made peoples, who turned into the most consummate literary creations". Bhabha's

next short sentence, "I took a different view from his." sums up and crystallizes the main tenets of the postcolonial criticism that was to arise and dominate the literary criticism scene from the eighties onwards. This trend in criticism, which partly sprang from Bhabha's thinking and elected him as its prophet, was later to take radical paths, and very often disregarding a closer study of literary form in favour of militant politics. Texts and authors were to be discussed and valued more in regard to their ideologically correct (or "incorrect") views than aesthetic achievement.[14]

Although Bhabha's thinking diverges from Naipaul's melancholic and despairing attitude, he does offer insightful commentaries worth heeding, inasmuch as they apply to this discussion of *HL* and *MS*. Bhabha says that "Naipaul's people are vernacular cosmopolitans of a kind, moving in-between cultural traditions, and revealing hybrid forms of life and art that do not have a prior existence within the discrete world of any single culture or language (p. xiii)". Indeed, the wealth of intertextual references in *HL* and *MS* – the main object of this study – points to a dizzying array of cultural traditions and world history events. Also, the hybrid form the narrative takes – with embedded elements of fable and Bildungsroman, is less likely to happen in a single culture or discrete world. Bhabha also emphasizes the importance of geography and location. He writes that "the locale that informs his [Naipaul's] judgments is, in part, the world of extortionate boarding-houses […] a world of migrant life that features prominently in Naipaul's early fiction (p. xiii)". Not only in his early fiction, may I add. Willie Chandran's migrant condition and the geography of his journeys are central to the formation of the character's personality and to the form the narrative takes in *HL* and *MS*.

[14] This thesis breaks away from this brand of postcolonial criticism assumptions insofar as it does not aim to evaluate the author's political values.

People often think of the Empire in terms of how it affected the various nations ruled by Britain, but the influences worked both ways. Writers that come from what once has been the Empire have not merely been influenced by literature in English; they have taken possession of it and are writing some of the most widely read contemporary fiction.

In *The Mimic Men* (1967) and elsewhere in his writings, Naipaul allegorically claims that *mimicry* best describes the intellectual efforts of Caribbean artists and activists who try to articulate a Caribbean discourse. Naipaul's indictment supports a widespread concept which argues that West Indians – and by extension, all the former colonies – have merely assimilated European artistic and literary traditions. Naipaul's insistent remarks that History is built around achievement and creation and that nothing totally original was created in the West Indies have brought about the anger of many renowned names in postcolonial criticism.[15]

The debate about imitations and assimilation has made some scholars charge Naipaul with allowing his writing to be influenced by British canons and Western traditions. Another postcolonial criticism targeted at him comes from those who declare Naipaul to be a traitor of the cause of literary originality produced in former colonies. Other critics, on the other hand, express dissatisfaction that Naipaul has not fully assimilated Western traditions and concentrate their remarks on the validity of the author's evaluations of the colonization. A prominent scholar who helped to establish the foundations of postcolonial studies is Edward Said. He claims that Naipaul’s literature supports the colonizer’s ideology, and wrote angry words about Naipaul:

[15] Robert Young, Edward Said, Fawzia Mustafa among others.

> 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. There are others like him who specialize in the thesis of what one of them has called self-inflicted wounds, which is to say that we "non-Whites" are the cause of all our problems, not the overly maligned imperialists. Two things need to be said about the small band whose standard bearer Naipaul has become, all of whom share the same characteristics. One is that in presenting themselves as members of courageous minorities in the Third World, they are in fact not interested at all in the Third World – which they never address – but in the metropolitan intellectuals whose twists and turns have gone on despite the Third World, and whose approval they seem quite desperate to have... (SAID, 1986, p.433).

Elleke Boehmer, in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* expresses quite a different view from Said's. In her own words:

> V. S. Naipaul challenges the dominant culture on its own ground and on its own terms. From the position of their otherness – their different and often feared place of enunciation, native colonials were often able to begin to unsettle the perspectives that organized the colonialist world (BOEHMER, 1995, p.172).

Still about Naipaul's writing, she goes on and argues that "subversion by imitation is reflected mainly in the unspoken and understated within texts. It emerges in ironies, double meanings, unlikely juxtapositions and disjunctures" (p.175). The kind of literary analysis carried out in this thesis bypasses the fierce debate to which the above quotations testify for two reasons. The first one is that, given the toppling amount of critical studies under the postcolonial approach it would be scarcely justifiable to add yet another personal comment on the matter. The second reason has to do with my belief that, exciting as they may be, critical trends come and go; what is *the* trend now – and/or the most quoted critics – may soon fall out of favour. What remains is the literary text and the never-ending joy of discovering and sharing ways of reading.

When faced with the various competing trends in the study of literature, one certainty only arises: there is very little agreement in literary criticism. Along the last decades, the theory of narrative has somehow displaced the theory of the novel as such as a topic of central concern in literary study. By changing the definition of what is being studied, what the critic sees also changes: and when different assumptions are used to chart the same territory, the results will differ, revealing one aspect of reality by virtue of disregarding others. But the fact remains that literary theories are created for different purposes, and their usefulness and suitability must be taken into account when choosing them. Postcolonial oriented discussions of the novel usually focus on political content, sometimes disregarding formal issues. Literary theories are seldom if ever ideal; their strengths and weaknesses arise from the practical problems they tackle. In spite of its achievements, postcolonial criticism did not provide the tools to work out the practical problems to accomplish my objective in this thesis.

All that said, my guiding thread in these pages has been to clarify the intertextual elements in *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*. Therefore, the following chapters aim to provide a theoretical grounding of the key terms and notions employed in the course of this study; that is: intertextuality, parody and the genre called Bildungsroman. The three of them are highly disputed, hence the need of a separate discussion of each.

2.2. THE CONCEPT OF INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality can be discussed on many different levels. The choice of a specific title, literary allusions to previous texts, a certain kind of music, or a particular way of moving a camera, all provide examples of intertextuality when examined with an eye to the relations they have with other "texts". Genre, cultural traditions, national and international

relations constitute a broader notion of intertextuality which is part of the interpretation of any work of art's relational features to the traditions to which they belong.

In short, what we are dealing with is a widespread phenomenon, as all-encompassing as a term that identifies it. The notion of intertextuality presents difficulties precisely because it is so widespread. A particularly important problem has to do with the fact that the concept of intertextuality seems to be infinitely expandable. Every time this word is used, a warning identifying the following dilemma must be made: either an ongoing regression will end up in a loss of perspective, to the point where origin, context, and purpose fade and results become uncertain; or else a number of subdivisions and typologies have to be developed in order to ensure a practical application of the concept. The poststructuralist approaches, by and large, take the first option. The second option, to which Gerard Genette's typology is a prime example – in spite of its overlapping number of sub-classifications – seems to me to be more profitable a tool to the analysis and understanding of the two novels studied here. This second option has been one of the most favoured paths taken by literary critics and widely adopted. The problem of classification of kinds of intertextual phenomena is made more complex on account of competing terminologies created by different theorists, not to mention the overlapping of the notions covered by different terms. In the chapter called "Presupposition and Intertextuality", in *The Pursuit of Signs*, Culler (2001) suggests some ways of limiting the scope of the term intertextuality. One way of doing this is to apply the linguistic concept of presupposition to the way a text produces a "pre-text" – or draws attention to its own conventions. Emphasizing the suggestive aspects of intertextuality while simultaneously calling attention to the many problems involved in its application seems to be a recurrent pattern in the history of the concept.

The word intertextuality is often used in comparative literature studies. This field represents a critical tradition that tends to focus on similarities, contrasts and influences between various authors and works. Traditionally it has been oriented toward authors or national literatures and the relationships among them. Comparative literature is also oriented toward continuity within the literary developments in a given country or between countries, rather than rupture. Consequently, in the tradition of comparative literature, literary development is often described in terms of how a specific author or a literary genre is absorbed by a different country or cultural context. More recent developments in the field of comparative literature have problematized the idea of closed national literatures, and from the eighties onwards literary criticism in this field has shifted its attention to postcolonial studies and intertextual relations.

The Russian formalists, who stand at the roots of the notion of intertextuality, proposed another framework for understanding the fundamental question of literary development. Their research, developed in the twenties, was later appropriated and refined by French structuralism. The Russian formalists concentrated on the dynamic interaction between individual works of art and genres, and adopted a framework which presupposes that texts *relate* to one other, thus shifting the focus of study from author to texts. This shift was later radicalized and taken to its limits by Barthes and poststructuralism.

Yuri Tynianov played a leading role in elaborating a theory of genre dynamics, bringing to view the mechanisms of the dialogic relationship between genres, styles, and their parodies. Drawing mainly on Dostoevsky's relationship to Gogol, Yuri Tynianov showed that in traditional criticism this relationship had primarily been perceived in terms of categories of

influence. Tynianov rejected this apperception as inadequate.[16] Through detailed comparisons of characters, names, and styles in selected works of Gogol and Dostoevsky, Tynianov foregrounds a quite different kind of relationship. The main objective of the comparison is to show that in Dostoevsky's early work, *Poor People* and *The Double*, words have a kind of double existence (1974). The results of this double existence can be seen most clearly on the level of style, where stylization and parody testify to the complexity of the relationships in question.

The work of the Russian formalists provided a starting point for Bakhtin's understanding of genre and style. Bakhtin learned a great deal from the formalists, but he also disagreed with them about some fundamental issues. With few exceptions, Bakhtin's translators and commentators take great care to explain his complicated relationship to the formalist movement; the most influential being the studies of Todorov (1981) and Holquist (1990). In spite of the occasional disagreements among scholars who study his work, there is reason to believe that Tynianov's detailed analysis of the Gogol-Dostoevsky relationship profoundly influenced Bakhtin's conceptions of style and genre and their mutual relationship.

Bakhtin's theory about dialogism and the double existence of words was later identified as intertextuality in an essay by Julia Kristeva, "Le mot, le dialogue et le roman".[17] Kristeva is the person who coined the term which was to become the central concept for a

[16] The work of Harold Bloom, in *The Anxiety of Influence* and other writings, resumes and extends the notion of influence in a controversial manner, resorting to psychoanalytic categories. Bloom's approach to intertextuality goes against the grain of this trend initiated by Russian Formalists and will not be dealt with in the scope of this thesis.

[17] First printed 1967, reprinted many times. The best known English version is in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic approach to Literature and Art*. Along with the French and English versions I also used the Portuguese translation in the collection of essays *Semiótica do Romance*, translated by Fernando Cabral Martins and the English reprint in “Word, Dialogue, and Novel", translated by Alice Jardine et al. 1967. In Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art.* Ed. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1980. 64-91.

host of diverging theories. In this essay Kristeva introduces the theories of Bakhtin, only superficially referring to the insights of the Russian formalists that preceded him. The concept of intertextuality is launched in order to identify a fundamental dialogue of discourses and texts. In her essay Kristeva defines the horizontal status of discourse as its simultaneous orientation toward the writing subject and the receiver. The vertical status is defined as the simultaneous orientation of the discourse toward the literary tradition and the present situation (KRISTEVA, 1980, 1986). As has been pointed out by a number of researchers, Kristeva examines Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue and ambivalence, and ascribes to him the discovery that every text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations, as it absorbs and transforms other texts.

Jonathan Culler (2001) writes about the concept in a way that reveals an awareness of both its promise and limitations. There have been attempts to introduce a more systematic approach to intertextuality, which would involve various categories and types designed to make the basic concept more operative to be handled in criticism, as in Genette's *Palimpsestes* (1997a), in the work of Riffaterre and others.

There are some significant theoretical implications involved in Kristeva's coining of the term *intertextuality*. Kristeva's thinking involves a critical confrontation with 1) the subject, 2) representation, 3) narrative and 4) the work as an autonomous entity. The subject and the notion of representation are replaced by a textual system with its own systems of reference; the narrative is replaced by a textual mosaic; and the concept of the work is dissolved.

These four implications can make any use of the concept of intertextuality ambiguous in a literary context, even if the concept is acknowledged as somehow indispensable. Although texts do dialogue, it is difficult to imagine dialogues without some notion of an author, even if this author is regarded as a writing-subject, or a kind of "implied author". After all, inherent in Tynianov's analysis of the relationship between the works of Gogol and Dostoevsky is the idea of two different authors with two fundamentally different views of language and representation. Similarly, although specific works can be seen as part of an author's oeuvre, as belonging to a certain trend, or even as still evolving fragments, it is usually difficult to do without some concept of the work, unless the critic takes a stand within a strict post-structuralist frame of thought. These objections do not invalidate the idea of intertextuality in literary studies, but they make it clear that this notion should be handled with care and always qualified.

Representation and narrative are crucial issues in literary theory. The idea of intertextuality can be said to question the relevance of representation, at least when the internal system of references in a text is considered more important than representation. A parallel can be drawn to the area of narrative where a textual mosaic offers a rather limited kind of understanding of what a narrative is. Kristeva's original essay which used the term intertextuality was to address the conceptual clashes described above; to challenge the traditional ways of understanding how fundamental literary categories work. However, it is not adamant to assume that intertextuality needs to be understood in such a confrontational manner. I would suggest, rather, that intertextuality can be used in a less ambiguous – or ambitious – way as a concept that indicates that various dialogues and negotiations going on between texts and authors, within and between genres, and between different systems of representation and

narrative. In order to outline this kind of notion of intertextuality, it is necessary nonetheless to turn to the common source for understanding the concept: Mikhail Bakhtin.

When researchers wish to address questions of intertextuality in contemporary literary studies, they often refer to the notion of intertextuality as inspired by a Bakhtinian approach. But what is precisely meant by this phrase is a disputed matter.[18] There are various Bakhtinian concepts that revolve around the idea of intertextuality. Although studies of intertextuality originally emerged within the context of literary theory, they have since been made to encompass other areas, and the theoretical work of Mikhail Bakhtin has largely inspired this extension; his work is useful in a vast array of areas of study, such as discourse analysis, linguistics, cinema studies, philosophy of art, and of course, literary theory and literary criticism.

Reflecting on the use of intertextuality in the context of literary studies, four topics of research of Bakhtinian inspiration come to mind: concepts of dialogue; the functions and development of genres; chronotopes; and the carnivalization. Bakhtin, however, did not specifically address the issues of national identity and intercultural transfers, two questions which play a major role in postcolonial criticism. From the above mentioned concepts, the idea of chronotope is of importance for Section 5.1, dedicated to the analysis of the role of setting in Naipaul's narrative and the intertext of the settings of Africa, London and India in the author's writing as they reappear in *HL* and *MS*.

In recent history the developments in geopolitics leading to mass migration in the aftermath of the decolonization process promote a growing awareness of the more direct

[18] As seen in the writings of Kristeva, Holquist, Todorov and Morson, among others.

links between various cultures. As a result, the scope of interactions among cultures has increased, from local to national cultures and from the regional to transnational issues. If the concept of intertextuality is to be seen as more than just another abstraction, it must be set in relation to these ongoing negotiations which have to do with questions of national identity and intercultural transfers. The theories under the umbrella term intertextuality are vast and complex, and the body of studies which deals with them is constantly expanding. For this reason I will limit the scope of the present study to a survey of a few selected aspects. Besides, it is my impression that, in a contemporary context of postcolonial literature, where the intertwining of national and foreign cultural products is the rule, the studies of intertextuality proposed by Gerard Genette prove helpful to the study of cultural transfers in a literary work.

2.2.1 Genette's Theory of Transtextuality

In his essay "Structuralism and Literary Criticism",[19] Genette elaborates on Claude Lévi Strauss's notion of the *bricoleur* in order to give an account of a structuralist practice of the critic. Genette states that the literary critics acts as a *bricoleur*, inasmuch as they create a structure out of a previous structure by rearranging elements which are already arranged within the object of his or her study. The structure created by this rearrangement functions as a description and explanation of the original structure by its very act of rearrangement. In other words, the bricoleur-critic breaks down literary works into key words, themes, motifs, recurrent metaphors, quotations, and references. By doing so, he or she rearranges the original literary work in terms of literary criticism. The critic is thus able to

[19] In David Lodge (ed.) *Modern Criticism and Theory*. Translated by Harjeet Singh Gill. London: Longman, 1988.

display the work's relation to the system of themes, motifs, key words which make up the literary system out of which the work was constructed.

Literary works are not original or unitary wholes, but rather articulations, recombination and elections of an enclosed system. The literary work might not display its relation to the system on its surface, and the role of criticism is to do precisely that by rearranging the work back into its relation to the literary system. Genette equates literary production with the Saussurean concept of *parole* – a series of partially autonomous and unpredictable individual acts; but the reception of this literary work is equated with *la langue*. Readers tend to order literary texts into a coherent system. Both reader and author, then, can be called *bricoleurs*, but with one important difference. The author takes elements of the enclosed literary system and arranges them into the work, obscuring the work's relation to the system in the process. The reader and the critic, on the other hand, take the work and return it to the system, highlighting the relation between work and system that had been obscured by the author. Poststructuralists deny that any critical procedure can ever rearrange a text's elements into their full signifying context. Structuralists retain a belief in the critics' ability to describe, locate, throw light and stabilize or enhance the understanding of a text's meaning, even if that significance resides in an intertextual relation with other texts. Theorists may be roughly divided into fields, depending on their stand in relation to the possibility of grasping the meaning of a literary work. One trend, poststructuralist in nature, emphasizes the ambiguity in the core sign relation (signifier-signified) and the infinite regression of signification; the other trend assumes that the meaning of a text can be contained or at least partially understood by the description of elementary units and recurrent relations. In this thesis I take the second stand. The present study is written in the assumption that placing a text back into its presumed system of references may produce a form of knowledge, in an

attempt to achieve a relatively stable reading that is usually unavailable in poststructuralist theories of intertextuality.

Gerard Genette's ground-breaking studies of the nature of narrative discourse and narrative fiction in *Figures* established his reputation as a literary theorist. The French author sets out a working definition of narratology in *Narrative Discourse* (1988) and *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1991). In those works, Genette describes narratological levels of voice within the novel, setting up a hierarchical model of diegeses, or narrating voices. My focus in this section, nonetheless, lies on the three related works where he explores the ramifications of text relationships and details what he calls transtextuality: *The Architext: an Introduction*, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* and *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*.[20] In *Architext*, Genette discusses the place of criticism that links texts to other kinds of discourse with which they belong, such as genres and other formal or thematic means of classification. In *Palimpsestes*, Genette extends transtextuality to include texts like *Ulysses* that are "written over" by later texts – what others refer to as intertextual references – and discusses the relationships of such texts in terms of forms of imitation such as adaptation, parody, and pastiche. In *Paratexts*, Genette examines the kind of transtextuality that accompany a text and serve to structure its reception and consumption. Following Genette's ideas, I present here a brief description of the five kinds of transtextuality, as proposed in the above mentioned works.

Transtextuality is the term Genette uses to refer to what other critics call intertextuality. He then proceeds to explain the five kinds of transtextuality, or textual transcendence, that is subsumed in this term. They are:

[20] Originally published in French in 1979, 1982 and 1987, respectively. I used the English translations referred to in the bibliography and also the French edition *Palimpsestes: la Littérature au Second Degré*, also listed there.

1. Intertextuality: It is the actual and concrete presence of one text within another. It is a pragmatic and determinable intertextual relationship between specific elements of texts. The intertextual trace is more akin to the limited figure than to the work considered as a structural whole.

2. Paratextuality: It is the relation between a text and that which surrounds its main body. The paratext are the elements on the threshold of the text and serve to direct and control its reception by the reader. This threshold is further divided in *peritext* – titles, prefaces, headings, dedications, epigraphs, inscriptions, chapter titles, notes and the *epitext*. The *epitext* consists of advertising announcements, reviews, private letters, editorial discussions, design of the cover. The paratext consists of all those things one is not sure in which way they belong to the text, but nevertheless contribute to present the text. It marks a zone of transition between text and non-text. The paratext assists the reader in establishing what to expect and how to read the text presented. Its function is to guide the reader and help to establish the text's intention. Genette insists that paratexts serve a rhetorical function beyond the aesthetic in that they "ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author's purpose" (1997, p.407).

3. Metatextuality: It happens when a text takes up a relation of commentary to another text. It links a text with another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it or even naming it. Literary criticism is a form of metatext.

4. Hypertextuality: This is the focus of attention of *Palimpsests*, where the author commentates at length a variety of works in Western literature from the perspective of his proposed nomenclature. It involves any relationship linking a text B (the hypertext) to an

earlier text A (the hypotext). A hypertext is derived from a previous hypotext through transformation or imitation. The hypertext is grafted upon the hypotext in a way that is not a straightforward commentary or simple quotation. What Genette calls hypotext is often referred to by other critics as inter-text.

5. Architextuality: Architextuality is a subtle and broad type of transtextuality. Genette states that the architext is everywhere – above, beneath and around the text. It includes issues of imitation, transformation, parody or montage. Architextuality establishes a relationship of a text with the category of genre as a whole, and not with other isolated texts.

The word *palimpsest* means a paper or parchment on which the original text has been partially erased to make room for a new text to be written, leaving fragments of the original text still visible. Although Genette initially uses this word in relation the style of Proust's *A la Recherché du Temps Perdu,* he later generalizes the term *palimpsest* to describe a "literature to the second degree", made up of hypertexts which derive from or refer to earlier texts. Genette's concern is with intended and often self-conscious – at least from the reader's point of view – relations between the texts, and not with a general functioning of the language or culturally signifying practices, but rather with the generic (as in literary genre) aspect of the closed system of literature. The difference between hypertextuality and architextuality is the that the first is mostly intentional, like pastiche, parody and caricature, while architextuality is based on the imitation of generic models – tragedy, comedy and other genres – rather than a specific hipotext.

For Genette, contrasting with strict poststructuralist's positions, indeterminacies within and individual text are not important since for this author, the task of

criticism is to establish a general system of possibilities and functions, and not delve on indeterminacies inherent to texts. Also, according to Genette, the reader has a choice between reading the text for itself or in terms of transtextual relations. This later option seems to me quite a suitable perspective from which to discuss and analyze *HL* and *MS*.

2.3 THE CONCEPT OF PARODY

Critical reviews on *HL* and *MS* sometimes mention the use of parodic strategies but rarely engage in a more elaborate analysis of how it happens in the novels. I aim to show that the use of parody is connected to some major assumptions in *HL* and *MS*, therefore a discussion of the concept of parody is needed. Abrams defines parody as an imitation of "the serious manner and characteristic features of a particular literary work, or the distinctive style of a particular author, or the typical stylistic and other features of a serious literary genre, and applies the imitation to a lowly or comically inappropriate subject" (1985, p.18).

Traditionally, parody has been considered a comic imitation of a given work, but this concept has been broadened to encompass the imitation of a style or genre. Indirectly, parody reflects a criticism of the taste and ethos of an era, and can also have an ideological purpose, when opposing ideas or interests are at stake. In more limited cases it can be nothing more than a playful game.

For a long time only, or mostly, this playful aspect of parody had been highlighted. Modern criticism, nonetheless, has focused on another aspect, of great importance for the discussion that follows in the next chapters, that is, the doubling of the language, given that in specific cases parody adds one language on another, and by doing so,

constructs a new vision of reality. That is the case of the greatest parody of all times, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. Modern criticism acknowledges the metalinguistic role of parody in Cervantes's masterpiece, which, as it parodied the romances of chivalry, created a new language of fiction, and in the process, established the foundations of the modern novel.

The Russian Formalists also concerned themselves with the metalinguistic role of parody. Tynianov shows, in a comparative study, that Dostoevsky parodied Gogol in his *The Manor of Stepantchikovo*, with the objective of criticizing the romantic traces in Gogol's realism. In the same line of thought, Victor Shklovski tried to demonstrate that Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, which consisted of a parody of the conventions of the seventeenth century, became the parody of a whole literary genre. In those cases, parody is seen as a decisive factor in the course of the literary genre's evolution.

Parody – as virtually everything else in terms of western literature – has its roots in Greece. Examples of parody date back to the ancient Greek poet Hegemon's *The Battle of the Giants* (*Gigantomachia*). In ancient Greek literature, a parody was a type of poem that imitated another poem's style. The Greek roots of the word parody are *par-* or *para-* (meaning "beside", "along with" or "subsidiary", as in the current words paramedic, paramilitary) and *-ody* (meaning "song", as in ode). Thus, the original Greek meant, roughly, "mock poem".

The importance of parody in the modern age was such that a new parodist genre was created: the mock-heroic. After the translation of *Don Quixote*, English writers started to imitate the inflated language of Romance poetry and narrative to describe misguided or low-life characters. The most likely genesis for the mock-heroic, as distinct from the

picaresque, burlesque, and satirical poem is the comic poem *Hudibras*, by Samuel Butler. This led to the creation of an anti-epic, as is the case of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516). Parody has been characterized not only by the exaggeration of stylistic peculiarities, but also for thematic ones. The case of *Candide*, where Voltaire exaggerated to the limit of absurdity Leibniz's optimistic philosophy, is exemplary.

In English literature one finds a wealth of parodies by famous names. Byron parodies Southey, Shelley parodies Wordsworth. In my opinion, a good example of parody is the Victorian Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Imitating the seriousness of Robert Southey and Isaac Watts, Carroll transforms this seriousness in incongruence, replacing the original sense of their verses for nonsense. The first use of the word parody in English, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary* is found in Ben Jonson, in *Every Man in His Humour* (1598): "A Parodie, a parodie! to make it absurder then it was" (OED). The next remarkable citation is from Dryden in 1693, who adds an explanation, suggesting that the word was not common usage. The history of definitions of the word parody in English is long. What is interesting to retain is that prior to the eighteenth century parody was considered to be more of an ornament or effect rather than a genre.

English fiction has many cases of direct criticism through parody. These parodies were successful inasmuch as the altered the conventional view of reality. Thackeray parodied in the heroic medievalism of Scott's *Invanhoe* (1819) in *Rebecca and Rowena* (1849). Fielding, in *Joseph Andrews* (1742), parodies Samuel Richardson's *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded*, mocking its naïve morals. And Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey* (1818) parodies the gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe. The aspect of parody as a metalinguistic process, in which one language superposes another, as in the case of *Don Quixote*, or in which one language is

superposed to another one like the case of *Tristram Shandy*, reaches its peak in 1922 with James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Parody is defined and understood in different ways, often mutually opposed or exclusive. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I have chosen to reduce the scope of the debate about parody in concepts that come from Mikhail Bakhtin and Linda Hutcheon. I believe that, in a way or another, all discussions about parody refer to Bakhtin. As for Linda Hutcheon, she is important to this research because she adopts Bakhtin's views and adapts them to Genette's formal method. Hutcheon's definition of parody is the following:

> Parody, then, in its ironic 'trans-contextualization' and inversion, is repetition with difference. A critical distance is implied between the background text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signaled by irony. But this irony can be playful as well as belittling; it can be critically constructive as well as destructive. The pleasure of parody's irony comes not from humor in particular but from the degree of engagement of the reader in the intertextual 'bouncing' (to use E. M. Forster's famous term) between complicity and distance (HUTCHEON, 1985, p.32).

Hutcheon reports to Genette in the formal part of her definition: parodic is a relation "of one text to an earlier one" (1985, p.21), that is what Genette calls hypertextuality. Her definition, however, is extended to encompass a view of parody as "double-voiced" or "dialogic", and having an ambivalent relation to its target. This ambivalence can be either in complicity (constructive) or distanced (destructive). This aspect of Hutcheon's definition is admittedly influenced by Bakhtin. For this author, parody is an example of "double-voiced discourse" or "heteroglossia", and he generally sees it as opposed to the parodied text and sometimes links it to the comic. The latter is particularly evident when Bakhtin ascribes a carnevalesque function to parody, as well as when he states that it represents a legalized freedom of parodying. There is an echo of this Bakhtinian views in Hutcheon, when she says that "parody

is fundamentally double and divided; its ambivalence stems from the dual drives of conservative and revolutionary forces that are inherent in its nature as authorized transgression" (1985, p.26). Such concepts of carnivalization and the authorized transgression of parody are relevant for the discussion of the ideological implications of parody as present in *HL* and *MS*. They apply, for instance, to the reversal of the Bildungsroman ascendant trajectory as well as in these novels' reversal of the belief in the powers of the Indian guru portrayed by Maugham. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of this thesis, respectively, will develop this issue.

Through irony, parody signals how current representations come from past ones as well as ideological consequences which derive from both continuity and difference. Parody works to foreground the politics of representation. Postmodernist parody, particularly, is said to problematize value and denaturalize the way of acknowledging history and the politics of representation (Hutcheon, 1990, pp.93, 94). Here we touch the relation between parody and postmodernism. Inasmuch as Hutcheon's definition of postmodern parody includes the notion of parodic critical distance, it can be ascribed to parody in general.

By defining the politics of postmodernism as a sort of critique and by stating that parody is doubly-coded in political terms that both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies, she suggests that postmodernism finds its natural form in parody and that the notions of parody and postmodernism overlap (HUTCHEON, 1990). The awareness of the fictional character of history and the historical character of fiction constitutes an important segment of Naipaul's writing. In this regard we can relate Naipaul's work, and also *HL* and *MS*, to Linda Hutcheon's claim that postmodern writing incorporates the realm of history into literature with a self-awareness of both history and fiction as human constructs which make

possible the reworking of the forms of the past. Although Naipaul is not generally considered a paradigmatic postmodern author, his use of parody can be seen as a characteristic postmodern device. In this sense, the narrative in *HL* and *MS* does present traits of postmodern literature.[21]

Because it refers to past texts, parodic discourse must acknowledge that representation is historically situated and it can be accounted for by ironic and/or comic mode. The parodied text, however, is not always from the past – *HL* and *MS* also concern themselves with the contemporary discourses about India and the colonial subject. Nor are non-literary texts excluded from the range of parody: in Naipaul there are references to many sorts of discourses, from canonic works of literature to history books, comic books and Hollywood films to sacred texts.

It is not hard to think of a few reasons why parodic allusions and quotations from the British literary canon permeate the novels. One of them seems most important: they provide a metafictional frame that allows for a questioning of the relation between the empire and fiction. In this case, parody points to the fact that texts are historically and ideologically conditioned. By the same token, and considering that in Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* (1944) the holy man is believed by his Western admirers to be a person of true integrity, *HL* and *MS* portray this character as a fraud for the parodic effect that pervades the two novels. In *HL* and *MS*, the difference in style and tone (in relation to *The Razor's Edge*) can be regarded as resulting from different historical settings of the novels and the conditions in which they originated.

[21] All that said, the standing of Naipaul's work in postmodernism is not the objective of the present thesis.

In short, two elements in the concept of parody seem to be undisputable and can serve as starting points in this critical reading of *HL* and *MS* in their relation to the Bildungsroman as well as regarding the way they deal with Maugham's guru spirituality. They are: a) parody includes and is signaled by intertextuality, b) the presence of critical and ironic distance/difference. In the chapters that follow, assumptions about Naipaul's parodic strategy are set forth. The discussion highlights the parodic ironic distance in *HL* and *MS* and the implications to the worldview this narrative proposes to undermine.

2.4 THE CONCEPT OF BILDUNGSROMAN

This thesis approaches the novels *HL* and *MS* as twisted or parodic version of Bildungsroman, a term with a long history and prone to various interpretations, thus requiring qualification. After a summarized account of the origin and uses of the term I focus on the studies of Moretti and Bakhtin, whose notions are important for the discussion carried on in section 3.1.

The Bildungsroman, the novel of formation or emergence, has been broadly defined in English as "the novel of youth, the novel of education, of apprenticeship, of adolescence, of initiation" (BUCKLEY, 1974, p. vii-viii). The Bildungsroman emerged as a literary genre in late eighteenth century Germany, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* being uniformly regarded as prototypical. The earlier novels had a distinctly aristocratic bias, as their heroes had inherent qualities that simply had to be discovered or revealed, and not learned or achieved in the course of life. The Bildungsroman, on the other hand, is a genre of the rising Bourgeoisie, of those who strive to become cultivated, not having been born in such an environment.

The terms *Bildung* and *bilden* were used by the medieval German mystics in the sense of purging the soul of its impurities. In the eighteenth century the concept was secularized and used alongside the terms "education" and "enlightenment", but, in contrast with education and the more reason-oriented term enlightenment, *Bildung* was thought to affect the whole self. The term Bildungsroman was created and first used by Karl Morgenstern in 1810; later, as more and more definitions were attached to the name, a genre came into existence with its own theories and canon that supposedly belonged to the category.

The German word *Bildungsroman*, widely adopted in English, means a novel of formation, that is, a novel of someone's growth from childhood to maturity. It traces the spiritual, moral, psychological and social development and growth of the protagonist from childhood to maturity. As previously mentioned, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1796) is largely taken to be the genre archetypical instance and/or its prototype. Other examples include Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and *David Copperfield*, and Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. A subset of the traditional Bildungsroman is the *Kunstlerroman*, which is the story of an artist's growth to maturity. Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is among the most outstanding examples of this particular subdivision of Bildungsroman. One easily finds examples that do not exactly fit the pattern, but still involve elements of the Bildungsroman. The novel *Jane Eyre*, for one, is claimed by many to be at least partly a Bildungsroman. As far as Goethe's novel is concerned, some critics argue if even this novel would not really fit into the category of which it is the prototype, which implies that the genre can easily be deprived of its prestigious origin. It seems that the analyst, searching for its meaning, can hardly get closer to the Bildungsroman as a genre through its definitions.

The *Oxford English Dictionary's* entry reads: "A novel that has as its main theme the formative years or spiritual education of one person (a type of novel traditional in German literature). Hence Bildungs(roman)-hero, the main character in such a novel". The *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines the Bildungsroman in a similar way. In this dictionary, the Bildungsroman is defined as "novel of formation" presenting the youthful development of the hero or heroine. The end of the formation process is maturity.

One of the first and very influential definitions was given by Wilhelm Dilthey.[22] According to him, the theme of the Bildungsroman is the history of a young man who sets out into life in a state of ignorance, experiences friendship and love, struggles with the hard realities of the world and, armed with a variety of experiences, achieves maturity, finding his mission in the world. Briefly stated, Dilthey's five main points about the Bildungsroman are: a) the idea of cultivation, education, shaping of a single main character, usually a young man; b) individualism, the emphasis on the uniqueness of the protagonist and the focus on his private life and thoughts, although these should be representative of an age and culture; c) the biographical element; d) the connection with psychology of development; and e) the ideal of the full realization of human potential as the objective of life

German critics frequently apply this term to a very specific kind of novel. In a Bildungsroman (literally a growing-up novel), the reader encounters a description of how the hero/heroine develops his/her own personality by means of experience. This "Bildung" (German for education, formation in a broad sense) is not as much an educational matter but rather a more internal and psychological process. The term should not be confused with

[22] Wilhelm Dilthey first used the word Bildungsroman in 1870 in a biography of Friedrich Schleiermacher entitled *Das Leben Schleiermachers*.

Erziehungsroman (which carries a more pedagogic hue) or Entwicklungsroman (carrying a less intellectual weight than the Bildungsroman).

Among the many scholars who concerned themselves with this sub-genre, Lukács has been one of the most influential. In his pre-marxist *Theory of Novel*, he sets out a three-fold subdivision in the development of the novel, the Bildungsroman being a sort of synthesis of the preceding "abstract idealism" and "disillusionment" forms.[23]

With the intention of getting closer to a working definition of Bildungsroman, I will from now on focus on one particular text: Franco Moretti's *The Way of the World* (1987). The starting assumption of Moretti's theory is that the Bildungsroman is a grand narrative, a symbolic form of modernity. The basis for this interpretation is that in the eighteenth century Europe entered the phase of modernity without actually having a culture of this new mode of living, therefore it was required that a meaning were attached to modernity. Moretti attempts to determine the meaning of Bildungsroman by regarding it as a genre which emphasizes the possibility of individual development and social integration, and which offers a model for the middle-class youth in these aspects of life.

In the Bildungsroman individual development and social integration belong together as part and whole, and at their point of encounter and fulfillment lies maturity. Moretti's emphasis on the social integration becomes particularly important for my purposes here, in that, Willie Chandran's quest is informed, or even determined, by his urge – and failure – to be socially integrated, either in India, England or Africa. I resume this discussion in more detail in chapter 4.

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[23] LUKÁCS, Georg. *A Teoria do Romance*. Translated by José Marcos Mariani de Macedo. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2000.

In *The Way of the World* (1987), Franco Moretti says that there is only a handful of texts that fulfils the principles of the Bildungsroman set by criticism, and that the classical Bildungsroman was short lived. Focusing on the writings about this genre one concludes that it has been actually set up by a body of literary criticism. The Bildungsroman as a genre has been brought into existence by definitions invented by literary critics by way of reading German novels of the eighteenth century, among them Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.

Still borrowing from Moretti's accounts, one finds that another common proposition is as such: instead of just looking at the development of the protagonist, one should consider the novels' intended effect on the reader, since the Bildungsroman depicts the *Bildung* (formation) of the hero, and, as a side-effect, would also promote the education of the reader.

Moretti attempts to determine the meaning of Bildungsroman by regarding it as a genre which emphasizes the possibility of individual development *and* social integration, and which offers a model for the middle-class youth in social life. It would be necessary that, as a free individual, not as a fearful subject but as a full citizen, one is able to perceive the social norms as one's own. One must internalize them and fuse external bindings and internal impulses into a new whole until the former is no longer distinguishable from the latter. If the Bildungsroman appears to us still today as an essential point in literary history, this is because it has succeeded in representing this fusion with a conviction and optimistic clarity that may never be equaled again in the fragmented realm of contemporary postmodern and late capitalist society (MORETTI, 1987).

Besides Moretti's, Bakhtin's theories about Bildungsroman are of interest here. In his essay "The Bildungsroman and its significance in the History of Realism"[24], Bakhtin classifies novels into two major groups: The *Novels Without Emergence* and the *Novels of Emergence*. The first group consists of three types: *travel novel*, *novel of ordeal* and *biographical novel*. The second group consists of five types, the last of which concerns the concept of Bildungsroman that more closely applies to *HL* and *MS*. I will proceed to a cursory description of the there types of first group, as their traits often serve as a contrast to the second group – *Novels of Emergence* – which notion is relevant for our upcoming discussion; and then proceed on a slightly more extensive description of the five types of *Novels of Emergence*, since these five types often overlap, and arguably *HL* and *MS* present elements of more than one of them.

The *travel novel*, in which temporal categories are weak, focuses on the world's diversity, the hero being a moving point in space. This sub-classification encompasses the picaresque novels and adventure narratives. The second type of the first group, called the *novel of ordeal*, includes the majority of all novels ever written, the Greek romance and chivalric fiction. In this type, the basic structure of the plot is one of *testing*; the hero undergoes an ordeal, or rite of passage. The protagonist's identity is affirmed but does not emerge or develop. The social world is a mere background. These last features are in opposition to the plots of the *Novels of Emergence*. The third and last type of the *Novels Without Emergence* is the biographical novel, which includes early Christian confessions. Those novels work in a biographical time that may extend for generations. Bakhtin says they never existed in pure form.

[24] In *Speech genres and other late essays*. Edited by C. Emerson & M. Holquist; translated by V. W. McGee, Austin: University of Texas Press. 1986. The following page numbers refer to this edition.

Bakhtin recognizes five types of *Novels of Emergence*, in which the image of the protagonist develops in time. According to the author this type is much rarer than the *Novels Without Emergence* in the history of literature. Type one is called "the idyllic-cyclical chronotope". Its main characteristic is that time is cyclical; emergence occurs as a result of the life cycle from childhood to old age. Type two is the Bildungsroman in a narrow sense; time is still cyclical, the path from idealism to sobriety shapes life. It includes the classic eighteenth-century novel of education. The third type, left unnamed by the author, dispenses with cyclical time. Here experience shapes changes; destiny and self-image are created by the protagonist's own activities. Bakhtin includes here *David Copperfield* and *Tom Jones*. Type four, mentioned as "the didactic-pedagogical novel" is not actually described by Bakhtin. He says it is traceable to the *Cyropedia* and includes *Emile*. Type five, called "novels of historical emergence" is Bakhtin's main concern, as well as the type in which I aim to place *HL* and *MS* in the discussion in the course of this study. Always according to this author, aspects of this sort of chronotope – or the yoke of space/time categories – are to be found in almost all important realist novels. Bakhtin claims that the chronotope in these novels is the only one that *assimilates* real historical time in the narrative, inasmuch as the protagonist emerges *along* with the world, and the plot encompasses both individual and social change shaping each other. Section 3.1 offers an analysis of how *HL* and *MS* relate to "novels of historical emergence".

For Bakhtin, the Bildungsroman is, above all, the story of emergence in which the notions of person, time, and space become explicitly coordinated and elaborated such that it becomes impossible to discuss them separately. A major characteristic of the genre is an emerging focus on development in the context of a historically evolving world. This, in turn, entails an evolution of the understanding of temporality, from an idyllic or cyclical time to a

historical sense of time. The genre depicts the protagonist "in the process of becoming" (1986, p.19), and so depends upon a radically different conception of time than that present in the travel and ordeal novels. It is a conception that is created through a series of developments. Bakhtin discusses five historical variants of the Bildungsroman, each distinguished by the extent to which it assimilates historical time and socio-cultural context in its depiction of the hero's maturation or emergence.

The first type introduces the notion of cyclical or idyllic time. Here emergence "is cyclical in nature, repeating itself in each life" (1986, p.22). In cyclical or idyllic time one may chart development "from childhood through youth and maturity to old age, showing all those essential internal changes in a person's nature and views that take place as he (sic) grows older" (1986, p.22). The formal properties are the presence of a goal and a linkage of all events in the narrative to that goal. The similarities to the "ordeal category" are striking.

The second type of cyclical emergence discussed by Bakhtin "traces a typically repeating path of man's emergence from youthful idealism and fantasies to mature sobriety and practicality" (1986, p.22). The image reflected in this more ironic type of novel of emergence is that of a world "through which every person must pass and derive one and the same result: one becomes more sober, experiencing some degree of *resignation*" (1986, p.22, italics mine). An important consequence of the notion of cyclical time is that everyone must trace the same essential course of development through the inevitable cycle. Here the individual undergoes various transformations, but the transformations are, as before, pre-given and timeless.

In the third type, development loses its cyclical quality and proceeds within biographical time, passing "through unrepeatable, individual stages" (1986, p.22) in a more explicit enculturation or socialization as opposed to a naturalistic orthogenesis. "Emergence here, is the result of the entire totality of changing life circumstances and events, activity and work" (1986, p.22). Both the individual's character and life course are shaped through experience. Bakhtin also mentions a fourth novel of emergence that is characterized by a specific pedagogical ideal. This didactic-pedagogical variant of the socio-cultural novel of emergence "depicts the pedagogical process of education in the strict sense of the word" (1986, p.22-23).

In the fifth and last type of novel of emergence discussed by Bakhtin, individual development "is inseparably linked to historical emergence" (1986, p.23). In the previous four types proposed, Bakhtin argues that development takes place against a static background with little or no consideration given to historical change in the world in which the individual develops. In the case of this last, cultural-historical variant, *Bildung* comes to refer both to the cultivation of the individual and to the historical emergence of the larger culture. There is no longer an opposition between the self-contained individual and society. Emergence "is no longer [one's] own private affair" (1986, p.23). Here both the individual and society, both self and other, are entering the uncharted territory of history in the making. The world itself is changing along with and, indeed, *through* the experiences of individuals.

In conclusion, Bakhtin's classification and discussion of Bildungsroman are distinguished by degrees of integration of person, place, and time. This integration appears to have emerged historically in phases, at first integrating the protagonist and a naturalistic, organic sense of place and time. This naturalistic development is then placed in a socio-

cultural and sometimes specifically educational context to become social development. Finally, the protagonist's development is placed in a cultural-historical context entailing a new sense of emergence in historically-effective time. Although each of these genres is taken to have been the result of historical development they are not considered to be stages in that there is no sense of successive replacement. Rather, these genres coexist and provide rhetorical frames for different sorts of perspectives of human action and experience.

Although very different in their approaches, there is a point of convergence in Moretti's and Bakhtin's notions of Bildungsroman which is retained in this study, that is, the importance of the interplay of historical time and the protagonist's lived time in the narrative.

3 THE NAME THREADS

Half a Life begins with Willie's question to his father about why he was named after the English novelist Somerset Maugham. A name is a crucial piece of a person's identity, the two novels delve on how damaging the information Willie receives is. For Willie Somerset Chandran his name is his destiny. Half of his name does not belong to him, it is borrowed from the famous writer Somerset Maugham; his first name proclaims him as a Christian whereas his surname points to Indian ancestry. Willie's father, interestingly, remains unnamed in the novels, and so does his mother. Hindu astrology ascribes a peculiar meaning to the name *Chandran*, which suits its bearer's profile in the novels. In this tradition the word or name *Chandra(n)* means the immaculate moon. This is a very important planet according to Hindu astrology, as it is the ruler of the human emotions. Therefore, it is believed that anyone who has the name *Chandran* embodies the qualities of the moon. The name *Chandran* reflects the shine of the moon, which cannot be compared to the glowing heat of the sun. This is a different kind of silvery radiance that refreshes the mind and spirit. Hindu astrology sometimes refers to worldly life as one that is burned with the heat of desire, anger and other negative energies. By contemplating the cooling qualities of the moon's energy one is supposed to block the *worldly energies* and so attain peace and tranquility. Indeed, if there is one feature Willie lacks most is the energy to deal with worldly affairs.

The names of several other characters' carry meanings that are linked to their personalities and the role the play in the plot. The most outstanding case is Sarojini, the active counterpart to Willie's passivity. Just like the character, the historical person Sarojini was an active woman of strong political ideas who passed on to history as a nationalist leader. There is an explicit intertext about her name, voiced by the father, in the first chapter of *HL*:

> This time it was a girl, and this time there was no room for any kind of self-delusion. The girl was the image of her mother. It was like divine punishment. I called her Sarojini, after the woman poet of the independence movement, […] was also remarkably ill-favoured. (2002, p.34)

Indeed, there is a real historical figure by this name. The Indian poet and nationalist leader Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949) became famous in her home country after her three volumes of verse, *The golden threshold* (1905), *The bird of time* (1912), and *The broken wing* (1912)[25] won critical acclaim in England. The poems depicted Indian life, speaking of snake charmers, beggars, fishermen, widows, and bangle sellers. Poet, reformer and political leader; born in Hyderabad, of Brahmanin heritage, the historical Sarojini graduated from the University of Madras and studied at London and Cambridge universities. She rebelled against the caste tradition by marrying a medical officer of a lower caste. Notice the parallel to the father's motivation to marriage in *HL*: the same use of marriage to a lower caste person for political or protest reasons. Sarojini was the first Indian woman president of Indian National Congress in 1925, and soon came under the influence of Gandhi. She eventually gave up poetry and fully devoted herself to emancipation of women, education, Hindu-Muslim unity and national causes. She became a follower of Gandhi and accompanied him to England. She was famous for her wit, and called Gandhi "Mickey Mouse" because of his frail structure. Perhaps this accounts for the "ill-favoured" appearance ascribed to the character Sarojini by the father.

[25] See one of the poems by Sarojini and list of her Works in annex A.

The "real" Sarojini had a leading role in Salt March – frequently alluded event in *HL* and *MS*,[26] and as a consequence was jailed with Gandhi and other leaders. She was President of National Women's' Conference. She was appointed Governor of Uttar Pradesh, (the province where Naipaul's ancestors had immigrated to Trinidad from) as soon as India became independent. Sarojini had a fine aesthetic sense and was known for selection of exquisite silks and jewelry. She gave up all luxuries for the sake of national struggle and began to wear coarse peasant clothes. One of her brothers was a revolutionary and spent his life outside India all the time for fear of getting extradited, an event echoed and fictionalized in the guerrilla chapters of *Magic Seeds*.

The use of characters' names with an ironic hint is further exemplified in the guerrilla chapters in *MS*. One of the most disturbed – but intelligent – characters is called Einstein. Another one, who has a life story similar to that of Willie's ancestors is named Ramachandran, another one is named Narayan.[27] Yet another instance of name intertext is the one referring to Percy Cato, who befriends Willie in the *HL*. The name "Catus" for the Romans meant "skilled man". The character Percy Cato is the man in-the-know, the skilled man who tips Willie about the ways of the world in London. Two Roman politicians are known to have used this name: Marcus Porcius Cato, the Elder, (2nd century BCE), the censor and Marcus Porcius Cato, the Younger, (1st century BCE), his great-grandson, Julius Caesar's enemy. He is the author of the notorious slogan *Carthago delenda est,* "Carthage must be destroyed." Cato rose in politics without any family precedent, similarly to the character Percy Cato.[28]

Although parallels of many characters' names may be traced, I chose to concentrate on the protagonist's name. The sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 of this chapter provide a

[26] See chapter tables in appendix C.
[27] See chapter 3.3 about Narayan, the writer.
[28] See appendix H for information about the two Roman Statesmen named Cato.

discussion of the array of transtextuality spurred by the protagonist's name – William Somerset Chandran.

3.1 WILLIE – THE BILDUNGSROMAN TRADITION

This section analyses the characterization of Willie Chandran, the protagonist of *HL* and *MS*, within the context of the Bildungsroman. It will argue that these novels, although structured like a Bildungsroman, are in fact a parody of this genre, and mock its core meaning of optimism and faith in human betterment. As happens in the case of most of other Naipaul's protagonists, Willie Chandran endeavors to improve his present condition by reinventing his past and his personality. Again, in the novels at hand, the main character complies with the stereotype of the expatriate who feels displaced in the England he had assumed to know well due to the cultural impositions of British colonialism, but which proves to be a hostile environment. More importantly, I aim to show that the novels, placed in a contemporary postcolonial world order, consist of a mockery of the Bildungsroman to the extent that the narrative points to the impossibility of the protagonist's *Bildung*; in the unfolding of the narrative Willie Chandran fails to achieve maturity.

In the coming-of-age stories, several postcolonial writers depict the development of their characters through varied experiences. They present experiences of initiation, socialization, and maturation into adulthood, by depicting cultural, social and political conflicts that a youth in the former colonies might go through in their search for their identity and role in the world, especially when they migrate to European metropolises. Naipaul's works, however, characteristically deal with the *inability* of the ex-colonies peoples to build an integrated identity.

The novels *HL* and *MS* keep formal aspects of the Bildungsroman but to the opposite effect. In the Bildungsroman genre the several events in the protagonist's life build up to a change for the better in his or her character. There is an effective "character formation". In the end, the protagonist, after living through several events, somehow achieves a balanced personality and social integration. In *HL* and *MS* the protagonist does undergo a journey of character formation from childhood to a kind of maturity. However, as I will argue, in his journey, Willie can hardly be said to have achieved social integration.

Taking the cue of the protagonist's first name – William – I aim to trace the architextual characterization of the two novels within the context of the Bildungsroman genre. I see the novels relationship to the European Bildungsroman tradition as an architext, and analyze how this tradition is reworked in Naipaul's *HL* and *MS*. Genette's distinctions, at one and the same time, have their determinants directed towards a particular work (called hypotext) or towards a model of textuality.[29] In the case of architextuality, the hypotext is not easily singled out and consists of a whole genre. When a work enters into a relation of transtextuality with a genre or a code, Genette calls it architextuality. It consists in a mute relation that alludes to a set of features which transcend the text. This is the case of *HL* and *MS* architextual relation to the Bildungsroman genre. Genette recognizes that the process of architextuality involved in a translation of genres and codes are never neutral and always involve a resignification of a previous formal structure for means other than those produced within the original structure. In the novels under analysis here the ethos of the Bildungsroman tradition is appropriated, and its core meaning reverted to serve parodic purposes in the contemporary postcolonial context.

[29] See section 2.2.1 for Genette's s five distinctions.

The starting point of Moretti's argument in *The Way of the World* (1987) is that the Bildungsroman is a grand narrative, a symbolic form of modernity.[30] In the Bildungsroman, individual development and social integration belong together as part and whole, and at their point of encounter and fulfillment lies maturity. Moretti's emphasis on the social integration becomes particularly important for this analysis, in that Willie Chandran's quest is informed, or even determined, by his urge – and failure – to be socially integrated, either in India, England or Africa.

If the definition of Bildungsroman entails the protagonist's struggles with the hard realities of the world to achieve maturity and find his mission in the world, Willie Chandran does not fit in insofar as he can scarcely be said to have found his mission in life. Another common proposition, subscribed by Moretti, is that the Bildungsroman has an intended effect on the reader: while it depicts the formation of the hero, as a side-effect, it would also promote the education of the reader. As far as the effect on the reader's formation, the one provided by *HL* and *MS* is a negative one. By negative, I mean that the reader would not take him as an example to be followed in any way. The "teaching" involved would be an awareness of the harshness of a life of a colonial subject trying to find a place in the world, and that there is no guarantee of success.

Moretti regards Bildungsroman as a genre which emphasizes the possibility of not only individual development *but also* social integration, and which offers a model for the middle-class youth in the social life. If instead of middle-class, one thinks of a colonial subject, the narrative of *HL* and *MS* is a reversal of this pattern. It is necessary that, as a free individual, not as a fearful subject but as a full citizen, one perceives the social norms as one's

[30] See section 2.4 for more details on Moretti's views.

own. One must internalize them and fuse external bindings and internal impulses into a new whole until the former is no longer distinguishable from the latter. Willie's plight is that regardless of his efforts, he achieves neither of those. During his journey, he does not internalize or make his own neither the norms of his Indian tradition nor fully understand and accept the metropolitan ones.

In this interpretation, the Bildungsroman is treated as a sign which successfully represents the individual's ability to abolish the difference between the inside and the outside. Belief in the creation of the coherent narrated self and in the protagonist's integral personality are requirements present both in Moretti's and Bakhtin's theories of the Bildungsroman. In Moretti's work there is a recurrent stress on social integration process as constitutive of the concept of *Bildung*. This concept is generally interpreted as a typical pre-modern idea with a powerful influence on the image of the self and on the function of culture in human life, the relation between man and society. This idea is based on the belief in the possibility of the individual's successful integration into society by accepting its ethics and culture, while also preserving the self as a coherent being exposed to various social vectors in the course of *Bildung*. If the process described above is a hard one for an individual with a guaranteed status as a citizen, the difficulties of this same journey are manifold for a "second-rate" citizen, which is the standing of Naipaul's protagonist.

Bakhtin's "novels of historical emergence", the fifth type in his classification of Bildungsromane, is essentially linked to the protagonist's development *harmonious* with the larger context of historical change. This is hardly the case of Willie, unless the narrative is read with a parodic gist in mind. Willie Chandran's journey is shaped by real historical events; and his "development" to maturity is deeply intertwined

with changes in society, but never harmonious with them. In addition, for many of its users, the connotations of Bildung are over-optimistic. This notion of optimism sharply contrasts with Naipaul's hardwired pessimism, and the clash of the form – Bildungsroman (optimism) – and the wretched life and pessimistic disposition of the protagonist provides the pervading tension of *HL* and *MS*.

According to Moretti (1987), one has to willingly give up individual freedom in the process of social integration. The hero relinquishes freedom in order to reach a happy integration in the social order. The classical Bildungsroman promotes happiness as the highest value, which is offered as a compensation for giving up one's freedom. It must be granted though, that besides social integration, the formation of the self as a coherent entity is a crucial requirement for a novel to be considered a Bildungsroman. Under this view, there are two points to be discussed. Firstly, whether the protagonist's self really becomes integrated in the novel as it should be to conform to the criteria of *Bildung*, and secondly, whether this self develops to a higher stage of maturity or not. In both cases the narrative in *HL* and *MS* does not give an account of its belief in *Bildung*; instead, the narrative questions both its relevance and its feasibility.

Willie grows up despising both his father and mother, and is eager to leave India. As a student in 1950s London, suffering the expected humiliations, he finds that he is less willing to criticize his father, and realizes how much he acts just like him. Gradually, as he learns the ways of the world, and sees how much of late-imperial Britain is actually the invention of the recent past, he also feels that the old rules of India – the caste traditions, and so on – no longer hold him:

> Yet something strange was happening. Gradually, learning the quaint rules of his college, with the churchy Victorian buildings pretending to be older then they were, Willie began to see in a new way the rules he had left behind at home. He began to see – and it was upsetting, at first – that the old rules were themselves a kind of make-believe, self-imposed. And one day, toward the end of his second term, he saw with great clarity that the old rules no longer bound him (*HL,* p.57).

Willie, like most of Naipaul's characters, embodies postcolonial angst. As the others, he abandons his homeland and is a colonial subject trying to reinvent himself in metropolitan London. While he manages to survive, not unscathed, though, his life is unaccountable without the chaos wrought by colonial rule. In this sense, *HL* and *MS* follow the pattern set by the author's previous novels and display strong instances of hypertext from his former works.

The two novels, taken as a narrative unity, present the story of Willie Chandran from early childhood to adulthood, and an account of the events and people that he comes across throughout his life, to retirement age. It is a story of a childhood in India, youth in London, adulthood in a country in Africa, wanderings in a guerilla movement in India, return to London, always as a drifter, unsure of his stand in the order of things.[31] At first glance, it is a dry narrative of a colonial subject and his failed attempts to find a place in the world and to make a living in a hostile society, all of which are the makings of several postcolonial pieces of writing. However, Willie Chandran's story is not simply a recollection of the events of his past. The recollection of his past is an important element in the narrative, in that the events he goes through are essential to his development throughout the novel and shape his perceptions of the world. However one could argue that the experiences that Willie Chandran has as a young boy in India, as well as his ill-functioning family, are determinant as hindrances in his maturation into adulthood.

[31] See sections 1.3 and 1.4 for details of the plot of *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*, respectively.

The early events in India, indeed, especially his father's choices, are crucial to the structure and parodic unfolding of the novels: Willie Chandran's maturation and development from child to man is an inherent characteristic of the Bildungsroman. The Bildungsroman would typically trace the development of a protagonist from his early beginnings – from his schooldays to his first venture into metropolitan London, and later in colonial Africa and postcolonial India – following his experiences there, and his ultimate search for self-knowledge and maturation. Upon the further examination of the characteristics of the Bildungsroman as presented above, it becomes clear that *HL* and *MS* conform to the general characteristics of the Bildungsroman while at the same time they undermine its most crucial feature: the actual building of the protagonist's character. In Willie Chandran's case, overcoming a troubled childhood, reckoning with prejudice, throwing off the shackles of bohemian immigrant London's scene, marrying Ana as an escape and running away to her country in the hope of finding stability, joining the guerrilla in India prompted by his sister, returning to London; all these events amount to nothing much. Self understanding and maturity do not take place, or at least do not bring about any satisfaction to the character.

Willie Chandran's family status is important in the novel's classification as a Bildungsroman. From the outset of Willie Chandran's story, it is made clear that he gets hatred or disgust rather than love from his family. The father figure, who would be the strongest force in the boy's development, is in fact the one who curses him by seeing in the son features of his despicable backward mother.

Another aspect of the Bildungsroman present in *HL* and *MS* is education. Although Willie Chandran's education is complete, first in a Presbyterian Mission School in India, and later in a London college, it is described as having been almost useless – Willie

drags on through the college syllabus; for him it represents only a means to stay in England. The Mission School phase of Willie Chandran's education and development makes him more determined to reach his goal of getting away from the backwardness of his mother and caste-bound country. Willie Chandran's education also fulfils another of the characteristics of the Bildungsroman in that he is unassisted. For what matters he is self-educated, learns from books, alone in the library, ranging from history to basic sexual procedures.

Part of Willie Chandran's education stems from his experiences as a scholarship holder in a London college, but not exactly from classroom. During his three college years, Willie Chandran first becomes aware of the fact that he belongs to a specific group, the migrant, and "second rate" citizen bohemian groupings. The word "community" would not be suitable here, as it is a scattered unselfconscious group. There is no successful social integration in this group.

Willie Chandran's scholarship in London is a characteristic element of the Bildungsroman. In most Bildungsromane, the young man leaves his provincial town for the big city. The trip to Africa, though, is a narrative twist. Ana is his unlikely benefactor who provides him with an escape when he is despairing at his bleak future, thrown out from college, jobless and with nobody to turn to. He decides to flee to Ana's African country in a desperate attempt to dodge once again instead of coping with life's challenges as a destitute colonial subject.

Willie Chandran's urge to become fluent in the social scene of bohemian London is an important characteristic of the Bildungsroman. The transformation from poor provincial working class to a true gentleman, educated and well-off, was common in English novels of the Victorian period. This is appropriate for the time when the rising middle class

growing out of the Industrial Revolution had more prospects for social mobility than ever before. However, Willie Chandran does not earn his status in the way a protagonist in the traditional Bildungsroman would do. In the middle-class values of the Bildungsroman, a man must work his way to achieve social status, but Willie Chandran is an outsider, a migrant who hesitantly tries and fails to accomplish anything.

The approach to narrative procedures employed by the narrator to represent historical facts leads the reader to focus on another theme of central importance in *HL* and *MS*: the characterization of the London Bohemian immigrant scene in the late fifties, the decolonization process in Africa and the poverty-stricken India. The common element among the characters with a representative function is exactly their migrant condition, their lack of belonging neither to the country of origin nor to England's society. The historical facts are often presented as intertwined with the migrant's daily life and are essential to grasp their casual conversation and attitudes.

Willie is a product of his time, not because his existence – as it happens to the hero in the typical Bildungsroman – is a result of direct confrontations with the social reality he lives, but rather because he is passively determined by these historical conditions, namely the aftermath of imperialism and the decolonization of India.

As seen in section 2.4, the Bildungsroman is emblematic of Enlightenment. Moretti (1987) explains its rise and fall. Arising in Europe in the eighteenth century, this genre had its peak in the nineteenth century, constituting a good deal of the modern novel before its decline. Focused on the development of the protagonist and her/his conscious adaptation to the bourgeois lifestyle, the Bildungsroman had similar expression in many

countries. Its legacy of humanist optimism influenced the development of the novel as a dominant genre.

The parodic character of *HL* and *MS* is determined to a great extent by the nature of the historical experience lived by its protagonist. Willie's journey to metropolitan England is a particular one, but it could only happen in the broader context of ex-colonies independence movements and the migrant waves of Indian nationals towards the metropolitan centre, in an attempt to find a place in the world, outside the social misery of India. Willie's journey makes the connection between the parody to the Bildungsroman and the disillusionment of his time. The existential pessimism that shapes him from early childhood is shown to be intrinsically linked to his – and the narrator's – view of history. Also irony, a stylistic procedure largely employed in *HL* and *MS*, turns out to be an effect of Willie's bitter worldview. In several instances the narrative thematizes the absurdity of Hindu's Brahmanin caste system, the farce of the guerrilla fight to improve the world and the shallow and pointless bohemian life of immigrants in London. As usual, Naipaul's narrative does not spare anyone or anything. The author offers no solutions. Facing the dark side of times in an aesthetic manner, the novels clash with the stereotyped conception of the colonized subject as a victim of external oppression, touching one of the sore points of postcolonial discussion. Instead, the narrative presents the protagonist entangled with inner sources of difficulties to find a place in the world and a self definition. These difficulties do not spring from colonial oppression alone; they are also the consequences of the caste system and other aspects of Hinduism.

Willie's character formation, or better, the failure to achieve it, is to a great extent the result of deeply rooted caste prejudices and traditional Brahmin family structures

that precede the European colonization process. It is interesting to notice that the historical scene that unfolds in the reading of *HL* and *MS* shows a distinct difference from the description of the period found in historiographic studies. The ignorance about what goes on outside their limited low-caste community of Willie's backward mother as well as Willie's slow realization of how history goes on outside it is a narrative tool employed to that effect.

In a characteristic pessimistic manner, Naipaul's protagonist does not evolve to be an accomplished and adjusted person, or the better understanding he eventually acquires of his own standing does not produce any happiness of peace of mind. In the end of the narrative at the age of 52, Willie can only claim to the realization he has learned nothing of value so far, has wasted his life and from now on should start from scratch.

Here there is room for a digression to account for another different thread to be followed regarding the architextual presence or the genre Bildungsroman in the novels. The sequence of chapter names in *Magic Seeds* is an emblematic paratextual instance to the fairy tale *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The chapter titles are as follows: "The London's Beanstalk" (chapter 8), "The Giant at the Top" (chapter 9), "An Axe to the Root" (chapter 10), as well as the last chapter which also provides the name for the novel, "Magic Seeds". As discussed in section 2.2.1, Genette states that paratextual items lead to, or hint at, other kinds of transtextuality, specially the more complex architextuality as this chapter's object shows. The chapter titles paratext makes room to a string of inferences to the fairy tale.

The fairy tale "Jack and the Beanstalk" has also been seen as an example of a Bildungsroman. As the tale unfolds, Jack evolves from an immature person into a mature and self-assertive person. While minor differences exist in various versions of the tale, as it

happens to all orally transmitted folk and "fairy" tales, the story can be read as Jack's quest for maturity. It is possible, nonetheless, to analyze the tale as one in which Jack remains spoiled and immature, just as it is the case of Willie's journey in *HL* and *MS*, where there is room for arguing for an incomplete or failed Bildungsroman. In this train of thought, neither Jack nor Willie change very much by the end of the story. While it is possible to make points which support this claim, careful analysis of the tale will reveal that Jack's struggle to achieve maturity is representative of the difficult processes of maturation and socialization.

The tale leads to questions about Jack's morality and maturity. A closer reading of the fairy tale reveals how entering into the giant's land and stealing the giant's treasures is significant to the progress of Jack's maturity. The *MS*'s character, Peter, the banker, is the "giant at the top" of the property "beanstalk". There is a parallel between the two narratives regarding the fact that the circumstances of Peter's business downfall allows Willie to start to envision a career of his own.

Jack begins as an immature and spoiled child. Jack's mother blames him for making her a beggar, to fail to provide a steady source of income. Jack's inability to get a job shows his immaturity, as Willie's inability and unwillingness to do so is one of the main aspects to underline his lack of maturity. When the cow (Milky-white) stops giving milk, Jack's mother sends him to the marketplace to sell it. According to Bruno Bettelheim, in the classical study of fairy tales' psychology *The Uses of Enchantment* (1988), this first encounter with the world represents the end of infancy for Jack. As Bettelheim reminds us, Jack's mother demands that he "learn to make do with what the outside world can offer" (p.188).[32] Willie only glimpses at the need to make do with what the outside world offers in the very

[32] This and the following page numbers refer to the above mentioned edition.

end of the narrative, with a bitter taste that it is too late to try. Now that Jack can no longer expect his mother to do everything for him, he realizes that he must take steps toward maturity. As Bettelheim says, "the child then has to begin the long and difficult process of turning himself into an adult" (p.188). In a parallel with Willie's story, it is not the mother, but a composite figure of his sister Sarojini and his friend Roger who play the mother's role.

On the way to the market, Jack meets an old man, who trades Jack's magic beans for the cow. His mother views this trade as foolish, and this makes apparent the mother's displeasure for Jack. In several instances Sarojini shows her contempt for Willie's lack of initiative and the mess he makes of his life, especially when he clings to Ana and spends 18 years in Africa. As Bettelheim states, Jack's trading the cow for the magic beans is his "first act of independence and initiative" (p.189). In contrast, Willie's "initiative" throughout the novels is always to hide or withdraw.

Jack's mother failure to recognize and approve of his display of initiative can be viewed in different ways. First, she does not trust his ability to make mature decisions. She tends to take a negative view of everything that he does. In this case it is Sarojini's role in *MS*'s narrative. What is significant is that Jack must overcome his mother's low opinion of him in order to achieve maturity and to grow socially. Willie had first to follow Sarojini's views and join the guerrillas, then blame her for his misfortune there, only to come to terms that it was his decision in the end, and not hers.

Jack responds to his mother's displeasure with actions which result in greater maturity. Most versions of the tale mention that Jack feels sorry for causing his mother grief. Willie does so in his last letter to Sarojini in the end of chapter 12. This is possible in the tale

through the growth of the beanstalk, while in *MS* it is the belated reckoning of the necessity to pursue a professional training to perhaps start a life, even if at the age of 52. He feels that he must gain his mother's – here the sister Sarojini's – approval to have self-assurance of his own maturity. Removing his guilt and proving himself to his mother is important to his process of obtaining greater maturation and socialization.

The beanstalk, first climbing it and then cutting it off to the roots by the use of an axe, is extremely important to Jack's achieving maturity and demonstrating his social growth. Literally, he climbs up and down to take the giant's treasure. Figuratively, he "will climb into the sky to achieve a higher existence" (p.190). Jack's actual climbing of the beanstalk is another display of initiative. As Bettelheim states: "he climbs the beanstalk on his own initiative, not because somebody else suggested it" (p.189).

The beanstalk also deals with Jack's obtaining sexual maturity. However, as in other aspects of life, Jack's views of sexuality are initially immature. Bettelheim's analysis, being grounded on Freudian psychoanalysis does emphasize this sexual maturation because of "the hopes which his newly discovered masculinity evokes in him" (189). It is certainly possible to establish a series of parallels to Willie's sexual (un)achieved maturity, but this would be a lengthy topic, and it would suit a thesis of another nature. The scope and theoretical assumptions of this study do not allow for delving more into this topic. Bettelheim goes on to describe the way the ogre's wife is instrumental to Jack's gaining his maturity. According to this author, the ogre's wife helps Jack overcome oedipal conflict with the ogre. Apart from the implications of this oedipal conflict analysis, the ogre wife's protection does allow Jack to gain the giant's powers, which are materialized in the magic objects. Jack's acquisition of the three magic objects has great symbolic meaning.

Jack's chopping down the beanstalk is the final step in his gaining maturity. He seems to cut ties with his past problems. The crash of the beanstalk and the death of the giant allow Jack to move forward in his life and in the maturation process. Chopping down the beanstalk allows him to free himself from unrealistic fantasies about his identity and to move forward in the development of a mature person with an integrated responsibility.

"Jack and the Beanstalk" is a story of movement from immaturity to maturity. So is Willie's story, notwithstanding the ironic belatedness and incompleteness of this accomplishment. Jack gains maturity through several steps, including the conflict with his mother, the climbing and chopping down of the beanstalk, the aid of the ogre's wife, and the taking of the giant's treasure. So does Willie, through several journeys around the world and troubled encounters with inner and outwardly obstacles. For the fairy tale character, overcoming his mother's low opinion of him and gaining her approval is vital to Jack's obtaining maturity and social growth. In a way, Willie also strove to overcome his father's contempt, and also his sisters' low opinion of him, but above all, Willie had to overcome his own sense of inferiority, and adjust his expectations about life.

As concluding remarks, I may say that the parody to Bildungsroman – a genre that from its Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* prototype through to the studies of Bakhtin and Moretti has always had an educative optimistic view about the possibility of human improvement – is in the novels tinged with a nihilist tone. The historical process, more specifically the aftermath of the colonization era, intertwined with character psychology, forms the backbone of the narrative. All decisions Willie undertakes arise out of either external influences, such as his father's choices, his sister's urgings, his friend Roger's views, his acquaintances, his readings on the ongoing historical process and the assimilation of colonial subjects in metropolitan life.

Willie hardly learns to make decisions and does not learn to make moral judgments, as the killing episode is but one example. Naipaul seems to be interested in constructing an account of a historical process by suggesting how it depends on personal experience. At the same time, he demonstrates how difficult it is to disengage one's decisions from one's historical context.

In the preface to a Portuguese edition of Goethe's masterpiece (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship Years*, 1998), the critic João Barrento points out that it would be hasty to reduce Goethe's classic novel to a vulnerable formula of "novel of formation", and states that "not even this novel manages to enact its protagonist's formation in a definitive form but leaves him *at the threshold* of this process" [33](1998, p.7, italics mine). Naipaul's narrative does precisely the same: it leaves Willie Chandran at the threshold of a new life, ironically, only too late. In the end of *Magic Seeds*, at the age of 52, he may not yet have achieved maturity, but he does catch a glimpse of what is to be done: stop hiding, abandon illusions about how the world should be and try to actively find a place, humble as it may, in the given social order.

Not only is Willie Chandran's journeying ultimately a failure that makes the outcome of the narrative disappointing if read as a classical Bildungsroman, but his colonial subject status also drifts away from the traditional Bildungsroman formula, either under Moretti's or Bakhtin's notions. More importantly, Willie Chandran does not become an integrated and adjusted person. This is, after all, the ultimate goal of the Bildungsroman's protagonist. Naipaul creates a travesty of a novel of formation, but the fact remains that Willie Chandran's development is complete only in Naipaul's rebuff of many of the traditional traits of the Bildungsroman.

[33] My translation of the original in Portuguese: "…nem este romance chega a encenar, de forma cabal a 'formação' de seu problemático protagonista – deixa-o precisamente no *limiar* desse processo."

3.2 SOMERSET – THE BRITISH TRADITION

Naipaul has written about India's caste system and philosophy in several of his non-fiction books. In *HL* and *MS* he visits the theme again as he recreates the social world of a caste-bound culture and roots the circumstances of the novels about identity – or the struggle to achieve it – in a character's half-hearted effort to rebel against his Hindi cultural heritage and belated adjustment to modernity.

The first chapter of *Half a Life* is entitled "A Visit from Somerset Maugham". It reports how the protagonist, Willie Somerset Chandran, is named after the English writer, who spent some time in India collecting material for his novel *The Razor's Edge* (1944). The meeting of the British writer and Willie's father is sarcastically fictionalized in *Half a Life* in the first chapter, and its consequences inform the rest of the two novels' narrative. As it happens in *HL* and *MS*, in *The Razor's Edge* the author/narrator recurrently reminds the reader of how he learned the events he is telling: "Our [narrator] conversation was a long one and Larry told me a great deal more than I have felt it possible to set down in what after all purports to be a *novel*" (p.273 – italics mine).

The Razor's Edge was published in 1944 in a very different world from the one depicted in Naipaul's works. Somerset Maugham addresses the yearning for meaning and purpose in life as a matter of romantic endeavor, with no heed for the historical setting that lay behind the Indian's "guru" tradition. *The Razor's Edge* is the story of how a young American searches for and eventually finds peace through a mystic experience in India. This novel is one of the earliest instances of what would become the standard Western notion of Hinduism as an alternative philosophy and the healing powers ascribed to it. Needless to say,

in mid-forties the wave of writing that goes under the umbrella term of postcolonial literature was not yet noticeable. Naipaul's work, in turn, belongs to the host of writings dealing with the aftermath of independence processes in former European-dominated regions, his work fictionalizes the interaction of historical forces that shaped the relationship of diverging cultural traditions.

In his mature years, the English writer Somerset Maugham developed an interest in Indian spirituality. He visited an ashram[34] in Madras in 1938, and was taken to the ashram holder Venkataraman, who had retreated to a life of silence, prayer and self-denial, and was known by the name of Maharshi.

According to the version of the meeting reported by Somerset Maugham[35], he fainted, maybe due to the heat, while waiting for his audience with Maharshi. When he came to his senses, he could not speak. The Maharshi comforted him by saying that silence also is conversation. News of the fainting fit, still according to Maugham, soon spread across India: through the power of the Maharshi, it was said, the pilgrim had been taken into the realm of the infinite. Maugham eventually makes this encounter with the guru the motive of *The Razor's Edge*, the novel that made him popular in the United States in the forties. This novel remains popular to date. It has been translated into several languages and is still being reprinted.

The Razor's Edge tells the story of Larry Darrell, a sensitive and troubled young American who visits the Indian guru Shri Ganesha – modeled on Shri Maharshi, and

[34] The word *ashram(a)* describes a place – house, hut or cave – where a guru dwells and teaches those seeking spiritual advice. Traditionally only the guru lives there, however some ashrams also offer accommodation for visitors – including longtime or permanent stay. More information in the glossary in appendix K.

[35] Though Maugham claims to have no recollection of visiting the infinite, the event left a mark on him: he describes it in *A Writer's Notebook* (originally published in 1949) and in the story "The Saint", published in *Points of View* (first edition in 1958).

has a life changing spiritual experience under his influence. With Shri Ganesha's blessing, Larry goes back to his country to become a taxi driver and plans to live a quiet life in accordance to the teachings of the guru.

Willie's father is not, as Maugham may have taken for granted, a man of spiritual depth, and was rather more interested in the fame of the visitor after whom he named his son than in developing spiritual gifts. In the following summary of *The Razor's Edge*, many side threads of the plot are left uncommented as the intention is to concentrate on the features related to the subsequent discussion of Naipaul's parody of the novel and reversal of the notion of the guru's role, traits and traditions.

The story starts shortly after the end of World War I. Although different aspects of the protagonist's (Larry Darrell) character are revealed slowly, one thing the narrator immediately discloses is that he is a frustration to his family because he refuses to pursue a professional career. Little by little the reader is informed of other facts: his engagement to a childhood sweetheart (Isabel Bradley), and that he also refuses to talk about his wartime experience as a pilot. Through other characters' comments the reader learns how changed Larry is since the war. His most shattering wartime experience is presented near the end of the first chapter: a fellow soldier and friend is killed as he rescues Larry. The death of his friend is the event that prompts Larry to begin a quest for the meaning of life. Then, over many years, he reads and studies the work of philosophers, travels and studies under spiritual teachers from a variety of religious traditions. Larry's spiritual quest is the primary narrative thread of the novel.

Throughout the novel, Larry's search is contrasted with the other characters' material and worldly pursuits. A major character in the novel is the American Elliott Templeton, the narrator's friend and Isabel's uncle. He strives and succeeds in being accepted by European aristocratic society. Isabel also plays an important role in the novel. She eventually breaks off her engagement with Larry because she is neither willing to follow Larry's quest for spirituality nor to relinquish her upper-class privileges. Elliott and Isabel provide effective narratorial foils for Larry. Both characters express a concern about material needs rather than spiritual ones. Elliott's life revolves around prestige and he dies near the end of the novel satisfied because he is made to believe he was invited to a sought-after social gathering. Elliott has nothing to sustain him when his social popularity declines, inevitable as he gets older. Isabel is devastated when her husband loses all his wealth in the Wall Street crash of 1929.

During around 12 years, Larry reads and wanders, occasionally meeting the first-person narrator – who bears a strong resemblance to Maugham and shares the writer's biographical data – and tells him his experiences. After several encounters and introductions to competing philosophical and mystical explanations, Larry finally has a ground-breaking and lasting mystical experience in India and tells about it to the narrator near the end of the novel. He spent two years meditating with a man known for his saintliness, who Maugham refers to as Shri Ganesha, and who is based on Shri Ramana Maharshi, the actual guru Maugham met in India. His account of the mystical enlightenment is a typical cliché version of the western fantasy of what an oriental mystical rapture should be like:

> I'd never known such exaltation and such a transcendent joy. I had a strange sensation, a tingling that arose in my feet and traveled up to my head, and I felt as though I were suddenly released from my body and as pure spirit partook of a loveliness I had never conceived. I had a sense that a knowledge more than human possessed me, so that everything that had been confused was clear and everything that had perplexed me was explained. I was so happy that it was pain and I struggled to release myself from it, for I

> felt that if it lasted a moment longer I should die; and yet it was such rapture that I was ready to die rather than forego it. How can I tell you what I felt? No words can tell the ecstasy of my bliss. When I came to myself I was exhausted and trembling (MAUGHAM, 2003, p.275).

Later on Larry reproduces, in a sequence of dialogues, almost all the characteristics generally ascribed to Hindi philosophy: "It transcends permanence and change; whole and part, finite and infinite. It is eternal because its completeness and perfection are unrelated to time" (p.269).[36]

After his mystical experience, Larry returns to the U.S. to live according to the ideals of "calmness, forbearance, compassion, selflessness and continence" acquired in India (p.279). Throughout the narrative Larry is portrayed in the best of possible lights, with minute and recurrent descriptions of his physical and spiritual beauty. Every time he enters the scene the narrator takes pains to repeat and add a positive trait to Larry. Not only is Larry portrayed in a positive light, but the Indian guru is also idealized.

The citations below are very telling of the positive and, according to Naipaul's narrative in *HL* and *MS*, unrealistic, view of Hindi gurus. "It's a mistake to think that those holy men of India lead useless lives. They are a shining light in the darkness" (p.280), and also: "He was a man of noble and saintly character (p.278). In fact, sections six, seven and eight of part six of *The Razor's Edge* consist of a string of remarkable statements bearing the same purpose of dignifying the guru and purporting the deep truth of his revelations. Even the guru's appearance is given a very positive account: "[…] the serenity that he irradiated, the goodness, the peace, the selflessness. I was hot and tired after my journey, but gradually I began to feel wonderfully rested. Before he'd said another word I knew that this was the man

[36] This and subsequent page numbers refer to the 2003 First Vintage International edition. Full reference listed in the bibliography.

I'd been seeking" (p.272). Also: "He taught that it is not essential to salvation to retire from the world, but only to renounce the self. […] But it wasn't his teaching that was so remarkable; it was the man himself, his benignity, his greatness of soul, his saintliness. His presence was a benediction. I was very happy with him. I felt that at last I had found what I wanted" (p.273).

The supposedly impenetrable difference between Indian and Western mentalities is made clear in several instances, as in the lines uttered by Larry: "I don't think it's possible for us Occidentals to believe in [reincarnation] as implicitly as *these* Orientals do. It's in their blood and bones. With us it can only be a matter of opinion" (p.266, italics mine). For the views expressed in *HL* and *MS*, this barrier of mentalities is indeed "impenetrable", but for very different reasons. As we shall see bellow, Naipaul offers another angle from which to think of these differences. In fact, the narrative of *HL* and *MS* shows an indictment of the Western marketable notions of Hindi philosophy and the way it has been misinterpreted by Maugham and others who popularized an idealized version of it for "metropolitan" audiences.

In *Half a Life*, the protagonist Willie Somerset Chandran is the son of a minor official in an Indian state. Somerset Maugham, researching for his novel *The Razor's Edge*, had visited the maharajah and taken notice of Willie's father, who happened to be doing penance and, summoned by the model of Gandhi, observing a vow of silence in the temple courtyard. Though he comes from a line of priests, in *Half a Life* Willie's father is not, as Maugham has taken for granted, a man of spiritual depth. On the contrary, the would-be "guru" was a famished ragged man, a pitiful wreckage of a person; as well the result of the sub-continent miserable past; he was more interested in the fame of the visitor after whom he named his son than in spirituality or religious ecstasies.

Maugham's title[37] – *The Razor's Edge* – alludes to a metaphor from the Upanishads, comparing the way of enlightenment to the sharp and narrow edge of a razor, a matter on which Willie's father, even if he had been willing to speak, was unlikely to have thrown any light. Between the novelist and his silent interlocutor there was plenty of room for misunderstanding. Foreign critics begin to name Willie's father as the spiritual source of his novel, and he derives some local celebrity from this. But when it comes to the point of committing himself, the fictionalized Maugham, pleased as he seems to have Indian friends, politely denies giving Willie any assistance when he goes to London. In honor of his British helper, Chandran names his first-born William Somerset Chandran. Calling in old debts, the father writes to Maugham asking him to pull strings on the boy's behalf. He receives a typewritten small note in return: "Dear Chandran, It was very nice getting your letter. I have nice memories of the country, and it is nice hearing from Indian friends. Yours very sincerely... [punctuation as is]" (NAIPAUL, 2001, p.47). Other foreign old acquaintances prove equally evasive. Although the fictionalized Somerset Maugham was of no help, eventually Willie is granted a college scholarship in London.

In *The Razor's Edge* there is blending of Maugham naïve recollection of his meeting with the guru with widespread and idealized notions about the oriental spirituality. The guru provides Maugham with a marketable version of Hindi philosophy, Maugham provides the guru with publicity and foreign attention; the event sets the starting point for Naipaul's *Half a Life*. In rewriting, in a parodic fashion, the story of Somerset Maugham and the holy man, Naipaul explores the way Hindu religious practices of fasting, silence and self-

[37] "The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over; thus the wise say the path to Salvation is hard." Katha-Upanishad. As printed in the novel's epigraph.

denial are consumed and misinterpreted by a western audience. The novels show the historical causes and the damaging consequences of those practices.

To understand the story, Naipaul's narrative leads to the notion that one needs to view Indian asceticism historically. In the past, prior to the foreigner invasions, Hindu temples supported a thriving priestly caste. Then, as a result of foreign conquest, first Muslim, later British, the temples lost their revenues. The priests became trapped in a vicious cycle: poverty led to loss of energy, which led to passivity, which led to deeper poverty. The priestly caste was in terminal decline. Instead of quitting temple life, however, the caste came up with an ingenious reversion of values: starving and denial of the appetites in general, was praised as admirable in itself, worthy of veneration and hence of tribute.

This is Naipaul's account of how a Brahmin ethos of self-denial and fatalism, an ethos that scorned individual enterprise and hard work, hampered the advance of modernity in India. In Naipaul's narrative, a nineteenth-century Brahmin named Chandran (the protagonist's great-grandfather) breaks out of the system. He saves the scraps of money he can possibly manage, journeys to the nearest big town – which is the capital of one of the independent backwater and impoverished states in British India – where he manages to get a job as a clerk in the maharajah's palace. His son continues the advance of the family through the ranks of the British Raj's civil service. The Chandrans have found a safe niche for themselves, and they no longer must cope with life in self-denial and starvation in an *ashram*. The priestly caste set out to create *ashrams* first out of sheer physical destitution and starvation; then out of a fear from political persecution. Nothing could be further from the idealized story presented by Maugham, where people just abandon a stable life to become wanderers pursuing spiritual values and living off charity.

But the grandson is a rebel. He hears rumors of Gandhi's nationalist movement. The Mahatma calls for a boycott of universities; Willie's father – never named – , always referred to as "the father", responds by burning his copies of Shelley, Hardy and other canonical British literature names in the college yard. He waits for the attention and consequences of his bold act, but his gesture goes unnoticed. He then decides to marry a "backward" caste woman, as a way of sacrifice along the lines of the – distorted – Gandhian call against caste. Out of this union Willie, the protagonist is born, bearing for life the marks of his father relentless hostility and despise towards his mother.

> And when sometime in 1931 or 1932 I heard that the mahatma had called for students to boycott their universities, I decided to follow the call. I did more. In the front yard I made a little bonfire of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and Shelley and Keats, and the professor's notes, and went home to wait for the storm to beat about my head (*HL*, p.11).

Besides, Willie's father states: "I am following the mahatma's call […] I am sacrificing the only thing I have to sacrifice" (*HL,* p.25). What he has to sacrifice is his caste pride, the only asset he had.

Gandhi proclaims that the caste system is wrong. The father makes a peculiar interpretation of this appeal and concludes that the only way for a Brahmin to fight the caste system is by marrying bellow him. Therefore he proceeds to pick a destitute, dark-skinned girl in his college class belonging to the so-called backward caste – also referred to as the "untouchables" – the lowest caste – and pays court to her in clumsy fashion. In a short time, the girl, using lies and threats, forces him to make good on his promises.

Set in disgrace in the eyes of his family and Brahmin caste, Chandran (the father) is set to work in the maharajah's tax office. There he indulges in petty misdeeds and

small irregular acts of what he tells himself are his way of performing Gandhi's call for Civil Disobedience, though his true motives are idle and mean. His mischief is exposed, and when he is about to be tried in court, he takes sanctuary in a temple, where he protects himself from what he claims to call unfair persecution by taking a vow of silence. His vow turns him into a kind of local saint or guru, and locals flock to the place to bring offerings, or just to watch him being silent. Willie's father states:

> […] foreign critics began to see in me the spiritual source of *The Razor's Edge*. My persecution stopped. The writer – to the general surprise, an anti-imperialist – had, in hid first Indian book, the book of travel notes,[38] written flatteringly of the maharaja and his state and his officials, including the principal of the college. So the attitude of everybody changed. They pretended to see me as the writer had seen me: the man of high caste, high in the maharaja's revenue service, from a line of people who had performed sacred rituals for the ruler, turning his back on a glittering career, and living as a mendicant on the alms of the poorest of the poor (NAIPAUL, 2001, p.5).

It is into this background of hypocrisy and deceit that the gullible Westerner writer Somerset Maugham comes to in his visit to the "guru". Maugham asks the holy man if he is happy. In writing, Chandran replies that within his silence he feels free, and that this is what happiness is all about. Maugham takes those words to be the utmost example of wisdom and later turns this meeting into the core of his successful novel *The Razor's Edge*. The irony runs deep: the only freedom Chandran enjoys is freedom from prosecution, and has nothing to do with any sort of quest for spirituality.

As a side effect of his contact with the famous western writer, Chandran is suddenly famous – famous for having been given attention and written about by a foreigner. Visitors from abroad, influenced by Maugham and the fake version of Indian spirituality follow in Maugham's footsteps. To his new audience, Chandran recounts how he gave up a

[38] Probably *.A Writer's Notebook*. See note 2.

promising career in the civil service for a life of prayer and self-sacrifice. The second turn of irony is that he comes to believe his own lies. Following the lead of his Brahmin ancestors, he has found a way of repudiating the world and yet prospering. He thinks a "higher power" must be guiding him. Chandran, the father, states: "Fate, tossing me about, had made me a hero to people who, fighting their own petty caste war, wished to pull them down" (*HL*, p.29).

In *Half a Life's* first chapter the Naipaul's reader already recognizes two familiar overtones, which pervade these two novels and much of his fictional and non-fictional writing production: first, that Western attempts to understand India have always failed; second, that Indians, adopting European assumptions without being able to abandon their own, are doomed to live in a perpetual intellectual swamp.

In his first and most critical book about India, *An Area of Darkness* (1964), as well as in scattered episodes pervading his oeuvre, Naipaul describes Gandhi as a man deeply influenced by Christian ethics,[39] capable, after twenty years in South Africa, of seeing India with the critical eye of an outsider, and in this sense "the least Indian of Indian leaders" (NAIPAUL, 2002, p.74). But in Naipaul's view India undid Gandhi, by turning him into a mahatma, an icon, so as to ignore his social message. In the process of sanctification, the Indian people undermined the power of his social message, and turned him into yet another holy man among the thousands in the Hindu pantheon.

Chandran – the father – deems himself a follower of Gandhi. However, the narrator suggests implicitly, the issue Chandran poses himself is far from the Gandhian quest

[39] A variety of external sources about Gandhi's life and doctrine details the influence of Western thought on the development of Gandhi's pacific resistance and Civil Disobedience preaching,; the role played by of Ruskin's thought and Tolstoy's version of Christianity are particularly relevant. In *An Area of Darkness*, it reads: "He [Gandhi] emerged as a colonial blend of east and West, Hindu and Christian"(p.74).

for change in a petrified society, but rather the atavistic and paralyzing Hindu question of giving up the quest for progress and a life of achievement. By and large, Naipaul sees Hinduism looming large behind all the mimicry and disappointment of India. Its alleged sense of defeat and despair, explain and render possible the passiveness of the people, make understandable the deification of Gandhi and his ultimate failure in ridding society of millennium-old caste beliefs. Bluntly stated as above, this statement is an unavoidable simplification of the much nuanced – and often ambiguous – strains of thought that pervades Naipaul's oeuvre. Nonetheless, his thought does clash frontally with Maugham's, as it was presented and made popular by his novel *The Razor's Edge*.

3.3 CHANDRAN — THE ANGLO-INDIAN NOVEL TRADITION

The connections between Naipaul and R. K. Narayan are manifold. The most obvious one – and the starting point of the discussion in this chapter – is that Naipaul chose to call the protagonist of *HL* and *MS Chandran* – the same name of the main character of Narayan's novel *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937).[40] This fact could be seen as an irrelevant coincidence had it not been for the many instances of transtextuality regarding *HL*'s and *MS*'s narrative and aspects of both Narayan's biographical elements and aspects of many of his fictional characters, in the above mentioned novel and many of his other novels. Furthermore, there is a tangled interplay of connections regarding the two writers' backgrounds as well as their fictional characters. Willie, for instance, does not inherit just the name of Narayan's protagonist, but also elements of *HL* and *MS* historical context are based on Narayan's biography and fiction. In addition, Naipaul has often referred to Narayan in several of his

[40] Since both characters have the same name, for the sake of clarity, in this section *Chandran* refers to Narayan's character and Naipaul's Willie Chandran is referred to as *Willie*.

essays and other non-fictional books. The following paragraphs deal with the connections above mentioned, starting by the novel *The Bachelor of Arts*.

In this novel, Narayan's Chandran is a history student, the son of a retired district judge, who lives with his family in a prosperous neighborhood in a small south Indian town. He completes his B. A. at Albert Mission College. After graduation, intending to pursue further education in England but bitterly disappointed in love, he decides to become a *sadhu*, a sort of holy man who gives up earthly matters and roams the country and lives by begging. Less than a year later, he is shamed by destitute villagers into reckoning that his motives for renouncing the world are not rooted in spirituality, but are rather vengeful. Eventually he returns to his hometown and starts a new life as a newspaper's distributor, apparently relinquishing both love and plans to go to England.

The hypotext to Naipaul's novels are twofold: Firstly, Willie's father also "renounces the word" for reasons miles away from true spirituality. Besides, the narrative taking place at the Mission College history course and Chandran's problematic relationship to its metropolitan style of teaching is echoed first in Willie's father college days and then in Willie's account of his university life in London.

The story narrated in *The Bachelor of Arts* takes place in Narayan's fictional South Indian town Malgudi, a composite of the writer's two hometowns – Mysore and Madras – which are the setting of most of his fiction.[41] The town is populated by quirky characters whose approaches to tradition and modernity are the themes of most of his novels and short stories.

[41] Specially in the stories in *Malgudi Days*. See map 3 in appendix D for the location of Mysore and Madras.

Naipaul has often written about Narayan. In *An Area of Darkness* (1964), Naipaul openly praises his achievement, saying that "The virtues of R. K. Narayan are Indian failings magically transmuted. I say this without disrespect: he is a writer whose work I admire and enjoy"(NAIPAUL, 2002, p.232). At the same time that he praises, Naipaul also points out to Narayan's contradictions:

> He seems forever headed for that aimlessness of Indian fiction […] but he is forever rescued by is honesty, his sense of humour and above all by his attitude of total acceptance. He operates from deep within his society. Some years ago he told me in London that, whatever happened, India would go on. […] the India of Narayan's novels is not the India the visitor sees. […] There is a contradiction in Narayan, between his form, which implies concern, and his attitude, which denies it: and in this calm contradiction lies his magic […] He is inimitable […] (NAIPAUL, 2002, p.232).

A decade or so later, in *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), in another long commentary, Naipaul says that Narayan's fiction has a realistic surface, which mildly satirizes the provincial native ways as the traditional lifestyle crashes with the modern world. Naipaul censures him because they reaffirm tradition and subvert Westernization. Naipaul writes about Narayan's typical character Srinivas and how he (mis)understood Gandhi's non-violence plea as "no need to interfere, no need to do anything" (NAIPAUL, 2003, p.13). "Srinivas, the hero of [Narayan's novel's] *Mr Sampath*, is a contemplative idler. […] But this nonviolence or nondoing depends on society going on; it depends on the doing of others" (pp.12, 13).

Yet another instance of the complex interplay of the novels is the fact that Narayan, in his memoirs *My Days* (1974), reports the episode of his failed meeting with Somerset Maugham, on occasion of the British writer visit to Mysore. Narayan's Madras had been the first city of British India, and had become one of the centers of the country's modernization with its opportunities of education and employment in the late nineteenth

century. Everywhere across the South, Brahmins left centuries-old rural settings and occupations and moved into towns and cities, where they formed the first administrative middle class. This is exactly the context of Willie's father in *Half a Life*, only that there the character takes a twisted turn triggered by Somerset's visit. Narayan was expected by his family to find his own place in this world of work and economic security. He eventually set up to be a freelance writer's life, without much success. He was discouraged as much by the lack of publishers and readers as by his family.

Born in 1906, Narayan comes from a middle-class Brahmin family of second-generation immigrants from rural Tamil speaking South India. As his family was close to ancestral ways, he was brought up to learn Sanskrit. But both languages – Tamil and Sanskrit – were a badge of inferiority and occasions for jokes at school, along with everything else that belonged to the old Hindu world broken into by British colonialism. The language at school was English, taught from an imported textbook. Narayan's education in English began shaped by the civilization portrayed in the imported textbooks. The textbook and the English magazines he came across in India – *Bookman*, *London Mercury*, and *The Spectator* – inspired him to be a writer. Western-style education helped create a dynamic new urban civilization in what had been an agrarian society. The same kind of textbooks and magazines inspires *HL* and *MS*'s Willie Chandran to write his stories and provide the first glimpse of escape to Europe.

Modern literature, with its preoccupation with the individual, had only just started to be understood in a society ruled by custom and ritual. The first modern writers in Indian languages had emerged in only the half a century or so before Narayan's birth, mostly in the Bengali region; relatively few had attempted to write fiction in English. Narayan career

as a writer was marked by the disadvantages common to Naipaul and other writers from colonial societies, who wrote without a received tradition. These writers had had to overcome their intellectual upbringing before they could look directly at their world and find a voice that matched their experience. The groping for knowledge through an abstract maze of other cultures and worlds were repeatedly mentioned by Naipaul in his essays.

Narayan had no use for the classical Indian literature that his family kept urging him to read. Later in life, though, he turned his attention to his ancestral past when he published abridged English editions of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Paralleling Naipaul' career, the confidence came later, after Narayan had already published three novels. Before that, he made a living out of journalism for an anti-Brahmin newspaper and reviews of books. For these writers who followed foreign models, the problem was recognizing that their own experience of the world had intrinsic value, and could be written about. This is the object of reflection in Naipaul's essay *Reading and Writing*, and he recurrently comes back to this topic.[42] For writers like Narayan and Naipaul who are immersed in their fast-moving world of the decolonization aftermath, and who at first have no world or audience, the problems of finding a personal literary voice and tone are a matter of cultural survival.

Taking a closer look at *The Bachelor of Arts*, it becomes apparent that the youthful energy of Chandran does not take him anywhere. Narayan's dislike for the colonial education Chandran receives seems to have hardened into conviction: the system of education churns out clerks for business and administrative offices, reducing India to a nation of technocrats. In the novel, it is made clear that a lot of clerks is what a dependent economy needs; there is no way out for the intelligent and sensitive Chandran, who reluctantly joins

[42] As in the Nobel Lecture.

fellow students in playing at being adults and serious. He is not at ease in doing so; he feels distaste for himself as the secretary of his college's historical association; he tries to keep his distance from the revolutionary student and the poet friend; he scrapes through his final examinations, depressed.

It is the idea of platonic love – a girl sighted on the banks of the local river – that brings relief from the dreariness of his preparations for adult life. But when he finally persuades his parents to arrange a marriage with the girl, whom he never gets to speak to, the horoscopes are not matched. A distraught Chandran runs away from home, and becomes a wandering *sadhu* (see glossary). But he soon begins to feel himself a fraud in that role – the Brahminical past of his ancestors can no longer be retrieved – and when he returns to Malgudi, to a job and an arranged marriage with a good dowry, he is quick to denounce romantic love, accepts the smallness of his horizons and settles down to a life of quiet and sobriety.

Chandran is one of the first in Narayan's long list of restless drifters who, in search of their identity, quickly reach the limits to their shrinking colonial world, and then have to find ways of reconciling themselves within it. This reconciliation, though, can never be satisfying. In Narayan's novels the half-accomplished modernity of ex-colonies has impaired Chandran's growth to maturity, has made him unease in both cultures, the vanishing ancestral one and the sweeping modernity imposed by the West. It is this ethos, semi-feudal, semi-modern setting of dissatisfactions and impotence; the confused inner life of a fragmented makeshift society – it is this, besides the themes from Hinduism in Narayan's *The Bachelor of Arts* that reminds the reader of Naipaul. Narayan, unlike Naipaul, though, never casts light on the larger historical setting through which his characters drift, the major events

British colonialism, Indian independence, for instance. *HL* and *MS*, on the contrary, are ridden with historical intertext and embedded in social context In *The Bachelor of Arts*, even a quite real setting goes under the imaginary name of Malgudi; and only a few, easily missed domestic details hint at the fact that Chandran, along with many other of Narayan's main protagonists, are Brahmins, marginalized by a fast-changing world.

Nevertheless, the lack of direct social/historical depth in Narayan's novels does not prevent one from seeing in them all the anxieties and disappointments of Chandran as part of a generation of Indians expelled from the past into a new world. This anguish-ridden initiation into modern life, which both Naipaul and Narayan underwent, is what gives their work an unexpected depth of suffering. However different in tone and attitude, here Narayan and Naipaul converge in seeking to acknowledge and dramatize that suffering.

In *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), Narayan uses as background the Indian Freedom Movement – and the same is true of the first chapter of *Half a Life*. Narayan, as a young man, was forbidden by his family to get close to the agitators for freedom. The more progressive aspects of the British presence in India – the new educational institutions, the new career opportunities – had brought their own kind of freedom to many Indians, including people in Narayan's family. His father, a school headmaster, thought of his future in practical terms when he adopted modern ways and turned his back on tradition-minded ancestors. Inevitably, Narayan's writing came to depend on acceptance by British publishers and readers. He was prefaced and praised by Graham Greene, who generally introduced him to metropolitan audiences.

Narayan, like Naipaul, experienced a deep ambivalence about the mass movement against the British, never clearly expressed, but always present in Narayan writings; an ambivalence that shapes Naipaul's novels. In Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* there is an open ambivalence about the anti-colonial struggle and its impact on the Indian population. This piece of writing presents the Indian people making of the Freedom Movement whatever suits their private and religious ends: eager to revere Gandhi as a mahatma, willing to be touched by his aura of holiness, while at the same time remaining indifferent to, or unable to understand his emphasis on developing an individual self-awareness and vision. Naipaul reworked this theme in *HL* and *MS*. There is a link between this view and Willie's father's way to embrace Gandhi's cause by marrying a "backward" woman in his twisted way of interpreting Gandhi's call for sacrifice.

This novel's protagonist is Sriram, a young man in Malgudi, who joins the "Quit India movement" after falling for Bharati, an attractive and idealistic woman in Gandhi's entourage. Sriram drifts around the famine-stricken countryside, trying to convince villagers about the need to expel the British. His poor grasp of Gandhi's message is highlighted by the fact that he lets himself be persuaded to engage in violent actions by a terrorist. He is arrested and spends years in jail, still short of understanding Gandhi's political ideas. Here again the story provides a twofold hypotext. Willie is persuaded by his activist sister to join the guerrillas and ends up involved in violence in south India.

In both Narayan's and Naipaul's novels, Gandhi alone emerges as the active and self-aware Indian in the novel, struggling to awaken an emotionally passive colonial individual, in a society where a majority of people have surrendered all individual and conscious choice, and are led instead by decayed custom and fake gurus, a population to

which Gandhi becomes yet another kind of periodic distraction, another guru for the pantheon.

The one character that embodies individual initiative in the novel turns out to be a British tea planter; and Narayan portrays him in positive light. He is friendly to Sriram, who has painted the words "Quit India" on his property. Sriram, unsettled by the tea planter's attitude, tries to assume a morally superior position. Narayan shows him floundering, resorting to half-remembered bits and pieces of other people's aggressive anti-British rhetoric. Here again, there is a parallel with *HL* and *MS*. The westernized political activist Sarojini is the one to show individual initiative, even if modeled or inspired by her German husband Wolf. She actively takes the lead of her life and the one to find practical means to direct Willie's life in Berlin and later to rescue him from prison.

Many of Narayan's novels, like *The Bachelor of Arts*, end in the point at which the characters are finally turning away from the challenges of self-creation and individuality by seeking reinsertion into the ethos of traditional India. Here lies the main divergence between Narayan's and Naipaul's novels. Willie, at the age of 52, is far from attempting any return to traditional Indian lifestyle. On the contrary, he seems to have come to the conclusion that he must seek to accomplish a profession and lead a productive life – and the bitterness that this maturity has come to him too late is exposed in his last letter to Sarojini in the end of *Magic Seeds*.

4 INTERTEXTUAL REFERENCES TO NAIPAUL'S PREVIOUS WORKS

This chapter charters the way in which the themes that haunt the literary career of Naipaul recur in his two latest novels. *HL* and *MS* are full of literary echoes and allusions to Naipaul's own writings. Such analysis functions as an "entrance door" to the complexity of Naipaul's engagement with the issues which dominate his fictional and non-fictional writings exposed in the introduction and section 1.1. Those manifold issues are here grouped in three main strands as 1) identity of the colonial subject, passivity and the weight of tradition, 2) the nature of writing and the materiality of books, and 3) the interaction of former colonies' societies with metropolitan ones or the impact of modernity in colonial societies. These topics are developed, respectively, in sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

4.1 PARALLEL: *THE MIMIC MEN*, *HALF A LIFE* AND *MAGIC SEEDS*

The presence of a myriad of echoes of *The Mimic Men* (1967) in *HL* and *MS* is striking to the reader of Naipaul, not for the plot – which is very different – but for the protagonists' psychological demeanor and the ways they react to the condition of migrants. This section examines how Willie's sense of loss and disconnectedness, his struggle to find a sense of identity, and his inability to connect with others are linked to his experiences as a

colonial immigrant, which though outwardly different from Ralph Singh's, in *The Mimic Men*, can be traced to this 1967's creation. These experiences and reactions fit into patterns of colonized persons acting within colonial situations. I will also point out the parallels between *The Mimic Men* and *HL*'s and *MS*'s pessimistic conclusion and their apparent dismissal of the possibility of transformation.

> We, here on our island, handling books printed in this world, and using its goods, had been abandoned and forgotten. We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new (*The Mimic Men* p.157).

Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* is the fictional memoir of protagonist Ralph Singh. Written in a boarding house in London, it is a retrospective, first-person account of Ralph's life, ranging over his childhood in the fictional West Indian island of Isabella, his university days in London where he meets his wife, and his successful business and political careers back in Isabella. Yet, Ralph Singh, just like Willie Chandran in *HL* and *MS*, is also a prototypical colonial character, an individual confused by the plural but unequal society he was raised in and for whom identity is a primary issue. While Ralph Singh's story is told through flashbacks interwoven with self-analysis, the narrative of Willie's story in *HL* and *MS* is chronologically straightforward, but also dotted with reflection and self-analysis.

Everywhere Willie Chandran looks he sees corruption, and so does Ralph Singh, regarding his fictional island Isabella. History itself is corrupt. India's history of colonial oppression, first by Muslims and then by the British, has left the subcontinent in a despairing state of poverty. As a result of the Muslim and British domination the inhabitants of India compose a disordered and mixed society Willie wishes to escape from. The sector of Indian society to which Willie's father belongs is the result of an anemic colonial economy

that cannot support an active middle class engaged in production but rather engaged in intermediary activities like small-scale business and subsistence agriculture.

The corruption Willie perceives in history and the society it produces, and his resultant sense of alienation from both, permeates his experience of every aspect of public life in India and Africa, especially politics. In *MS*, after years in the revolutionary guerrilla, Willie finally fully realizes that the movement is absurd and ultimately pointless. Willie's involvement in the guerrilla movement is ultimately disillusioning, confirming that promised utopias of radical left do not offer chances to create a new uncorrupted society but, are rather tainted from the outset by the history that has gone before. The guerrilla leaders' rhetoric and ideas are not original or tailored to their situation but "borrowed phrases" from other revolutions in other places. Nothing new is created; their efforts are tainted by the past.

The independence movements in Africa and India depicted in *HL* and *MS* have not prevented the local political elites from fighting over what scraps of power or influence they perceive they could have as representatives or agents for the old colonial power and the lines of division between the locals become more racially drawn. Given that a colonial government is specifically structured to protect and promote the interests of a small group of colonizers, being an instrument of both class and racial domination the gradual infiltration of local elites does not fundamentally change its structure or purpose. The Africa section of *HL* seems to subscribe to Fanon's view that decolonization is always a violent phenomenon (FANON, 1963). In the second chapter of *MS*, Willie's life in parenthesis, he joins the guerrillas. After an initial although shallow idealism, he is unable to construct any positive meaning out of his political experiences; the slogans are "borrowed phrases". He becomes one of the faceless and pathetic guerilla fighters made by distress and part of distress. But the

ultimate hollowness and futility Willie discovers in the guerrilla movement are mere echoes of a much more personal and deeper emotional emptiness. Indeed, his entry into the movement is due to his own incompleteness and submission to his sister's promptings. His perceptions of outside events are colored by and filtered through this internal reality.

At the heart of Willie's recounting of his fictional life in the chapters of *MS* that takes place in the guerrilla movement is the story of how and why this sense of personal incompleteness grows to almost destroy him. Willie is not unaffected by the corruption he perceives all around him. In fact, apart from all the external disorder, Willie and the reader come to realize that the chaos lies within. By the same token, reflecting on his adult years in Africa as the husband of a mixed-Portuguese estate owner, Willie concludes that all the activity of these years existed in his own mind in parenthesis, representing a type of withdrawal, as part of the injury inflicted on him by his father's choices imprinted on him from childhood.

When he refers to his traumatic university days in London, Willie indicates elsewhere that many of his struggles with a sense of identity began during his childhood. His reactions to many of the events in his childhood are similarly characterized by disassociation and emotional withdrawal. He refuses to identify with his family's history in India; for him the region is simply a place where they have been shipwrecked. This view is only one of many of Willie's secret childhood attitudes that seem to be influenced by his reading, both at school and at home, in which he adopts a British or Western position. Willie accepts the Western European view of the world as the only escape rather than one possibility among many. Yet this only serves to disorient him, dislocating his sense of place and history from India to London, creating a crippling duality within him.

Willie's conscious and imaginative identification with Britain and the West affects him in a number of interrelated ways. When he considers his origins, he sees himself descending from a line of passive and non-enterprising oppressed upper-caste Indians which is a cause for deep, silent shame. This fits with Naipaul's pessimistic contention that identification with the colonizer is subtended by a complex of feelings ranging from shame to self-distrust. Willie's sense of shame leads him as a child to withdraw from his family and activities around him and he looks forward to escaping to London and the European landscapes that he deems to be his proper backdrop. Willie conceives of himself as protected by the West, since he thinks he is one of their own. The unfolding of the narrative discloses that this is not the case; Willie never manages to be integrated in metropolitan society. Just as he disassociates his concept of home from India, Willie projects authority away from himself toward a symbolic, disembodied entity representing the would-be superior culture. This projection slowly undermines his sense of will and engenders the feeling of helplessness that plagues him as the narrative of *HL* and *MS* proceeds and he grows older. Willie finds that London does not welcome him, he is not in his rightful place; he fails to integrate into the ideal culture presented to him through books. From childhood Willie had disowned Indian history and culture, yet he doesn't find a place in British society either.

As he had done in his previous works, especially in *The Mimic Men*, in *HL* and *MS* Naipaul presents Willie's situation as a common experience among colonized persons who emulate the colonizer. Both Willie and Ralph Singh feel estranged from both cultures and experience a crisis in identity that they never fully recover from. The result is a persistent and pervasive sense of emotional emptiness. His identity has no culture to center around and he becomes the double and hollow hybrid colonial subject that Homi Bhabha

examines in his essay[43] "Signs Taken For Wonders". Unlike Bhabha, though, who derives a possibility of celebration of the diasporas and creative mingling of cultures as the outcome, Naipaul equates placelessness with loss and disorder. This primary experience in London serves to propel Willie into a downward spiral of emotional distress, loss, and growing sense of helplessness and futility that shapes his adult experiences to follow in the next chapters of *HL* and in *MS*.

Another consequence of Willie's amorphous sense of self is that he takes refuge in developing and playing a number of social roles. Unanchored by a coherent identity, he drifts along, leading other people's lives: first he leans on Ana in Africa for 18 years, then, following his sister's ideas, spends around seven years in the guerrillas in south India. Throughout the narrative Willie is shown to be conscious of his role-playing and the fact that none of his roles ever fit. In a way, the reader is not surprised at his inevitable failure. Willie's sense of disorder led to his role-playing; he finds himself in a cycle of action and reaction that continually feeds on itself. The colonized cannot succeed in becoming identified with the colonizer, not even in copying his role properly. As stated before, this colonial angst pervades Naipaul in all his writings, notably in *The Mimic Men*. Willie continues to try and play his roles because he feels he has no authentic identity, his real self has been too damaged – first by his father's fatalistic choices and then by his experience in London. In fact, later in his narrative, Willie dates his feeling of inadequacy prior to his stay in London and says that his psychological damage began years earlier as a child; his London experience was only his most dramatic confrontation with a personal psychic state that had been developing for some time.

[43] In *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 2004.

There is a parallel here with the words of *The Mimic Men*'s protagonist: "Certain emotions bridge the years and link unlikely places. Sometimes by this linking the sense of place is destroyed, and we are ourselves alone: the young man, the boy, the child" (pp.166, 167). For both Naipaul's protagonists, the stage was set for their lives in the early years of childhood, again highlighting the deterministic view of the author.

Given Willie's overwhelming sense of inadequacy and dislocation, it follows that all his relationships with others are affected. Willie is perceptive in recognizing many of his own conflicting feelings in other colonial immigrants in London. They also internalize feelings of shame and inadequacy regarding their racial and cultural origins, though reacting to them in different ways. Like Percy Cato who feels ambivalent about his origin. In addition, Willie's relationship with women does not go unaffected. From his sexual encounters with Perdita to his marriage with Ana, Willie finds that the physical closeness of sexual intimacy does not extend to a sense of connection. Instead, the emotional intimacy Willie discovers with women is never satisfying and does not help him transcend the difficulties he faces in the world around him. The same is true to Ralph Singh. Again there is a parallel to Naipaul's earlier character Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men*, who says that he "had a superstitious reliance of her [his wife, Sandra], which was part of the strength I drew from her" (*The Mimic Men*, p.48). Also: "I felt we had come together for self-defence" (p.71). Willie has exactly the same kind of relationship with Ana; he "trusted her luck". Ralph says the very same words on page 53. Both mixed marriages – Ralph's and Sandra's, Willie's and Ana's – were the women's idea and initiative; both male protagonists went along as they relied on their "good luck".

In a way, Sandra's power of attraction comes from the fact that she belongs to British culture in a way Ralph does not, and his marriage is a strategy to attach himself to this

culture. Sandra's ease in operating within her own culture appears as a unique quality to Ralph. Unable to claim a place for himself in the colonizer's culture, Ralph's relations with women serve either to divert him from this disappointment or as an attempt to bridge the gap.

In *The Mimic Men*, Ralph's ultimate reaction to both public and personal events is withdrawal, and the same is true of Willie Chandran. Though his confused sense of identity contributes to an emotional distance between himself and others, further difficulties and a culmination of events intensify this tendency. Fear becomes the mediator between the external and internal realms, fear of the external uninviting world propelling him inward, and he discovers he has no resources with which to cope with this uninviting world. Willie shows the same attitude. Emotional withdrawal becomes the pattern in which both protagonists are depicted in the novels. "Withdrawal: it became urgent for me" (*The Mimic Men*, p.156).

Ralph's words also apply to Willie. The confusion and disorder is too much for someone who needs order and simplicity at an emotionally primal level. Both protagonists have rejected the cultural traditions of their people, and the comfort of traditional religious teachings. The narratives in *The Mimic Men* and *HL* and *MS* portray the main characters unanchored in a sea of chaos. Rather than grappling with reality, Ralph and Willie reckon that the wrongness of the world can never be put right. In his suburban London hotel retreat, Ralph Singh writes:

> It was my hope to give expression to the restlessness, the deep disorder, which the great explorations, the overthrow in three continents of established social organizations, the unnatural bringing together of peoples who could achieve fulfillment only within the security of their own societies and the landscapes hymned by their ancestors, it was my hope to give partial expression to the restlessness which this great upheaval has brought about (*The Mimic Men*, p.32).

But he realizes he cannot do this because, as he adds, "I am too much a victim of that restlessness which was to have been my subject" (p.32).

Are the efforts to forge a satisfying identity by formerly colonized peoples always doomed to entangled mimicry? The answer provided by the narratives of *The Mimic Men*, *HL* and *MS*, explicit or implicit, appear to be negative. The whole idea of transformation – and *Bildungs* – in the novels is questioned. *The Mimic Men* Ralph's political experience raises the interrelated issues of nationalism, independence, and democracy and serves to introduce the possibility of creating a better society only to discharge it as impossible. Ralph Singh concludes that Trinidad politics was the conceptual abstractions of a small group isolated from the mass of people whose lives their rhetoric sought unsuccessfully to change. While Ralph Singh sees the difficulties facing those who want to change the political and economic conditions in Isabella, he focuses mostly on the pathetic nature of their plight rather than on the British responsibilities for constructing and maintaining the colonial situation. As long as people's lives are affected by these historical conditions one cannot ignore history. The theme of ignoring history pervades *HL* and *MS*. The tragedy of it is that not everyone can escape to London as Willie and Ralph do. Moreover this escape proves unsatisfactory too.

Another very telling parallel between the two characters, Ralph and Willie, is the value ascribed to an orderly life and the sense of protection that it yields. Ralph confesses his gratitude for the "order, sequence, and regularity" (p.267) of life at the hotel and for the internal order he creates with the writing of his book. Both Ralph and Willie are colonized individuals trying desperately to find their place in the dominant culture. Both, by the end of the narratives, are in the age of maturity, having found neither achievement, nor the much cherished security.

Though neither Ralph nor Willie seem able to construct a whole identity from the fragments of their lives, caught in the empty space between two cultures, the fact that Naipaul continues to write at the age of 70, rather than withdrawing from life like his protagonists do, indicates a continuing effort to make sense of the world and of his standing in it, as well as to keep alive the discussion about the situation of the formerly colonized people. In writing, perhaps Naipaul himself is struggling to imagine an alternative to Willie and Ralph Singh, even though in both the novel written in 1967 – *The Mimic Men* – and the recent novels *HL* and *MS*, the human will to create and to transform is hampered by temperament and historical circumstances.

4.2 ON BOOKS AND WRITING

Like in many other novels by Naipaul, in *HL* and *MS* there are many characters who are writers or would-be writers. Willie shows a consciousness of the tangibility and reality of books, and a preoccupation with the social ethos they evoke. From the outset of the narrative the reader finds that the main concern of his boyhood is the school compositions. The stories that Willie writes in the mission school spring from his hatred of his father and the non-digested input from the Canadian teachers. In his "Prologue to an Autobiography,"[44] Naipaul states, "To become a writer, that noble thing, I had thought it necessary to leave. Actually to write, it was necessary to go back. It was the beginning of self-knowledge" (2004, p.79). It is significant that Willie's book is made up of stories he had heard from his father over many years. In *HL* (chapter 2) there are long metatextual passages about the process of writing, the use of borrowed stories and the self-referential quality of literature. On another key, Willie and the immigrant characters around him live a dreary version of the romanticized

[44] In the collection of essays *Literary Occasions*. New York: Picador, 2004. p. 53 to 79.

and idealized lives of international characters portrayed in Maugham's *The Razor's Edge.* In the same way the British have stereotypes about the cultures of their overseas empire, so the dominated colonial people have misplaced ideas about the literature produced by the metropolis. The book of short stories turns out to be an imitation of plots and ideas from western popular culture, namely films.

> The stories came quickly to him. He wrote six in a week. *High Sierra* [the Hollywood movie] gave him three stories and he saw three or four more in it. He changed the movie character from story to story, so that the original Cagney or Bogart character became two or three different people. The stories were all in the same vague setting, the setting of 'Sacrifice' [the first of the six stories, itself based on his mission school composition that so infuriated his father – described in pages 43 to 45 in *HL*]. And as he wrote, the vague setting began to define itself, […] a hermitage with an *unreliable holy man* [his father, Narayan's Chandran fake holy man episode in *The Bachelor of Arts*], an image maker, and outside town, the high-smelling *tanneries* with their segregated population [early allusion to chapter 3 of *MS* – "The Street of the Tanners"]. To Willie's surprise, it was easier, with these *borrowed stories* far outside his own experience, and with these characters far outside himself, to be truer to his feelings than it had been with his cautious, half-hidden parables at school. He began to understand – and this was something they had to write essays about at the college – how Shakespeare had done it, with his borrowed settings and borrowed stories, never with direct tales from his own life or the life around him (*HL*, pp.81, 82, italics mine).

There are also metatextual passages in Roger's direct speech:

> […] India isn't really a subject. The only people who are going to read about India are people who have lived or worked there, and they are not going to be interested in the India you write about. The men want John Master's – *Bhowani Junction* and *Bugles and a Tiger* – and the women want *Black Narcissus* by Rumer Godden (*HL*, p.97).

Furthermore, the self-referential and transtextual aspect of writing is present in the following passage: When Willie is asked to write an English composition at the mission school he pretends he is a Canadian and writes an invented story which is based on the bits of life he has known through American comic books.

A second aspect of the issues regarding books and writing is the metatextuality regarding the British literary canon. Throughout the novels there is a relentless criticism of British literature taught in the Raj, a literature which could not be farther removed from the actual lives of the Indian people. Among the several examples scattered in the narrative, Willie's father, says the following about Willie's composition from school: "But is it worse than Shelley and W. [Wordsworth] and the rest of them? All of that was lies too" (*HL*, p.39). *HL* and *MS* also present lengthy patches of commentary about specific books. Richard's speech in chapter 9 of *MS* of how Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* reflects the empire ethos and the presence of overseas immigrants in nineteenth century England: "the publisher who had done his book was in one of the big black squares. […] and the publisher made him imagine the carriages and servants and footmen of *Vanity Fair*. […] It was that, in such a room in *Vanity Fair*, the rich merchant wished to compel his son to marry a black mulatto heiress from St Kitts" (pp.215, 216). There is also a deep metatextual irony about "postcolonial literature" in several passages, such as in "The jacket copy was new: Willie read that his book was a pioneer of Indian postcolonial writing" (*MS*, pp.187,188).

4.3 MODERNITY AND COLONIAL SOCIETIES

This is a multifaceted discussion, which branches out in several threads. In the first chapter of *HL* the Naipaul's reader recognizes a familiar overtone: Western attempts to understand India have always failed; Indians, adopting European assumptions without being able to abandon their own, are doomed to live in a perpetual intellectual swamp. Willie realizes that a culture's rules are largely "make-believe," and that he is free to present himself as he wishes. This new sense of freedom however does not enable him to shed his past. He is plagued by a sort of internalized shame.

In the first volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action*,[45] Habermas claims that "mythical" worldviews fail to distinguish between nature and culture and that the "modern" differentiations between them marks a developmental-logical advance. This lies within the context of a general discussion of the rationality debate, about whether modern standards of rationality might justifiably claim universal applicability. Habermas persuasively argues that they can, and that the superiority of modern over mythic attitudes lies in the significance of the move from a "closed" to an "open" worldview, which is to say, from one incapable of criticizing its own beliefs to one self-reflexively able to acknowledge the contingent and potentially fallible character of those beliefs. The distinction between nature and culture appears to Habermas as a step in this "decentration" process characteristic of modernization.

The feeling of helplessness that overcomes colonial subjects aware of the fact that they have been left behind in the sweeping advance of modernity is put forward in the passage in which Willie observes a tile worker – also of mixed parentage – in the Portuguese seafood restaurant. Willie is so moved at the sight of the persecuted and abused tile worker that he thinks to himself, “Who will rescue that man? Who will avenge him?” (*HL*, p.155)

Naipaul has written about India’s caste system in several of his non-fiction books, remarkably in the "Indian Trilogy"[46] In *HL* and *MS* the author recreates the social world of a caste-based culture and roots the circumstances of a novel about identity – or the lack of it – in a character’s half-hearted effort to rebel against the caste system. The weight of Hinduism hampers modernity. Naipaul sees Hinduism looming large behind all the mimicry

[45] *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, pp. 48 -74 - in Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols., translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press, 1987. There are very interesting commentaries about Habermas in Vogel, Steven. *Against Nature* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

[46] See section 1.1.

and disappointment of India. In the author's narratives, the population's alleged sense of defeat and despair, fostered by certain traditions in Hinduism, would explain and render possible the passivity of the peasants, as well as make the deification and failure of Gandhi understandable.

One of the issues that the novels pose is the value of a life of action. Throughout *HL* and *MS* the meaning and consequences of political action – and the correlated issue of passivity – is questioned. Willie's s father destroys his future by applying to Gandhi's principles in a context where they are of no use. Percy Cato concludes that Che Guevara's aims are not as well meaning as he had believed at first, and that ideals of revolutionary justice recurrently lead to killing of innocent people and to further ills.

Change is not a voluntary act, but something that arises in a fraught fashion from the clashes within the environments and heritages of people. What emerges in *HL* and *MS*, is not a transcendence of the author's earlier view, but a bringing together of these in an increasingly conservative anti-revolutionary understanding of human needs and society

The counterpoint of Willie's passivity is Sarojini's active decision making. Apart from the Berlin chapter in *MS* and her brief visits to Willie's college room in London in *HL* and in prison in chapter 7 in *MS*, Sarojini is absent from the events narrated. However, her presence is constant in Willie's thoughts and she is determinant for the development of the story. This is structurally resolved by the resources to the letters. The narrative is punctuated by her letters, each of them either bringing about a turning point or prompting Willie's reflections.

A reading of the novels based on a feminist critical approach, which is not the case here, would have plenty of room to develop this unorthodox duality of male passivity and female activity. The male Chandrans, father and son, in their passivity, leave the reader cold; the female Chandrans on the other hand, – the "backward" wife and sister – are the ones who are more likely to gain the reader's empathy. For good or ill, it is the women who take action in the narrative. It is easier for the western reader to empathize with the women in the novels – either as victims of the caste system (the mother's case) or with Sarojini, who, compared to her brother, is a woman who takes action and at least tries to make coherent decisions.

5 INTERTEXTUAL REFERENCES IN *HALF A LIFE* AND *MAGIC SEEDS*

5.1 GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES: THE ROLE OF SETTING

Studies of literature have not given literary representations of space the same kind of scrutiny that has been spent on time, tense, and chronology. Scholars followed the idea that literature was a temporal art as opposed to spatial arts like painting and sculpture. Thus, for a long time, the general assumption was that a verbal narrative's setting was not as worth of study as its temporal framework and chronology.

In the course of my research I was set aback by the overlapping definitions of the terms *setting*, *place*, *landscape*, and *space*, often used interchangeably. For this reason I see it fit to display at the onset of this chapter what I understand by each of these terms in the context of this study of *HL* and *MS*. Setting: The elements of a scene which provide atmosphere and visual meaning, for example, a forest, a village hut, a sunny day, a hotel. The setting descriptions in the *HL* and *MS* are psychologically charged, as in evocations of places in the speeches of characters. The setting is constitutive of the drama and action. A sense of place refers to the feeling one gets from identifying with a certain dwelling. It has more to do with identity and belonging rather than the physical layout, a "sense" instead of a visual

phenomenon, more as an enclosed and humanized space, centered on how the characters perceive it. As for "landscape": Dictionary entries usually define landscape as the physical scenery. However, in Naipaul's narrative, "landscape" refers to an organization of space and the relationship that people have with landscape – through identity and community roots. In Naipaul's works generally, and in *HL and MS* in particular, the narrative voice defines landscape as also including unseen things, such as a configuration of ideas or a set of conditions, or a psychological makeup.

"Space" is a broader definition than "landscape" and "setting". Not as specific as "place", which seems to suggest a definite location or area, "space" seems to suggest something more ideological, such as a "political" space or "personal" space. Here the Bakhtinian notion of chronotope comes in handy. In his writing about "chronotope" Bakhtin draws attention to the fact that time and space in narrative texts are actually very closely correlated (1986). Literary space in this sense is more than a static background setting. The following discussion tries to establish why space is as important as time in Naipaul's works.

The depiction of India is abstract and London is sketchy, but the decadence of Portuguese and mixed Portuguese domination in Africa – probably Mozambique – is detailed. The second part of *HL* and the London Chapters in *MS* have a journalistic gist, with Willie and Roger, respectively used as media for representative pictures of colonial life in Africa and contemporary England. But there is a difference: things get to happen faster and change more sharply in London, as opposed to the dragging and unmarked time of the African estate farm.

An exception of the usually cursory description of India is the urban areas depiction, especially when it comes to indoors settings. The *Anand Bhavan* setting in *Magic*

Seeds (Chapter 2, p.44) is an important historical site sarcastically dubbed as a cheap hotel. The stately mansion is the symbol of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty and has a near synonymous association with the Indian National Congress. The site has been turned into a museum. Its huge gardens and elegant interiors are depicted as a rundown and shabby hangout of destitute people in the novel. Nehru spent his last days there, Indira Gandhi grew up there, and Mahatma Gandhi was often a houseguest. A plaque at the entrance declares: "This house is more than a structure of brick and mortar. It is intimately connected with our national struggle for freedom. And within its walls great decisions were taken and great events happened." In 1970, Indira Gandhi dedicated *Anand Bhavan* to the nation and handed it over to the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund Trust which runs it as a museum. The irony runs deep.

In the African part of *HL* historical reportage and social analysis flow into and out of fiction tinged with autobiographical and travel writing: a mixed genre that is typical of Naipaul. Naipaul has lived and worked in East Africa ("Home Again," in *A Way in the World* (1994), is based on his time there); he has written books about Africa, notably *In a Free State* (1971), and many essays.[47] Joseph Conrad, the "outsider" who became a classic of English literature, is one of Naipaul's masters. For good or ill, Naipaul's Africa comes out of *Heart of Darkness*.

Among the novels, there are clear allusions to *A Bend in the River* (1979). Overall, his vision of Africa remains remarkably constant as a region that resists understanding, which eats away at modernity projects.

[47] Among the best known are: "The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro" and "A **N**ew King for the Congo: Motobu and the Nihilism of Africa", reprinted in the collection of essays *The Writer and the World*, New York: Picador, 2002.

One of the key issues in Naipaul's writings is the extent to which his characters change their perception of themselves in relation to their surroundings in such a way as to achieve the security of finding a "place in the world" – a recurrent figure that pervades his books. The representation of *place* in literature has an important influence on how people regard individual places and regions. A host of postcolonial criticism has blamed Naipaul for debasing regions of the third world for their inability to accomplish an ordered society and contribute to modernity. The centrality of a place in Naipaul's texts is established by its weight in the behavior of characters and by the force of the imagery and style describing it. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) is emblematic of the importance attached to setting and place in his fiction. The search for his house is the central, uniting image of the novel. Besides, the symbolic role of "The Roman House" in *The Mimic Men* (1967) also testifies to that recurrent concern. The image of the house trapping characters is shown in *The Mimic Men*'s protagonist's "Roman House", and the text constantly mixes description of the house as a concrete metaphor for the character's actions. This example of characters being trapped within a house or dwelling is also reflective of setting as the simplest level of allegorical characterization – that the place inhabited by a character is representative of the type of person he is and his function in the story.

In *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), the main character's longing for a house of his own frames the narrative. The house is the central symbol for everything Mr. Biswas seeks: a solid basis for existence, a concrete individuality and social security. Although in other novels the house symbolism may not be that central, the depiction of homes – rented rooms, apartments, and houses – is very important in setting the tone of the narrative and establishing characters' personalities and perception of the world.

In *The Mimic Men* (1967) the “Roman house” not only is the physical setting of the main character’s troubled political actions, but it cannot be dissociated from his conscious questioning of those actions. Furthermore, the “Roman house” underlies his reflections about his private life, his marriage and process of divorce.

> And all this while at Crippleville our Roman house was being built. It built itself. We had both lost interest in it, but we both kept this secret from the other. It is a strain to inspect the progress of a house in which you know others will live. A house, though, is one of those things in which the principle of inertia is clearly demonstrated. It is more difficult to abandon the building of a house than to take it to the end. To the end we took ours, through all the rites that go with the building of the house, the sacred symbol; until we came to the final rite, the housewarming, the installing of the household gods who convert brick and timber into something more (*The Mimic Men,* p.76).

The "Roman house" also helps to establish the design of the novel, as it contrasts with the backward London hotel from where the narrator tells his story in flashback, and the houses of his childhood.

Space in Naipaulian narrative is deeply semantically charged and involves landscapes as well as weather conditions, cities as well as gardens and building premises; indeed, it includes everything that can be conceived of as spatially located objects and persons. It is the environment which situates objects and characters; more specifically, the environment in which characters move or live in.

In *HL* and *MS* there are significant oppositional pairs: city/country, civilization/nature, indoors/outdoors, public/private space. These spaces are culturally defined and therefore relative. In Naipaul's narrative they are clearly associated with value judgments. The countryside, open fields, forest and small villages are attuned to disorder, whereas closed

or self-contained spaces are attuned with order and security. It is striking how the depiction of the prison in *MS* is done in such a way that it evokes feelings of comfort and security to Willie, rather than the expected confinement usually attached to a jail setting.

5.2 LITERARY REFERENCES

This section accounts for the literary references as they show up in the novels. The objective is to provide background information about the many writers, books and characters mentioned in the narrative. By doing so, it is possible to grasp the literary realm that constitutes the tapestry of references and how they mingle with the narrative thread and the author's repertoire. These intertextual instances, as well as page numbers of occurrence, are laid out in the chapter-by-chapter tables in Appendix C, where all references are accounted for. The criteria for presentation here is the number of occurrences and the continuing presence of the same writers, books and characters in the author's other works. Besides, more space is given to writers usually less present to the Brazilian student of English literature, in accordance with the objective proposed. Better known authors like Ruskin are given a relatively small space here, but it is important to bear in mind that Ruskin is one of those British writers that have haunted Naipaul's literary career.

5.2.1 Writers

a) John Ruskin (1819-1900) — Victorian artist and thinker

A somewhat polemic character, John Ruskin was an artist, scientist, poet, environmentalist, and philosopher. He provided the impetus that gained respectability for the

Pre-Raphaelites. Ruskin's *Unto this Last* influenced Gandhi so much so that the Indian politician paraphrased the book as "Sarvodaya" and made it a source of his teachings. The relationship between Gandhi and Ruskin has been extensively commented by Naipaul in several of his non-fictional writings.

b) Evelyn Waugh (1903 - 1966) — English writer

In a dialogue between Willie and Roger, in the London chapter of *HL*, Evelyn Waugh is aligned with Orwell, Powell and Connolly as the "contemporary English masters". In fact, Waugh has been considered the greatest satirist of his generation. Though labelled a conservative snob by some critics, Waugh was essentially a moralist who attacked institutions and customs with impersonal scorn. He shares with Naipaul not only the conservative label, but also the travel and autobiographical writing, the interest in Africa and the distanced – maybe disdainful – perspective.

Educated in Oxford, he spent much of his time traveling. He served with distinction in World War II. Waugh appeared in the literary scene with a group of novels satirizing twentieth-century life with sophisticated wit; his best-known works include *Decline and Fall* (1928), *Vile Bodies* (1930), and *A Handful of Dust* (1934). *Black Mischief* (1932) and *Scoop* (1938), both set Africa, are utterly satirical. His most popular novel, *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), tells of the spiritual regeneration of a wealthy Catholic family. *The Sword of Honour Trilogy*, comprises his three World War II novels, *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955), and *The End of the Battle* (1961), which display Waugh's typical ironic wit rendered in a melancholic mood. In addition to fiction, he wrote travel books, biographies, and the autobiographical piece *A Little Learning* (1964).

Waugh is one of those writers that haunt Naipaul. He is often referred to in many of his essays and fictional pieces.

c) Anthony Powell (1905–2000) — English novelist

A writer of social comedy, he is best known for his 12-volume novel collectively entitled *A Dance to the Music of Time,* which consists of a detailed study of changes in the snobbish and self-contained world of the British upper and middle classes from World War I to the sixties. These themes are part of Naipaul's obsessions. Novels in the series include *A Question of Upbringing* (1951), *The Acceptance World* (1955), *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant* (1960), *The Valley of Bones* (1964), *The Military Philosophers* (1969), *Books Do Furnish a Room* (1971), and *Hearing Secret Harmonies* (1975). Powell was a prolific writer, and produced many other novels as well as plays, essays and a four-volume memoir.

d) Cyril Connolly (1903-1974) — English critic and editor

Co-founder of *Horizon* (1939-49), a small literary magazine that reflected Connolly's iconoclastic attitudes toward society. He also worked as a book reviewer for *The New Statesman* – from where Naipaul may have heard of him, as both writers did book reviews for this magazine – and London's *Sunday Times*. Among his works are *Rock Pool* (1935), a satirical novel; *Enemies of Promise* (1938), an autobiography of ideas; *The Unquiet Grave* (1944), with critical commentaries and aphorisms; *The Condemned Playground* (1945) and *Previous Convictions* (1964), both collections of literary essays.

e) A. J. Munby (1828 – 1910) — Victorian writer

Munby is extensively mentioned in *MS*, chapter 11, in a long speech by Roger about the ambiguities in the historical relationship between upper and lower classes in England. He is described by Roger in a detailed way:

> Munby was born in 1828 and died in 1910. This makes him the exact contemporary of Tolstoy. He was a highly educated man, a fine and vivid writer in the effortless Victorian way, and he was deep in the intellectual and artistic life of his time. He knew many of the great names. Some, like Ruskin and William Morris, he knew by sight. When he was still a very young man he could greet Dickens in the street […] (*MS*, pp.271, 272).

Roger recalls Munby's description of the hardships of maid servants, whose tasks included handling chamber pots bare handedly, and says "Something of this [Munby's writings] sorrow and disgust came to me when I thought of Marian's past. It came upon me at our most intimate moments" (p.275,276).

Arthur J. Munby was a Victorian poet, barrister and civil servant. His records of working women in Victorian times provide an important source of information about the age. The collection published by Trinity College, Cambridge, under the title *Working Women in Victorian Britain, 1850-1910: The Diaries and Letters of Arthur J. Munby (1828-1910) and Hannah Cullwick (1833-1909),* in 1993,[48] includes 64 diary volumes and 12 notebooks with descriptions of the working women and their places of work, industry and exploitation, child rearing, marriage and accounts of his meetings with working women in Victorian Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland.

[48] The collection above mentioned is available in microfilm format. Further information at the Toronto Library, at: <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/robarts/microtext/collection/pages/workwomn.html> Access on 28th October, 2005.

f) William Morris (1834-1896) — Pre-Raphaelite artist

Also mentioned in *MS*, William Morris is an artistic personality in English literature and fine arts, the founder of the British Arts and Crafts Movement. He is nowadays more known as a designer of wallpaper and patterned fabrics than as a writer of poetry and fiction. Morris is also a pioneer of the socialist movement in Britain. The Pre-Raphaelite was a group of artists and critics, founded in 1848 by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and others. They rejected the Mannerist mechanistic approach and aimed at reforming art. They believed that the Classical compositions of Raphael were a harmful influence on academic teaching of art.

5.2.2 Novels

b) *Vanity Fair* (1848) by William Makepeace Thackeray

In *MS* (chapter 9, pp.215, 216) Willie ponders about the reasons why his publisher brought about the novel and its allusions to the grandeur of the empire. He mentions the fact that the "rich merchant" in *Vanity Fair* wanted his son (the character's name is George Osborne) to marry a colonial heiress from the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. Miss Swartz, described as a "rich, woolly-haired mulatto," was a boarder at Miss Pinkerton's Select Academy for young ladies on Chiswick Mall, where, by reason of her being an heiress, paid double, but then she learned French to acquire some social status. Note the irony in the mulatto character's name: Swartz evokes the German word for "black" (schwarz).

The novel *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero* satirizes the middle-class English society of the early 19th century. The novel, at first published serially in *Punch*

magazine, was the first work that Thackeray published under his own name, and was very popular at the time. Some editions had illustrations by the author. Thackeray made clear through the narrator that the book was meant to be instructive. Some critics say that the novel presents structural problems, and that Thackeray seemed to have lost track of the huge scope of the work and mixed up characters' names and minor plot details. In the same way as *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*, *Vanity Fair* contains a remarkable number of allusions and cross-references. The title, for example, refers to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.* Another similarity to *HL* and *MS* is that the majority of the characters have flawed personalities. *Vanity Fair* can be read as an exposition of human sins (vanity being one of the worst ones) and portrays a bleak view of the human condition. The main characters are Becky Sharp, a cunning woman determined to make her way in society, and Amelia Sedley, a good natured and simple minded girl. The book traces the two women's lives in London and the countryside.

b) *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) by Thomas Hardy

Hardy is often mentioned in Naipaul's work. Hardy began to write the novel that would become *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in the summer of 1884. The literary magazine *The Graphic* (this magazine, not coincidently, is a remarkable intertext in *MS*) agreed to publish the novel serially, but the publishers required to censor it before publication, as Hardy was known for his ability to offend everyone. Interestingly, Naipaul is also known for his ability to offend established opinions. Hardy felt so constrained by *The Graphic*'s demands that he included an allusion to the magazine's directors' heavy-handed treatment in the courtroom scene. Nevertheless, Hardy's novel eventually began its serialization in January, 1886. In May of the same year, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was published in two volumes.

The Mayor of Casterbridge is set in the county of Wessex, a land that has relied on the beliefs of the farming folk for centuries. Because the farmers are more connected to the land, they follow a more primal religion, based on the changing of the seasons and the forces of nature. One of these forces of nature is *fate*, which usually works through two channels: chance and irony. Again, not by coincidence, fate happens to be the crucial theme in *HL* and *MS*. In *The Mayor of Castrbridge*, chance often brings characters together: Farfrae and Lucetta are brought to Casterbridge unexpectedly, but their arrival ruins the lives of the Henchards. Ironic fate works upon the people by making their plans go awry. Just as Michael convinces Elizabeth-Jane that she is his daughter, he finds the note from Susan that tells the truth. Nature assists fate; the moves of a primal and unchanging world working against the weak human, life becomes a series of pains, with brief respites of happiness.

When *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was first published in *The Graphic* magazine, Hardy wrote, "It is not improbabilities of incident but improbabilities of character that matter."[49] This is indeed the theme of the novel, which has the additional title, *"The Story of a Man of Character."* In fact, the above mentioned statement fits the narrative in *HL* and *MS*, inasmuch as these novels problematize the fatalistic twist of Willie Chandran. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as well in Naipaul's two novels, fate lays out the situations for the characters, but in the end their personalities determine how they will react**.** Michael earns the Farfrae's trust, but bad temper turns the young man away. Michael's pride keeps him from confessing secrets. Lucetta's reckless personality causes

[49] As quoted by Philip V. Allingham, Contributing Editor, Victorian Web; Faculty of Education, Lakehead University (Canada). This overview of the Victorian short story was created for English 3412 (Victorian Fiction), Lakehead University, January through May 2004. From Cassis, A. F. "A Note on the Structure of Hardy's Short Stories." Colby Library Quarterly 10 (1974): 287-296. <http://www.victorianweb.org/victorian/genre/pva300.html >. Access on 18th September, 2005.

her to take risks for love. The gossiping nature of the townspeople is responsible for the ride that kills Lucetta, and the gossip ruins Michael's career. All along the plot, personality is just as responsible for the weaknesses of the characters as fate is. In *HL* and *MS*, Willie Chandran's indecisive personality is also a key issue in the unfolding of the narrative.

c) *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1762) by Oliver Goldsmith

This Irish writer is best known for the canonical pieces *She Stoops to Conquer* and *The Deserted Village*. *The Vicar of Wakefield* was published in 1766. The novel starts in the idyllic parish of Dr. Primrose, but disaster strikes quickly. Primrose is made poor by the bankrupting of a merchant, Squire Thornhill, who encourages questionable behaviour in Primrose's wife and children, while there are various subsidiary adventures such as Mr. Burchell's saving of Sophie Primrose and later suspicion for the disappearance of Olivia. The novel follows the vicar's fruitless quest to find his daughter, his accidental discovery of his son George, and Thornhill's wretched treatment of women. The moral tale behind the plot is about Primrose's strength of character in times of hardship.

It is remarkable how often *The Vicar of Wakefield* is cited throughout the two novels. One instance is this Willie's direct speech:

> I had a lot of trouble with the books we were told to read. I tried reading *The Vicar of Wakefield.* I didn't understand it. I didn't know who those people were, or why I was reading about them. I couldn't relate it to anything I knew. Hemingway, Dickens, Marie Corelli, The Sorrows of Satan […] The only things I understood and liked were fairy stories. Grimm, Hans Andersen. But I didn't have the courage to tell my teachers or my friends (*MS*, p.112).

5.2.3 Characters

a) Artful Dodger — Dickens's character

As a nickname, "Artful Dodger", is commonly used to refer to someone who is good at getting away with irresponsible actions. In *Magic Seeds*, Roger likens the irresponsible use of the British Welfare State benefits to Dickens's character. "It's like Dickens's England (*MS*, p.246)". A few pages later: "Today's circumstances require us actually to invite the Artful Dodger and his crew into our house, and the insurance companies tell us, too late, that nothing lost in this way can ever be redeemed. Strange and various needs the modern Dodgers have […]" (*MS*, p.251).

The Artful Dodger is a character in *Oliver Twist* (1839), by Charles Dickens. His real name is Jack Dawkins. He is called a dodger due to his skills in avoiding arrest, and success as a pickpocket. He is the leader of a gang of young criminals, trained by the elderly Fagin. Dickens' second novel tells the story of the orphan Oliver set against the seamy underside of the London criminal world. It was published in monthly parts in *Bentley's Miscellany*, from 1837 to 1839, at the same time as *Pickwick* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

b) Dick Tracy — cartoon character

Dick Tracy is a popular character in American pop culture created by cartoonist Chester Gould in 1931 for a newspaper comic strip of the same name. Among its traits are intelligence, endurance and fast shooting abilities. He is a police detective who fights a variety of villains. The strip was distributed by the Chicago Tribune Syndicate. Gould wrote

and drew the strip until 1977. In *HL* Dick Tracy is used by the narrator as an icon of the American pop culture input in Willie's "diseased" mind, as is shown, for instance, in the second chapter of *HL*: "This is what the missionaries have done to him with Mom and Pop and Dick Tracy, and the Justice Society of America comic magazine […]" (pp.45,46).

5.3 Historical References

Willie's account of his life is filled with whining, self-reproaching for his passivity and his incompetence. He acknowledges he is unable to master anything and always flees rather than fight. Nonetheless, he does travel to England, Africa, and Germany, and he does join the guerrilla in India. All along the narrative, the protagonist is set in areas where historically significant events take place. He is part of the wave of students who went to England in the fifties; he is part of the now mythic Noting Hill encounter of immigrants and British Bohemians which led to the notorious Noting Hill race riots. He is in London at the time of the Suez crisis. He is in Africa at the time of the guerrilla war and the collapse of the Portuguese empire and the independence guerrillas of large parts of the continent. He is in the last years of cold-war Berlin, where he witnesses all those events with fear and an urge to retreat. The guerrilla movements the protagonist joins in *MS* are well documented and ongoing historical events. This movement is the object of annexes B and C. Here these movements are dealt with in connection with its leaders, in section 5.3.2. None of the historical events intertwined in the fictional narrative are imaginary, all the references are chronologically fitting and grounded in the annals of history. Throughout those, Willie never achieves self-determination, but floats from the influence of his father (and the deterministic ethos of Hinduism), to the influence of his friends in London: at first the third world immigrants (portrayed in the character Percy Cato), then Roger (standing for the British

ethos), then to his revolutionary sister, then to Roger again in the end of the novel. An awareness of the reality of those events adds to the appreciation of the way the protagonist is affected by them.

5.3.1 Events

a) The Salt March

On 12th March 1930, Gandhi started what was to pass on to history as the "Salt March" by walking from the Sabarmati ashram with 78 supporters. They headed 241 miles south, to a costal town called Dandi. On the 5th of April, by the time Gandhi and his group reached Dandi, a crowd of thousands had joined them. The name of the event is linked to Gandhi's strategy to gain popular support. The British held the monopoly on the salt trade in India, and the product was heavily taxed. The taxation on salt, one of means to generate revenue that supported British colonial rule, was an increasing source of strain on the impoverished population. Gandhi made the salt tax the focal point of non-violent political protest. Despite the fact that salt was readily accessible to workers in the coast for free, they had to pay for it. Gandhi's protest proved to be very appealing nationwide, across caste and ethnic boundaries, as the British taxes on it had an impact on all of India. The Salt March is today acknowledged worldwide as a milestone event that shook the British Empire and stirred the ongoing growth of nationalistic forces in India. In the first chapter of *HL*, the famous march helps to establish the context for Willie's father's plight. The father explicitly mentions it in connection with the origin of his fateful decision and its dire consequences. "And he [Gandhi] had to come up with the unexpected and miraculous idea of the Salt March, a long march from his ashram to the sea, to make salt" (p.11).

b) Back to Africa Movement

This was a movement claiming that descendants of African slaves in America should migrate back to the African continent and create an independent all-black nation there. Africa was seen as their homeland. The movement stated the population of African ancestry should settle there because its leaders believed that it would never have justice in communities where most of the people were white. The movement started in Jamaica and achieved its heyday in the U. S. in the twenties. More details in the entry "Marcus Garvey" in section 5.3.2**.**

c) Quit India movement or Civil Disobedience

The Quit India Movement was a call for independence of India from British rule issued by Gandhi on August 8th, 1942. The Indian National Congress passed a resolution demanding immediate independence from Britain. The draft proposed that if the British did not accede to the demands, a massive Civil Disobedience movement would be launched. In Bombay Gandhi urged the people to follow a non-violent civil disobedience and urged the masses not to follow the orders of the British. Large scale demonstrations were held all over the country. However, not all the demonstrations were peaceful. The British responded by mass detentions. Arrests were made nationwide, bombs were dropped and demonstrators were subjected to public flogging. Many national leaders went underground and continued their struggle by broadcasting messages over clandestine radio stations, distributing pamphlets and trying to establishing a parallel government. As explained in Sections 1.3 and 1.4, the shape the protagonist's life takes is inconceivable without the events that marked his childhood and

his father "ill-fated" choices, which, in turn, have a direct connection to the Civil Disobedience movement.

d) The Suez Crisis – 1956

The Suez Canal in Egypt, which links the Mediterranean and Red Seas, was opened in 1865. There was military confrontation from October to December 1956 following the nationalization of the Suez Canal by President Nasser of Egypt. In an attempt to reassert international control of the canal, Israel launched an attack supported by British and French troops. Widespread international campaign led to the withdrawal of the British and French. The crisis resulted in the resignation of British Prime Minister Anthony Eden. The London conference of maritime powers proved unsuccessful. The military intervention met Soviet protest and the USA did not support it. Cold War politics came into play during the Suez Crisis, straining relationship with the U.S. The USSR was seeking to extend its influence in Africa at the time and saw Egypt as a key country with which it could establish friendly relations. The support given to Egypt by the Soviets during the Suez Crisis increased their influence in the region. The Suez Crisis had a significant role in the Cold War as well as in the conflict between Egypt and the former colonial powers of Britain and France.

In the second chapter of *HL*, there is a lengthy passage containing Willie's ponderings about his lack of real historical knowledge and its dire consequences for his dizzy sense of identity. This is done having the Suez crisis as a foil. In London, he runs into Krishna Menon – the Indian spokesperson for international affairs during Nehru's rule. His alienation from history and ignorance about the contemporary event – around 1956, in his London College – prompts the narrator to say:

> Willie knew nothing about that invasion. The invasion had apparently been caused by the nationalization of the Suez Canal, and Willie knew nothing about that either. He knew, from school geography lessons, about the Suez Canal; and one of the Hollywood movies they had shown at the mission school was *Suez*. But in Willie's mind neither his school geography nor *Suez* was strictly real. Neither had to do with the here and now; neither affected him or his family or his town; and he had no idea of the history of the canal or Egypt. He knew the name of Colonel Nasser, the Egyptian leader, but it was only in the way he knew about Krishna Menon: he knew about the greatness of the man without knowing the deeds. […] He had learned to shut out the main stories [in the newspapers], the ones about far-off wars or election campaigns in the United States that meant nothing to him. […] Now, after his sight of Krishna Menon in the park, he was amazed at how little he knew of the world around him. He said, 'This habit of non-seeing I have got from my father' (pp.51, 52).

5.3.2 People

a) Kandapalli Seetaramiah — guerrilla fighter

The name is probably a reference to Kondapalli Seetaramaiah,[50] founder of the "People's War Group", which has conducted armed uprising in the forests of Andhra Pradesh, India, sometimes in alliance with the "Liberation Tigers of Tamil". PWG engages the tribal people and impoverished farmers of south India and Sri Lanka against police and government targets.

According to Joseph Brewda and Madhu Gurung[51], both the "Liberation Tigers of Tamil" and the PWG, the two movements linked to Kandapalli, are currently active. Kandapalli's actions are still part of current affairs in India, as many national Indian

[50] Spelling divergences, sometimes the name is grafted as Kondapalli, with "o".
[51] In the article "Lanka terrorist groups", in the October 13, 1995 issue of Executive Intelligence Review. More details in annex C.

newspapers show. The story telling of Kandapalli's grand-daughter's claims in his defense[52] in April, 2004 in the India national newspaper *The Hindu* substantiates the influence of the guerrilla leader in India's current political scene.

Although he never appears in action, the role of Kandapalli as an icon of the irrationality of the guerrillas is of surmount importance for the narrative in *MS*. To make a long story short, his name is first mentioned in the first chapter, chapter 11 is entitled "The end of Kandapalli", and references to his deeds and ideology recurs throughout the novels, as it can be seen in the chapter by chapter tables in Appendix C.

b) Lin Piao (1907-1971) — Chinese communist General in Mao's Cultural Revolution

Lin Piao is famous for being the editor of *Mao's Little Red Book*. By editing it and requiring soldiers to study it, Lin Piao helped bring about the Cultural Revolution. Lin Piao was an outstanding general who fought for the communist cause in China, and was considered to be a skilled practitioner of guerrilla warfare. He became involved in radical student circles in the late 1910s and early 1920s, when he joined the communists and entered the Whampoa Military Academy. Lin Piao was close to Mao Tse Tung and had a reputation for tactical and strategic brilliance. In 1945 he was appointed the commander of all Communist forces in Manchuria, where the fate of China was decided in the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949). In 1971 Lin attempted an unsuccessful coup d'état. Fleeing the country, he died when his plane crashed or was shot down over Mongolia. In the first chapter of *MS*, Sarojini, the leftwing sister, blames Lin-Piao for the mistakes of the guerrilla in India, stating that "The Lin-Piao line turned the revolution into middle-class theatre" (p.13).

[52] Published in the online edition of the India national newspaper *The Hindu*, Thursday, April 22nd, 2004. The story is reprinted in annex B.

c) Pol Pot (1925? - 1998) — Cambodian communist leader

Pol Pot is often ranked among the most violent dictators in recent history, along with Stalin and Hitler. The countryside of Cambodia, the site Khmer Rouge atrocities, was referred to as "the killing fields" and later became the title of the 1984 movie directed by Roland Joffé. Pol Pot and his army, the Khmer Rouge, came to power in Cambodia in 1975. He was named prime-minister of the new communist government in 1976 and began a program of violent reform. The Khmer Rouge abolished currency, religion and private property and evacuated cities in order to create a Maoist agrarian society free of Western influence. Ironically, both Pol Pot and Mao studied the works of Lenin and Marx in Europe. Under his regime, executions and famine killed around 20% of the population. When Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1979, Pol Pot was expelled from the capital, Phnom Penh, but continued to lead the Khmer Rouge army in the countryside with support from China and the U.S. He resigned as leader of the army in 1985, and by the late nineties a split in the Khmer Rouge led his former comrades to take him to prison for murder. The cause of death is unknown: some say he was murdered and some say he committed suicide. In 2001 it was announced that his final hideout would be turned into a museum.

In the third chapter of *HL*, Willie asks Sarojini about his friend Percy Cato[53]. In her answer she links the "Pol Pot position" with extreme radicalism and rage.

> He was doing well with Che and the others. Then some kind of rage possessed him. He had left Panama as a child and he had a child's idea of the continent. When he went back he began to see the place differently. He became full of hatred for the Spaniards. You could say he reached the Pol Pot position (p.130).

[53] As remarked in the beginning of chapter 3, the character Percy Cato is the man in-the-know, the skilled man who teaches Willie about the ways of the world in their London phase. Cato eventually engages into Che Guevara's rebellion. Also, see appendix H for the Roman Cato.

d) Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) — Back to Africa Movement leader

Jamaican born Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) was a black leader who started the "Back-to-Africa" movement in the US. He claimed that the African-Americans should consider Africa their homeland and that they should settle there because he believed that they would never attain full citizenship in communities where most of the people were white.

He began his movement in Jamaica in 1914 and developed it in the United States. In the early 1920s, Garvey had around 2 million followers, chiefly poor people. Despite their poverty, his supporters sent him thousands of dollars. He used the money to set up all-black businesses. Business profits were to be used to finance the movement. In 1925, Garvey was convicted of mail fraud in connection with sale of stock in one of the businesses. His doctrine of racial purity and separatism however brought him enemies among established black leaders, including the writer W.E.B. Du Bois, head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The movement declined. Garvey was deported to Jamaica in 1927 and died in London in 1940.

Garvey combined the economic-nationalist ideas of Booker T. Washington and Pan-Africanists with the political possibilities as he sought to end imperialist rule and create modern societies in Africa. In 1919 he created the Black Star Line, an international shipping company to provide transportation and encourage trade among the black businesses of Africa and the Americas. Garvey sought to channel the black militancy into an organization that could overcome class and national divisions.

In *HL* there is an explicit connection between the character Marcus and the historical Marcus Garvey. The ironic twist lies in the fact that the character Marcus is described by Roger (a Londoner) not in relation to politics, but to private goals and achievements. Roger tells Willie:

> He [the editor who may publish Willie's book] likes sometimes for his own pleasure to bring together dissimilar people, to create a social nosegay, as he says. […] There will be a negro I met in West Africa when I did my National Service. He is the son of a West Indian who went to live in West Africa as part of the Back to Africa movement. His name is Marcus, after the black crook who founded the movement. You will like him. He is very charming, very urbane. He is dedicated to inter-racial sex and is quite insatiable. […] He is now training to be a diplomat for when his country becomes independent, and to him London is paradise. He has two ambitions. The first is to have a grandchild who will be pure white in appearance. He is half-way there. He has five mulatto children, by five white women, and he feels that all he has to do now is to keep an eye on the children and make sure they don't let him down. He wants when he gets old to walk down the King's Road with this white grandchild. […] His second ambition is to be the first black man to have an account at Coutts. That's the Queen's bank (pp.84, 85).

The same character reappears at the end of the narrative, in the closing chapter of *MS*, as the elderly happy groom's father at the interracial wedding Willie attends. In a last letter to Sarojini, Willie writes: "My friend here [Roger] says that the happiest and most successful people are those who have precise goals, limited and attainable. We know such a man. He is an African or a West Indian African, now a highly respected diplomat" (p.285). Although Marcus does not take part in the main events narrated in *MS* and *HL*, his life story, as reported by other characters, provides a thread connecting the beginning and the end of the novels.

e) Jawaharlal Nehru (1889 - 1964) — India's first Prime Minister

Considered as the architect of the nation, Nehru was the political heir of Gandhi. Building on the Mahatma's foundations, as leader both of the Congress Party and of independent India from 1947, Nehru shaped the face of India's recent history. His five-

year plans helped to establish the economic independence that Gandhi had envisaged. Nehru was arrested several times during the civil disobedience campaign orchestrated by Gandhi (see 5.3.1, item c above). When the Second World War breaks out Britain unilaterally declares India's involvement on the side of the Allies. Nehru argues that the country is to be aligned with the democracies but insists that India should only fight as a free country. Nehru was a Kashmiri Brahmin, a member of India's most aristocratic caste. In spite of the fact that his domestic policies were directed to socialism, unity, and secularism, Nehru established his own dynasty. Nehru's only child, Indira Gandhi, served as India's prime minister. Her son, Rajiv Gandhi, was prime minister until 1989. In spite of intermittent disagreements with Gandhi, both leaders worked together for years. In his autobiography, Gandhi writes that Nehru "is the quintessence of the conscious and subconscious will of those millions […] he knows his India well and reacts to her slightest tremors, and gauges a situation accurately and almost instinctively" (2004, p.307).[54] Naipaul often refers implicitly and explicitly to both Gandhi's autobiography and to Nehru's role in the history of India, both tightly interwoven with *HL* and *MS*'s protagonist's story. One instance of that occurs in the second chapter of *MS* (p.44) regarding the *Anand Bhavan* episode, when the setting, symbol of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, is portrayed in the narrative as a cheap hotel.

f) Sir Roper Lethbridge (1840-1919) — Historian

Lethbridge was an Indian civil servant and local historian, prominent in West Country organizations. In the first chapter of *MS*, he is mentioned in connection with the recurrent idea underlying the novels: India has no idea of History:

[54] Cited by Kulke and Rothermund in *A History of India* 4.ed. London: Routledge, 2004.

> All the history you and people like you know about yourself comes from a British textbook written by a nineteenth-century English inspector of schools in India called Roper Lethbridge. […] It was the first big school history book in India and it was published in the 1880s by the British firm of Macmillan (*MS*, p.6).

Lethbridge wrote *The Golden Book of India*[55], a genealogical and biographical dictionary of the ruling princes, chiefs, nobles and other persons, titled or decorated by the British during their rule in India, covering the period until 1890. Sir Lethbridge is also known for having exchanged letters with Gandhi.[56]

g) Rani of Jhansi (1835 - 1858) — Indian nationalist heroine

Rani Lakshmi Bai, the Queen of the small India state called Jhansi, also known as the Rani of Jhansi[57], was a nationalist heroine of the first war of India freedom, a symbol of resistance to the British rule in India. At that time Lord Dalhousie was the Governor-General of India. British rulers rejected Rani's claim that Damodar Rao was the legal heir to the state Lord Dalhousie decided to annex the state of Jhansi as Maharaja Gangadhar Rao. In 1854 the British ruler announced an annual pension for Rani and ordered her to leave the Jhansi. Rani Jhansi was determined not to give up her state. She was a symbol of patriotism. Rani Lakshmi Bai strengthened the defense of Jhansi and assembled a volunteer army of rebellions. Women were also given military training. The local population of Jhansi, irrespective of their religion or caste, was determined to keep fighting encouraged by Rani. The British attacked Jhansi in March 1858. Rani Jhansi did not surrender, but eventually fell to the British forces.

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[55] Originally published by Macmillan and Co., London, 1893. Republished by Elibron Classics, 2001

[56] The letters can be read at <http://www.mkgandhi.org/cwm/vol6/ch137.htm>. More information about Sir Roper Lethbridge at <http://www.elibron.com/english/other/item_detail.phtml?msg_id=110956> and <http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/Exbourne/>. Access on 18th September 2005.

[57] Among the several institutional sites on Rani of Jhansi <http://www.jhansi.nic.in/rani.htm> provides thorough information. The text by N.S. Ramaprasad at <http://freeindia.org/biographies/jhansi/> is a little biased towards national price, and highlights the importance of her historical role. Access on September, 25th 2005.

In the first chapter of *MS*, Willie mentions this Indian mythical figure juxtaposed to Queen Elizabeth and Buddha, Sherlock Holmes and Marie Antoniette, in a typical narrative technique of erasing historical chronology in order to depict William's unanchored existence. "Beyond that everything was a blur, a primeval ocean, in which figures like Buddha, Akbar and Queen Elizabeth and the Rani of Jhansi and Marie Antoinette and Sherlock Holmes floated about crisscrossed" (p.18).

h) Len Hutton (1916 – 1990) — English cricketer

Mentioned in *MS*, chapter 9, Len Hutton[58] is a famous sport's personality. Reportedly, his greatest achievement was the 1953/54 series of games in the West Indies. In *The Middle Passage* , *The Mimic Men*, and other writings about Trinidad and the West Indies, Naipaul has often ironically referred to the way the British cricket had been borrowed by the locals to become a very popular entertainment, and the way native successful players became a source of pride for the native population. Hutton was knighted in 1956 for his services to cricket.

[58] Among other sources, there is a full fledged article about him at the institutional site about British history at <http://www.englandhistory.com/sections/people/sports/lenhutton.htm>. Access on 14th August, 2005.

CONCLUSION

And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Ecclesiastes, 12:12

In reading Naipaul's *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds,* I have been deeply impressed by two features: the first one is the density of intertextual relations to Western literary tradition, India's culture and historical events in every chapter. The second is the way the narrative reshapes the themes that recur throughout the author's previous production. When I set out to analyze *HL* and *MS*, my initial focus was on the internal logic of the novels. I was concerned with tracing out the connections the narrative draws between Hinduism, cultural contrasts, and parodic projections that pervade Naipaul's oeuvre and how the author consistently portrays the individual as drawing his identity from his own lived experience in the decolonization aftermath. It also seemed remarkable that Naipaul's works as a whole stress the ways in which the colonial subjects often fail to create meaning and/or adapt to the crumbling postcolonial world around them. The more deeply into the text I followed these various threads, the more entangled they became. It was necessary to devise a method so as to tackle those threads, and at that point I chose to resort to Genette's classification of transtextual categories. Genette's classification became the operational tool by which I charted

my understanding of the tapestry of references in the novels. His studies on the manner texts find their ways in the process of cultural exchange seemed more adequate to my purposes than the mainstream postcolonial theory. Studying these two novels in detail, I arrived at an understanding of what Naipaul sees as the social handicaps that give rise to the difficulty (or altogether impossibility) in the endeavor of a colonial individual to find a place in the world; as well as the damage the paralysis of former colonized societies can imprint on individuals and communities. I also came to see the ways the novel portrays identity as a construction, an evolving entity rather than an essential and static one; for only within such a conception can identity contain the ever-present potential for transformation.

For the sake of textual economy, I will not paraphrase here the partial conclusions set at the end of the preceding chapters and sections, but rather outline more general considerations about *HL* and *MS* in the light of the author's career. The broad nature of the following concluding paragraphs is in keeping with the objective set out in the introduction, that is, to study the manner in which these two recent novels condense and revisit the author's worldview.

Modernity may be an accomplished fact in the West, but remains a fraught, a repeatedly frustrated aspiration in the former colonies. Naipaul's writing consistently upholds a belief in the powers of the western version of civilization, and in what, in his view, it offers to peoples around the world: the dignity of individuality, the idea of progress, the possibility to pursue private and professional fulfillment. This faith in the redemptive powers of modernity, however, is balanced by a sense of wonder about the past, and the supposed "wholeness" of pre-industrial systems of belief. Naipaul's regard for the vanished or threatened ways of being has often been deemed as cultural "essentialism" by a host of post-

colonial critics aligned with the approach to cultural hybridization in the manner of Homi Bhabha.

Naipaul is an essentially exilic writer; all his texts carry with them this *angst* of clashing and fading worlds. The anguished perception co-exists with an attitude of acceptance, a faith in human perfectibility against all odds. These visions are not usually peacefully or neatly juxtaposed. Their intertwining gives Naipaul's work its characteristic tension and bitter flavour, and makes it one of the most wide-ranging – and uneasy – meditations on the contemporary postcolonial world order. The protagonist reaches a pessimistic conclusion regarding his own fate. The very idea of fate is problematized in the narrative. Every personal relationship is tainted from the outset; Willie discovers nothing in his experiences or in himself that suggests a possibility of overcoming his initial failures or disappointments. At the same time, however, the narrative indicates that the rule of fate is embedded in historically accountable facts, and therefore it can be challenged.

Naipaul's drifter characters – Willie, among others – map out an emotional and intellectual journey that many people in former colonial societies have made: the faint consciousness of individuality and nationality through colonial education; confused anti-colonial assertion; postcolonial sense of inadequacy and failure; unfulfilled private lives; distrust of modernity and individual assertion and, finally, the search for cultural authenticity and renewal in the neglected, once-great past. Willie's ultimate failure drifts away from the Bildungsroman architext, as exposed in section 3.1. The narrative in *HL* and *MS* subverts many of the traits of the classical Bildungsroman.

Above and behind the theme of imperialism, the notion that history is cruel lurks in the narrative; as well as the realization that the world consists of people trying to satisfy their desires and that to find a place for oneself entails conquering and damaging others. There is always an unfair process of change – and change is not necessarily conceived as progress, or change for the better – as individuals and peoples compete for comfort, protection, space. There is always domination and the need to seek protection from the powers that be. Those who lack the means to protect themselves, or lack willpower or competence to impose themselves, or at least to find a safe niche, are doomed to the endless human process of flight and migration in search of survival. Willie's ancestors fled starvation under the consequences of Moghul domination of India; his father found security pretending to be a holy man; Sarojini found protection from caste prejudice by marring a western man; Willie sought protection under Ana's lifestyle – and abandoned her as soon as it became clear that the protected life she offered in the mixed community in Africa was about to crumble under the guerrilla. He mistakenly and shortly believed that the revolutionary guerrilla in India would offer him a secure frame to live by, only to be deeply frustrated.

Edward Said's opinion about Naipaul's writings is that, by identifying with the cultural and political authority of metropolitan Europe, Naipaul has sacrificed a distanced critical perspective on the damages imposed by European imperialism. As remarked in section 2.1, this view is typical of postcolonial criticism approach, which does not hold the whole truth. The difference between Said's and Naipaul's standings maybe arises from their competing versions on how best to negotiate and live their shared experience of colonial subjects living and working in the West. Apparently Naipaul favors a reinvention of the colonial subject and commitment to the traditions of the society that shelters the migrant, even

if it is to the cost of a life-long quest for adaptation and often bitter consequences for one's identity. In the semi-autobiographical novel *The Enigma of Arrival*, the narrator says:

> I had thought that because of my insecure past – peasant India, colonial Trinidad, my own family circumstances, the colonial smallness that didn't consort with the grandeur of my ambition, my uprooting of myself for a writing career, my coming to England with so little, and the very little I still had to fall back on – I had thought that because of this I had been given an especially tender or raw sense of an *unaccommodating world* (1988, p.92, italics mine).

Said, by contrast, takes a politically charged view in his *Imperialism and Culture*, and claims that there is room for an activism and redemption in literary writing and critical studies. Regardless of which position one takes, they both arise from the same historical reality. The postcolonial world-order in most regions provided its inhabitants with a confusing state of existence. The old cultures are still in force, with all the traditions, beliefs and values that they have held in the past. However, the new culture of modernity, fostered by the colonizers, increasingly seizes its place among the people. This conflict has been handled in postcolonial writing by displaying the constant push-pull contest that seems to be the norm of the times.

Until *Half a Life* and its sequel *Magic Seeds*, India was never used by the author as the background of his fiction. Of the three locations presented in the novels, India and Africa remain inexact and vague. London is accurately presented, with street names and other venue markers that are mentioned clearly. In Naipaul's narrative, England is situated at a different level of reality, firm and stable, while other regions are relegated to haziness. The narrative is intrinsically interwoven with the historical events surrounding the independent movement in India, the politicians involved as well as the ancient history of India and Hinduism.

Given that *HL* and *MS* deal largely with characters from India, and given that this country has a long history of foreign domination first by Muslim and then by the British, to reach conclusions about the novels it is worth looking at theories of decolonization. In his work *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Said explores the notion that there are two stages in the process of decolonization. The first takes place in the geographical sense and the second, more complex and painstaking, takes place in the cultural, social, and ideological realms. Said states that the second stage is characterized by an effort to restore the broken culture of a community that goes on long after the establishment of politically independent nation-states. Such a cultural nationalism is concerned with an imagined cohesive national identity that receives much of its force from its deliberate contrast with the conqueror's culture. The rise of postcolonial literature is part of this process and it often mingles with trends in postmodernist literature. The novels at hand are part of this larger movement of exploring particular modes of being and constructions of reality.

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), Franz Fanon claims that native elites usually form a nationalistic framework that replaces the colonial power in oppressing the native population. This author claims that cultural regeneration can be impaired by movements based on ideals of religious, linguistic, or ethnic traditions that can be as oppressive as the colonial rule. The contemporary rise of religious fundamentalism, in India and elsewhere, is in large part a reaction to an increasingly multicultural yet economically unbalanced world in which spiritual values deeply rooted in ancient communities seem out of place in the modernity carried along by the former western colonizers. Among their many aspects, *HL* and *MS* consist of an interwoven mosaic of citations and allusions characteristic of the postmodern way. The narrative explores the staying power of religious myths and examines how they can take hold of an individual quest for identity in a culture torn between

the urge to be modern and the pull of the past. All of these ideas come into play in the novels' treatment of Hinduism, of religion as cultural narrative, added to the pitfalls of naïve revolutions.

The narrative highlights a deterministic view and questions the human agency in the light of the kind of Hinduism as practiced in the half-modernized India to provide individuals with means to achieve an accomplished and productive life as required by the standards of modernity in Western society. The narrative suggests that the passivity and acceptance promoted by Hinduism clashes with the possibility of individual growth and insertion in contemporary society. Whether the idea is right or wrong, Naipaul's novels seem to argue that integration in the modern western-bound lifestyle is not only unavoidable but must be pursued if one is to achieve a meaningful life. Furthermore, the novels suggest that Hinduism is a cultural myth: it provided a safe but stifling lifestyle for its adherents and served their needs for a long time, but in current days – in the historical necessity of integration into Western modernity – it is no longer useful, it rather limits and restricts instead of providing solutions or a path to self-fulfillment.

HL and *MS* present a bitter account of the evils of Hinduism deterministic views and the caste system, as well as – in the narrator's point of view – Gandhi's pathetic and failed attempts to remove it from Indian society. The novels distinguish between the genuine desire of individuals to make sense of the world, as expressed through Willie's existential yearning for finding a place in it *and* the collective mind of Hindu religion, which, in the way it is portrayed in the narrative, is more concerned with power and its own survival as an institution than it is with spiritual quests.

Besides the exploration of the lasting impairing effects of the religious impulse, the narrative in *HL* and *MS* also examines how mythic stereotypes and cultural projections filter through cultural traditions and institutions to affect the psychological lives of individuals. In *HL* and *MS*, Willie constantly reminds himself that all his life he has not managed to pursue his own goals, he has never tried to live up to his own standards of being in control of his life.

The narrative claims that a flexible and adaptable sense of self in general is more practical and more realistic than a self that is static and unchanging. But Willie is unable to forge a new identity out of his burden determined by caste and origin, even though he recognizes the need to do so. Willie cannot bring his many selves together. In the end, Naipaul seems to argue, it is a question of will. Willie submits to his destiny, while Sarojini does not.

Naipaul ultimately abides with the western idea that personal will and energy are the seats of humanity's creative abilities, and human rational nature is essential to the progression and development of the self. The whole of Naipaul's view, developed in the course of his writing career, seems to be that the only possible alternative for the colonized is assimilation or perishing. Willie is obsessed about his own extinction and chooses (without conviction) to withdraw into other people's lives and ideas – Ana's, Sarojini's, the guerrillas', and finally Roger's. The end of *Magic Seeds* finds him under Roger's protection, living in his house, where he belatedly attempts to make sense of his life. Here there is a parallel with many of the author's other pieces, especially with *The Mimic Men*'s protagonist. In his self-exile in a London hotel room, after failed attempts to assert his standing as a colonial subject

fighting for independence, Ralph writes his memoirs. This process of rediscovery stands for the individual plight as well as the broader drama of decolonization.

The life Willie Chandran leads, and the reality he observes, is told in painful bleak detail. Naipaul's language is concrete and carefully confined. This language offers a claustrophobic image of existence. And yet it is precisely this language that makes *HL* and *MS* so unsettling. Willie is displaced, removed from immediate reality – but he is not the only one. In Roger's voice, "The common people are as confused and uncertain as everybody else. They are actors, like everybody else" (p.247). One of the novels' main lasting impressions is that nobody is at home, everyone is lost. In this and other instances, Roger tries to explain the changed world around him, and the narrator has him admit that he does not often understand it, which makes Roger an unlikely mouthpiece for whatever the author might mean.

The language in *HL* and *MS* does not show sympathy for any of the characters. The short searing sentences and the compact chunks of dialogue mirror the drifter protagonist. The narration is as pitiless as the troubled postcolonial world. The novels tell a story stripped of compassion. *HL* and *MS* represent life for the colonial subject as a sequence of diasporas and the related urge to take the best shelter one can manage from the turmoil of history. A pessimistic tone impregnates the two novels, and the reader is left with the feeling that only the realm of literature provides such shelter, makeshift as it may be, from a harsh unwelcoming world.

The objective of this thesis from the outset was to scan the narrative of *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* in order to examine the ways it sheds light on the writer’s works. The method proposed was to trace the textual references in novels and to keep track of their

threads. This task is of course an unending one due to its own nature, as the more than two millennium old wisdom of Ecclesiastes testifies. Although it is true that "of making of many books there is no end", be them literary or academic, one must sooner or later put a limit to one's writing, and consider it done in spite of possible omissions a thesis inevitably entails. In sharing this research and the information provided in the appendices, nonetheless, I hope this thesis proves helpful for the readers as an introduction to Naipaul's set of concerns as developed in all his fictional and non-fictional writings

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APPENDICES

HL chapter 1			*HL* chapter 2						*HL* chapter 3									*MS* chapter numbers											
1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
India father's story – childhood early youth			London – college Notting Hill						Africa – Portuguese colonial country [leaves for Africa in unit 2 p.124]									Berlin	India – guerrilla					India prison	London				
20 years			3 years						18 years									5 months	7 to 8 years					circa 1 year	circa 2 years				
Willie born late 1930s [1936?]			ca. 1956 to 1958						ca. 1959 to 1976										ca. 1976 to 1983						ca. 1984 to 1986				
1890s: great-grandfather flight from temple 1930s:Maugham's visit (p.3) 1930:Salt March [1938:Maugham's visit] 1947: India's independence			1956: Suez crisis 1958: Notting Hill race riots						1960s: independence fights, collapse of Portuguese rule 1964: start of guerrilla 1975: Mozambique's independence									end of cold war	1986: the Liberation Tigers of Tamil active in south India. 1986: People's War Group reactivated in 1986-87					(Willie is around 50)	late 1980s immigrant scene second generation multicultural city				
Willie is 41 in the end of *Half a Life*																		Willie is 52 in the end of *Magic Seeds*										

APPENDIX B — *HL* and *MS* Overview Table

novel	*Half a Life*			*Magic Seeds*											
chapter	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**
chapter title	**A Visit from Somerset Maugham**	**The First Chapter**	**A Second Trans-lation**	**The Rose-Sellers**	**Pea-cocks**	**The Street of the Tanners**	**Safe Houses**	**Deeper in the Forest**	**The End of Kandapalli**	**Not the Sinners**	**The London Beanstalk**	**The Giant at the Top**	**An Axe to the Root**	**Suckers**	**Magic Seeds**
first page	p. 3	p. 36	p. 107	p. 1	p. 24	p. 50	pg. 75	p. 99	p. 126	p. 152	p. 176	p. 197	p. 228	p. 249	p. 283
time span	20 years	3 years	18 years	5 months	ca. 8 years					ca. 1 year	2 years				
space	India	London Notting Hill	Africa	Berlin	India guerrilla town	India guerrilla	India guerrilla	India guerrilla	India guerrilla	India prison	London	London	London	London	London
narrator	the father	3rd person	p. 107 to p. 131: 3rd person p. 131 shift to 1st person	3rd person	3rd person	3rd person	3rd person	3rd person	3rd person	3rd person	3rd person	3rd person	3rd person	Roger's voice	3rd person
letters		from Maugham, p. 47; from the father, p. 105	from Sarojini, p. 108; from Ana, p. 117; from Sarojini (Cuba), pp. 121, 122			3 to Sarojini, p. 61, p. 66 and p. 71; from Sarojini, p. 63	from Sarojini, p. 80			2 from Sarojini, p. 158 and p. 166			2 from Sarojini, p. 236 and p. 242		to Sarojini, pp. 284,285
Key Naipaulian concepts	determinism passivity	caste; identity; writing	security	erased history	"Two worlds"; moder-nity	home-lessness	caste	borrowed ideas	order; security	writing	home-lessness	fear; nullity	Hinduism; modernity	housing; decay	pas-sivity

APPENDIX C — *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* Chapter Tables

Introductory Note

The following chapter tables provide the reader with an at-a-glance grasp of the novels' elements which are relevant for this thesis and serve a twofold objective. The first one is to present complementary instances that support the transtextual issues tackled in the body of the thesis. For this reason the first column refers to topics dealt with beforehand and also indicates sections as organized in the table of contents. The second purpose is to include textual evidence from the novels. For easier visualization, the excerpts from *HL* and *MS* are in italics, while occasional commentaries are in normal font. Bold face is used to highlight some relevant phrases.

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 1**
chapter title	**A Visit from Somerset Maugham**
first page	p. 3
number of pages	33
time span	about 10 years – father's narrative from birth to 18 years old
opening lines	*"Willie Chandran asked his father one day,' Why is my middle name Somerset? The boys at school have just found out, and they are mocking me.* *His father said without joy,' You were named after a great English writer. I am sure you have seen his books around the house.'* *'But I haven't read them. Did you admire him so much?'* *'I am not sure. Listen, and make up your own mind.'* *And this was the story Willie Chandran's father began to tell. It took a long time. The story changed as Willie grew up. Things were added, and by the time Willie left India to go to England this was the story he had heard*." p.3
closing lines	"*His father said, ' It has been a life of sacrifice. I have no riches to offer you. All I have are my friendships. That is my treasure.'* [Willie asks:] *'What about Sarojini?" [father replies:] 'I will speak to you frankly. I feel she was sent to try us. I can tell you nothing about her appearance that you don't already know. Her prospects in this country are not bright. But foreigners have their own ideas of beauty and certain other things, and all I can hope for Sarojini is an international marriage*." p.35
geographical references (5.1)	India
literary references (5.2)	**Somerset Maugham** – chapter title "[…] *foreign critics began to see in me the spiritual source of The Razor's Edge. My persecution stopped. The writer – to the general surprise, an anti-imperialist – had, in hid first Indian book, the book of travel notes, written flatteringly of the maharaja and his state and his officials, including the principal of the college. So the attitude of everybody changed. They pretended to see me as the writer had seen me: the man of high caste, high in the maharaja's revenue service, from a line of people who had performed sacred rituals for the ruler, turning his back on a glittering career, and living as a mendicant on the alms of the poorest of the poor*. " p.5 *"And when sometime in 1931 or 1932 I heard that the mahatma had called for students to boycott their universities, I decided to follow the call. I did more. In the front yard I made a little bonfire of* **The Mayor of Casterbridge** *and* ***Shelley*** *and* ***Keats****, and the professor's notes, and went home to wait for the storm to beat about my head*." p.11 "[…] ***Browing*** *and* ***Arnold*** *and the importance in* **Hamlet** *of soliloquy*." p.12 *"She had almost no idea of the story of Hamlet.* […] *She had thought that the play was set in India."* p.13

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 1** (cont.)
literary references (5.2) (cont.)	*The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy's novel – p.20 "*and then the great writer* [Maugham] *and his friend appeared, together with the school principal, and my life took yet another turn*." p.29 encounter with the writer (Maugham) pp.30, 31
historical references (5.3)	**Gandhi** – the Salt March – "*And he* [Gandhi] *had to come up with the unexpected and miraculous idea of the Salt March, a long march from his ashram to the sea, to make salt*." p.11 Willie's father: "*I am following the mahatma's call* […] *I am sacrificing the only thing I have to sacrifice*."[his caste pride, by marrying a low caste girl] p.25 **Nehru** – p.28 "fireband" – the Labourers Union – p.16
narrator	Willie's father "*This was the story that Willie Chandran's father told. It took ten years. Different things had to be said at different times. Willie Chandran grew up during the telling of this story*." p.36
characters' appearance	Willie's mother – "*There was a girl at the university. I didn't know her. I hadn't spoken to her. I had merely noticed her. She was small and coarse-featured, almost tribal in appearance, noticeably black, with two big top teeth that showed very white, She wore colours that were sometimes very bright and sometimes very muddy, seeming to run into the blackness of her skin. She would have belonged to a backward caste*." p.13 **Sarojini** – "*This time it was a girl, and this time there was no room for any kind of self-delusion. The girl was the image of her mother. It was like divine punishment. I called her Sarojini, after the woman poet of the independence movement, […] was also remarkably ill-favoured*." p.34
key Naipaulian concepts	Hindu passivity Security p.15 **Determinism**/Fate: "*Fate, tossing me about, had made me a hero to people who, fighting their own petty caste war, wished to pull them down*." p.29

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 2**
chapter title	**The First Chapter**
first page	p.36
number of pages	71
time span	around 3 years in London
opening lines	"*Willie Chandran and his sister Sarojini went to the mission school* [in India]. *One day one of the Canadian teachers asked Willie, in a smiling friendly way, 'What does your father do?"* p.36
closing lines	"*Willie thought, 'It's something I have learned since I came here* [London]. *Everything goes on a bias. The world should stop, but it goes on."* p106
geographical references (5.1)	India – up to p.49 London – from p.49 to the end of chapter – Willie is 20 years old when goes to London College in London: "*The college was a semi-charitable Victorian foundation and it was modeled on Oxford and Cambridge.* […] *And because the college as like Oxford an Cambridge it was full of various pieces of "tradition" that the teachers and students were proud of but couldn't explain*". p.57 The Buckingham Palace, the Speaker's Corner, Bayswater Road – p.50; Claridge's Hotel – p.51 The Buckingham Palace – p.56 Debenhams (magazine) – pp.62, 63,64, 65, 79 Oxford Street – p.61 Bayswater – p.65 Marble Arch – pp.62,65,66 Oxford Street – p.61 Cricklewood – p.66 Notting Hill – p.68,79 Chelsea (Richard's party) – p.100 Underground to Holborn – p.74 the Ritz hotel – p.71 Kingsway – p.74 Bush House – p.74 Law Courts – p.77 Soho – p.68 Wardour Street – p.82 Chez Victor (restaurant on Wardour Street) – p.82 Jujuy in north Argentina – p.100 Willie's father, about Willie's composition from school: "*But is it worse than* **Shelley** *and W.* [**Wordsworth**] *and the rest of them? All of that was lies too*." p.39 Willie's short-story name: "A Life of Sacrifice" – p.45

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
literary references (5.2)	"[Willie's father] *thought, 'His mind is diseased. He hates me and he hates his mother, and now he's turned against himself. This is what the missionaries have done to him with Mon and Pop and* ***Dick Tracy****, and the* ***Justice Society of America comic magazine****, and the* ***Christ and the Cross movies*** *in Passion Week, and* ***Bogart****, and* ***Cagney*** *and* ***George Raft*** *the rest of the time. I cannot deal rationally with this kind of hatred. I will deal with it in the way of the mahatma. I will ignore it. I will keep a vow of silence so far as he is concerned*." p.45,46 **Somerset: (also Key Naipaulian concepts – writing)** "*At last Roger said, ' I know* ***your great namesake and family friend*** *says that a story should have a beginning, a middle and an end. But actually, if you think about it, life isn't like that. Life doesn't have a neat beginning and a tidy end. Life is always going on. You should begin in the middle and end in the middle and it should all be there. This story about the Brahmin with the tribal chief coming to see the Brahmin in his hermitage. He begins by threatening and ends by groveling, but when he leaves we should know he is planning a terrible murder. Have you read* ***Hemmingway****? You should read the early stories. There's one called* ***'The Killers'****. It's only a few pages, almost all dialogue.* […] *Hollywood made a big film out of it, but the story is better. I know you wrote these stories at school. But you are pleased with them. What is interesting to me as a lawyer is that you don't want to write about real things. I've spent a fair amount of time listening to devious characters, and I feel about these stories that the writer has secrets. He is hiding*." p.79 (Roger's words) **letter from Somerset Maugham** to Willie in London: "[…] *there came a letter from the great writer after whom Willie was named. It was on a small sheet of Claridge's paper* […]. *The letter was typewritten, double spaced and with wide margins. Dear Willie Chandran, It was nice getting your letter. I have very nice memories of India, and it is always nice hearing from Indian friends. Yours very sincerely… And the shaky, old man's signature was yet carefully done, as though the writer felt that was the point of his letter*." p.55 Pelican paperback *The Physiology of Sex*, p.67 [Written by Walker, Kenneth, published GB: Penguin Pelican, first edition in 1940] *The Vicar of Wakefield* – p.47, again on p.48 Orwell, Waugh, Powell, Connolly – p.78 *The Killers* – p.79 Shakespeare – borrowed stories – p.82

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
literary references (5.2) (cont.)	*The New Statesman* (autobiographical: Naipaul wrote for *The New Statesman* as a free lancer in his early years in London) p.82 V. S. Pritchett (writer of reviews for *The New Statesman*) – p.82 ***Wuthering Heights* – Reference to the postcolonial kind of "writing back" recreating versions of canonic works** – Roger speaking to Willie: "*One day you might give us a new reading of* Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff was a half-Indian child who was found near the docks of Liverpool*." p.98 Hollywood movie *Suez* – p.52 movie *High Sierra* – pp.81, 82 and 96 movie *White Heat* – p.96 movie *The Childhood of Maxim Gorgy* – p.96 Roger's direct speech: "[…] *India isn't really a subject. The only people who are going to read about India are people who have lived or worked there, and they are not going to be interested in the India you write about. The men want John Master's* – Bhowani Junction *and* Bugles and a Tiger – *and the women want* Black Narcissus *by Rumer Godden*." p.97 **Proust** – "In Proust there's a social figure called Swann" – p.84 "*Richard presents himself as a kind of* Bertold Brecht*, the promiscuous and smelly German communist playwright*." p.86 **Thackeray** – p.98 – Richard direct speech: "*These houses used to be the houses of rich London merchants a hundred and fifty years ago. One of the houses in this square might very well have been the Osborne house in* Vanity Fair. […] *What is hard nowadays to imagine, and what most people forget, is that Thackeray's great London merchant, sitting in a room like this, wanted his son to marry a Negro heiress from St. Kitts in the West Indies*." p.98 *Vanity Fair* – pp.98, 100 *The Animal in You – and Me* – p.100 Gray (poet) – p.93 BBC Commonweath programmes – p.73 Penguin Books – p.73 Bertold Brecht – p.86
historical references (5.3)	Gandhi's civil disobedience – p.40 Krishna Menon (India's spokesman in international forums) and **Nehru** – p.51 Krishna Menon / **Suez** invasion (history) – p.72 **Gandhi** at the Round Table Conference in England in 1931 – p.89 Back to Africa movement – pp.84, 85

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
historical references (5.3) (cont.)	Panama Canal, First War – p.59 Latin America – p.88 – Roger direct speech: "*Colombia is a poor country, but she's connected to one of those absurd Latin-American fortunes that have been created out of four centuries of Indian blood and bones*." p.88 Identity and history: "*And just as, when he had walked down Kingsway to Bush House to record his talk about being an Indian Christian* [to BBC radio programme], *there has come to Willie for the first time some idea of the wealth and power of pre-war England, so, gradually, out of his friendship with Roger, Willie felt he was seeing behind many blank doors, and there came to him the beginnings of an idea of England far removed from the boys in the college of education and the sensation-seekers of the immigrant-bohemian life of Notting Hill*." p.77
books and writing (4.2)	**borrowed stories – self-referentiality:** "*The stories came quickly to him. He wrote six in a week.* ***High Sierra*** *gave him three stories and he saw threes or four more in it. He changed the movie character from story to story, so that the original* ***Cagney*** *or* ***Bogart*** *character became two or three different people. The stories were all in the same vague setting, the setting of 'Sacrifice'. And as he wrote, the vague setting began to define itself, began to have markers: a palace with domes and turrets, a secretariat with lines of blank windows on three floors, a mysterious army cantonment with white-edged roads where nothing seemed to happen, a university with a yard and shops, two ancient temples where dressed-up crowds came on certain days, a market, housing colonies with graded dwellings, a hermitage with* ***an unreliable holy man*** [his father, Narayan's Chandran fake holy man episode in ***The Bachelor of Arts***], *an image maker, and outside town,* ***the high-smelling tanneries with their segregated population*** [chapter 3 of *Magic Seeds* – The Street of the Tanners, *MS*, p.50]. *To Willie's surprise, it was easier, with these borrowed stories far outside his own experience, and with these characters far outside himself, to be truer to his feelings than it had been with his cautious, half-hidden parables at school. He began to understand – and this was something they had to write essays about at the college – how* ***Shakespeare*** *had done it, with his borrowed settings and borrowed stories, never with direct tales from his own life or the life around him*." pp.81, 82 Roger direct speech: "*They've all written books. It's the last infirmity of the powerful and the high-born. They don't actually want to write, but they want to be writers. They want their name on the back of a book.* […] *People pay a vanity publisher to bring out their books*." p.101 Richard's indirect speech about publishing industry *"*[…] *going first into the paper-making business in Jujuy in the north of Argentina and later printing paperback books more cheaply than in Europe and the United States*." p.100

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
narrator	third-person: short, coordinated sentences, often broken. A period is usually followed by a coordinated connector like *and* and *but*.
characters' appearance	**Willie** reinvents himself: "*he adapted certain things he had read, and he spoke of his mother as belonging to an ancient Christian community of the subcontinent, a community almost as old as Christianity itself. He kept his father as a Brahmin. He made his father's father a 'courtier'. So playing with words, he began to re-make himself. It excited him and began to give him a feeling of power*." p.58 **Percy Cato**: "*Percy was a Jamaican of mixed parentage and was more brown than black. Willie and Percy, both exotics, both on scholarships, had been wary of one another* […]*"* .p.58 "*Percy loved clothes. He always wore a suit and a tie. His shirt-collars were always clean and starched and stiff, and his shoes were always polished, with new-looking insteps and heels* […]. *Good clothes seemed, almost, to have a moral quality for him; he respected people who respected clothes."* p.60 **Perdita**: "*Roger said, 'My girlfriend is coming* [to lunch at Chez Victor]. *Her name is Perdita. She may even be my fiancée.'* […] *She was tall and slender, not beautiful, unremarkable, with a slight awkwardness of posture. She was made-up in a different way form June, and something she had used had given a shine to her pale skin*." p.82 **June** (Percy's girlfriend) sex scene – p.61 Willie and June – p.66 **Roger** – p.76 "*But he was charmed by Roger. Roger was a young lawyer whose career had hardly started*." p.76 "*Roger was tall and wore double-breasted dark suits. His manner, his style, his speech (easily veering into a curious formality, with complete, balanced sentences, creating for Willie and effect of wit) – all of this came to Roger from his family, his school, his university, his friends, his profession. But Willie saw it all as personal to Roger*." p.77 **Richard**: Roger speaking: "*But Richard is only a bedroom Marxist*" p.87 **Marcus** – p.84 [Marcus reappears in *Magic Seeds* chapter 10 "*Marcus has succeeded*." *MS* p.240] Roger speaking in direct speech (a recurrent narrative device): "*Roger said one day, 'My editor is coming to London soon.* [a page length of Roger's direct speech uninterrupted] *He* [the editor] *likes sometimes for his own pleasure to bring together dissimilar people, to create a social nosegay, as he says*. […] *There will be a negro I met in West Africa*

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
characters' appearance (cont.)	*when I did my National Service. He is the son of a West Indian who went to live in West Africa as part of the* ***Back to Africa movement****. His name is Marcus, after the black crook who founded the movement. You will like him. He is very charming, very urbane. He is dedicated to inter-racial sex and is quite insatiable.* […] *He is now training to be a diplomat for when his country becomes independent, and to him London is paradise. He has two ambitions. The first is to have a grandchild who will be pure white in appearance. He is half-way there. He has five mulatto children, by five white women, and he feels that all he has to do now is to keep an eye on the children and make sure they don't let him down. He wants when he gets old to walk down the King's Road with this white grandchild.* […] *His second ambition is to be the first black man to have an account at Coutts. That's the Queen's bank*." pp.84, 85
letters	**letter from the father** – p.105. In the very end of chapter 2 there is the father's letter with news from Sarojini. "*They* [Sarojini and her husband] *are going to make a film about Cuba. It's the place where they make cigars. They are going to be with a man with a Goan kind of name, Govia or Govara, and then they will be going to other places*." p.105 – Perception of history, the misspelled name "Govara" most probably refers to **Che Guevara**. The letter shows the father's total misapprehension of historical facts. "*A letter came to Willie from India. Envelopes from home had a special quality. They were of local recycled paper, suggesting the junk from which they had been made, and they would have been put together in the bazaar, in the back rooms of the paper stalls, by poor boys sitting on the floor, some of them using big-bladed paper-cutters (not far from their toes), some using glue brushes. Willie could easily imagine himself back there, without hope. For that reason the first sight of these letters from home was depressing, and the depression could stay with him, its cause forgotten, after he had read the letter*." p.104, 105
key Naipaulian concepts	mixed-parentage, **caste**: Willie's father: "*He is his mother's son*. […] *She has these mission-school ambitions. Perhaps after a few hundred rebirths she will be more evolved. But she can't wait like other decent folk. Like so many backwards [low caste people] nowadays, she wants to jump the gun*." p.39 **caste**: "*That was how Willie Chandran's mother learned that in the world outside aluminum was for Muslims and Christians and people of that sort, brass was for people of caste, and a rusty old tin was for her*."[the untouchables, or the lowest caste – about vessels for drinking water at the Canadian Christian Mission School] p.37

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
key Naipaulian concepts (cont.)	"*They* [the untouchables] *didn't know about the religion of the people of caste or the Muslim or the Christians. They didn't know what was happening in the country or the world. They had lived in ignorance, cut off from the world, for centuries*." p.38 **caste**, Brahman rituals, **sacrifice**: "*One day he sees a group of tribal people passing in front of the temple compound. They are black and small, bony from starvation, and almost naked. Hunger has driven these people from their habitations and made them careless of old rules. They should not pass so close to the temple because the shadow of these people, their very sight, even the sound of their voices, is polluting. The Brahmin has an illumination*. […] *He seeks out the headman and in the name of charity and religion he offers to buy one of the half-dead tribal children*. […] *the child is to be drugged and taken to a certain low cave in the rocky wilderness and left there*. […] *The sacrifice is done*, […] *With a practiced hand the Brahmin sacrifices the two to the spirit of the cave."* pp 44, 45 **immigrants** survival tactics in London: pp.66,73,74,75 and other pages scattered all over the chapter. This topic bears strong hypertextuality to ***The Mimic Men*****.** "*In fact, through Percy, and without knowing what he was being introduced to, Willie was becoming part of the special, passing bohemian-immigrant life of London of the late 1950s.This hardly touched the traditional bohemian world of the Soho. It was a little world of its own. The immigrants, from the Caribbean, and then the white colonies of Africa, and then Asia, had just arrived. They were still new an exotic; and there were English people – both high and low, with a taste for social adventure, a wish from time to time to break out of England, and people with colonial connections who wished in London to invert the social code of the colonies – who were ready to seek out the more stylish and approachable of the new arrivals. They met in Notting Hill, neutral territory, in dimly lit furnished flats in certain socially mixed squares […]. But few of the immigrants had proper jobs, or secure houses to go back to. Some of them were truly on the brink, and that gave an edge to the gaiety*." pp.68, 69 **immigrant scene** (and Bildungsroman's protagonist typical encounter with the big city): "*Willie knew more of London now[through Roger], and didn't need to have Percy as a guide and support. Those bohemian parties with Percy and June and the others –and, as well, some of the lost, the unbalanced, the alcoholic, the truly bohemian – those parties in shabby Notting Hill flats no longer seemed metropolitan and dazzling*." p.104

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
key Naipaulian concepts (cont.)	**Hindu passivity** blamed for ignorance of History: invasion of Egypt by Britain and France; the Suez Canal, Colonel Nasser "*Now, after his sight of Krishna Menon in the park, he was amazed at how little he knew of the world around him. He said: 'This habit of non– seeing I have got from my father.' He began to read about the Egyptian crisis in the newspapers, but he didn't understand what he read* […] *it was necessary to kwon about what had gone before. [...] he had lived without a knowledge of time. He remembered one of the things his mother's uncle used to say: that the backwards had been shut out for so long from society that they knew nothing of India, nothing of other religions, nothing even of the religion of the people of caste, whose serfs they were. And he thought: ' This blankness is one or the things I have got from my mother's side.'* " pp.52, 53

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 3**
chapter title	**A Second Translation**
first page	p.107
number of pages	104
time span	18 years in Africa (Ana's country) 41 years old in the end of the novel; "*When she came back later I said to her* [Ana], *'I am forty-one. I am tired of living your life*." p.211 "*For the past two and a half years I have lived like a free man.*" p.110 (at the London college)
opening lines	3rd and 4th sentences – first paragraph "*No one could say where Percy was, but a story was that he had left London and gone back to Panama. Willie was forlorn at the news. It was as though – especially after the riots of Notting Hill – all the early part of his life in London was now lost*." p.107
closing lines	dialogue between Willie and Ana: "*When she came back later I said to her [Ana], 'I am* ***forty-one****. I am tired of living your life*." "*You wanted it, Willie. You asked. I had to think about it*." "*I know. You did everything for me. You made it easy for me here. I couldn't have lived here without you. When I asked you in London I was frightened. I had nowhere to go. They were going to throw me out of the college at the end of the term and I didn't know what I could do to keep afloat. But now the best part of my life has gone, and I've done nothing."* "*You are frightened of the new war*." [guerilla fight had intensified and the Portuguese inhabitants were physically menaced] "*And even if we go to Portugal, even if they let me in there, it would still be your life. I have been hiding for too long*." *Ana said, " Perhaps it wasn't my life either*." p.211
geographical references (5.1)	London – up to p.124 the riots of Notting Hill – p.107 Africa – from p.124 to the end of the novel hypertext from ***A Bend in the River*****,** and essays about Africa – p.141, 142 African habits "*They had social obligations which were as intricate as those I knew at home. They could without warning take days off estate work and walk long distances to pay a ceremonial call or take a gift to someone*." p.142
literary references (5.2)	**Kama Sutra**: "*But in our culture there is no seduction. Our marriages are arranged. There is no art of sex. Some of the boys here [London] talk to me about the Kama Sutra. Nobody talked about that at home. It was an upper-caste text, but I don't believe my poor father, brahmin though he is, ever looked at a copy. That philosophical-practical way of dealing with sex belongs to our past, and that world was ravaged and destroyed by the Muslims. Now we live like incestuous little animals in a hole. We grope all our female relations and are always full of shame*." pp.110, 111

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 3** (cont.)
historical references (5.3)	Pol Pot – p.130
identity (4.1)	split identity: "[Ana] *stood in some kind of* ***half-and-half position***." p.117 "[…] *the world I had entered was only a* ***half and half world***,[…]" p.150 "***half-and-half friends***" – p.150
books and writing (4.2)	Security/Hiding/Books: – p.109 (Sarojini visit to the London college) "*She (Sarojini) said: 'When you get this famous degree or diploma, what will you do with it? You will get a little teaching job and hide away here for the rest of your life? 'Willie said,' I don't think you know. But I've written a book. It's coming out next year."* p.109
modernity (4.3)	Boots shop – p.160 "*Over here we need the things they make, the medicines and other things.*" p.160
narrator	a) p.107 to 131 third-person. Typical device on p.110: "*He thought*," followed by pages long of a stream of short, straight forward sentences rendering Willie's thoughts and plain statements about India and England. b) p.131 shift to first-person – (Willie) until the end of the novel – recounting the 18 years in Africa The shift is marked by an * dividing the two chunks of paragraphs. The last paragraph narrated in third-person refers back to the novel opening lines, mirroring and duplicating the narration device "*And just as once his father had told Willie about his life, so now, over many days of the Berlin winter, in cafés and restaurants and the half-empty flat* [Sarojini's – observe the constant use of half to indicate negative aspects: half a life, half-made societies, etc.], *Willie began slowly to tell Sarojini of his life in Africa*." * "*The first day at Ana's estate house (Willie said*) [the parenthesis are part of the text] was as long as you can imagine." [here is the first time the narrator addresses the reader – you]
characters' appearance	**Ana**'s letter – p.116 Ana's first encounter – p.117 **Sarojini**'s visit to Willie at the London college – p.109. Contrast: her initiative and independence as opposed to Willie's passivity: "*She stayed in a small hotel near the college – she had arranged that herself, before she left Germany – and she came every day to Willie's college room and prepared a rough little meal. She asked for his help for nothing. She bought cheap new pots and pans and knives and spoons, found out about greengrocers, came in every day with fresh vegetables, and cooked things on the little electric heater in Willie's room*." p.109

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 3** (cont.)
characters' appearance (cont.)	About Sarojini's dress: "*Willie was worried about breaking the college rules, and he was just as worried about people seeing the little dark cook – clumsily dressed, with a cardigan over her sari and socks on her feet – who was his sister*." p.109 **Perdita** – p.111 sexual insecurity: Willie speaking: "*But I will tell you. It's a cultural matter. I want to make love to you, want desperately to make love to you, but then at the actual moment old ideas take over and I become ashamed and frightened, I don't know of what, and it all goes bad. I'll be better this time. Let me try*." p.111 **Álvaro** – as a guide to sexual adventures – p.169 prostitute African girls – p.172 **The Correias** – p.178 **Percy Cato** – "*Percy – with less of a start in the world [...] could go to Panama or Jamaica or, if he wanted to, the United States. Willie could only go back to India, and he didn't want that*." p.114 **Willie – determinism/security/cultural values/ civilization**: to his sister: "*I drew comfort from Ana, her strength and her authority. And just as now, as you may have notices, Sarojini, I lean on you, so those days, ever since she had agreed to my being with her in Africa, I leaned on Ana. I believed in a special way in her luck.* […] *I believed that she was in some essential way guided and protected, and as long as I was with her no harm could come to me. It may be because of something in our culture that, in spite of appearances, men are really looking for women to lean on. And of course, if you are not used to governments or the law or society or even history being on your side, then you have to believe in your luck or your star or you will die. I kwon you have inherited our mother's uncle radical genes and have different ideas.* […] *I just want to tell you why I was able to follow someone I hardly knew to a colonial country in Africa of which I knew little except that it had difficult racial and social ideas. The two ideas went together. And since I know, Sarojini, that you have your own ideas about love as well, I will explain. Ana was important to me because I depended on her for my idea of being a man*." p.132. 133
letters	letter from Sarojini from Germany – p.108 "*Willie didn't want to open the envelope. He remembered, with shame, how it would have excited him at home, at the ashram or the mission school, to see a German or any foreign postage stamp on a letter. The design of the stamp would have set him dreaming of the country, and he would have thought the sender of the letter blessed."* pp.107, 108

HALF A LIFE	**Chapter 3** (cont.)
letters (cont.)	from this letter*: "Wolf and I are about to go to Cuba and other places. Wolf has talked to me about revolutionary ideas. He is like our mother's uncle, but of course he has had more opportunities and is better educated, and of course he has seen much more of the world than our poor uncle*." p.108 another letter from Sarojini – p.123: "*Outsiders who go to India have no idea of the country even when they are there, and I am sure the same is true of Africa*." p.123
key Naipaulian concepts	**Security**: "*And Sarojini is right in the other way too. If I get my teaching diploma and decide to stay here and teach it will be a kind of hiding away. And it wouldn't be nice teaching in a place like Notting Hill. That's the kind of place they would send me, and I would walk with the fear of running into a crowd and being knifed like Kelso. It would be worse than being at home*." p.110

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 1**
chapter title	**The Rose-Sellers**
first page	p.1
number of pages	23
time span	5 months: "*In those five months [in Berlin] he had come far."* p.23 *When the novel starts, Willie had been in Berlin for six months. "You've been here for six months*." p.1 "*Five months before,* […] *as a refugee from Africa* […] p.22 "*In those five months he had come far.*" p.23 41 years old at the outset – "[Gandhi] *was forty-six when he gave up and went back to India. Five years older than you, Willie,* […]" p.21
opening lines	"*It had begun many years before, in Berlin. Another world. He was living there in a temporary, half-and-half way with his sister Sarojini. After Africa it had been a great refreshment, this new kind of protected life, being almost a tourist, without demands and without anxiety*." p.1
closing lines	"*He felt that everything he had thought and worked out in those five months was true. They issued out of a new serenity. Everything he had felt before, all the seemingly real longings that had taken him to Africa, were false. He felt no shame now; he could acknowledge everything; he saw that everything that had happened to him was a preparation for what was now to come*." p.23
geographical references (5.1)	Berlin "*They were in a café in Knesebackstrasse"* – p.3 shopping avenues; Patrick Hellmann shop – p.12
literary references (5.2)	Gandhi's autobiography in 1920s – p.17 Tolstoy and Ruskin (Gandhi) – p.21 Hemingway – p.19 "*Beyond that everything was a blur, a primeval ocean, in which figures like* ***Buddha***, ***Akbar*** *and* Queen Elizabeth *and the* ***Rani of Jhansi*** *and* ***Marie Antoinette*** *and* ***Sherlock Holmes*** *floated about crisscrossed*" p.18 Lenin and Mao – p.12 Penguin Books – p.4 Roper Lethbridge – p.6 the British firm of Macmillan – p.6 British Council Library – p.18 Gandhi's autobiography – English translation by the mahatma's secretary: "*a book (specially at the beginning) about shame, ignorance, incompetence: a whole chain of memories that would have darkened or twisted another life: memories that Willie himself* […] *would have wished to take to the grave, but with the courage of this simple confession*, […] *almost part of folk memory, in which every man of the country might see himself*." p.19

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 1** (cont.)
historical references (5.3)	**Mutiny** – p.6 "The British East India Company" – p.7 "The British East India Company army in the north of India was a Hindu army of the upper castes." p.7 Tamil Rose-seller – p.3 **Lin-Piao** "*The Lin-Piao line turned the revolution into middle-class theatre*" p.13 Mahatma Gandhi in London in 1890 – p.16 **The British East India Company** – p.7 – Sarojini's direct speech, in the two pages long preaching about history and revolution to Willie: "*The British East India Company army in the north of India was a Hindu army of the upper castes. This was the army that pushed the boundaries of the British Empire almost to Afghanistan. But after the great Mutiny of 1857 that Hindu army was degraded*. […] *So the warriors who had won the empire became servile in British propaganda, and the frontier people thay had conquered just before the Mutiny became the martial ones. It is how imperialisms work.* [plural] *And since* ***in India we have no idea of history*** *we quickly forget our past and always believe what we are told*." p.7 History swamp – p.18
identity	Colonial identity: Willie, about Gandhi's autobiography: "*I wish this healing book had come my way twenty-five years ago. I might have become another man.* […] *I wouldn't have lived that shabby life in Africa among strangers*. [note that after 18 years he sees his wife and the half-Portuguese community they befriended as strangers] […] *Instead, I was reading Hemingway, who was very far away from me, who had nothing to offer me, and doing my bogus stories*. [the word *bogus* is an allusion to the concept of the inevitable colonial inherent lack of authenticity and mimicry explored in the novel *The Mimic Men*]." p.19
narrator	third-person narration device: In the beginning (p.10) of this first chapter of *MS* there is a explicit allusion to the title of *HL*, and a sum-up of the events in the first novel – momentarily under the influence of his history – conscious sister's preaching, Willie tells her about his life up to then, which now seems "shameful" to him.
characters' appearance	**Sarojini** (first introduced in *HL* chapter 1) **Wolf** mentioned as a film maker – p.6 **Kandapalli** – p 12 the **Tamil rose-seller** – p.3 "*He was self-possessed, the rose-seller, full of the idea of his own worth. […] his brown trousers (made by tailors far away) and the too-big gold-plated watch and wristlet (perhaps not really gold) on his hairy wrist, saw that in his own setting the rose-seller would have been someone of no account, someone unseeable*." p.3

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 1** (cont.)
characters' appearance (cont.)	**Willie**: "*This habit of keeping things to himself had been with him since childhood, at home and at school; it had developed during his time in London, and had become an absolute part of his nature during the eighteen years he had spent in Africa, when he had to hide so many obvious things from himself."* p.5 *"Willie, full of shame in Berlin at the though of his behavior in Africa, thought, 'I mustn't hide any longer. Sarojini is right.'* " p.11 (note Sarojini brainwashed him with her western shaped political revolutionary ideas – he is a puppet in her hands)
key Naipaulian concepts	"**half and half way**" – p.1 **security**: "*After Africa it had been a great refreshment, this new kind of protected life, being almost a tourist, without demands and without anxiety."* p.1 **India has no idea of History** – *"All the history you and people like you know about yourself comes from a British textbook written by a nineteenth-century English inspector of schools in India called* ***Roper Lethbridge***. […]*It was the first big school history book in India and it was published in the 1880s by the British firm of Macmillan*" (p.6) **determinism**: Willie's direct speech: "*I feel a bad hand was dealt me*." p.2 Determinism: allusion to *A Bend in the River* opening line: Sarojini's direct speech: "*That's the way the world is made. You can't object to it*." colonial trap: here associated with caste lasting hampering effects on the colonial subject: "*What could I have done in India What could I have done in England in 1957 or 1958? Or in Africa?*" p.2 caste: Sarojini's direct speech: "*You were on the outside because you wanted to be. You've always preferred to hide. It's the colonial psychosis, the caste psychosis*." p.2 Hinduism as absorbed by **Dravidians**: Tamil rose-seller: "*And even while the man still appeared to smile there came from his soft lips a long and harsh and profound religious curse delivered in Tamil, which Willie half-understood, at the end of which the man's smile had gone and his face below in the blue-checked golf cap had twisted into a terrible hate*." p.4

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 2**
chapter title	**Peacocks**
first page	p.24
number of pages	26
time span	around 15 years in India altogether (chapters 2 to 7)
opening lines	"*They began to wait for Kandapalli. But no word came from him. The summer began to fade*." p.24
closing lines	"*That night Willie cried, tears of rage, tears of fear, and in the dawn the cry of the peacock, after it had drunk from its forest pool, filled him with grief for the whole world."* p.49 Allusion to the foreword [about the early morning peacock cry]*: "a raucous, tearing cry that should have spoken of a world refreshed and re-made but seemed after the long bad night to speak only of everything lost, man, bird, forest, world;*[…]." pager not numbered
geographical references (5.1)	Patrick Hellmann shop in Berlin – p.26 KDW in Berlin – p.26 Airport in India: "*The small, shabby airport building was full of movement and echoing noise. The Indian passengers from the aeroplane were already different, already at home, already (with briefcases and cardigans and the plastic bags from shops in famous foreign cities) with an authority that separated them from lesser local folk. The black-bladed ceiling fans were busy; the metal rods or shanks that fixed them to the ceiling were furry with oil and sifted dust*." pp.26, 27 "*The concrete walls were whitewashed in a rough-and-ready way, with paint splashed beyond concrete on glass and wood; and for many inches above the terrazzo floor the walls were grimy from broom and dirty washing-water. A blue plastic bucket and a short dirty broom made of the ribs of coconut branches stood against the wall; not far away a small, dark, squatting woman in a camouflage of dark clothes moved slowly on her haunches, cleaning, giving the floor a suggestion of thinly spread grime."* p.27 **India –** from p25 on "*And so, after more than twenty years, Willie saw India again. He had left India with very little money, the gift of his father; and he was going back with very little money, the gift of his sister*." pp.25, 26 "*The* [unnamed] *town were Joseph lived was big, but without a metropolitan feel. The road outside the station was a mess, with a lot of urgent shouting and excitement but very little movement. Everybody as in everybody else's way. Pedal rickshaws and scooter rickshaws and taxis competed for space with horse-drawn or mule-drawn carriages that tilted dangerously downwards at the back, seemingly about to throw out their heavy load of women and children*." p.31

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
geographical references (5.1) (cont.)	Hotel Riviera – p.32 – "*It was a small concrete building of two storeys* [sic] *in the bazaar area, and though of concrete it felt fragile." The room was "stale and stuffy". The window did not open properly. "The [window's] catch, which as of a strangely soft metal seemed to bend in his hand*." p.44 – moved to the countryside **Neo Anand Bhavan** **Architecture**: Joseph's dwellings: p.33 The new area of the big town: "[…] *an unasphalted flinty road that made the little scooter bump up and down., and came finally to a development of concrete apartment blocks on bare, hummocked earth, as though the builders had forgotten or didn't care to clean up the ground after they had done their work*." p.33 "*The elevator* […] *didn't come all the way down to ground level.* […]. *They [the elevator doors] were black with grease and were very noisy opening and closing. Willie was used to rough building in his remote corner of Africa (where people in their heart of hearts had always known that one day they would have to pack up and leave); but he had seen nothing so unfinished-looking as what he saw when he got out at Joseph's floor. The building here seemed to have been abandoned at its first brutal stage, with nothing to soften the raw concrete, which was pegged along the top of the corridor walls with many cables, thick and thin and covered with old dust*." p.34
literary references (5.2)	*The Cool World* – p.44 *Royal Commentaries* – p.44 "*A book from the 1950s or 1960s about the Harlem,* The Cool World*, a novel, told in the first person; and a book about the Incas of Peru, the* Royal Commentaries*, by a man partly of the Inca royal family*." p.44 [reading by the light of a hurricane lantern] "*He would like to have candles, for their old-fashioned romance; but there were no candles*. […] *The* Royal Commentaries *required knowledge of a sort that Willie didn't have; it very quickly became abstract. And The Cool World was simply too far away, too American, too New York, too full of allusions he couldn't get*." p.44, 45
historical references (5.3)	Kandapalli – p.41 **Che Guevara** – p.41 Joseph's direct speech: "*When people here talk of the guerrillas they are talking of people like her* [the "cricket girl"] […] *It's not Che Gevara and strong men in military fatigues. In every other apartment in this area* [the new development of concrete apartment blocks, considered to be a rich area] *there is a helpless woman like this from a village, and they will tell you it's all right, the woman is going to fill out*." p.41 [to fill out is a colloquial term that means to gain weight, to become more fleshy]

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
books and writing (4.2)	p.44 – hypertext Conrad's famous passage about the materiality of a book in an African colonial context, commentated by Naipaul and Homi Bhabha. Also: The setting of Willie's revolutionary activities in India, at first in a big town, then deeper and deeper into the small villages and camps and the forest; the setting dislocation from urban areas to the deep of the forest is a parallel movement to Willie's increasing loss of identity, and purpose, it constitutes of a hypertext of **Conrad**'s *Heart of Darkness*.
modernity (4.3)	Mimicry – p.32 Colonial societies pathetic and attempts to mimic modernity. Describing the menu of the hotel in a big city in India: "*A room service menu standing upright on the small table promised food around the clock, with dishes 'from our baker's basket', and 'from the fisherman's net' and 'from the butcher's block'. Willie knew it had no meaning, that it had all been copied from some foreign hotel, and was to be taken only as a gesture of goodwill, a wish to please, an aspect of being modern.*" p.32
narrator	third-person
characters' appearance	**Joseph** mentioned by Sarojini: "*He's a university lecturer.* […] *he's a Christian. He's not underground. All these movements have people like that. Useful for us, useful fro them, useful for the authorities*." p.25 Joseph – p.31
key Naipaulian concepts	**Two words [reference to the title of the Nobel Lecture]**: "*One world was ordered, settled, its wars fought. In this world without war or real danger people had been simplified. They looked at television and found their community; they ate and drank approved things; and they counted their money. In the other world people were more frantic. They were desperate to enter the simpler, ordered world. But while they stayed outside a hundred loyalties, the residue of old history tied them down; a hundred little wars filled them with hate and dissipated their energies. In the free and busy air of West Berlin everything looked easy*." p.10 On the uselessness of the **"Cricket people"** Revolution: "*Willie looked at the very small hunchbacked figure who had come out from the kitchen to the sitting room and was moving about on her haunches, inches at a time, using a small broom of some soft rushes, making very small gestures. Her clothes were dark and muddy-coloured; they were like a camouflage, concealing her colour, concealing her features, denying her a personality. She was like a smaller version of the cleaning woman Willie had seen days before at the airport. Joseph said, ' She comes from a village. One of those villages I've telling you about, where people ran barefooted before and after the horse of the foreign lord and no one was allowed to cover his tights in the presence of the lord. She is fifteen of sixteen. No one knows. She doesn't know. Her village is full of people like her, very small, very thin. Cricket people, matchstick people. Their minds have gone after the centuries of malnourishment. Do you think you can make a revolution with her? It's what **Kandapalli** thinks, and I wish him well*." p.41

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 2** (cont.)
key Naipaulian concepts (cont.)	**Caste/History**: Joseph's direct speech, following remarks on the "cricket people", the undernourished crowds: "*The old lords have gone away. We are the new lords. People who don't know will look at her and speak of the cruelty of Indian caste. In fact we are looking at the cruelty of history. And the most terrible thing is it can't be avenged. The old lords oppressed and humiliated and injured for centuries. No one touched them. Now they've gone away. They've left these wretched people as they monument. This is what I meant when I said that you have no idea of the extent to which the victors won and the losers lost here.'* " p.41

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 3**
chapter title	**The Street of the Tanners**
first page	p.50
number of pages	25
time span	around 15 years in India altogether (chapters 2 to 7)
opening lines	"*There were about forty of fifty people in the camp*. […] *Somewhere, Willie thought, thinking back to what he had heard of the guerrillas in his part of Africa, some cloth-seller had been made to pay his dues to the movement in this cheap, lightweight olive cloth;* […] *A peaked cloth cap came with the uniform; just above the visor was a star in red satin. The uniform spoke of drama, coming suddenly to forty of fifty lives; it also spoke reassuringly of organization; and it gave everyone a new, easy, sheltering identity*." p.50
closing lines	"*Willie said, 'It's the one thing I have worked all my life, not being at home anywhere, but looking at home."* p.74
geographical references (5.1)	India – camp Journey to Dhulipur – p.56 Neo Anand Bhavan – p.58 "*The house in which the room had been ranted for them was a small low house with a red-tile roof in a street of small low houses. There was an open gutter outside, and the wall of the rented room [...] had the same mottled multi-coloured quality as the walls of the* ***Neo Anand Bhavan****, as though all kinds of liquid impurities had worked their way up like a special kind of toxic damp*." pp.57, 58
historical references (5.3)	Indian people historical undernourishment – "cricket people" – p.57
narrator	third-person
characters' appearance	**Bhoj Narayan** – p.55 "*He was a big dark man with broad shoulders and a slender waist*." p.57
letters	p.63 – letter from Sarojini: "*The movement as you know has split, and what has happened is that you are among psychopaths*. […] *The comfort is that you are all serving the same cause in the end, and the time may come one day when you may be able to cross over and join Kandapalli's people*." p.63 p.66 letter from Willie to Sarojini: "*I see only that I have put myself in other people's hands. I did that before, you will remember, when I went to Africa*." p.66 p.71 letter from Sarojini: "*Our* ***father*** *is ill. Neither you nor I have been in contact with him for many years, and I suppose if you asked me I would have said I was waiting for him to die, so that no one would be able to see what I had come from.[...] My happiest day was when Wolf came and took me away from that dishonest mess of a family and ashram.* […] *We have another idea of human possibility and we must not judge him too harshly."* p.72

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 3** (cont.)
key Naipaulian concepts	**homelessness – counting the beds**: "*And then, as he had done at various points in his recent journey (and just as sometimes in the past, feeling lost in Africa, unable to pick his way back to safety or to what he could be easy with, and with no one to confess his anxiety to, he had taken to counting the different beds ha had slept in since he was born, to keep track of things), so now in the street of the tanners he began re-living the stages of his descent in the past year. From the desolation and real sacrifices of a broken-down estate house in an abandoned Portuguese colony in Africa; to the flat in Charlottenburg in Berlin which at first had seemed to him a place looted and bare and unkempt and cold, speaking of post-war neglect, and full of earlier ghosts he could scarcely imagine; to the airport town in India, to the Riviera Hotel, to the Neo Anand Bhavan, to the guerrilla camp in the teak forest, and now this shock of the tanneries in a small town he didn't know and wouldn't be able to find on a map: separate chambers of experience and sensibility, each one a violation with which he in the end would live as though it was a complete void*." p.58

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 4**
chapter title	**Safe Houses**
first page	pg. 75
number of pages	24
time span	around 15 years in India altogether (chapters 2 to 7)
opening lines	"*The movement had suffered badly from police action in a certain sector, had lost a whole squad, and to take pressure off other squads in that sector the leadership – far off, mysterious – had decided to open a new front in another area which had so far, in the language of guerrilla war, been untroubled*." p.75
closing lines	"*But Shivdas does what he does because he is instinctively following old ideas, old ways, old courtesies. One day he will not give up his bed to me. He will not think he needs to. That will be the end of the old world and the end of the revolution*." p 98
geographical references (5.1)	India Weaver's area: "*Space: how it always pressed, how in all the openness it always became minute*" **arquitecture**: "*The railway workers' colony was an old settlement, from the 1940s perhaps, of flat-roofed and three-roomed concrete houses set down tightly together in dirt roads without sanitation. It might have been presented at the time as a work of social conscience, a way of doing low-cost housing, and it might just have looked passable in the idealizing fine line (and fine lettering) of the architect's elevation. Thirty-five years on the thing created was awful. Concrete had grown dingy, black for two or three feet above ground; window frames and doors had been partially eaten away. There were no trees, no gardens, only in some houses little hanging pots of basil, a herb associated with religion and used in some religious rites. There were no sitting areas or playing areas or washing areas or clothes-drying areas; and what had once been clean and straight and bare in the architect's drawing was now full of confused lines, electric wires thick and thin dipping from one leaning pole to the next, and the confusion was fully peopled: people compelled here by their houses to live out of doors in all seasons: as though you could do anything with people here, give them anything to live in, fit them anywhere*." p.90
modernity (4.3)	passage alluding to the polemic Gandhian anti modernity thought – hoping that a crafts based society would prove meet the needs of India, allegedly influenced by Ruskin and Tolstoy: "*The weavers* [the weavers are *dalits*, or backward caste] *sat in the late-afternoon shade in the yards in front of their houses and spun yarn into thread. The looms were in the houses; through open front doors people could be seen working them. It was an unhurried scene of some beauty; it was hard to imagine that this spinning and weaving, which looked so much like some precious protected fold craft, was done only for the village, for the very poor, and was a desperate business for the people concerned, run on very narrow margins.*" p.82

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 4** (cont.)
narrator	third-person narration technique: "*His* [Bhoj Narayan] *was known as Einstein, and over the next few months Willie picked up various pieces of his story, which was legendary in the movement.*" p.78 – followed by the inset story of Einstein.
characters' appearance	**Einstein** – p.78 "*His* [Bhoj Narayan] *was known as Einstein, and over the next few months Willie picked up various pieces of his story, which was legendary in the movement*." p.78 The **scooter-taxi man** (weaver caste) p.81 His name is mentioned on page 84 Raja. Bhoj's direct speech after the visit to Raja's house: "*They adore Raja. They are very proud of him. They will do what he wants them to do*." p.84
letters	p.80 letter from Sarojini: "[…] *Kandapalli is not well. He is losing his grip.People who admired the strong man and wished to share his strength run from the weak man. His weakness becomes a kind of moral failing, mocking all his ideas, and that I fear is what is happening to Kandapalli and is followers. I feel I have landed you in a mess."* p.80
key Naipaulian concepts	**caste**: "*Weavers were a backward caste, and the dalit of backward caste area of the village began at a bend in the main village lane, but if you didn't know it was a dalit area you would have missed it*." p.82

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 5**
chapter title	**Deeper in the Forest**
first page	p.99
number of pages	27
time span	around 15 years in India altogether (chapters 2 to 7)
opening lines	"*He got to his base – it had been his and Bhoj Narayan's, his commander – late the next afternoon. It was a half-tribal or quarter tribal village deep in the forest and so far not touched by police action; it was a place where he might truly rest, it such rest was possible for him now*." p.99
closing lines	"*Willie thought, 'I didn't think of the dead policemen. I've forgotten myself. Now I'm truly lost. In every way. I don't kwon what lies ahead or behind.* ***My only cause now is to survive, to get out of this***." p.125
geographical references (5.1)	India – guerilla in the forest
literary references (5.2)	Robinson Crusoe – p.108 *The Three Musketeers* – p.112 **Willie** development: **"***It was a strange time for Willie, a step down into yet another kind of life: patternless labour, without regard or goal, without solitude or companionship, without news from the outside world, with no prospect of letters from Sarojini, with nothing to anchor himself to. In the beginning he had tried to hold on to his idea of time, his idea of the thread of his life, in his old way, counting the beds he had slept in since he was born (like* ***Robinson Crusoe*** *marking each day with a notch on a piece of wood* […]**"** p.108
books and writing (4.2)	pp.112, 113. Ramachandra and Willie talk about western books: Ramachandra: "[about *The Three Muketeers*] *What a letdown it was*!
narrator	third-person
characters' appearance	**Ramachandra** – "*Ramachandra said, 'I feel that everything about my birth and life was an accident.' Willie thought,' That is how it is with all of us. Perhaps men can live more planned lives where they are more masters of their destiny. Perhaps it is like that in the simplified world outside.'* ". pp.115. 116 [here again, simplified life equals modern western societies]
key Naipaulian concepts	pitfalls of revolution – p.117 – "*They want blood, action. They want the world to change. All we give them is talk. That's Kandapalli's legacy. They see nothing happening and they drop out*." p.117 – Ramachandra's words

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 6**
chapter title	**The End of Kandapalli**
first page	p.126
number of pages	26
time span	around 15 years in India altogether (chapters 2 to 7) Chapter 6 is the last chapter in the bush with the revolutionaries.
opening lines	"*After two anxious days they came again to the village with the lord's abandoned mansion, the lord's abandoned straw-coloured fields (with the vivid green of fast-growing parasitic vines), and the orchards where branches had outgrown their strength, where starved-looking leaves, not the right colour, were few on spindly crusted twigs, and fruit was scattered and deceptive, with wasps making nests with the rotted, grey-white skins of sweet limes and lemons*." p.129 Echoes of ***The Enigma of Arrival***: The description of plants and decaying garden as metaphor for the decadence of the lord.
closing lines	**Willie is arrested – narrative turning point – end of chapter 6,** p.150 "*His* [the police superintendent's] *face radiates intelligence. I have to make no allowances for him. I feel we are meeting as equals. After my years in the bush – years when in order to survive I made myself believe things I wasn't sure of – I feel this as a blessing*." p.151
geographical references (5.1)	India **order/ setting/ architecture**: "[…] *an army-style area created in the British time, the now old trees planted at that time, whitewashed four or five feet up from the ground, the white kerbstones of the lanes, the sandy parade ground, the stepped pavilion, the welfare buildings, the two-storey residential quarters*." p.150
historical references (5.3)	Willie asked how he spends the day. He answers "*I am in somebody's hut. I have spent the night here**. No worries about rent and insurance and utilities**. I get up early and go to the fields and do my stuff. I have got used to it now. I doubt whether I could go back to sitting in a little room with four walls*. […] *I read for a while. The classics**: Marx**, **Trotsky**, **Mao**, **Lenin**. Afterwards I visit various people in the village, arranging a meeting for a future date. I return. My host comes from the fields. We chat. Actually, we don't. It's hard to talk. We don't have anything to say to one another.* […] *I don't want my host to get tired of me and tip off the police**. In this way every day flows past, and every day is like every other day. I feel the life I am describing is similar to that of a high-powered executive***." p.132
narrator	third-person
characters' appearance	**Keso** – p127 "*the fat, dark stand-in commander, a failed medical student*, […] *keso knew about the desertions*." p.127 **Ramachandra** on revolutionary failed ideals: "*We must give up the idea of remaking everybody. Too many people are too far gone for that. We have to wait for this generation to die out. This generation and the next. We must plan for the generation after that*." p.129

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 6** (cont.)
characters' appearance (cont.)	news of **Kandapalli** arrest: p.135 *"*[…] *Kandapalli had now lost most of his following and was so little a security risk that the police took no special precautions when they arrested him or when they took him to the court. What was most notable about him was the clippings book he carried with him all the time. In this book he had pasted newspaper photographs of children. There was some profound cause for emotion there, in the photographs of children, but Kandapalli couldn't say; his mind had gone; all that was left him was this great emotion. Willie was profoundly moved, more moved than he had been in Berlin when he had first heard of Kandapalli from Sarojini: his passion for humanity, his closeness to tears. There was no means of being in touch with her now, and for some days, in a helpless kind of grief, which held grief for himself and the world, and every person and every animal who had been wounded, Willie tried to enter the mind of the deranged man."* p.135
key Naipaulian concepts	**revolution:** mistaken views: *"*[…]*Willie now realized, and during all his time with the movement, he had lived with the pastoral vision of the countryside and forest that was the basis of the movement's thinking. He had persuaded himself that that was the countryside he saw; he had never questioned it. He had persuaded himself that outside the noise and the rush and awfulness of cities was this quite different world where things followed an antique course, which was the business of revolution to destroy. This pastoral vision contained the idea that the peasant laboured and was oppressed. What this pastoral vision didn't contain was the idea that the village – like those they had liberated on the march (and then let go off) and might one day with luck liberate again – was full of criminals, as limited and vicious and brutal as the setting, whose existence had nothing to do with the idea of labour and oppression*." p.128 "*In some villages there were people who had got it into their heads that the* [revolutionary] *squad were traveling gunmen who could be hired to kill an enemy. The people who wanted someone killed usually didn't have any money, but they thought they could nag of cajole the men into doing what they wanted. Perhaps this was how they lived, begging for favours in everthing. This way of life showed in their wild eyes and wasted bodies*." p.128 "*So stage by stage they went back, for Willie the vision of pastoral undoing itself, as if by a kind of magic. Roads that had been made by the squad with the help of villagers had disappeared; water-tanks that had been cleared of mud had become clogged again. Family disputes, infinitely petty, about land or bore-wells or inheritances, that had been brought to Ramachandra as squad leader for adjudication, and appeared to have been set by him, raged again; at least one murder had occurred*." p.129

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 6** (cont.)
key Naipaulian concepts (cont.)	On page 130 he tells how he joined the movement: Willie asks him how he started. He answers, and this is the beginning of a two-page long detailed answer: "*In the classical way. I was at the university. I wished to see how the poor lived. There was a certain amount of excited talk about them among the students. A scout for the movement – there were dozens of them around – arranged for me to see the poor*." p.130 **borrowed ideas**/revolutionary ideology as an abstraction in Indian context: p.140 – "*The news they bought, unofficially, was of police arrests and the liquidation of squads, but the fiction of successful revolution and the ever expanding liberated areas was still maintained, at least in the formal discussions, so that these discussions became more and more abstract. They might debate, for instance, with great seriousness, whether landlordism or imperialism was the greater contradiction.* […] *whether the peasantry or the industrial proletariat was going to bring about the revolution. In spite of all killings, the movement was becoming more and more a matter of these abstract words*." p.140 **nihilism**: the "dark middle-aged man" who had been in the movement for 30 years and boast as a "general" tells a typical story of how the revolutionaries came to be: *"Willie said, 'How do you spend your time?*' " – "*Avoiding capture, of course. Apart from that I am intensely bored.* ***But in the middle of this boredom that soul never fails to sit in judgment on the world and never fails to find it worthless****. It is not an easy thing to explain to outsiders. But it keeps me going*." pp.129, 130 "*That was the ideology of the time, to turn the peasants into rebels, and through them to start the revolution*." p.131 [still the "general" account] "*We had some dreadful rice. The water came from a little stream. Not some story-book purling English stream, clear as crystal. This is India, my masters, and this was a dreadful muddy runnel. You had to boil whatever you could wring out of the smelly mess*." p.132 **protection/housing**: "*They came at last to the base, where Willie had* ***a room of his own****. The wish of the high command to extend the liberated areas had failed; everybody knew that. But in spite of the general gloom Willie was happy to be in a place he had already been. He felt he had ceased to be flung into space; he felt he might once again come to posses himself. He liked the low clean thatched roof – so protecting, especially when he was on his string bed – where he could store small things between the thatch and the rafter; he liked the plastered beaten-earth floor, hollow-sounding below his feet*." p.134

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 7**
chapter title	**Not the Sinners [the prison chapter]**
first page	p.152
number of pages	24
time span	50 years old – p.160 around 2 years in prison around 5 months in the prison hospital
opening lines	"*He thought at the end of that civil session with the superintendent, a man at once educated and physically well exercised, that he was in the clear, and he continued to think so even when he was separated from Einstein and taken to a jail in an outlying area*." p.152
closing lines	"*And Willie understood that just as his father, thirty years ago, had by his begging letters to great men in England set certain wheels in motion that had eventually taken him to London, so now Sarojini, out of her great political experience, had begun to act on his behalf.* *Six months later, under the terms of a special amnesty, Willie was once again bound for London*." p.175 Recurring pattern, rescued by others, Willie resorts to England**.**
geographical references (5.1)	prison in India space: "*Two weeks after Sarojini's visit he was transferred to the hospital ward*." p.169
historical references (5.3)	**Mao** and Lenin – p.163 "A Gandhi-capped prisoner" – p.171 HATE SIN NOT THE SINNER: board in the prison that provides for the chapter title p.157 "Was it Ghandian, this expression of a difficult kind of forgiveness, or was it Christian? It could have been both" p.157
identity	"*The India of his childhood and adolescence; the three worried years in London, a student, as his passport said, but really only a drifter, willing himself away from what he had been,* ***not knowing where he might fetch up and what he had been****, not knowing where he might fetch up and what form his life would take; then the eighteen years in Africa, fast and purposeless years, living somebody else's life.*" p.155
books and writing (4.2)	Book as a magic charm – p.174 writing as salvation – p.174
narrator	third-person
characters' appearance	**Roger** mentioned – p.174
letters	p.158 – Sarojini's letter apologizing for having sent him to the wrong revolutionary movement and acknowledges the guerrilla idea was a mistake – she sends him some money – news that their father is ill – she shows a change of heart about the father: ***"Perhaps in the end one way of living is as good as any other, but that probably is what defeated people have to tell themselves."*** […] *"And all I wanted was to do good. It is my curse.* […] *What can I say? I will never forgive myself. That is no consolation for you, I know. You were sent to the wrong people, and as it turned out the other lot were not going to be much better. You were going to be snookered either way*." pp.158, 159

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 7** (cont.)
letters (cont.)	second letter from Sarojini in this chapter – borrowed ideas leitmotif: **she learned about Buddhism from Wolf; recurrent idea of Indian history and culture learned from a western point of view.** p.166 – "*Dear Willie, Our father is dead. […] I have decided to take over our father's ashram*. […] *I have no religious wisdom, and I will not be able to offer people anything of what our father offered them. I think what I will do is to turn the ashram into a place of quiet and meditation, something with a Buddhist slant, which I know a little about, from Wolf*." p.166 *"That war was not yours or mine and it had nothing to do with the village people we said we were fighting for. We talked about their oppression, but we were exploiting them all the time. Our ideas and words were more important than their lives and their ambitions for themselves. That was terrible to me, and it continues even here,* […]. *They are mostly village people and they are undersized and thin. The most important thing about them is their small size. It is hard to associate them with the bigger crimes and the crimes of passion for witch some of them are being punished. Abduction, kidnapping. I suppose if you were a villager you would see them as criminal and dangerous, but if you see them from a distance, as I still see them, although I am close to them night and day, you would be moved by the workings of the human soul, so complete with those frail bodies. Those wild and hungry eyes haunt me. They seem to be to carry a distillation of the country's unhappiness. I don't think there is any one single simple action witch can help. You can't take a gun and kill that unhappiness. All you can do is to kill people."* p.167
key Naipaulian concepts	**passivity/counting beds:** "*Willie had long ago given up counting the beds he had slept in. He could count all the beds of those years, and the counting would give him a strange satisfaction, would show him that for all his* ***passivity*** *his life was amounting to something; something had grown around him. But he had been undone by the India of his return.* ***He could see no patterns, no thread****. He had returned with an idea of action, of truly placing himself in the world. But he had become a floater, and the world had become more phantasmagoric than it had ever been. […] He had at some time lost the ability to count the beds he had slept in; there was no longer any point; and he had given up. Now, in this new mode of experience that had befallen him – interviews, appearances in court, and being shifted from jail to jail: ha had had no idea of this other, whole world of prisons and a prison service and criminals – he started again, not going back to the very beginning, but starting with the day of his surrender.*" pp.155, 156

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 8**
chapter title	**The London Beanstalk**
first page	p 176
number of pages	21
time span	2 weeks
opening lines	"*The plane that took Willie to London taxied for a long time after it landed*." p.176
closing lines	"*The streets of the centre were very crowded, so crowded that sometimes it was not easy to walk. There were black people everywhere, and Japanese; and people who looked like Arabs. He thought, ' There has been a great churning in the world. This is not the London I lived thirty years ago.' He felt a great relief. He thought, 'The world is now being shaken by forces much bigger than I could have imagined. Ten years ago in Berlin my sister Sarojini made me almost ill with stories of poverty and injustice at home. She sent me to join the guerrillas. Now I don't have to join anybody. Now I can only celebrate what I am or what I have become.' From these walks he returned to the big house in St John's Wood, to Roger, and often in the afternoon to Perdita* " p.196
geographical references (5.1)	London: **Roger's house in St. John's Wood (property beanstalk= chapter title)** Marble Arch – pp.189, 195 Wardour Street – p.189 Edgware Road – p.194 Oxford Street – p.195 Maida Vale – p.194 St. John's Wood – p.194 Notting Hill – p.195
literary references (5.2)	Kipling – p.182 W. E. Henley, a Victorian-Edwardian poet – p.182 Robinson Crusoe – p.179
books and writing (4.2)	**metatextuality**/ narrator's irony about the rise of postcolonial literature: Perdita shows Willie the new edition of his book: *She took a small paperback off the sideboard. Willie recognized his name and the name of the book he had written twenty-eight years before. She said, 'It was Roger's idea. It helped to get you released* [from the Indian jail]. *It shows that you were a real writer, and not political'. Willie didn't know the name of the paperback publisher. The printed pages were like those he remembered. The book would have been photocopied from the original. The jacket copy was new: Willie read that* ***his book was a pioneer of Indian postcolonial writing***. pp.187,188
narrator	third-person
characters' appearance	Perdita reappears – p.185

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 8** (cont.)
key Naipaulian concepts	Housing – ***A House for Mr. Biswas*** – p.185 Willie says "*I have never slept in a room of my own. Never at home in India, when I was a boy, Never here in London. Never in Africa. I lived in somebody else's house always, and slept in somebody else's bed*." p.185

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 9**
chapter title	**The Giant at the Top**
first page	p.197
number of pages	31
time span	not exacted
opening lines	"*After two weeks his mood of exaltation abated and he [Willie] began to be bored by the routine he had fallen into.*" p.197
closing lines	*"He left Willie desolate in the training centre, wandering about the lounge and garden, and then going too early to his little room to court sleep. He could hear, faintly, the traffic on the main roads, and in his gradually distorting mind's eye the level line of red houses rolled on and on. He wished there was another place to go."* p.227
geographical references (5.1)	London – weekend at Peter – the banker's estate Marble Arch – pp.200. 224 Grosvenor Gardens – p.200 Bus 16 to Victoria – p.200 Maida Vale – p.200 Park Lane – p.200 Charing Cross Road – p.205 The British Museum – p.215 Trades Union Congress building – p.215 King's Road – p.245 *"**Cricklewood**: twenty-eight years ago it was a mysterious place for Willie, somewhere far to the north of Marble Arch, where in his imagination people lived regulated and full **secure** lives. It was where June, the girl from the Debenhams perfume counter, lived with her family.* […]*Cricklewood, Willie learned later, was where a big bus garage was;* […] *where the lovely young actress Jean Simmons was born and grew up* […]. [Cricklewood*] was an unending level red line of two-storey houses, brick and rendered concrete, with little local shopping areas in between, shops as small and low as the houses they served: London here, as created by the builders and developers of sixty or seventy years before, a kind of toyland, cosy and confined* […]." pp.222. 223 second wave of **immigration** – p.223 *"Increasingly on the winding main road there were Indians; and Pakistanis; and Blangadeshis dressed as they might have been at home, the men with layers of gowns or shirts and with the white cap of submission to the Arab faith, their low-statured women even more bundled up and covered with fearful black masks. Willie new about the great immigration from the subcontinent; but (since ideas often exist in compartments) he hadn't imagined that London (still in his mind something from a [film] central casting) could have been so repeopled in thirty years.* […] *Now the* [Cricklewood's] *park, much reduced, was in immigrant territory"* pp.223, 224.

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 9** (cont.)
literary references (5.2)	*The Origins of Species* – p.204 ***The Graphic*** **magazine –** pp.205. 206 **"*pasting the pages [of the Graphic] on the lavatories*"** p.206 *Illustrated London News* – p.206 *A Christmas Carol* – p.214 Dickensian building – p.215 Jane Austen – p.205 Len Hutton – p.245 *Vanity Fair* – pp.215, 216 Dickens's England – p.246 **Artful Dodger** (Dickens's character) – p.246
historical references (5.3)	maharaja of Makkhinagar, Indira Gandhi pp.208, 209. The Banker's voice. "*He* [the maharaja] *came to stay [in London]. It was just after Mrs. Gandhi had de-recognized the princes and abolished their privy purses. This would have been in 1971*." p.208 Indira Ghandi – p.213 Bangladesh – p.213 Roger's voice: "*In 1971, at the time of the Bangladesh business, he* [Peter] *went to Delhi and tried to see her* [Indira Gandhi]. […] *She ignored him*." p.213
identity	Willie finds a job – p.214 "*So Willie at last found a job in London. Or found something to go to in the mornings. Or, to make it still smaller, something to leave the St John's Wood house for*." p.214
books and writing (4.2)	The materiality of books – p.218 "*There was an architectural library on an upper floor. The books were big and forbidding, but Willie soon began to find his way about them.*" p.218
narrator	third-person
characters' appearance	**Perdita** – "*Perdita herself became a burden, her body too familiar*." p.197 **Peter, the banker** (**"the giant at the top**" in the chapter title) – p.208
key Naipaulian concepts	**Nullity/fear of extinction** – p.211 Willie's voice: "*The people here* [London] *don't understand nullity. The physical nullity of what I saw in the forest [in India]. The spiritual nullity that went with that, and was very much like what my poor father lived with all his life*." p.211

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 10**
chapter title	**An Axe to the Root**
first page	p.228
number of pages	21
time span	"*half a life ago*" – p.240
opening lines	"*The course at the training center was richer and profounder than Willie expected, and he sank into it, keeping Roger's troubles at the edge of his mind*." p.228 (profounder was the word Naipaul used to describe his father in relation to the character Mr. Biswas, inspired on him)
closing lines	"*And this, when all the pieces were put together, was the story Roger told."* p.248 – The story is told in the next chapter, "Suckers"
geographical references (5.1)	London – focus on architecture – semantically charged spaces. Architecture and urban planning mirroring history shifts Cricklewood – p.230 Barnet– p.230 King's Road – p.245 Wardour Street – p.247 **Houses** – training course **setting** "[…] *the simplest and most modest house, even a house like those seen on the main roads around the training center, held an immense history: the poor no longer living in huts in the shadow of the great houses of their lords, no longer the helots of the early industrial age living in airless courts or in the back-to-back tenements, the poor now people with their own architectural needs, these needs developing as materials developed*." pp.231, 232 **architecture and its connection to history and imperial Britain**: "[at the training course about architecture] *He learned about the window tax in England, and the tax on bricks which had lasted from about the time of the French revolution to about the time of the* ***Indian Mutiny****. Putting dates in this way to the tax on bricks in England, Willie had, without the help of the lecturer, called up an all but forgotten memory that in British India, too, there had been a tax on bricks: absurd but unfair, since it was not paid on baked and finished bricks but on unbaked batches, and made no allowance for the many bricks damaged or destroyed in the kiln. (He remembered those kilns in many places, the tall chimneys, oddly swollen at the bottom, beside the rectangular clay pits and the stacks of finished bricks […].) Willie had always felt oppressed by the red brick of England, so widespread, so ordinary*. […]. *Industrial Victorian England had the machines to make all kinds of brick in prodigious numbers. That brick of 1880 would have been the remote ancestor of the endless low red houses of 1930 [still standing nowadays] of north London, from* ***Cricklewood*** *to* ***Barnet***." p.230

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 10** (cont.)
literary references (5.2)	Roger's direct speech: "*It is like **Dickens's England**. Nothing's changed except that there's a lot more money about, and the **Artful Dodger** is doing very well indeed, though everything is very expensive and everyone's hopelessly in debt and wants the benefits increased*." p.246
historical references (5.3)	Indian Mutiny – p.230 French Revolution – p.230
modernity (4.3)	**Modernity as a western achievement not acknowledged by the colonial societies:** [training course setting] "*That afternoon the lecturer had talked all week about the accretion in the industrial age of learning and new skills, of vision and experiment and success and failure. [to his colleagues from the third world] little of that mattered: they had been sent by their countries or companies to get at knowledge that had for a long time been unfairly denied them for racial or political reasons but was now, in a miraculous changed world, theirs to claim as their own. And this newly claimed knowledge confirmed each man in the rightness of his own racial or tribal or religious ways. Up the greasy pole and then letting go. The simplified rich world, of success and achievement, always itself; the world outside always in disturbance*." p.235
narrator	third-person Willie becomes Roger's **sounding box**: "*It was then, when the property caper was beyond mending or glossing over, that Roger began to talk to Willie, not of that calamity, but of the other, that had befallen his outside life. He didn't do so all at once. He did it over many days, adding words and thoughts to what had gone before; what he said wasn't always in a sequence. He began indirectly, led to his main subject by scattered observations that he might have kept to himself before*. […] *He talked of socialism and high taxes, and the inflation that inevitably followed high taxes* […]. *To Willie this kind of talk was a surprise. He had never heard Roger talk of politics of politicians* […] *and had grown to think Roger was not interested in the passing political scene (being in this like Willie himself), was a man of inherited liberal ideas, a man rooted in this liberalism, concerned with human rights allover the world, and at the same time at ease with his country's recent history, going with the flow.*" p.244 In Roger's voice, "*The common people are as confused and uncertain as everybody else. They are actors, like everybody else"*. p.247
characters' appearance	**Roger's lover**: "*My woman was wearing a black lycra outfit. Or so I was told later. The trousers or pants had slipped far down at the back, showing something more than her skin. Quite cheap, the material, but that was a further attraction for me. The pathos of the poor, the pathos of an attempt at style at that lever. I had no idea who she was and what she might be. And that fact, the difference between us, gave me the encouragement to press my suit*." p.248 clothes description.

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 10** (cont.)
characters' appearance (cont.)	**Marcus** reappearance: Roger's direct speech, to Willie [and to the reader as a narrative technique to bring back to the reader's memory the events in *Half a Life*: "*Do you remember Marcus? The West African diplomat. He's served every kind of wretched dictatorship in his country. He's kept his head down and been ambassador everywhere. As a result he's now highly respected, as they say* [conscious use of language – irony to the cliché]. *The highly polished African, the man to wheel out if you want to make a point about Africa. He came to the dinner we gave in the little Marble Arch house* ***half a life*** *ago*. [explicit allusion to the title of the first novel] […] *Marcus succeeded. His half-English son has given him two grandchildren, one absolutely white, one not so white. The parents of the two grandchildren are getting married*. […] *Marcus held fast to is simple ambition. The white woman and the white grandchildren*." pp.240, 241 **Willie** – ***Bildungs*** – change in perception: "*It is terrible and heartbreaking that this way of seeing and understanding has come to me so late. I can't do anything with it now. A man of fifty cannot remake his life. I have heard it said that the only difference between the rich and the poor in a certain kind of economy is that the rich have money ten of fifteen or twenty years before the poor. I suppose the same is true about ways of seeing. Some people come to it too late, when their lives are already spoilt. But I have a sense now that when I was in Africa, for all those eighteen years, when I was in the prime of life, I hardly knew where I was.*" p .230, 231
letters	letter from Sarojini – the letters, as all the narrative of *HL* and *MS*, are embedded in and intertwined with history: "*that educated handwriting, still radiating confidence and style, showing nothing of the tormented life of the writer, was for Willie now full of irony.*" from the letter: "***I have decided to close down the ashram***. *I cannot give people what they come to me for. […] I now have grave doubts about our father's way of going about things. I don't think he was above giving people little powders and potions, and I find that this is what people expect of me. They don't give a damn, to use a polite word, for the life of meditation and repose, and I find it horrible to think what our father must have been up to all those years.* […] *I wonder if it hasn't always been like this, even in the ancient days of sages in the forest that the television people here so dearly love. A lot of people here have been to* ***the Gulf****, working for the Arabs. Recently things have not been going so well there and now many of the Gulf workers have come back. They are desperate to maintain their life style, as they have learned to say [mind the typical writing – the character or the narrator commenting on his own awareness of the usage of borrowed language – language ridden with historical and cultural consequences], and they come to me and ask me to do prayers for them and give them charms. The charms they really want are like those they got in the Gulf from*

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 10** (cont.)
letters (cont.)	*African spiritualism or marabous,* ***witchdoctors to you and me*** [again self-consciousness of the implications of **vocabulary choice** – revealing their attitude towards what they deem to be fake spiritualism]. *For many people here this African Mohammedan rubbish is the latest thing, would you believe, and I can't tell you how I have been pestered in the last few months. For cowry shells and things like that. I imagine our father was dealing in this kind of thing for years.* ***Money for old rope****, I suppose, if you don't mind doing it. The upshot of all this is that I have decided to call it a day here. I have written to Wolf, and the dear old man without one word of rebuke has promised to do what he can for me in Berlin. It will be nice to make a few documentaries again*." pp.236, 237 letter from Willie to Sarojini: [about the chance encounter with the man in the brown suit, who had been in prison] "*It is terrible to think of those people who look all right carrying their hidden wounds and even more terrible to think that I am one of them* […]. p.242
key Naipaulian concepts	**Ethnic tapestry**/migrations/British empire: "*He* [a colleague at the training center], *who in the beginning had appeared to be very Chinese, reserved, self-contained*, […], *had turned out to me the most frivolous of the group. He seemed to take nothing seriously, seemed to have no politics, and was happy to say, almost as a joke, that in Malaysia, no longer a pastoral land, now a land of highways and skyscrapers, he was running an* ***Ali Baba*** *construction business. Nothing to do with the forty thieves: in Malaysia 'Baba' was the word for a local Chinese, and Ali Baba business was one in which there was an Ali, a Malay Muslim, as a front man, to placate the Malay government, and a guiding Baba, a Chinese like the joker himself, in the background*." p.233

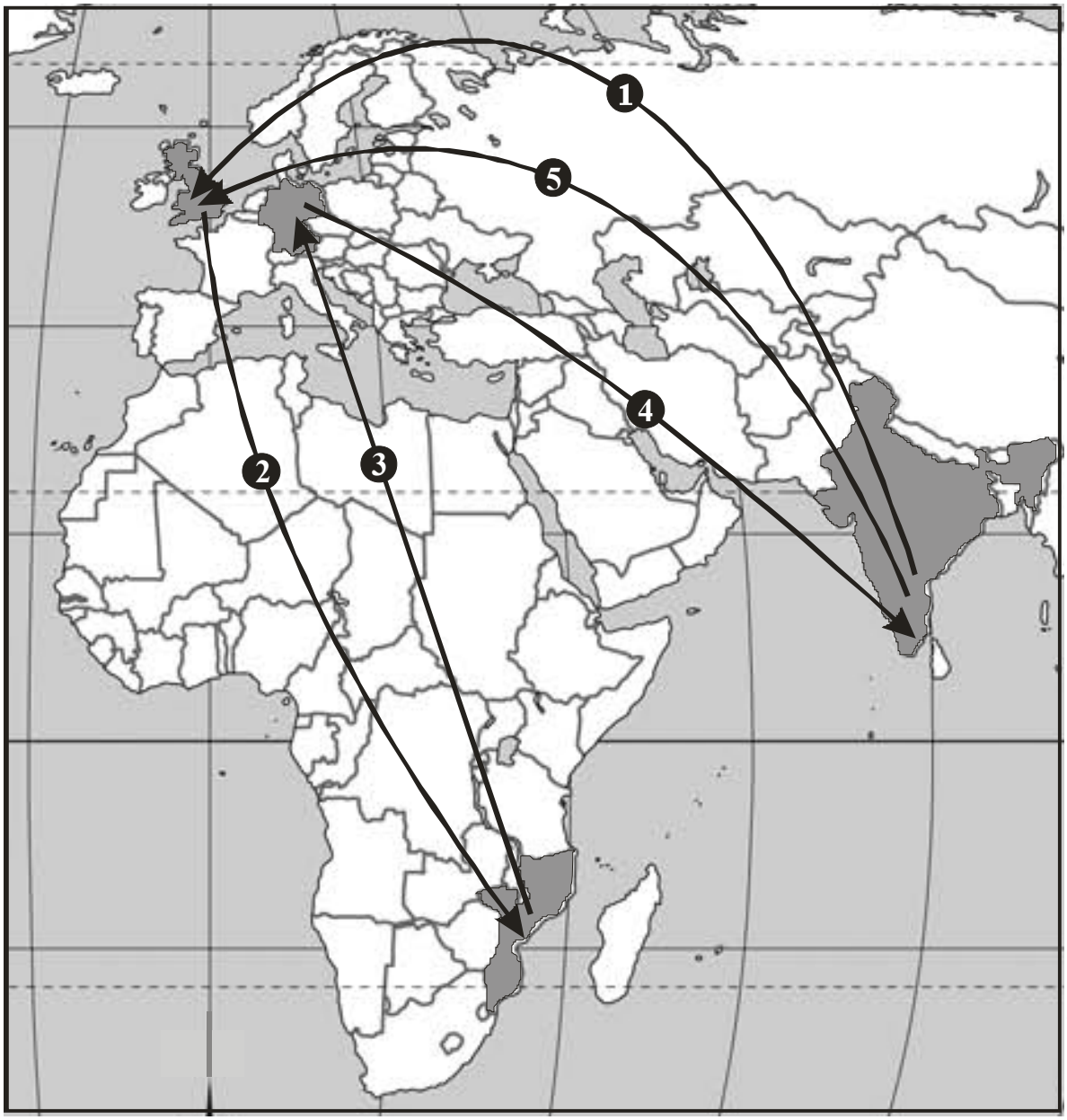
MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 11**
chapter title	**Suckers**
first page	p.249
number of pages	34
time span	not exacted
opening lines	"*My father was ill (Roger said). Not yet close to dying.* [...]*I felt my father was too romantic abut himself.*" p.249 recurrent narration device: "*Roger said*".
closing lines	[Roger's voice] "*Perhaps my foolish little pictures will hang in another house somewhere and I will slowly see them blur below the grimy glass*". p.282
geographical references (5.1)	London Piccadilly Circus – p.279 Turnham Green – p.279 "Most of the Victorian or Edwardian houses in that area were being turned into flats." Maida Vale – p.279 Tottenham Court Road – p.251
literary references (5.2)	A. J. Munby – pp.271, 272, 273,275 Ruskin – p.267 Henry James – p.267 Artful Dodger (Dickens's character) – p .251 Dickens – p.272 Tolstoy – p.271 William Morris – p.272 reference to the novel title *Magic Seeds* p.253 Roger's voice: "*I imagined her* [Jo's – his father's maid who also sold handcrafted objects] *sitting forlorn beside her craft goods at the fair, as an ancestor in long skirts and clogs might have sat in a simpler time beside her eggs in a village market, ready at the end of the weary day to exchange everything for a handful of* ***Magic Seeds***." p.253
narrator	first-person – Roger's voice
characters' appearance	**Marian** (Roger's lover) "*Her black, too loose, elastic pants, part of a black outfit, had slipped far down. And that energetic getting out of the Volvo, using the steering wheel to lever herself out, had pulled it askew and even lower."* p.256
key Naipaulian concepts	**housing /half and half:** Roger about his father's house: "*I used to think how shabby the house was, more a cottage than a house, how dusty and smoky, how much in need of a coat of paint,* […].*So the firs half of his* [Roger's father] *life was spent in pride, an overblown idea of his organization and who he was, and the second half was spent in failure and shame and anger and worry. The house epitomized it. It was* ***half and half*** *in everything. Not cottage, not house, not poor, not well to do*." p.249

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 12**
chapter title	**Magic Seeds**
first page	p.283
number of pages	11
time span	by the end of the chapter (and the book) Willie is 52 years old
opening lines	"*That was the story Roger told, in bits, not in sequence, and over many weeks."* p.283 (the story told in the previous chapter) recurrent narration device
closing lines	"*All night it seemed to him as well that he had found something good to write to Sarojini about. This thing eluded him. […], and in the morning all he was left with was: 'It is wrong to have an ideal view of the world. That's where mischief starts. That's where everything starts unraveling. But I can't write to Sarojini about that.'* " p.294
geographical references (5.1)	London Maida Vale – p.283
literary references (5.2)	hypertext: vegetation description alluding to the author's ***Enigma of Arrival***, where value is placed on man-made tilled nature. "*The first canopied enclosure they came to was the half-dead orchard. In one corner chain upon chain of ivy fattened the lower trunk of a dying old horse-chesnut tree. Often, where a branch had fallen off and old apple tree, a hole showed in the trunk: vegetable nature, at this stage of its cycle, seemingly human, disassembling itself. But the light below the canopy softened everything, gave every ruined tree an extra life, gave every spindly branch an extra importance, made the abandoned orchard look like a stage set, made it miraculous, a pleasure to be in*." p.289
historical references (5.3)	Back to Africa movement – p.285
narrator	third-person "*That was the story Roger told, in bits, not in sequence, and over many weeks*" – p.283 opening line – refers to last chapter
letters	first letter to Sarojini: p.283 "*I wish I could turn the clock back nine of eight years*" p.283 **the second and last letter to Sarojini (pp.284, 285) provides a final reckoning by Willie of his life so far and his perspectives. He plainly states the only optimism he ever mustered was a wish to escape, and ponders that happiness lies in having simple and attainable goals**. Excerpts from the letter:" […] *I think I really should try to do something in the architecture line. It would take me eight years or so (I imagine) to become qualified. This would take me up to sixty. This would still give me ten or twelve or fifteen active and satisfying years in the profession. The difficulty there is that to any logical mind it is absurd for a man of fifty to start learning a profession. The main difficulty is that to carry it out I would need an injection of optimism.* […] *The only optimism I had was when I was a child and had a child's view of the world.* […] *I wanted to be a*

MAGIC SEEDS	**Chapter 12** (cont.)
letters (cont.)	*missionary.* ***This was only a wish of escape. That was all my optimism amounted to.*** *The day I understood the real world the optimism leaked out of me. I was born at the wrong time. If I was born now, in the same place, the world would have a different look. Too late for me, unfortunately. And* ***with that pathetic little self that now exists inside me somewhere, the self that I recognize so easily, I put aside the architectural dream and think that I should get some undemanding little job somewhere*** *and to live in some little flat somewhere and hope that the neighbours are not too noisy. But I know enough now to understand that life can never be simplified like that, and there would be some little trap or flaw in that dream of simplicity, of just letting one's life pass,, of treating one's life only as a way of passing the time. My friend here says that the happiest and most successful people are those who have very precise goals, limited and attainable.* pp.284,285
key Naipaulian concepts	passivity

APPENDIX D — Maps

MAP 1 WILLIE'S JOURNEYS



Adapted from the base map at http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/world_country.pdf

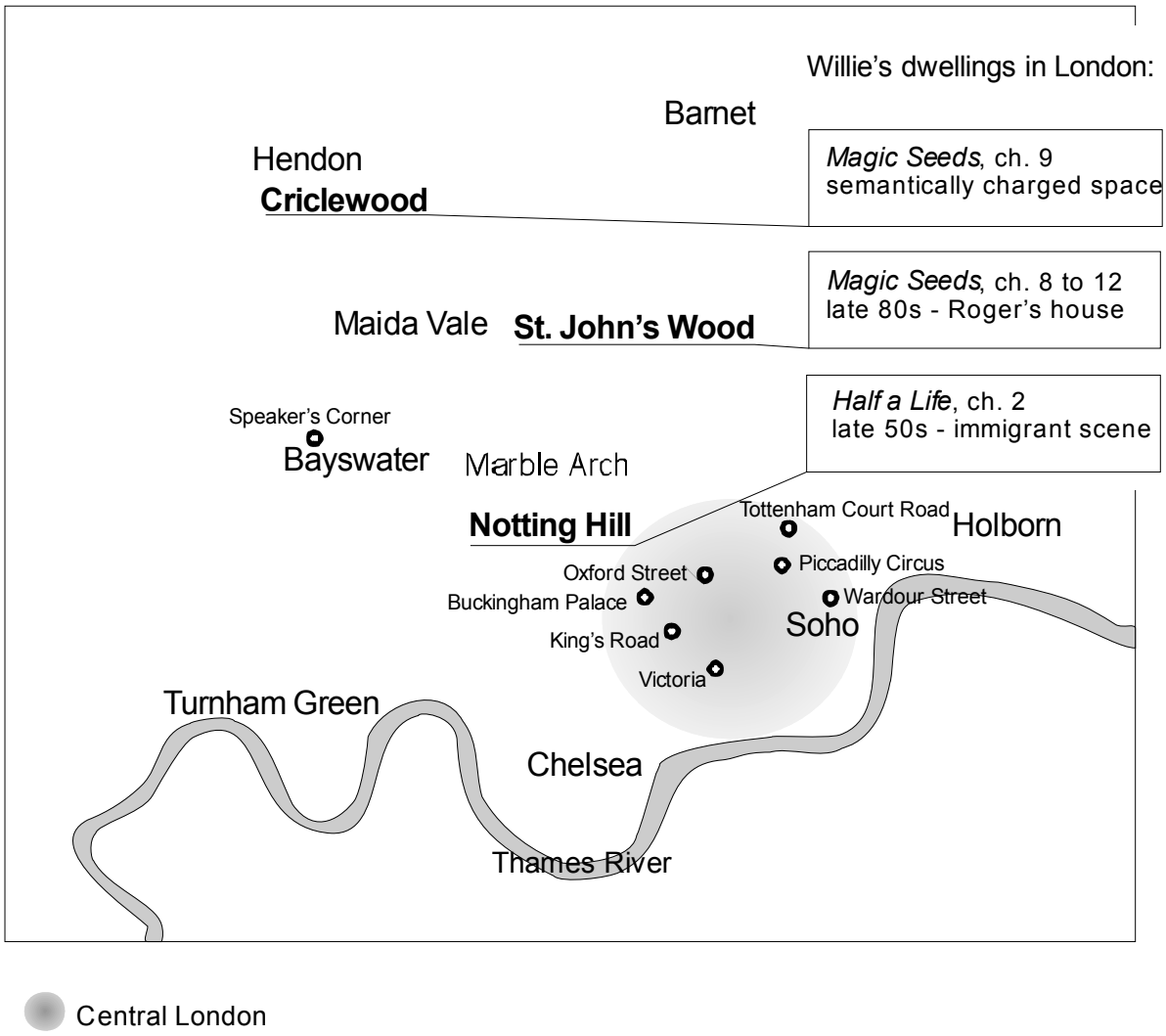
Legend

1 1st journey: HL India to London - Willie is 20 years old.
2 2nd journey: HL London to Africa* - Willie is ca. 23 years old.**
3 3rd journey: HL/MS Africa to Berlin -Willie is 41 years old.
4 4th journey: MS Berlin to India - Willie is ca. 42 years old.**
5 5th journey: MS India to London -Willie is ca. 50 years old. **

*Unnamed African country. Intertextual evidence lead to Mozambique

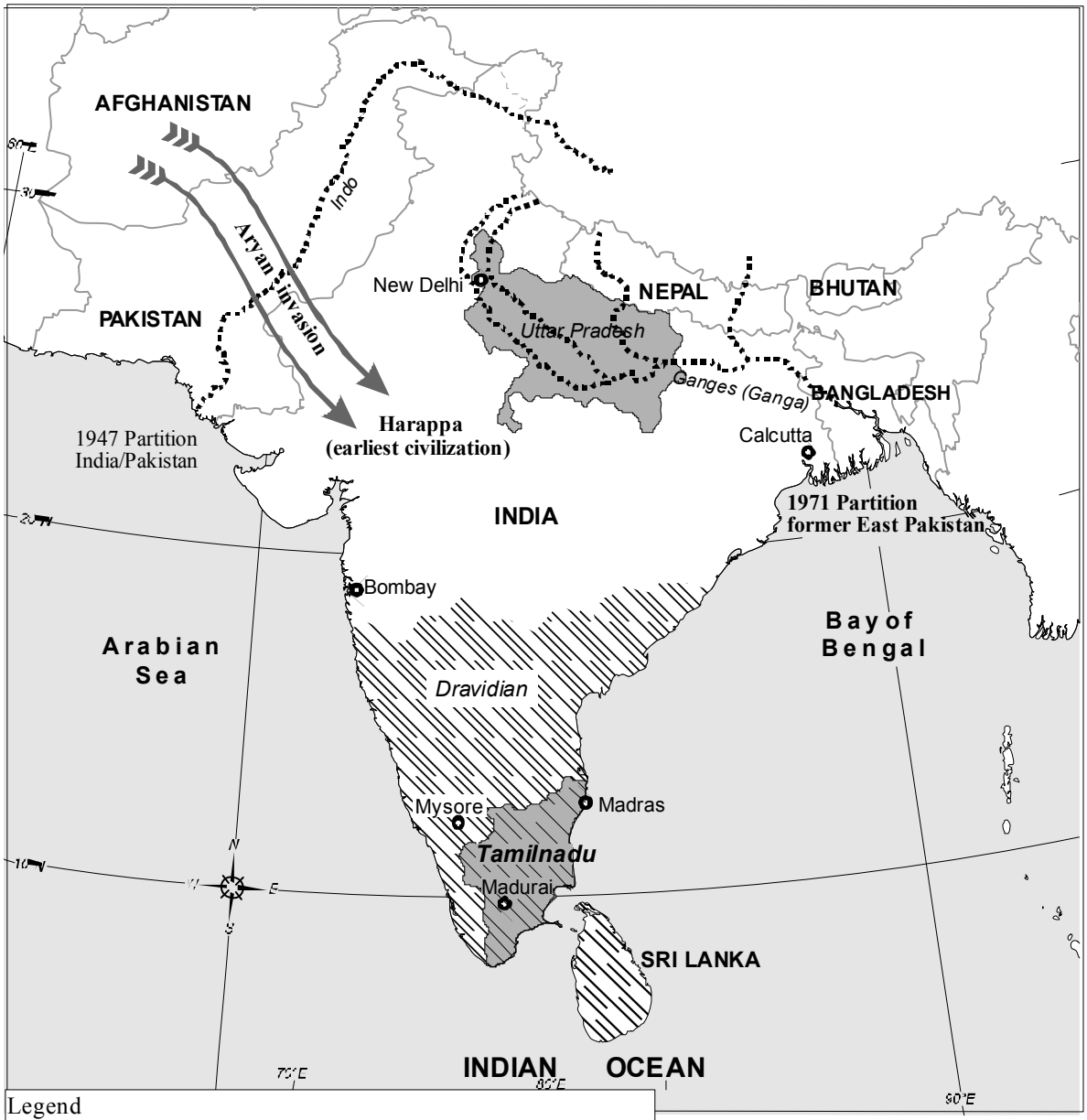
** Dates inferred from narrative. In the end of *MS* Willie is 52 years old.

MAP 2 LONDON SETTINGS



Among the many venues, streets and locations scattered in the narrative and not pin-pointed in the map above are: Debenhams (department store), the Ritz (hotel), The Berkeley (hotel), Claridge's (hotel), Chez Victor (nightclub), Park Lane, The British Museum, Charing Cross Road, Edgware Road, Trade Union Congress building, Cricklewood Park, Seven Dials area (Dickens' London), *Vanity Fair*'s sights (Victorian London), BBC building, the Law Courts. Page number references in appendix C.

MAP 3 INDIA: INTERTEXTUAL REFERENCES



Adapted from the base map at http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/s_asia_pol.pdf

Mysore and Madras are Narayan's two hometowns. They are the basis of Malgudi, the composite fictional town which is the setting of *The Bachelor of Arts* and most of Narayan's fiction.

Madurai: Sri Hamana Maharshi.

Tamil Nadu and Srilanka: areas where Kanadapalli's guerrilla take place.

Uttar Pradesh is the region of Naipaul's ancestors who migrated to Trinidad in the West Indies.

Harappa or Indus River Civilization (ca. 2300-1750 BC)

MAP 4 CARIBBEAN INTERTEXTUAL REFERENCES

Adapted from the base map at http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/s_americal.pdf

◆ The five essays in Naipaul's *The Middle Passage* (1962) are about Trinidad, British Guyana, Surinam, Martinique and Jamaica.

◆ St. Kitts is the home region of the heiress in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. Metatextuality in *Magic Seeds,* chapter 9.

◆ Trinidad: Naipaul's birthplace.

◆ Jamaica: related to the character Percy Cato, in *Half* and *MS.*

APPENDIX E — Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi: The Guru

Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950), whose birth-name was Venkataraman, was born on the 30th of December, the Ardra-darsanam day. On this day the image of the Dancing Siva, Nataraja, is taken out of the temples in procession to celebrate the divine grace of the Hindu God. There was nothing distinctive about Venkataraman's early years. Following his father death, the family moved to Madurai, where he attended an American Mission High School. He was an indifferent student, but the example of the saints and Hindi religious literature fascinated him. Without any earlier preparation, a longing arose in him to emulate the spirit of renunciation that constituted saintly life. A complete change happened in the young sage's life. The spiritual values which he had ignored till then became the only objects of attention. He lost interest in friends and studies, and grew indifferent to his surroundings. He preferred to sit alone, all-absorbed in concentration. An English teacher had asked him, as a punishment for indifference in studies, to copy out a lesson from Bain's Grammar three times. Realizing the futility of the task, he threw aside the book and turned inward in meditation. He decided to leave home and made his departure for the holy place of Tiruvannamalai. From then on he took on the name Ramana. Shortly after his arrival atTiruvannamalai Ramana shifted his residence to a shrine called Gurumurtam. Later on he started living in Virupaksa Cave after a saint who dwelt and was buried there. Ramana stayed in Virupaksa Cave sixteen years (1899-1916), and then moved to Skandasramam Cave, where he stayed from 1916 to1922. Gradually, during these years the crowds came, to put him questions regarding spiritual experience or bring sacred books for having some points explained. Ramana sometimes wrote out his answers. In 1903 there came to Tiruvannamalai a Sanskrit scholar, Ganapathi Muni famous for the austerities he had been observing. He visited Ramana in the Virupaksa Cave quite a few times.

As the years went by the Ashram grew steadily, and people from India and western countries came to seek help from him in their spiritual pursuits.

Ramana's first Western devotee was the Englishman Frank H. Humphrys, who was impressed and wrote about Ramana for the *International Psychic Gazette*. Humphrys also recorded his impressions in his letters to friends in England. The most famous British visitor, though, was Somerset Maugham, who based the protagonist of the novel *The Razor's Edge,* Larry Darrell, on Sri Ramana. Prompted by the success of the novel, scores of people poured into the Maharshi's ashram. His fame spread first in Europe, then in India, fuelled by the publicity generated by books and articles of many supporters and authors. Among other westerners like the philosopher Paul Brunton and, Maugham is credited with opening up to the west to the knowledge of Hindu mysticism and Zen experience.

Besides writers there were hosts of gurus, mystics and *sadhus* of every religious persuasion that paid him homage. But not only worshipers went to the ashram. Sometime thieves looted the holy shrine. In one of these occasions the Maharshi was beaten up and forgave the attackers. In spite of these incidents, life in the Ashram flowed on smoothly. With time more and more of visitors came, some of them for long stays. The dimensions of the Ashram increased, and new features and departments were added – a home for the cattle, a school for the study of the *Vedas*, a department for publication, and the Mother's temple with regular worship. There were invitations for him to undertake tours. But he never left Tiruvannamalai. Most of the time, people sat before him in silence. Sometimes some of them asked questions, and sometimes he answered them. Sri Ramana died in 1950, after a long disease, and his fame, literary and otherwise still endures.

APPENDIX F — *The Graphic* – Victorian Magazine

The Graphic (1869 - 1932) Victorian magazine [*MS*, Ch. 9, pp.205, 206]

The Graphic was one of the most outstanding publications of Victorian England. The magazine was an illustrated weekly publication edited by the social reformer, William Luson Thomas (1830-1900). Thomas believed that the power of images could be used to affect public opinion and foster interest in matters of poverty and injustice. The first edition of *The Graphic* appeared in December 1869. Thomas asked Fildes to illustrate an article on the then recently issued *Houseless Poor Act*, the illustration showed a line of homeless people applying for tickets for overnight stay in the workhouse. This engraving, entitled "Houseless and Hungry", impressed Dickens, who commissioned the artist to illustrate his unfinished mystery novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). *The Graphic* commissioned illustrations of current events from pole exploration to the flogging of a criminal at Newgate Prison, and slices of London life, with a Dickensian flavour. Though if often carried articles with social relevancy, it was a general news magazine, featuring known individuals and their families, including the royalty, politicians and inventors. Ferdinand de Lesseps was featured in an 1881's issue, at the time was trying to build a canal in Panama. They also published well-regarded artistic illustrations of such subjects as a series on Shakespeare's heroines.

APPENDIX G — *High Sierra* – The movie

High Sierra (1941) – Hollywood film [*HL*, Ch. 2, p.96]

High Sierra, released in 1941, was a blockbuster at the time of release. It was written by John Huston directed by Raoul Walsh, with Humphrey Bogart as Roy Earle. Roy 'Mad Dog' Earle is broken out of prison by an old associate who wants him to help with a planned robbery. The robbery goes wrong, a man is killed and Earle is forced to go on the run, chased by the police and an angry press He eventually takes refuge among the peaks of the Sierra Nevada, where a tense siege follows, during which he regrets the attachments he formed with two women during the planning of the robbery.

APPENDIX H — Cato – Roman Statesmen

Cato of Utica or Marcus Porcius Cato Uticencis (95 BC-46 BC), known as Cato the younger to distinguish him from his great-grandfather Cato the Elder, was a Roman statesman of the early Republic, and a follower of the Stoic philosophy. He is famous for 2 facts: his immunity to bribes and the legendary tenacity, especially as applied to his main political enemy Julius Caesar. His politics were conservative, and his refusal to compromise made him unpopular. He was a violent opponent of Julius Caesar and tried to implicate Caesar in the conspiracy of Catiline in 63 B.C. As a result he was sent (59 B.C.) to exile in Cyprus. He supported Pompey after the break with Caesar. Then he went to Africa and continued the struggle against Caesar there. Cato was in command at Utica. After Caesar crushed (46 B.C.) Scipio at Thapsus, Cato committed suicide, bidding his people make their peace with Caesar. Cicero and Marcus Junius Brutus (Cato's son-in-law) wrote eulogies of him while Caesar wrote his *Anticato* against him; the tragedy of his death has been the subject of many dramas. He became the symbol of probity in public life.

Marcus Porcius Cato, the Elder (234 - 149 BC) was a Roman statesman, surnamed "The Censor," Sapiens, Priscus, or Major (the Elder). He is the author of the notorious slogan *Carthago delenda est,* "Carthage must be destroyed." Cato rose in politics without any family precedent, similarly to the character Percy Cato.[59] In the course of his career Cato served the expanding Roman state in Sicily, North Africa, Sardinia, Spain and Greece. But his fame came from what he did and said in Rome. He had a reputation for stubborn righteousness and fiery oratory. As senator, advocate, prosecutor, he targeted misbehaviour by generals on campaign and by governors in overseas provinces. Cato's last

[59] See appendix C chapter tables – characters' appearance

major contribution to Roman public affairs was to urge war against Carthage, the "Third Punic War". As Cato had so insistently repeated, "Carthage must be razed". Though he was respected as a skilled politician and an effective public speaker, he was hated for his harshness. Cato compiled the earliest Roman encyclopedia, wrote a medical work, a history of Rome, and a treatise on agriculture. Cato was the first to use Latin for historical writing, as an instruction that addressed politics and the moral standards of Rome's ancestors. He despised Hellenistic philosophy and resolved to philosophers put out of the city. In the exercise of the censorship Cato gained the most enduring fame of his life. He improved the public works, supported the plebeians, and opposed the nobles and patricians. Cato died at 85 years old. In private life and in the treatment of inferiors and slaves, he exhibited great harshness. He was also said to be a good husband and a thoughtful father.

APPENDIX I — Naipaul Complete Works: A Chronology of First Editions

1957 *The Mystic Masseur* – novel

1958 *The Suffrage of Elvira* – novel

1959 *Miguel Street* – short stories

1961 *A House for Mr. Biswas* – novel (considered his masterpiece)

1962 *The Middle Passage* – essay, travel writing

1963 *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* – novel (the only one set in England)

1964 *An Area of Darkness.* – Indian Trilogy book 1 – travel writing

1967 *The Mimic Men* – novel

1967 *A Flag on the Island* – short stories

1969 *The Loss of El Dorado* – history

1971 *In a Free State* – novel; the edition includes two short-stories

1972 *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles* – essays

1974 *The Return of Eva Perón with the Killings in Trinidad* – essays

1975 *Guerrillas* – novel

1977 *India: A Wounded Civilization* – Indian Trilogy book 2 – travel writing

1979 *A Bend in the River* – novel

1980 *A Congo Diary* – travel writing

1981 *Among the Believers*: An Islamic Journey – travel writing

1984 *Finding the Center* – blurred genre boundary: autobiography, essay

1987 *The Enigma of Arrival* – novel

1989 *A Turn in the South* – travel writing

1990 *India: A Million Mutinies* – Indian Trilogy book 3 – travel writing

1994 *A Way in the World* – blurred genre boundary – novel, historical writing

1998 *Beyond Belief*: *Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples* – travel

1999 *Letters between Father and Son* – collected letters

2000 *Reading and Writing: A Personal Account* – essays

2001 *Half a life* – novel

2002 *The Writer and the World* – essays

2004 *Magic Seeds* – novel: sequel to *Half a Life*

APPENDIX J — Naipaul's Works in Brazil: Chronology of Publications*

1987 *Os Mímicos* [*The Mimic Men*, 1967]
Translated by Paulo Henriques Britto

1988 *Uma Casa para o Sr. Biswas* [*A House For MR Biswas*, 1961]
Translated by Paulo Henriques Britto

1990 *Guerrilheiros* [*Guerrillas*, 1975]
Translated by Paulo Henriques Britto

1994 *Um Caminho do Mundo* [*A Way in the World*, 1994]
Translated by Anna Olga de Barros Barreto

1994 *O Enigma da Chegada – Romance em Cinco Partes* [*The Enigma of Arrival*, 1987]
Translated by Paulo Henriques Britto

1997 *Índia – Um Milhão de Motins Agora* [*India: A Million Mutinies Now*, 1990]
Translated by S. Duarte

1999 *Entre os Fiéis — Irã, Paquistão, Malásia, Indonésia* – 1981[*Among the Believers*: *An Islamic Journey*, 1981]
Translated by Cid Knipel Moreira

1999 *Além da Fé — Indonésia, Irã, Paquistão, Malásia – 1998* [*Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples,* 1998]
Translated by Rubens Figueiredo

2002 *Meia Vida* [*Half a Life*, 2001]
Translated by Isa Mara Lando

2003 *O Massagista Místico* [*The Mystic Masseur*, 1957]
Translated by Alexandre Hubner

2004 *Uma Curva no Rio* [*A Bend in the River*, 1979]
Translated by Carlos Graieb

* All books published by Companhia das Letras

APPENDIX K — Glossary of Hindi Words and Indian Culture and History

Aryan: The name refers to the nomadic herding tribes of Indo-European language from Iranian plateau in central Asia. There were waves of Aryan migration (ca.1750-1000 BC) into Northwest of India. The Aryans introduced oral religious traditions preserved in *Vedas*, the oldest of which, the *Rig Veda*, predates migration. These religious texts written in Sanskrit form the base of later developments of Hinduism.

ashram: The word *ashram* describes a place – house, hut or cave – where a guru dwells and teaches those seeking spiritual advice. Traditionally only the guru lives there, however some ashrams also offer accommodation for visitors – including longtime or permanent stay, in a similar way to the Christian Monasteries. The ashram does not charge for its services but accepts donations for charity.

Brahmanin: A member of the religious elite, the priestly caste.

caste: The four *varnas*, or caste original distinctions, form a hierarchy. At the top are the Brahmanins, or priests, who are the most powerful humans in existence, for with their prayers, spells and rituals, they can gain the favours of the gods. The second *varna*, or caste, is the *Kshatriya*, originally the warriors of the invading Aryan culture, then gradually extended to kings, princes, and leaders. In third position are the *Vaishya*, or commoners, which were originally the merchants, then gradually extended to farmers, and craftsmen, in the gradual mingling of Aryans with the native population of the Indian subcontinent. At the bottom are the *Shudras*, or servants. Not included in the four *varnas* are the outcasts, the untouchables, considered completely outside society. Since this social hierarchy reflects the

moral order of the universe, movement from one caste to another is out of question. From these original four castes sprang a complex social system that includes hundreds of caste subdivisions that remain until today.

dothi: A traditional Indian male outfit. It consists of loincloth made with cotton or silk fabric worn by men in India. It is usually white.

fireband: This word refers to a political activist engaged into radical action.

Kama sutra: It is an ancient Hindu text about sexual behavior collected by a scholar named Vatsyayana, during the heyday of the Gupta period sometime between the 1st to 6th centuries AD. The word "Kama" means desire, and the word "Sutra" means a discourse threaded on a series of aphorisms. The Sanskrit text is also known as *Vatsyayana Kamasutram* (Vatsyayana's Aphorisms on Love). In spite of the fact that it originated in a culture whose values are radically different, in Western culture the Kama Sutra has been considered a sort of guide for enhancing sexual pleasure, as it offers advice on lovemaking preparations and positions.

Maharaja (also spelled maharajah): The word literally means "great king" from the Hindi words "maha" (great) and "raja" (king). By the time of independence (1947), the British directly ruled one third of India, the rest of the territory comprised around 600 princely states, each ruled by with its own raja (if the king was Hindu) or nawab/sultan (if he was Muslim). Only a handful of the kingdoms were powerful and wealthy enough for their rulers to be entitled kings; the remaining were minor principalities or groups of villages, so the word "maharja" is also taken to mean prince or ruler.

Partition of India: The term partition is generally used only in reference to the independence of India and Pakistan from British rule in 1947, when borders were drawn along religious lines. The Partition created the Muslim Pakistan and saw the Bengal region divided into a Muslim-dominated eastern part called East Bengal corresponding to what is now Bangladesh, and a western part, nowadays the Indian state of West Bengal. In 1971 a war between East and West Pakistan resulted in the separation of Pakistan into two states: Pakistan and Bangladesh (former East Pakistan). In a broader view, the term "Partition of India" was the process by which the Indian subcontinent former British dominions were granted independence in the late 1940s. The divisions resulted in the creation of four new independent states—India, Burma (now Myanmar), Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Pakistan (including modern-day Bangladesh). The partition is at the origin or current conflicts in the region, especially at the Kashmere area.

sadhu: It is a term in Hinduism that refers to an ascetic who renounced the world or to a practitioner of yoga who is dedicated to achieving spiritual liberation through meditation and contemplation of God. A *sadhu* must give up the pursuit of the first three Hindu goals in life: *kama* (pleasure), *artha* (wealth and power) and *dharma* (duty) and dedicate himself thoroughly to the pursuit of God.

Tamil: 1) a member of the mixed Dravidian and Caucasoid people of southern India and Sri Lanka; 2) the Dravidian language spoken since prehistoric times by the Tamil people in southern India and Sri Lanka.

untouchables: The lowest caste members who could not handle food consumed by upper castes members nor be touched by them.

Upanishads: Mystic or spiritual interpretations on the *Vedas***,** and therefore also known as *Vedanta*. The Sanskrit term *Upanishad* derives from upa- (near), ni- (down) and shad (to sit), referring to the "sitting down near" a spiritual teacher or guru. These philosophical writings form the backbone of Hindu thought. One of the most influential ideas developed in the *Upanishads* is the concept of *karma*; every aspect of Hindu life, including social organization, is derived from this concept. *Karma* means "action," and operates as a causal explanation for everything that happens. All one's actions determine one's future actions; conversely, all actions one takes are the results of actions one has taken in the past. When the idea of karma was combined with the idea of reincarnation, to form the concept of *samsara*, or the cycle of birth and rebirth, it became a powerful tool for social organization. All actions in this life predetermine the nature of one's status when reborn; one's current life, including one's moral disposition, has been predetermined by the sum total of all the actions taken in previous lives. In the social order, karma produces the original "four colors" or "castes" (*varna* is the Sanskrit word for "color") which form the substance and hierarchy of society. This social order reflects the rigorous set of consequences for individuals. A well-lived life guarantees rebirth into a higher social order and a wicked life ensures rebirth into lower social orders; the social order, then, reflects the moral order of the universe. Since one's place in the hierarchy is predetermined by previous actions, one's duty (*dharma*) consists in rigorously performing the functions of the caste one is born into.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A — Poem by Sarojini Naidu

Indian Love Song

She

LIKE a serpent to the calling voice of flutes,
Glides my heart into thy fingers, O my Love!
Where the night-wind, like a lover, leans above
His jasmine-gardens and sirisha-bowers;
And on ripe boughs of many-coloured fruits
Bright parrots cluster like vermilion flowers.

He

Like the perfume in the petals of a rose,
Hides thy heart within my bosom, O my love!
Like a garland, like a jewel, like a dove
That hangs its nest in the asoka-tree.
Lie still, O love, until the morning sows
Her tents of gold on fields of ivory.

Books by Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949) Indian poet and nationalist leader:

Sarojini Naidu, Selected Poetry and Prose. Indus Publishing House, 1993.

Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu. G.A. Natesan & Co, 1925.

The Sceptred Flute: Songs of India. Kitabistan Publishing House, 1979.

India's Future. Published by The Foreign Policy Association, 1929.

The Feather of the Dawn. [poems] Asia Publishing House, 1961.

The Soul of India. Vasanta Press, 1923.

Sarojini Naidu: Select Poems. Oxford UP, 1930.

The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death & The Spring. Heinemann, 1914

Sarojini Naidu, Selected Letters, 1890s to 1940s. Kali for Women Publishing House, 1996.

Source of above poem and list of books by Sarojini Naidu:

<http://www.poemhunter.com/sarojini-naidu/poet-6636> Access on 22nd September, 2005.

ANNEX B — Kandapalli – *The Hindu* Newspaper Story

Kin react to charges against **Kondapalli**

By Our Staff Reporter

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL. 21. K. Anuradha and K. Sudha, grand-daughters of the founder of the CPI-ML People's War Group, **Kondapalli** Seetaramaiah, have found fault with what they termed as 'baseless charges' levelled against their grandfather by the PW leader, Pradeep.

In a statement here on Wednesday, the sisters said there was no truth in the allegation that their grandfather had shun the PW ideology and `surrendered' before the law enforcers.

Referring to a statement issued in the name of PW leader Pradeep's name which criticised War ideologue, Pilla Venkateswarlu's, surrender and listed Mr. Seetaramaiah also among those who had `stooped' down to a very low level and laid down arms to join the mainstream for their own selfish motives, they said Mr. Seetaramaiah was given a shabby treatment by the PW and finally expelled due to his bad health condition.

Source:

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2004/10/24/stories/2004102400460400.htm>

Access on June, 27th 2005.

ANNEX C — Kandapalli Connection with the Tamil Tigers and the PWG

The text that follows is a slightly abridged version of the article "Lanka terrorist groups", written by Joseph Brewda and Madhu Gurung, published in the October 13, 1995 issue of Executive Intelligence Review as reproduced in the site:

<http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241_south_india_groups.html>

Access on 18th May, 2005.

1) Tamil Tigers:

Name of group: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Other names: LTTE, Tamil Tigers.

Headquarters: Jaffna peninsula, Sri Lanka; headquarters previously in city of Jaffna.

Other major office/outlet: London; Paris, office of public spokesman Anton Balsingham; Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Founded: In 1972 as the Tamil New Tigers; renamed LTTE in 1973.

Locations of operations, areas active: Terror operations in southern India, the Sri Lankan capital Colombo, and other locations in Sri Lanka. Waging guerrilla war against the Sri Lankan Army in the Tamil territory of Sri Lanka, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula, and terror campaigns in other locations. Currently holds two-thirds of the Sri Lankan coastline. Previously sought refuge in and operated from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka states in southern India, a mere 20 miles across the Palk Straits from LTTE-held areas of Sri Lanka. In southern India, in 1990, LTTE customarily hid out in the Vedaranyan wildlife sanctuary.

Major terrorist actions:

In May 1986, the LTTE exterminated the leadership of rival Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization, in a terror campaign. In October 1988, the LTTE murdered 45 Sinhala villagers.

In February 1990, the LTTE kidnapped 15 Indian customs officials in Tamil Nadu, India.

In July 1990, the LTTE launched terror attack in Madras, Tamil Nadu state, India, against the headquarters of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front, killing 14 leaders of this rival group.

On March 2, 1991, the LTTE murdered Sri Lankan Defense Minister Ranjan Wijeratne with a remote-control bombing device.

On May 21, 1991, the LTTE murdered former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, during an election rally, using a woman suicide-bomber. Bomb was composed of RDX explosives. Gandhi was killed, along with 15 others, including the alleged bomber. Although Prabakharan consistently denied responsibility for the assassination, a Washington, D.C.-based LTTE outlet did claim credit. It is believed that up to 500 LTTE members or sympathizers were involved in the plot against Gandhi. The alleged masterminds behind the plot were one Sivarasan (a.k.a. "One-Eyed Jack"), who used his cousin to act as a "human bomb" against Gandhi, and LTTE leader Peria Santham. Sivarasan was killed or killed himself during a shoot-out at a hideout in Bangalore, India on Aug. 19, 1991, along with 26 other persons at the hideout. Santham was trapped at his hideout in Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India, and committed suicide before capture.

In August 1992, the LTTE carried out the bombing-murder of Sri Lankan General Kobbekaduwa and nine others during a campaign rally in Kayts, Jaffna.

On April 26, 1993, the LTTE shot dead leading Sri Lankan opposition leader and former national security minister Lalith Athulathmudali, while he was campaigning in provincial elections. The assassin swallowed a cyanide capsule before capture.

On May 1, 1993, the LTTE murdered Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa. An LTTE suicide-bomber rammed her explosive-loaded bicycle into the President's motorcade, killing Premadasa, herself, and 34 other people. Bomber was believed to be a 14-year-old girl.

On June 5, 1995, the LTTE blew up a Red Cross ship chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross, off the Jaffna peninsula.

On Aug. 7, 1995, an LTTE militant from India carried out a suicide-bombing, using a cart filled with plastic explosives, in Colombo, killing 22 people.

On Sept. 22, 1995, the LTTE hijacked a bus in Mannar Island in northern Sri Lanka, killing a policeman who refused to get off. This marks use by LTTE of tactics used by Khalistani terrorists in Punjab, India.

Trademark terror signatures: Suicide bombing; suicide squads, many of whom are composed of women; and car bombings. Explosive used in bombings is often heat-generating RDX, an explosive used by militaries in South Asia. Cadres customarily swallow cyanide capsules if captured or threatened with capture.

Leader name and aliases: Velupillai Prabhakaran is the LTTE's current leader in Sri Lanka. Oxford University-trained Anton Balsingham, residing in London and Paris, is the public spokesman for the LTTE. The LTTE's number-two leader, Sathisaivam Krishnakumar, alias Kittu, ran operations from London until August 1991, when his application for asylum in Great Britain was rejected in the aftermath of the May 1991 LTTE murder of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Kittu then reportedly fled to France, where he went underground. Kittu was killed in January 1993 onboard a ship surrounded by Indian naval vessels off the southern Indian coast, as he was apparently trying to make his way back into Sri Lanka. LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Amman allegedly planned LTTE's major assassinations. LTTE leader in (West) Germany was Sooriyakumaran Selvadurai, who is reputed to be a multi-millionaire drug-dealer.

Groups allied to nationally or internationally:

According to July 1995 testimony received by the Jain Commission inquiry into the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, Khalistani (Sikh separatist) leader Jagjit Singh Chauhan reported that the LTTE and the Khalistani Liberation Force were co-conspirators in the assassination plot against Rajiv Gandhi. LTTE has also received safe housing in the past from the People's War Group (Naxalites) in Andhra Pradesh (see below).

A 1983 Sri Lankan intelligence report indicates that at that time, the LTTE had a "Libyan connection."

Religious/ideological/ethnic motivating ideology: The LTTE is dedicated to carving out a Tamil ethnic state (Tamil Eelam) of Sri Lanka. Prabakharan also claims to be Marxist.

Current number of cadres: About 15,000 in Sri Lanka. The LTTE is recruiting children, according to a July 1995 report of University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna). The LTTE, according to the group, wants to recruit 10,000 school children, especially targeting youths in the 12- to 16-year-old age bracket who have dropped out of school due to poverty. Recruitment tactics also include kidnapping children from schools at gunpoint. The Sri Lankan Air Force has charged the LTTE with using children in its front lines, as indicated by the numbers of LTTE casualties who were children, killed in an LTTE attack on Army camps in the Weli Oya area in July 1995. The LTTE also is using a high percentage of women for combat duties.

Training: In the early 1970s, the LTTE began establishing training camps and secret arms caches under the cover of a chain of Refugee and Rehabilitation Farms of the Gandhian Society. Funds for the farms came from Oxfam (Oxford Famine), one of the most powerful and secretive British intelligence organizations acting under non-governmental organization cover.

A number of State and private organizations in Lebanon, Libya, and Syria provided training to the Tamil groups. Ex-French legionnaires, dissident sects within the Palestine Liberation Organization, and a few South American groups were also involved in this. John Glover, a British feature writer, wrote to Western Mail in Wales about the ongoing and future training programs for Tamil youth by British mercenaries. "A band of mercenary soldiers recruited in South Wales is training a Tamil army to fight for a separate state in Sri Lanka. About 20 mercenaries were signed up after a meeting in Cardiff and have spent the last two months in southern India preparing a secret army to fight the majority Sinhalas, in the cause of a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka," he said.

Russian Gen. Mikhail Barsukov reported in February 1990 that the LTTE had undergone special training in Lebanon and received combat experience there.

According to accounts by retired officials of the Israeli secret service, the Mossad, the Israelis were simultaneously training the Sri Lanka Army and the Tigers, and providing arms to each. Victor Ostrovsky, author of By Way of Deception, told Indian Abroad news service in 1991 that the Tigers were trained in Israel in 1985. "These groups kept coming and going. It was part of our routine job to take them to training camps and make sure that they were getting training worth what they paid for, not more and not less." The groups paid in cash. Ostrovsky

said that the arrangement for the training was made by the Mossad liaison in India, who lived there under a British passport.

A December 1983 Sunday Mail article reported that the Mossad was arming and training the Tigers, as well as the Sri Lankan Armed Forces.

One of the main figures involved in these operations, according to other reports, was Rafi Eytan, the former head of the Israeli intelligence agency LEKEM, which had been caught running spy Jonathan Pollard in the United States. Following the 1985 scandal, Eytan was transferred to become the head of Israeli Chemical Industries, in which capacity he spent time in Sri Lanka.

The British Special Air Services (SAS) firm Keenie Meenie Services, was simultaneously training the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE.

Known drug connections: The LTTE is believed to finance its weapons procurement through drug trafficking. The LTTE is reported to be involved in trafficking heroin through Bombay, Turkey, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Canada, and the United States. In the early 1990s, over 600 cases involving Sri Lankan Tamil traffickers were reported to Interpol.

Known arms suppliers/routes: In August 1983, in Salonika, Greece, two West Germans were sentenced to four years imprisonment on charges of illegal transport of arms and ammunition, by a transport plane which took off from East Berlin and landed at Salonika. The plane was headed for Sri Lanka, where the LTTE was scheduled to pick up the 267 cases in the plane which contained 300,000 rounds for automatic rifles and 400 rockets.

According to intelligence reports, most of the arms used by the LTTE are purchased from Singapore, India, Afghanistan, and the Mideast. Soviet-made AK47 Automatic Kalashnikovs, T56 Chinese assault rifles, the Indian-Belgian AKMS, and the M16 manufactured by the Colt company in the United States (believed to have been obtained by way of Vietnam) have been the common weapons of the LTTE guerrilla.

In late 1980s and early 1990s, the LTTE is known to have received weapons from munitions factories in India. In 1990, the LTTE was receiving small weapons from factories in the Tamil Nadu centers of Ranipet, Coimbatore, Salem, and Trichengode.

In 1987, the Hindustan Times reported that large quantities of arms with Pakistani and Israeli markings were seized by the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Jaffna from the LTTE.

In 1989, according to a Sri Lankan government secretary, the LTTE was receiving armaments directly from the Sri Lankan government of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who wanted to force the expulsion of the Indian Peacekeeping Force from Sri Lanka, and who was also using the LTTE to wipe out the JVP (People's Liberation Front) Sinhala insurgency.

In November 1991, the Indian Navy seized a large ship carrying large amounts of arms, ammunition, and clothes from Singapore to the LTTE.

In October 1993, the Indian daily The Pioneer charged that Pakistan had been clandestinely supplying arms to the LTTE, from a location close to the Karachi port. Sources in Dubai said

this arms supply line was uncovered when an Indian naval vessel intercepted the LTTE ship MV Yahata Maru on Jan. 16, 1993.

In November 1994, the Sri Lankan government asked the Indian Navy to intercept a suspected arms shipment to the LTTE, believed to be 10 tons of arms and explosives coming from a "Black Sea port."

The LTTE has now acquired radar-guided anti-aircraft missiles, according to July 1995 reports. The LTTE reportedly has bought Russian-made Strela anti-aircraft missiles from Belgian arms dealers.

Known political supporters/advocates: On Nov. 25, 1991, the police in Tamil Nadu, India, arrested former state home secretary R. Nagarajan, of the DMK Tamil party in Tamil Nadu, for sheltering and protecting LTTE assassins. Indian supporters of the Tigers have begun to exert pressure on New Delhi to back the Tigers once more. V. Gopalasamy, leader of the Tamil Nadu-based political party MDMK, says that his support for the LTTE and formation of Eelam in Sri Lanka was a "conscious, deeply thought-out decision." The DMK, one of the two leading parties in the state of Tamil Nadu, passed an official resolution supporting Eelam in 1984. Gopalasamy, dismissing any suggestion that the pro-Eelam movement is anti-national, told reporters that there is "no need to take the permission of the Indian government" before adopting such a position.

On April 13-14, 1995, forty-three LTTE prisoners in the Tippu Mahal jail in the Tellore fort camp in Tamil Nadu broke out of prison. Nine were captured in Madras city, two committed suicide with cyanide capsules before capture, and the rest escaped.

There are indications that the LTTE is receiving some support from the National Council of Christian Churches (NCCC). In July 1995, American national Kenneth Mulder was arrested by Sri Lankan police at Vavuniya for alleged links to the LTTE. An NCCC worker, Mulder was arrested after a police raid of NCCC's offices came up with evidence linking them to support operations for the LTTE.

In the 1995 war between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Army, the International Committee of the Red Cross has been refusing to put its food-ships through government security checks at the port of Kankesanthurai, and is instead insisting that they be allowed to travel directly to the LTTE's Point Pedro pier, thus delivering food to the civilian population directly through the LTTE.

Known funding: LTTE relies on financing first from Tamil expatriates in the West. In August 1986, a West German prosecutor accused the LTTE of blackmailing Tamil expatriates. Prosecution noted that the LTTE terrorists took a route that went from Sri Lanka to East Berlin to West Germany, and then on to Canada.

Rajiv Gandhi assassin Sivarasan reportedly traveled to Singapore, France, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait to raise funds for the LTTE.

Thumbnail historical profile: A small group called the Tamil New Tigers was formed in 1972 by Velupillai Prabhakaran, a reported communist. It was soon renamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a.k.a. the Tamil Tigers. Its first act was the 1973 assassination of the Tamil mayor of Jaffna, the main Tamil-area city.

In 1976, then-Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi began covert aid to the Tamil insurgents. She apparently favored a federal solution for the Tamil-speaking provinces of the island. Gandhi gave the insurgents sanctuary in Madras, the capital of Tamil Nadu, and allowed them to form jungle training camps in the state. In 1977, Sri Lankan President Junius Jayawardene again became prime minister. Gandhi reportedly suspected that the United States wanted to establish a naval base in Sri Lanka in Trincomalee harbor for use in policing the Indian Ocean, and accelerated her efforts. Gandhi lost power that year, but regained it in 1980, and resumed her policy of aiding the Tamil insurgency, which blew wide-open in 1983.

Buddhist monastic-led riots against the Tamils occurred in 1977, 1981, and 1983. The last, the most violent, led to the deaths of some 2,000 Tamils, and turned 80,000 to 100,000 Tamils into refugees. The riots were reportedly triggered by the news of the Tigers' ambush and killing of a couple of jeeps carrying 18 soldiers in northern Sri Lanka.

The 1983 insurrection and riots increased the pressure on Jayawardene to find a solution acceptable to the Buddhist chauvinists. In trips to Britain and the United States that year, he asked for counterinsurgency training and military aid. Both governments publicly refused, but provided covert assistance.

As a result of bringing in SAS and the Israelis, the civil war steadily worsened. In 1985, Jayawardene was forced to directly negotiate with the Tamils in Bhutan, under Indian auspices. In 1987, he was forced to sign the Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord, which gave autonomy to the Tamil areas in the north and east of the island. An amnesty was declared, and 3,000 Indian troops, and then many more, were sent as a peacekeeping force. The situation soon exploded.

A key feature of the Indo-Sri Lanka peace accords was that the expulsion of the Israelis was demanded. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, speaking in Delhi, denounced "outside forces" whose employment was dependent on continued violence. With the coming to power of Sri Lankan President Premadasa, the LTTE was used by the government against the Indian peacekeeping forces, and also against the Sinhalese insurgent JVP. In the early 1990s, the LTTE slowly escalated its low-intensity war against the Sri Lankan government. When peace negotiations, initiated in spring 1995 by newly elected President Chandrika Kumaratanga, broke down, the LTTE launched full-scale war against the Sri Lankan government.

2) People's War Group

Name of Group: People's War Group (PWG).

Any other name: Also commonly called the Naxalites.

Headquarters: Parts of Telangana region of India's Andhra Pradesh; Gadchiroli, Maharashtra; Bastar, Madhya Pradesh.

Founded: In the early 1960s; reactivated in 1986-87.

Major terrorist actions: Abduction of eight top bureaucrats in the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh on Dec. 27, 1987. On Aug. 18, 1988, ten policemen were shot inside the

Alampalli forest in Adilabad district in Andhra Pradesh. Kidnapped a Congress Party legislative assembly member in Andhra Pradesh, and blew up the house of an Andhra Pradesh minister on Jan. 29-30, 1993. Kidnapped four policemen from Nizamabad district in Andhra Pradesh in January 1990. In 1989, the PWG kidnapped two members of the legislative Assembly in Andhra Pradesh.

Trademark terror signatures: Kidnapping of government officials and using them as exchange for the release of imprisoned Naxalites; blowing up houses by placing bombs; exploding lethal bombs in crowded places.

Leaders name and aliases: **Kondapalli Seetaramaiah**; Mukku Subba Reddy; Muppala Laxman Rao, alias Ganpathy; Mallujula Koteshwar Rao; Puli Anjaiah.

Groups allied to nationally or internationally: Indian People's Front (IPF) in Bihar is also a Naxalite-terrorist front operating in at least five districts in Bihar; the Khalistan Liberation Front and the LTTE are also allied groups. Loosely associated with Revolutionary International Movement (RIM) (see below).

Religious/ideological/ethnic motivating ideology: Imbued with Marxist-Leninist ideology, PWG incites, arms, and engages the tribals and the marginal farmers against the police and other instruments of the establishment. Constant "actions" in the form of killing is the motivating force behind the ideology.

Known controllers/mentors/theoreticians of: On paper, PWG has a pantheon of mentors, including Mao and Lenin. At the local level, Charu Mazumdar, the founder of the Naxalite movement in West Bengal and Satyanarayana, among others, is considered a "hero" by the PWG.

In 1984, Amnesty International demanded the setting up of an "independent judicial mechanism" in India to inquire into the killing of political activists alleged to be Naxalites. At the same time, the U.S.-based Asia Watch and the U.K.-based Amnesty International have complained from time to time about "police brutalities" against the PWG. A 49-page report was issued by Asia Watch in 1992 entitled "Police Killings and Rural Violence in Andhra Pradesh."

Current number of cadres: Over 5,000.

Training: Trained in Andhra Pradesh in the jungles. Arms were made available through PWG connections with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Khalistanis in particular. Reports indicate that the LTTE has also provided them with arms training.

Known arms suppliers/routes: The LTTE and the Khalistanis.

Known political supporters/advocates:Trade union activists in Singareni coal mines, the student wings of the Revolutionary Students' Union, and a number of academicians in local universities. The ruling Telegu Desam party under N.T. Rama Rao, in the early-1980s, encouraged the PWG to go after and weaken the Congress Party, Telegu Desam's main opposition.

Thumbnail historical profile: PWG feeds on the country's failure to provide relief to the marginal farmers, and to integrate the forest tribals. PWG campaigns against the landlord-politician nexus, and the rigid forest policy of the government. PWG incites the tribals, claiming that the forestland belongs to the tribals. It also encourages grabbing forestland and setting up confrontations with government officials. Forestland is used as the group's base of operation. The success of the PWG cadres lies in extracting money from the tobacco plantation owners and tobacco contractors. Perhaps it is for these reasons that the PWG has remained confined within the tribal belt. The leadership fights among the leaders continue to weaken the group. But it is their propensity to kill government officials that has helped them to recruit desperate criminals and other individuals.

The Naxalite movement, of which it is a product, was founded by Charu Mazumdar in 1967 in the village of Naxalbari, West Bengal, as a split-off of the Communist Party of India (M). The movement was protected by sections of the West Bengal government, and the group took to the streets in Calcutta. Soon, however, the group came under the patronage of China, leading to a concerted Indian government crackdown. Although crushed in West Bengal, the Naxalites spread to Andhra Pradesh and other states, where they concentrated on organizing tribals and backward peasants. In 1978, the group became a major force in Punjab, and its cadre later became leaders of the Sikh terrorist movement.

In March 1984, a Naxalite international was created in London, under the name Revolutionary International Movement (RIM). Among the members of this international are: the Revolutionary Communist Party USA, its founding organization; Shining Path of Peru; the Turkish Communist Party (ML); the Communist Party of India (ML); the Union of Iranian Communists; the Ceylon Communist Party; and other organizations often active in narcotics growing or transshipment areas.