

V. S. NAIPAUL

A Critical Evaluation



Edited by
Dr. Bijender Singh

V. S. Naipaul : A Critical Evaluation

© Editor

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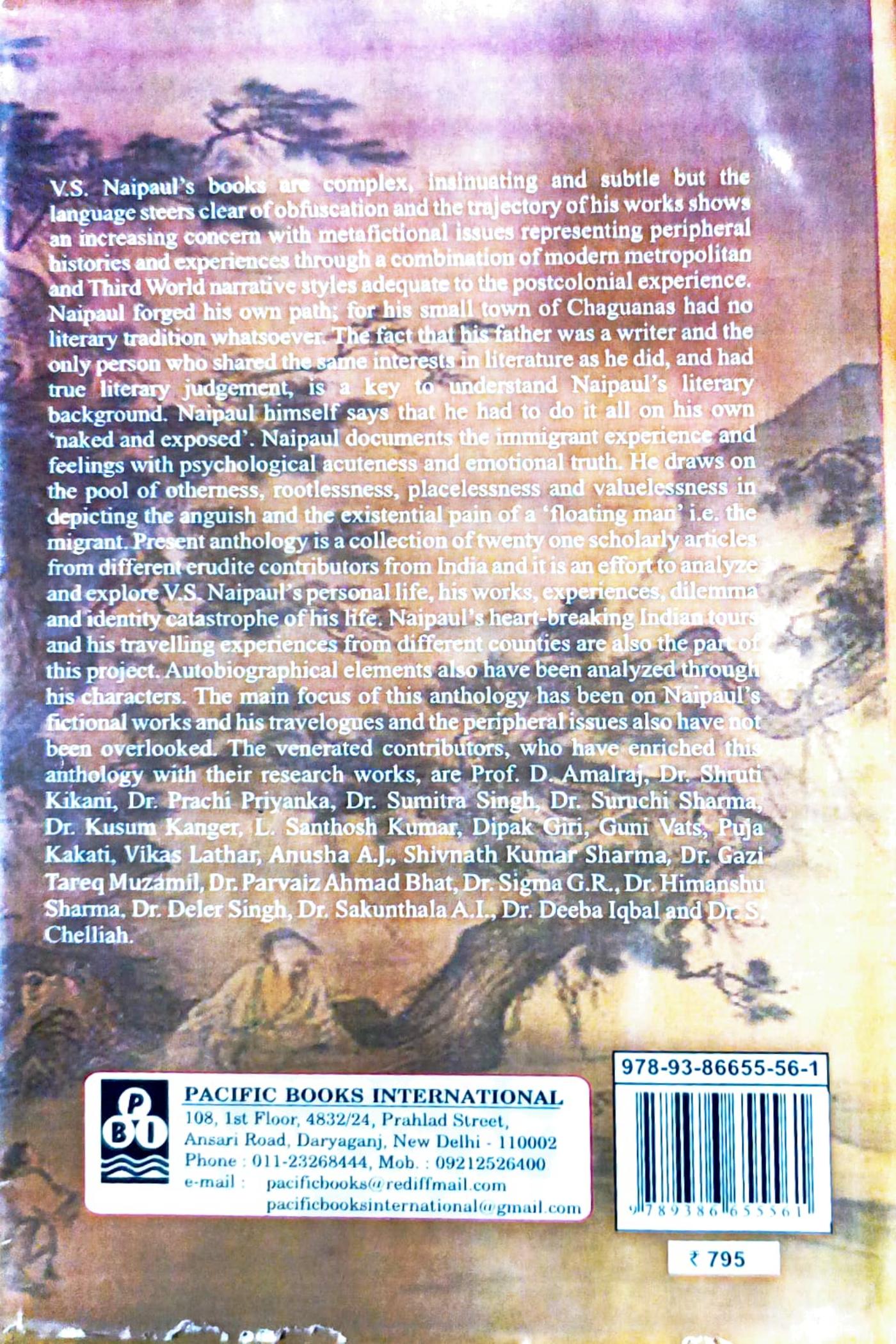
Political Identity of Ralph Singh and Issues of Mimicry: A Study of V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*

Dr. Suruchi Sharma

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* 146)

V.S. Naipaul has his reputation as an international writer who has written novels, travelogues and short-stories. His works, irrespective of the genre, have strong emphasis on the identity crisis, cultural clash and many other diasporic issues. Naipaul started his writing career with the publication of his first novel *The Mystic Masseur*. This novel tells the identity crisis of a Hindu Brahmin Ganesh Ramsumair who adopts many professions to settle in his life. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* (1967) also has almost a similar Indian character, Ralph Singh who feels the loss of his own self at many places. Naipaul depicts how Ralph Singh struggles for his political identity. He feels 'shipwrecked' not only in his own island,



V.S. Naipaul's books are complex, insinuating and subtle but the language steers clear of obfuscation and the trajectory of his works shows an increasing concern with metafictional issues representing peripheral histories and experiences through a combination of modern metropolitan and Third World narrative styles adequate to the postcolonial experience. Naipaul forged his own path; for his small town of Chaguanas had no literary tradition whatsoever. The fact that his father was a writer and the only person who shared the same interests in literature as he did, and had true literary judgement, is a key to understand Naipaul's literary background. Naipaul himself says that he had to do it all on his own 'naked and exposed'. Naipaul documents the immigrant experience and feelings with psychological acuteness and emotional truth. He draws on the pool of otherness, rootlessness, placelessness and valuelessness in depicting the anguish and the existential pain of a 'floating man' i.e. the migrant. Present anthology is a collection of twenty one scholarly articles from different erudite contributors from India and it is an effort to analyze and explore V.S. Naipaul's personal life, his works, experiences, dilemma and identity catastrophe of his life. Naipaul's heart-breaking Indian tours and his travelling experiences from different countries are also the part of this project. Autobiographical elements also have been analyzed through his characters. The main focus of this anthology has been on Naipaul's fictional works and his travelogues and the peripheral issues also have not been overlooked. The venerated contributors, who have enriched this anthology with their research works, are Prof. D. Amalraj, Dr. Shruti Kikani, Dr. Prachi Priyanka, Dr. Sumitra Singh, Dr. Suruchi Sharma, Dr. Kusum Kanger, L. Santhosh Kumar, Dipak Giri, Guni Vats, Puja Kakati, Vikas Lathar, Anusha A.J., Shivnath Kumar Sharma, Dr. Gazi Tareq Muzamil, Dr. Parvaiz Ahmad Bhat, Dr. Sigma G.R., Dr. Himanshu Sharma, Dr. Deler Singh, Dr. Sakunthala A.I., Dr. Deeba Iqbal and Dr. S. Chelliah.



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