



VIDHYAYANA

An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

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**ISSN 2454-8596**

[www.vidhyayanaejournal.org](http://www.vidhyayanaejournal.org)

**Narrative Art in "Bombay Theatre" in**

**'Naipaul's India: Million Mutinies Now'**

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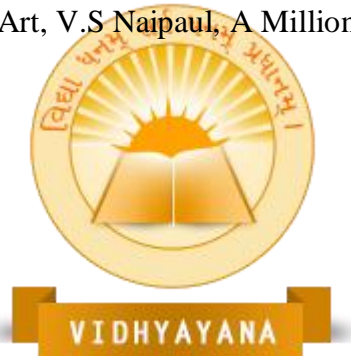
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**Abstract**

Travelogue is a genre which is combination of almost all the techniques of literary genres. One can find vivid narration like a novel and dialogues like drama. The genre travel writing can also be written like essay that consist description and it can have critical analysis too. A travelogue is difficult form because travel writer has to leave home, whether literally or metaphorically, exploring unknown land and live among the people of foreign land for a particular period. Travel writer has to note down facts and notions during his stay and write at leisure with the help of memories and his creativity 'recollected in tranquillity' in Wordsworth's term. As the genre travel writing incorporates many techniques of narration, this article focuses on a chapter one 'Bombay Theatre' of travelogue '*A Million Mutinies Now*' written by V.S. Naipaul. Primarily this article probes into how Naipaul has narrated the account of his traveling and which techniques and art have been used to unfold his experience.

**Keywords:** Travelogue, Narrative Art, V.S Naipaul, A Million Mutinies Now.





## Introduction

Narrative art is a way of telling the story. Much of the western art until the twentieth century has been narrative depicting stories from religion, myth and legend, history, and literature. The audience was assumed to be familiar with the stories. Many types of literature are considered narratives, including novels, drama, fables, folk-tales, short stories, and poetry. Narratives occur in a particular space and unfold in time. In narrative art, the writer chooses a way to portray the story. A work could have a narrative sort as a whole, additionally as parts of the artwork itself that depict separate sorts of narratives. The writer has choices to presents the story, it can be narrated through different techniques such as first-person narration, second person narration, and third person narration. Moreover, techniques like journalistic approach, use of history, frame story, flash-back, flash forward, backstory, multi-perspectivity, stream of consciousness etc. can also be found. Travel writer also makes use of history books, newspapers and journals to impart authenticity to their writing. Travel writers like Mark Twain, Xuanzang, Naipaul, and William Dalrymple have used the above-mentioned techniques. For instance, Dalrymple's several chronicles begin with historical examination. In Age of Kali, Dalrymple recounts history of Charminar, and he brings out whole history of the city of Madurai which is once again Dalrymple's choice of historical exploration.

Naipaul's' third India related travelogue 'A Million Mutinies Now' was written during Dec 1988-Feb1990. This time Naipaul turns still more systematic in his objective type of survey than his earlier two travelogues 'India: An Area of Darkness' and 'India: A Wounded Civilization'. No prologue, no preliminary paperwork, Naipaul begins directly in the Bombay theatre more or less stylistically fictional. As this is the era of specialization; in each branch of knowledge a lot of researches and in-depth studies are undertaken. Every individual writer has own style of narration, which make peculiar and distinct from other.

Serafin Roldan Santiago in his article "V.S. Naipaul's Vulcanisation of Travel and Fiction Paradigms" analyses five different techniques used in Naipaul's Travel writing.

*Naipaul employs particular 'travel writing strategies' that is different techniques and approaches have been carefully manipulated: (a) journalistic techniques (b) detailed ethnographic reporting, including landscape, geographic, and human observation, (c) historical perspective and style (d) autobiographical features and (e) philosophical inquiry (Naipaul, 175)*

Some of writing strategies can be found in Bombay theatre. The finding will also serve us the idea



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ISSN 2454-8596

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which technique has been preferred or extensively used by whom and which has been least utilized.

V.S. Naipaul has used five methods to describe his experiences during journeying in India.

### 1) The journalistic method.

The travel writer has to travel unknown land and thus gather the information as any journalist would do by inquiring and asking questions. This can be called the journalistic method. As a journalist inquiry from different people he meets, Naipaul also does the same and collect the information. So, an elaborated interview method of practical inquiry is adopted by Naipaul for a close objective picture of the land. He meets people and asks questions and listens to them carefully. The first person he begins to interrogate with is Papu, a Bombay Stock market agent who talks of his faith in God.

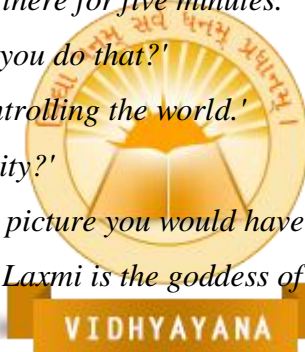
*He said, 'greed and fear', the two feelings associated with my business. I walk into the temple, hold my hands together, and wait there for five minutes.'*

*'who do you address when do you do that?'*

*Something you think of who is controlling the world.'*

*'You don't think of a particular deity?'*

*'If you are doing business, the picture you would have would be of the goddess Laxmi. On other occasions, it would be Saraswati. Laxmi is the goddess of wealth and Saraswati is the goddess of wisdom....' (Naipaul, 13)*



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Naipaul's method shows his curiosity to know the inner conflicts of the people and their beliefs and opinions. Naipaul descends to the position of his readers and makes an impartial unbiased impression. He evokes human responses and reactions. From Papu to Mr. Patil to Anwar to Mr. Raote again from Mr. Raote from Mr. Ghate, he interrogates throughout the first chapter which runs for more than a hundred pages and he keeps interviewing all sort of people. Mr. Ghate has an unwavering and firm belief that comforts and luxuries are of no consequence and that is prime importance. After that with the help of local contact Ajit, Naipaul seizes the opportunity to interview a group of middle rung gangsters who are more than willing to boast of their criminal activities. Then take of migrants who came to Bombay from the southern part of Maharashtra, Pujari; Pujari had successfully modified and adjusted their profession to suit city life. Later on, known as electric pujari. Other migrants, unnamed Bengali film writer later identified as Paritosh, whom Naipaul pays a visit to he had failed because his ethics had come in the ways of his success in the unethical



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ISSN 2454-8596

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world of films.

Naipaul's method seems not merely to seize the society, Bombay, with its inside subdivision, suburb, and some distant suburb hinterland like Thane, represent but to take count as possible. Naipaul is an observer. He is a purposeful inquire; the inquiry is for the book, not one as he has already written in this India- Series. Naipaul descends to the position of his readers and makes the impartial unbiased impression Naipaul has ultimately an Indian strain in his adopted style, He evokes human responses and reaction.

India: Million Mutinies now, is essentially Naipaul's observation of the hundreds of such rebellions found in the country, seen and told for the first time by the authors, from the perspective of the people he writes about. Naipaul makes a concerted effort not to interfere in the narrative. His direct contact with the people gives him lively experience to write on the condition and situation from people has went through. In this travelogue, it is not writer who speak but characters are talking about their stories. Which gives first-hand experience to the reader.

### 2) Third-person Narrative:

The narrative in India: Million Mutinies Now comprises interviews and conversation. Naipaul had with ordinary Indians, interspersed with a vivid description of physical surroundings in minute details. The narrative which Naipaul writes is from the point of view of the people he meets, from their multicultural; perspective where each group appears to be in contradiction with others. Naipaul doesn't satirize his interviewees or turn cultural differences and understanding into comedy but is prepared to give his interlocutors of sympathy with their viewpoint. When Naipaul departed for India, when he began his journey, he had two notion of India, first notion he formed from the stories he heard from his father and another from reading from newspaper and other books. But when he visited India for the first time, he encountered different India from image he had in his mind. But still his narrative seems neutral and unbiased because as travel writer one has to be neutral while writing. There are certain tales in the book where Naipaul gives account that can link every reader, i.e. when Naipaul recount the story of Mr. Ghate, Mr.Raote and Charu.

### 3) Use of History in the Narrative:

Whenever Naipaul takes up any issue, Naipaul probes into its history, he travels intellectually into past centuries to investigate the root of the matter. For instance, Naipaul tries to explore that why only



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Mahar cast has the right to have land in particular region. Naipaul includes his knowledge of History, Geography, philosophy, and psychology to explore various aspects of Indian life and to enrich his writings with depth and appeal. Naipaul exposes the personalities of the people whom he meets and narrates their aspirations, achievement, and frustration. Also, he tries to point out how, what is going on in a certain part of the country, is that typical of that area only, but it representative and national in character.

For example, the Last mutiny in chapter one is poet, leader, and founder of Dalit Panthers, Namdeo Dhasal, it is a story of how successful leader's leadership destroyed by the book which is written by Malika, wife of Namdeo, 'I want to destroyed myself', in this book Malika, wife of Namdeo Dhasal, revealed secrets of Namdeo which led to the destruction of Namdeo's leadership. When Namdeo talks about that among schedule caste only *Mahars* has land owing right in the Goplnath area of Bombay, Naipaul wants to know why only Mahars have the right to own Land, for that Namdeo goes back to history of the whole story of Raja Bidar –

*Once upon a time, there was a raja of Bidar. He wanted to send his daughter to certain place. The Mahars were the people who traditionally carried the palanquins, and the raja ordered the locals Mahars to carry his daughter to where she had to go. The Mahars understood the seriousness and as a precaution, they castrated themselves before setting out. The raja's enemies started to spread story that raja's daughter had been carnally used by the Mahars. The summoned the Mahars and questioned them. They displayed themselves to him, and said they had castrated themselves before taking the princess. The raja was so pleased, he gave the Mahars Land. That was how the Mahars became the only scheduled caste in the area to own land. (Naipaul, 134)*

#### **4) Pen Pictures of characters and Geographical places:**

Naipaul investigates and then narrates the stories of awakening by portraying several characters that he either interviews or talk to informally, he thus allows these characters to reveal themselves. He draws detailed pictures if cities, houses, temples, offices, hotels, natural landscapes, and so on. These geographical details along with biographical and autobiographical narration create the picture in the mind of readers. He could create the milieu to help the readers assess them more accurately. Naipaul sketches them both from outside and from inside: they are shown as representing basic human qualities of their class. Naipaul uses several techniques to elevate them. So that they can talk with the readers and make them feel their human qualities. As a journalist, he keeps in his memory what he observers and hears and then transform.



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It is noticeable how Naipaul begins.

*'Bombay is a crowd, I began to feel, when I was some way into the city from the airport that morning, that the crowd on the pavement and the road was very great and that something unusual might be happening' (Naipaul, 01)*

Whenever he finds something connected to him or his past, he started describing his memories, flashback narration. Also, we find that he inquires about the long queue in Bombay with hotel staff, here it could be seen in reference to inquire mode or Journalistic mode or approach. As if to convince the reader of his conviction that the story of India has changed considerably since the early sixties and mid-seventies, Naipaul begins with the success story of Papu, the Jain stockbroker and his apprehensions about the future. A young stockbroker who has made more money in a few years than his father ever did in a lifetime as a trader in Burma. Papu's source of strength and perseverance is his religion. Naipaul says, they are free of the burden of being preoccupied with the basic needs of food and shelter and can spare time for thoughts on religion and society.

Then in Thane, Naipaul meets Mr. Patil of the forty Sena units that exist in Thane. Mr. Patil, a religious man, lived in an area that appeared to be trouble-prone and sensitive. It is a story of a low-class person to become a leader of the Shiv Sena protection committee from putting up posters and banners on the wall. During a conversation with any interviewee, Naipaul started observing things and narrates every minute detail. Sometimes he goes in flashback, started thinking of his childhood memories when something appears connected with him.

Naipaul discovers, every community in India feels discriminated against and threatened by other communities, then Naipaul meets Anwar with help of Nikhil, and then Naipaul starts from an area from there were passing by, and came to about situation of Muslim dominated area. When Naipaul inquires about religious beliefs and lines which Naipaul sees on a wall of Mohamad Ali Road and then Anwar describes the whole story that small quarrels with Hindu became communal riots this incident gives some hidden and nanoscopic aspects of society.

Then Naipaul meets Mr.Raote, who was chairman of the standing committee of Bombay Corporation. It is a story of how Mr.Raote become chairman from failure life, a story of a self-made man who had clawed his way to the top with dogged determination and self-belief. Naipaul detects genuine humanity in Mr.Raote when he gives credit to his father and finds Mr.Raote also requires spiritual nourishment which his religion



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can provide, quite similar persona like Papu, Mr.Patil, and Anwar.

Mr.Ghate also a firm believer in the Shiv Sena. He has lived all his life in millworkers' single room tenements known as a 'chawl' in Bombay. Mr.Ghate has an unwavering and firm belief that comforts and luxuries are of no consequence and that is prime importance. After that with help of local contact Ajit, Naipaul seizes the opportunity to interview a group of middle rung gangsters who are more than willing to boast of their criminal activities. Then take of migrants who came to Bombay from the southern part of Maharashtra, Pujari; Pujari had successfully modified and adjusted their profession to suit city life. Later on, known as electric pujari. Other migrants, unnamed Bengali film writer later identified as Paritosh, whom Naipaul pays a visit to he had failed because his ethics had come in the ways of his success in the unethical world of films.

### 5) Autobiographical elements:

The initial four to five pages of the first chapter of India: A Million Mutinies Now are quite autobiographical as he discusses his connection with and his position in India. He even compares his situation with Gandhiji who too realized a political or historical or literary idea of India when he went to South Africa. It was during his stay in South Africa he felt the Indian identity most. Naipaul too felt the urge of discovering India that he heard from his ancestors, and brought him to India thrice. He expresses:

*Migration to the new world, shaking us out of the immemorial accepting ways of peasant India, had made us ambitious; but in colonial and agricultural Trinidad, during the depression, there were few opportunities to rise. With this poverty around us, with the sense of the world as a kind of prison, India from which my ancestors had migrated better themselves became in my imagination a most fearful place. This India was private and personal, beyond India I read about in the newspaper and books. (Naipaul, 07)*

Naipaul, himself the part of the Trinidad minority feels the same as Anwar to his Muslim community. "I feel that if I had been in their position, continued to Bombay, to that area, to that row, I too would have been a passionate Muslim, I had grown up in Trinidad as a member of the Indian community, a member of a minority, and I knew that if you felt your community was small, you could never walk away from it." (Naipaul, 58)





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### Conclusion:

Sometimes Naipaul seems to use all techniques together. First, he started with a background of that character to go back into history then he describes an existing situation and minute details like the color of the house, every picture on a wall, kitchen, furniture, and many more things. In between the interview, Naipaul tries to find similarities for that he compares mutinies with each other, as he compares Mr.Patil's faith and Papu's faith on God and ideas of both to be a middle-class people. Naipaul always tries to make things clear and make the reader engage to text, he adds his comments and point of view during the interview. When Mr.Ghate talks about 'Atma Vishwas' Naipaul remember of Mr.Patil who also talked about 'Atma Vishwas'. While narrating the story Naipaul compares the views of people to reach at certain conclusion.



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ISSN 2454-8596

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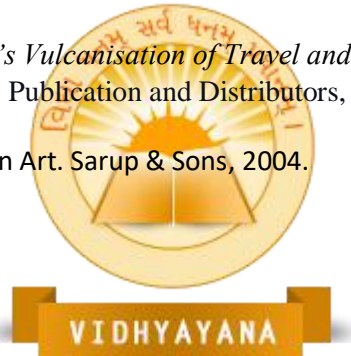
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