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TRAUMA OF DISPLACEMENT IN V.S. NAIPAUL'S SELECTED FICTIONS

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By

MASOUMEH MEHNI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

To my magnificent father and my heavenly mother

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia, in fulfilment
of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 2016

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V.S. Naipaul's obsession with displacements has been considered as a melancholic sign
of his sense of unbelonging by most of his critics. A permanent exile, a refugee, a
homeless citizen of the world, and an extranational writer, are some of the assorted
terms used to articulate the dominant perception of him. Some critics embrace him as
simultaneously coming from nowhere and everywhere, and other critics consider his
prose, or perhaps more precisely, the action of writing them as Naipaul's home.
Naipaul's obsession by displacement in his works implies that displacement is a
traumatic experience for him, an issue which has been ignored by his critics.

This research considers displacement in Naipaul's fictions as a traumatic experience.
Taking an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of my thesis, it explores the
historical and psychological dimensions of the displacement experience, as well as its
literary representations. This study addresses displacement in the fictions from
different phases of Naipaul's writing and focuses on *The Mimic Men* (1967), *In a Free
State* (1971), and *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) through character analysis. In the first
step, I depicted displacement as a traumatic experience for the characters by the illness
which displacement causes Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In the second step, I
suggested two ways the characters go through to remember their trauma. These ways
are two different kinds of memory, namely, "acting out" and "working through", which
are related to repetition. "Acting out" or melancholia is related to repetition
compulsion, which is the tendency to repeat something compulsively. There are many
different ways a person can "act out" his or her traumatic experiences. Flashbacks,
nightmares and compulsive behaviour and words are some common ways of "acting
out" trauma by traumatised people. "Working through" or mourning involves
repetition with significant difference — "working through" is a controlled, explicit,
critically controlled process of repetition. In "working through", the person tries to gain
critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between the past, present and future.
Generating countervailing forces to "acting out" and testimony are the ways a
traumatised person can "work through" her trauma. I take "acting out" and "working
through" as different but not opposite processes. "Acting out" and "working through"
may never be totally separated from each other, and the two may always mark or be
implicated in each other. Finally, I stated that Naipaul's trauma of displacement is the

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symptom of historical displacement of his indentured ancestors. I further argued that Naipaul's writing is a means of representing the "unclaimed" experiences of his ancestors.

Abstrak of tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

TRAUMA PERPINDAHAN DALAM FIKSYEN TERPILIH V.S. NAIPAUL

Oleh

MASOUMEH MEHNI

Februari 2016

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Obsesi V.S. Naipaul dengan anjakan telah dianggap sebagai tanda melankolik rasa ketidak kepunyaan beliau oleh kebanyakan para pengkritiknya. Orang buangan yang tetap, pelarian, penduduk bumi yang tidak berumah dan penulis extra nasioanl adalah sebahagian terma pilihan yang digunakan untuk menjelaskan persepsi dominan bagi beliau. Sebahagian pengkritik menilai dia sebagai secara serentak datang daripada mana-mana dan ada dimana-mana dan pengkritik lain menganggap prosa beliau atau lebih tepat, kelakuan untuk menulis mereka sebagai rumah Naipaul. Obsesi Naipaul bagi perpindahan dalam kerja beliau menandakan bahawa perpindahan adalah pengalaman traumatik bagi beliau dan satu isu yang mana telah disisihkan oleh para pengkritiknya.

Kajian ini menilai perpindahan dalam fiksyen Naipaul sebagai pengalaman traumatik. Dengan mengambil pendekatan inter disiplin kepada subjek bagi tesis saya, ianya mengkaji dimensi sejarah dan psikologikal bagi pengalaman perpindahan disamping perwakilan sastera. Kajian ini menggunakan perpindahan dalam fiksyen daripada pelbagai fasa bagi penulisan Naipaul dan fokus kepada *The Mimic Men* (1967), *In a Free State* (1971), dan *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) menerusi analisis karakter. Dalam langkah pertama, saya menggambarkan perpindahan sebagai pengalaman traumatik bagi karekter dengan penyakit yang mana perpindahan menyebabkan Gangguan Stress Pasca Traumatik. Dalam langkah kedua, saya mencadangkan dua cara kepada karekter untuk dilalui dalam mengingati trauma mereka. Cara ini adalah dua jenis yang berbeza bagi memori, yang dinamakan "acting out" dan "working through", yang mana berkait kepada pengulangan. "Acting out" atau melankolia adalah berkaitan dengan pengulangan kompulsi yang adalah kecenderungan untuk mengulang sesuatu secara kompulsif . Banyak cara berbeza bagi seseorang individu untuk "act out" pengalaman traumatik mereka. Imbas balik, mimpi ngeri dan tingkahlaku kompulsif dan perkataan adalah cara yang mudah bagi trauma "acting out" oleh orang yang trauma. "Working through" atau meratap melibatkan pengulangan dengan perbezaan yang signifikan— "working through" adalah proses pengulangan kritikal yang terkawal, eksplisit. Dalam "working through", individu tersebut cuba untuk mencapai jarak kritikal kepada masalah dan cuba untuk mengasingkan antara masa lampau, sekarang dan masa depan. Menjana tenaga kekuatan kontrabalas bagi "acting out" dan testimoni adalah cara bagi

individu trauman yang mampu "work through" traumanya. Saya mengambil "acting out" dan "working through" sebagai berbeza tetapi tidak sebagai proses berlainan. "Acting out" and dan "working through" tidak boleh sama sekali dipisahkan dari satu sama lain , dan kedua-dua sentiasa boleh menandakan atau ada kaitan antara satu sama lain . Dalam langkah ketiga, saya juga melihat kesan trauma anjakan kepada komponen struktur formal dan kerja-kerja yang dipilih fiksyen . Akhir sekali, saya menyatakan bahawa trauma Naipaul yang perpindahan adalah gejala perpindahan sejarah nenek moyang kepunyaannya . Saya mendakwa lagi bahawa penulisan Naipaul ini adalah satu cara untuk mewakili pengalaman " unclaimed " trauma nenek moyangnya.

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If there is a single debt of gratitude, it is to my parents. Without their love, nurturance, intelligence and sagely advice, I simply and literally don't know where I'd be. My thesis is lovingly dedicated to them (unfortunately they don't read English!).

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

V.S. Naipaul is an Indian by ancestry, a Trinidadian by nativity and British by residence and intellectual training. The distinctive combination of circumstances, which relates him to the three societies, certainly plays a predominant part in shaping his sensibility and determining his writing career. He said, "when I speak about being an exile or a refugee, I am not just using a metaphor" (Rowe-Evans 62). He was born into exile, separated his racial and cultural roots and driven into another exile from the land of his birth. The contradictions inherent in his background form the pivot of his work. As Landeg White says, "... the struggle against the effects of displacement lies at the heart of his work" (3).

Although due to his colonial upbringing, Naipaul is considered one the writers of what has come to be called post-colonial literature, which is the writing in English from the Third World and characterised by cultural nationalism which rejects the domination of Western values and literary traditions for a new exploration and revival of indigenous cultural forms and values; Naipaul's works as Cristina Emanuela Dascalu in her book, *Imaginary Homelands of Writers in Exile* (2007), asserts, "do not materialize from the certainty of a position within the echelons of the canon. Instead, they deal with the uncertainty and doubt of the outsider and the exile" (94). Moreover, "many postcolonial writers appear mostly concerned with ideas and groups, Naipaul focuses on individuals in societies, and like the great nineteenth-century novelists, he is interested in how people create themselves and advance in life" (King 2). Naipaul, like James Joyce and Albert Camus, who are also seen as voluntary exiles, drops the rhetoric of `national literature' and `anti-colonial resistance' and instead explores a universal human condition.

Naipaul is obsessed with displacements in his works. Portrayal of displacement in his works is unique. In Gillian Dooley's words in her article, "The Imaginative Promptings of My Many-Sided Background V.S. Naipaul's Diasporic Sensibility", Naipaul "instead of drawing heavily on memories of the homeland and the collective identity, he has made his difference into a distinction and turned his alienation into an abiding preoccupation"(3) . The collection of narratives entitled, *In a Free State,* which brought Booker Prize for Naipaul in 1971, exemplifies this obsession. *In a Free State* contains a host of characters from all races who seem to be "out of place." The Naipaulian migrancy takes the form of innumerable characters such as immigrants, expatriates, exiles, refugees, tourists and homeless.

There is much autobiographical reality in this sense of displacement. Naipaul identifies himself directly or indirectly with the characters that he creates or refers to when he also feels dislocated and displaced in the modern world and this idea is embedded

throughout his writings. Walter Clemens has referred to Naipaul, and to many of his characters, as displaced and uprooted persons:

> "Himself a kind of displaced person, Naipaul's forte is the uprooted, the dislocated modern man, torn between tradition and modernity, between local roots and the cosmopolitan demands and opportunities of the twentieth century.... His protagonists are most often motivated by a variety of personal concerns: [one of which is] coping with rootlessness..." (13).

Like other issues, Naipaul has contradictory attitudes towards displacement and shows ambivalence towards displacement in his works. In her book, *The Enigma of V.S. Naipaul* (2002), Helen Heyward contends:

> Part of the complexity of his work proceeds from its entertaining contradictory attitudes towards its material. There is an unresolved and important ambivalence in his attitude towards the history of empire: he conceives of colonial rule both as a system of base pillage and as a lost ideal of order, and he views the metropolitan centre at once as fulfilling and betraying an ideal. At times he seems to reconfirm imperialist assumptions, while at other times he offers to refute them. Another aspect of this ambivalence, and a recurring theme of this discussion, consists in the complex viewpoints he adopts in relation to his subjects. He moves between the stance of insider and that of outsider with regard to the societies he portrays, and blends, in an unsettling manner, sympathy with irony, cruelty with compassion, in the treatment of certain characters. (4)

Both his fictional characters and Naipaul himself in his autobiographical works have contradictory attitudes towards their native land and their destination. In general, he and his characters have a certain tendency towards affiliation with their home countries (from the broad perspective), but they also tend to identify with their destination. It is this "uncertainty" in Naipaul's discourse, which makes it prone to critical misinterpretation.

Regarding Naipaul's obsession and ambivalence towards displacement, V.S. Naipaul's obsession with displacements is considered as a melancholic sign of his sense of unbelonging by most of his critics. A permanent exile, a refugee, a homeless citizen of the world, and an extranational writer are some of the assorted terms that are used to articulate the dominant perceptions of him. Some critics embrace him as simultaneously coming from nowhere and everywhere, while other critics consider his prose, or perhaps more precisely, the action of writing them as Naipaul's home. Rob Nixon, in his book *London Calling: V.S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin* (1992), asserts:

"Such depictions of Naipaul as an extravagantly, even uniquely displaced literary figure uphold the image of him as embodying a melancholy modernity that can be readily generalized as "alienated": haunted by a global homelessness that is inseparably geographical, existential, and literary." (Nixon 17)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since displacement is a recurring theme in V.S. Naipaul's works, almost all his critics have touched this in their studies. Some of these critics, such as Judith Levy, Timothy F. Weiss and Chandra B. Joshi, who in their books *V.S. Naipaul: Displacement and Autobiography (1994)*, *On the Margins: The Art of Exile in V. S. Naipaul (1992)*, *V. S. Naipaul*: *The Voice of Exile (1994)*, respectively give more attention to a reading of the exile, expatriates and migrants in Naipaul's works though it has not received the necessary attention. Hence, it still requires thoughtful critical attention. The main focus of Naipaul's critics has been on postcolonial diasporic studies which consisted political and/or ideological aspects of displacement, while psychological dimension of Naipaul's works has relatively been ignored by the critics.

Leading trauma scholar, Cathy Caruth, in her book Trauma: Exploration in Memory (1995), asserts, "To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (4). As mentioned before Naipaul is obsessed with displacement in his works, Naipaul's obsession by displacement in his works implies that displacement is a traumatic experience for him, and as a traumatic event overwhelms the psychic defences and normal processes of registering memory traces, displacement should be approached in his works psychologically, an issue which has been relatively ignored by his critics. Therefore, this study seeks to re-examine displacement in Naipaul's work by considering displacement as a traumatic experience. Taking an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of my thesis, this study explored the historical and psychological dimensions of the displacement experience, as well as its literary representations by Naipaul. There are two reasons for choosing an interdisciplinary approach for this study. First, since Naipaul is the product of a unique combination of circumstances, a combination of approaches is necessary to deal with his works. Moreover, as Roger Luckhurst writes in his book, *The Trauma Question* (2008), to deal with a traumatic issue, multiple approaches are needed:

Without multi-disciplinary knowledge, there can only be an unappetizing competition between disciplines to impose their specific conception of trauma. We need another model for understanding the tortuous history and bewildering contemporary extent of a paradigm that is an intrinsically inter-disciplinary conjuncture. (14)

In addition, the critical scholars who have worked on Naipaul have mostly provided us with general readings and analyses of his works and they have not shown any engagement to deeper theoretical examinations. Based on the theoretical work of trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, this study attempts to investigate the effects of trauma of displacement in Naipaul's selected fictions.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The focal point of this study is to investigate trauma of displacement in selected fictions of V.S Naipaul. The study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To analyse the ways trauma of displacement affected the characters in the selected text by the illness which trauma causes; PSTD
2. To examine the characters' responses to their trauma of displacement by two possible responses to trauma, which are "acting out" and "working through".
3. To explore how Naipaul represents trauma of displacement in his works and becomes the voice of the trauma.

As the first step, I depict displacement as a traumatic experience for the characters by the illness which displacement causes: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which in 1980 was included in the new edition of the American Psychiatric Association official diagnostic manual. The first cluster of the symptoms of PTSD relate to the ways in which the traumatic event is persistently re-experienced', i.e. through intrusive flashbacks, recurring dreams, or later situations that repeat or echo the original. The second set of symptoms suggests the complete opposite; 'persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma' that can range from avoidance of thoughts or feelings related to the event to a general sense of emotional numbing to the total absence of recall of the significant event. A third set of symptoms points to 'increased arousal, including loss of temper control, hyper-vigilance or 'exaggerated startle response'.

As the second step, I suggest two ways the characters go through to remember their trauma. These ways are two different kinds of memory; "acting out" and "working through" which are related to repetition, concepts which are developed by one of the prominent trauma theorists, Dominick LaCapra in his book, *Wring History, Writing Trauma* (2001). "Acting out" or melancholia is related to repetition compulsion, i.e. the tendency to repeat something compulsively. In "acting out", one keeps on repeating the painful events in the form of flashbacks, nightmares or compulsive behaviour. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to be haunted by ghosts, or even to exist in the present as if one is still fully present in the past, with no distance from the past. "Working through" or mourning involves repetition with significant difference, i.e. "working through" is a controlled, explicit, critically controlled process of repetition. In "working through", the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between past, present and future. In "working through", one tries to acquire some critical distance that allows one to engage in life in the present, to assume responsibility—but that does not mean that one utterly transcends the past but creates desirable possibilities to come to terms with traumatic past. I take "acting out" and "working through" as different processes, and opposite processes. "Acting out "and "working through" may never be totally separate from the other, and the two may always mark or be implicated in each other.

In the third step, I argue that Naipaul is the voice of trauma of displacement of his indentured ancestors. Naipaul is the third-generation West Indian of East Indian descent. His ancestors were colonial transplants who were brought to the West Indies

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in the late nineteenth century to work on the British sugar-cane plantation, following the emancipation of slaves in the mid nineteenth-century. A traumatic experience cannot be grasped at the time which is happening. Traumatic experience, as Caruth formulates it, "suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it" (*Unclaimed Experience* 91-2). As a traumatic experience cannot be grasped at the time which is happening, the trauma of displacement of Naipaul's ancestors' remains unclaimed. According to trauma theorists such as Freud and Caruth, a traumatic experience remains "latent" and returns belatedly when it triggers; in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), Cathy Caruth explains, "in the term 'latency,' the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent, Freud seems to describe the trauma as the successive movement from an event to its repression to its return" (7). Almost a century later, by Naipaul's immigration to England, trauma of his ancestors triggers. Thus, Caruth explains that "the traumatized […] carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptoms of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (Caruth 5). I argue that the representation of trauma of displacement in Naipaul's works voices out his indentured ancestors' hitherto silent history.

1.4   Scope and Limitations of Study

V.S. Naipaul has published more than thirty works, employing a variety of literary idioms, from short stories to essays to mixed-genre pieces that blend autobiography, fiction, and journalistic reporting, over some fifty years. Critics like Bruce King, Timothy F. Weiss, Selwyn Cudjoe and Judith Levy divided Naipaul's works to different phases. Weiss, Cudjoe and Levy divided Naipaul's works to three phases, the first phase comprised of works written in the 1950s and beginning of 1960s, the second phase involved works of 1960s and 1970s and third phase comprised of the works of 1980s and 1990s; however, Bruce King divides Naipaul works in four phases, form 1950s to 1980s, each decade for one phase. Like critical remarks on Naipaul, the reasons of these writers for these divisions are different and somehow contradictory. Although these critics have divided Naipaul's works to different periods, characterised by differences in subject matter, manner, technique and complexity, there is continuity of concerns, themes and certain formal structures in his novels and books of travel. Bruce King's division is general and more comprehensive.

Although displacement is a recurring theme in most of Naipaul' works, the focus of my study is on three of his works of fiction: *The Mimic Men* (1967), *In a Free State (1971)* and *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987). *The Mimic Men* (1967) was written in the second phase of Naipaul's work. The putative author is Ranjit Kripalsingh or Ralph Ranjit Kripalsingh, as he is prefer to be known, the only son of a Hindu family on the fictional Caribbean island of Isabella. He is a man with an uneasy childhood, a disturbed youth, a broken marriage and failed political career behind him as he now sits writing his memoirs in a room of a suburban London hotel. *In a Free State (1971)* was written in the third phase of Naipaul's writing. *In a Free State* comprised of two short stories and a novella which are enclosed between the Prologue and the Epilogue. All three of them are tales of exile. The first story is about an Indian servant transplanted from Bombay to Washington, D.C.; the second episode tells the story of two West Indian brothers who came to London; and in the third section, two people

from England immigrate to an unnamed country in Africa. On the surface, there seems little to link these stories. They are set in three different continents: the first in North America, the second in Europe, and the third in Africa. *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) was written in the last phase of Naipaul's writing. *The Enigma of Arrival* is a novel that confuses the borders of fiction and autobiography. The biography of the fictional first person narrator in this novel is coherent with the biography of V.S. Naipaul himself, but a number of presumably significant circumstances of Naipaul's life are not described in the text. Like several of his other novels or his relationship with his wife, *The Enigma of Arrival* tells the story of Naipaul's painful and slow adjustment to English society and of the difficulties of getting started in his career as a writer.

There are different reasons for choosing these works of fiction as the scope of my study from Naipaul's different literary idioms. As I approach displacement in Naipaul's works as a traumatic experience and a traumatic experience cannot be grasped when it happens, we cannot access the truth of a traumatic experience and should use other ways to give voice to trauma. Since truth claims are not necessarily important considerations in fiction, this form of writing gives voice to trauma. Besides, I decided to choose works from different phases of Naipaul's writing to be more inclusive as it is impossible to work on all Naipaul's works in the period under study and to see how Naipaul deals with trauma of displacement in different phases of his writing. In addition, I chose the novels that the protagonists immigrate from the third world to the metropolitan because Naipaul himself emigrated from West Indies to England.

As to the limitations of this study, one of such is that it concentrates on three of Naipaul's works on displacement and does not scrutinise all of his works on displacement. Furthermore, this study looks at the displacement of the characters individually. The other limitation is that, this study does not look at the colonial side of Naipaul's works. Although Naipaul's works are not consistent with postcolonial literature's themes and issues, his ancestors' immigration to West Indies is a result of colonial purposes of Britain and Naipaul was born in colonial West Indies and immigrated and lived in the mother country England, so his works were affected by colonialism unawares.

1.5   Significance of the Study

The new millennium awakened to the bloodshed of an unprecedented scale on 9/11; two subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the enormous loss of life and property in Libya and Syria threw the world into turmoil. In her book *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (2002), Shoshana Felman calls the legacy of violence we inherited from the twentieth century as "a century of traumas", the century of World wars, local wars, civil wars, ideological wars, ethnic wars, the two atomic bomb attacks, the cold war, genocides, famines, epidemics, and lesser turmoil of all kinds.

We now live in a culture that is immersed in the permeating atmosphere of unpredictable but imminent hazard and crisis. Roger Luckhurst argues today's culture "saturated with trauma," politically, it involves

> Government inquiries, medical task forces and newspaper leader columns and grassroots pressure groups contest the nature and extent- or even the basic reality of traumatic impacts. Best-seller lists have carried sagas of detailing extremities of domestic violence, rape, war atrocity, terminal illness, family deaths or the tragic-comic eccentricities of traumatic memory. Academic monographs have proliferated, often appearing to subsume the whole area of Memory Studies under the sign of trauma. Meanwhile, in the curious world of celebrity culture, trauma can amplify or even become the sole reason for fame (2).

This condition of the world has posed new existential and epistemological questions to human civilisation, questions that trauma theory is trying to make sense of an answer. Cathy Caruth, in her book, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), writes that Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) "can help us understand our own catastrophic era (Caruth, 12). In *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud attempted a theory of trauma that would account for the historical development of entire cultures. Especially valuable in this work is Freud's elaboration of the concept of "latency", of how memory of a traumatic event can be lost over time but then regained in some symptomatic form when triggered by some similar event. In this way, each national catastrophe invokes and transforms memories of other catastrophes, so that history becomes a complex entanglement of crimes inflicted and suffered, with each catastrophe understood, that is, misunderstood in the context of repressed memories of the previous ones.

If not known and worked through properly, trauma can influence others "as through a kind of wordless osmosis" (Epsien 137). Unless translated into a meaningful narrative and placed in a proper context, traumatic events and the memories of the events will remain either disparate, fragmented bits of information and empty noises, or the toxic remains of the past people want to avoid and turn their backs on.

This study is significant in claiming that Naipaul gives voice to the trauma of displacement of his indentured ancestors. Naipaul is the third-generation West Indian of East Indian descent. His ancestors were colonial transplants who were brought to the West Indies in the late nineteenth century to work on the British sugar-cane plantation, following the emancipation of slaves in the mid nineteenth-century. As a traumatic experience cannot be grasped at the time when it is happening, the trauma of displacement of Naipaul's ancestors' remains unclaimed. Almost a century later, by Naipaul's immigration to England, the trauma of his ancestors triggers. I argue that the representation of trauma of displacement in Naipaul's works voices out his indentured ancestors' hitherto silent history. To investigate how Naipaul gives voice to the trauma of displacement of his ancestors, this study securitises trauma of displacement both in the theme and style of the selected works of fiction. In particular, this study depicts displacement as a traumatic experience for the characters in Naipaul's works by the

illness which displacement causes, i.e. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Then, it suggests two ways the traumatised people go through to remember their trauma. These ways are two different kinds of memory: "acting out" and "working through". I take "acting out" and "working through" as different processes but not opposite processes. "Acting out" and "working through" may never be totally separate from one another, and the two may always mark or be implicated in each other.

1.6   Conceptual Framework

As stated before, Naipaul considered displacement as a traumatic experience in his works. I choose the interdisciplinary theory of trauma to study displacement in Naipaul's works of fiction. The following section elaborates on the conceptual framework for the purpose of this research. It incorporates from different disciplines of trauma theory to address diverse aspects of displacement in the selected texts. I begin by defining trauma and its various conceptualisations in the field. This is followed by an elaboration of the concepts and issues, which are directly related to trauma, and thus drawn upon in the discussion of the works of fiction. My conceptual framework is divided into three parts: trauma, responding or overcoming trauma and trauma and literature.

1.6.1   Trauma

The trauma theory pervades cross numerous disciplines. As Dominick LaCapra observes, "no genre or discipline owns trauma as problem or can provide definitive boundaries for it" (*Writing History* 96). To grasp the full resonances of trauma, one needs to be at least minimally aware of medicine, philosophy, military psychiatry, sociology, literature, critical theory, history and historiography, social sciences, legal studies, psychology and psychiatry, etc. In the early 1990s, there came a boom in the cultural trauma theory which derived from a relatively narrow segment of these disciplines. Before looking at any related scholarly writing, a historical overview of trauma is provided to shed light on the existing scholarship on cultural trauma.

Trauma comes from the Greek word meaning wound. It was first used in English in the seventeenth century in medicine and referred to a bodily injury caused by an external agent. In the early editions of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the entries for trauma, traumatic, traumatism and the prefix traumato- cite exclusively from sources concerning physical wounds. The early indication of the drift of trauma from physical to the mental realm started taking place in the late nineteenth century, an 1895 edition of *Popular Science Monthly* and included the psychical meaning of trauma, "we have named this psychical trauma, a morbid nervous condition". This is an early indication of the drift of trauma from the physical to the mental realm, which started in the late nineteenth century. In the current edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, citations to physical wounds are reduced to three and are substantially outnumbered by those from psychoanalysis and psychiatry. The prevalent popular connotations of trauma now circle around the metaphors of psychic scars and mental wounds. The metaphor of a psychological 'impact' still holds the sense of a wound caused by an exterior agent. *OED* also registers a further drift into a general usage of the adjective 'traumatic' for

any difficult or untoward event. Roger Luckhurst asserts "indeed, it is useful to retain a sense that meaning of trauma have stalled somewhere between the physical and the psychical" (3).

When taking a look at the earliest appearances of the trauma theory in history, I was inevitably traced back to the early theories of Sigmund Freud. Some prominent trauma theorists like Caruth, Derrida, Lyotard and Felman are engaged with trauma via Freud, suggesting that his work is the unavoidable foundation for the theories of trauma, and this is undoubtedly the case for cultural studies. Freud's engagement with the traumatic neuroses was actually rather intermittent, as Ruth Leys comments that "Freud's writing on trauma and the mechanisms of defence are disorganized in ways that seem to invite, or necessitate, critical discussions" (247). As a result, Freud's three major interventions have each provided models that are not always compatible but which persist into contemporary discussions.

Freud was introduced to the clinical problems of psychological trauma by his mentors, Josef Breuer and Jean Martin Charcot. Freud engaged with the trauma theory three times. First, his research on trauma started at the end of the 19th century when he discovered that a psychological trauma was at the basis of women's so-called hysteria. In *Studies on Hysteria*, these traumatic events are related, as in the famous case of Anna O. to the death of the father and repressed guilt. Three years later, Freud insisted that these traumatic secrets"in the end ... infallibly come to the field of sexual experience" ("Aetiology of Hysteria" 199), a position inextricably linked to the origins of psychoanalysis itself, the term Freud coined in 1896. This produced a different emphasis in theorising the traumatic origins of hysteria. Freud's sexual theories supposed a two-stage development; an early phase of infantile sexuality that was repressed for a period of childhood 'latency' and which returned with puberty and the emergence of adult sexuality. Sexual neuroses and perversions were ascribed to deviations of the sexual aims that resulted from infantile disturbances (this normative language is Freud's own, in his *Three Essays on Sexuality*). In other words, early traumas in childhood would be forgotten in latency, but re-emerge in adults. Sexual disorders, therefore, acted like clues hinting at a hidden crime buried in infancy: interpretive: excavations to uncover the sexual secret became the basis of Freud's case histories. This two-stage theory of trauma, the first forgotten impact making a belated return after a hiatus, has been central to Cultural trauma theory.

Second, Freud's sexual economy of psychic life reached a deadlock in 1918, when he was forced to return to the problem of trauma a second time, at the end of First World War. His dynamic model of the psyche could not apparently explain the symptoms of war neuroses in soldiers, which was typically marked by an obsessive return in waking thoughts and nightmares, to the pain and terror of traumatic battle. This active pursuit of unpleasure forced Freud to unwillingly return to what he called "the dark and dismal subject of traumatic neurosis" (*Pleasure Principal* 283). *Beyond the Pleasure Principal* (1920) was Freud's speculative attempt to understand what he termed this 'repetition compulsion'. In essence, the psyche continuously returned to scenes of unpleasure because by restaging the traumatic moment over and over again, it hoped belatedly to process the unassimilable material, to find ways of dominating the trauma

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retroactively. Repetition compulsion has become a cultural shorthand for outcomes of traumatic events: individual, collective and nations risk trapping themselves in cycles of uncomprehending repetitions unless the traumatic event is translated from repetition to the healthy analytic process of "working through".

Third, Freud's late work, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), was given over to Freud's meditation on the origin of Judaism by using the analogy of the effect of trauma on individual for an entire race. In *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud contradicts the Biblical story of Moses with his own retelling of events claiming that Moses was not Hebrew, but actually born into Ancient Egyptian nobility and was probably a follower of Akhenaten, an ancient Egyptian monotheist. Moses only led his close followers into freedom during an unstable period in the Egyptian history after Akhenaten (ca. 1350 BC) and that they subsequently killed Moses in rebellion and later combined with another monotheistic tribe in Midian based on a volcanic God, Jahweh. Freud explains that years after the murder of Moses, the rebels regretted their action, thus forming the concept of the Messiah as a hope for the return of Moses as the Saviour of the Israelites. Freud said that the guilt from the murder of Moses is inherited through the generations; this guilt then drives the Jews to religion and reaffirms Judaism as a monotheistic religion. In *Moses and Monotheism*, we once more come upon the phenomenon of latency, of how memory of a traumatic event can be lost over time but then regained in a symptomatic form when triggered by some similar events.

In 1980, the arrival of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) assisted to consolidate a trauma paradigm. The American Psychiatric Association included in the new edition of its official diagnostic manual the symptom indicators for a new illness: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Those confronted with an experience involving 'actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a physical threat to the physical integrity of the self' considered to be outside the range of normal experience are diagnosed with PTSD if they showed certain clusters of symptoms. Individuals who experience wars, disasters, accidents or other extreme 'stressor' events seem to produce certain identifiable somatic and psycho-somatic disturbances. Aside from myriad physical symptoms, trauma disrupts memory, and therefore identity in peculiar ways. The first cluster of symptoms relates to the ways in which the traumatic event is persistently re-experienced', which is through intrusive flashbacks, recurring dreams, or later situations that repeat or echo the original. Weirdly, the second set of symptoms suggests the complete opposite: 'persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma' that can range from avoidance of thoughts or feelings related to the event to a general sense of emotional numbing to the total absence of recall of the significant event. The third set of symptoms points to 'increased arousal, including loss of temper control, hyper-vigilance or 'exaggerated startle response'. Symptoms can come on acutely, persist chronically, or in another strange effect, appear belatedly, months or years after the precipitating event (American Psychiatric Association 467-8).

1.6.2   Cultural Trauma

A renewed interest in trauma studies happened in the 1990s. One of the central figures who developed the cultural trauma theory in early nineties was Cathy Caruth, a

professor of Comparative Literature and English and Chair of Comparative Literature at Emory University. According to Robert Jay Lifton, an M.D. in Psychiatry, she is "one of the most innovative scholars on what we call trauma, and on our ways of perceiving and conceptualising that still mysterious phenomenon." She is the author of *Trauma: Explorations in Memory (1995)* and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). Caruth is one of the figureheads of modern trauma studies and her work has served as a basis for other researchers in the same field. She engaged with trauma via Freud.

In her book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory (1995)*, Caruth asserts that after acknowledgment of PTSD, which included the symptoms of trauma by American Psychiatric Association in 1980, PTSD "provided anything but a solid explanation of disease" (3):

> Indeed, the more we satisfactorily locate and classify the symptom of PTSD, the more we seem to have dislocated the boundaries off our modes of understanding - so that psychoanalysis and medically oriented psychiatry, sociology, history and even literature all seem to be called upon to explain, to cure, or to show why it is that we can no longer simply explain or simply cure. (4)

To define trauma, Caruth used the device of aporia or unresolvable paradox. Caruth states that trauma was an inherently "paradoxical experience" ("Trauma and Culture II" 417). Traumatic experience, as Caruth formulates it, "suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it" (*Unclaimed Experience* 91-2). An event might be regarded traumatic to the extent that it overwhelmed the psychic defences and normal processes of registering memory traces. Trauma is seared directly into the psyche, almost like a piece of shrapnel, and is not subject to the distortions of subjective memory; "it is a symptom of history" ("Trauma and Culture I" 3). Crisis of history is another paradox. Under the sign of trauma, "a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence", "its truth is bound up with its crisis of truth" ("Trauma and Culture I" 7).

A further Freudian paradox is the strange temporality of traumatic memory; an event can only be understood as traumatic after the fact through the symptoms and flashbacks and delayed attempts at understanding that these signs of disturbance produce. Freud already defined this latency in his speculative study of the Jewish history, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), where he came to the following conclusion:

> It may happen that someone gets away, apparently unharmed, from the spot where he has suffered a shocking accident, for instance a train collision. In the course of the following weeks, however, he develops a series of grave physical and motor symptoms, which can be ascribed only to his shock or whatever else happened at the time of the accident. He has developed a 'traumatic neurosis'. This appears quite incomprehensible and is therefore a novel fact. The time that elapsed between the accident and the first appearance of the symptoms is called the 'incubation period', a transparent allusion to

> the pathology of infectious disease… It is the feature one might term
> latency. (84)

Freud described trauma as the succession of the occurrence of the event, which is followed by its suppression and finally by its return. Caruth uses Freud's insight to explain why some traumatic experiences do not seem to affect the victim upon occurrence. She says a victim of the train crash does not suppress or forget the trauma but he was never fully aware of the accident when it happened, so the accident did not leave a trace in the conscious of the individual. "The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist not in forgetting of a reality that can hence never be fully known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 17).

The peculiar temporal, structure, the belatedness of trauma is another aporia; "since traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time" (Caruth, "Trauma and Culture I" 7). Caruth's notion of belatedness also raises the question of the duration and the extent of the period of delay in trauma. Theories of trans-generational trauma suggest that affect can leak across generations; that a traumatic event, which is experienced by one individual, can be passed on so that its effects are replayed in another individual one or more generations later. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's work on trans-generational haunting (*The Shell and the Kernel* (1994)) suggests that symptoms are transmitted from one generation to the next when a shameful and therefore unspeakable experience is barred from consciousness or kept secret. The trauma is communicated without ever having been spoken, and it resides within the next generation as a silent presence or 'phantom':

> Should the child have parents 'with secrets' [. . .] he will receive from them a gap in the unconscious, an unknown, unrecognized knowledge [. . .] The buried speech of the parent becomes a dead gap, without 1 burial place, in the child. This unknown phantom comes back from the unconscious to haunt and leads to phobias, madness and obsessions, its effects can persist through several generations and determine the fate of an entire family line. (Rashkin 39)

The phantom is a variant of the return of the repressed, for what returns to haunt is the trauma of another. In describing transgenerational trauma, Abraham and Torok notably evoke the metaphor of a building: the psyche of the next generation becomes a 'crypt', a container that houses the seemingly unthinkable and unrepresentable residue of the past.

Roger Luckhurst remarks that "for Caruth trauma is therefore a crisis of representation, of history and truth, and of narrative time. Repeatedly, there is a claim that psychoanalysis and literature are particularly privileged forms of writing that can attend to these perplexing paradoxes of trauma" (3). Psychologically, Caruth considers PTSD as the response to trauma as already mentioned earlier that there are different

ways PTSD manifests in a traumatised person. How literature attends to trauma and helps dealing with this issue in the next subsections.

1.6.3 Responding to Trauma

Traumatised victims/individuals go through two ways to remember their trauma. These ways are two different kinds of memory known as "acting out" and "working through", which are related to repetition, concepts which are developed by one of the prominent trauma theorists, as explained by Dominick LaCapra in his book, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001). Meanwhile, Freud used the terms mourning and melancholia to describe the different stages of a person's traumatic after-effects, and Dominick LaCapra prefers the respective expressions 'acting out' and 'working through' which were 'invented' by Freud as well. According to LaCapra, these terms are no synonyms, but rather, mourning can be seen as a form of 'working through' and melancholia can be seen as a form of 'acting out'. Pierre Janet's terms 'narrative memory' and 'traumatic memory' are related to both these oppositions as well. I chiefly make use of LaCapra's notions of 'acting out' and 'working through' because as LaCapra contends that "I tend to disavow, or take my distance from, therapeutic conceptions of psychoanalysis, and try to take psychoanalysis in more ethical and political directions" (143).

1.6.3.1 Acting Out

"Acting out" is one of the possible reactions to trauma. "Acting out" or melancholia is related to repetition compulsion, i.e. the tendency to repeat something compulsively. This particular concept was first introduced by Freud. In a famous passage in his paper "Remembering Repeating and Working Through", Freud introduces a systematic definition of "acting out". He writes, "the patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it" (150). Freud adds that "As long as the patient is in the treatment he cannot escape from the compulsion to repeat; and in the end we understand that this is his way of remembering" (Ibid.). Dominick LaCapra took this particular concept from Freud and developed it in a way that made them useful in historical studies. In his book *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001), LaCapra writes:

> Acting-out is related to repetition, and even the repetition-compulsion– the tendency to repeat something compulsively. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to exist in the present as if they were still fully in the past, with no distance from it. (142-143)

There are many different ways depicted by LaCapra and other trauma theorists in which a person can 'act out' his or her traumatic experiences. Flashbacks, nightmares and compulsive behaviour and words are common ways used by traumatised people when "acting out" trauma. According to LaCapra:

> Victims of trauma tend to relive occurrences, or at least find that those occurrences intrude on their present existence, for example, in flashbacks; or in nightmares; or in words that are compulsively repeated, and that don't seem to have their ordinary meaning, because they're taking on different connotations from another situation, in another place. (*Writing History* 142-143)

In most cases, nightmares often take the patient back to the trauma unconsciously but even when awake and fully conscious, the patient can experience flash-backs of the traumatic event. LaCapra states "in acting out, tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene" (*Writing History* 21). Thus, the patients have to deal with more than just a bad dream because the 'traumatic nightmare' keeps on haunting them, long after they woke up. The fact that the past is "relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription" (*Writing History* 70) can be an explanation for this constant haunting presence because the patient is not able to distinguish between dream and reality anymore. Sometimes, traumatised victims appreciate the dreams as a kind of memorial for their lost loved ones. LaCapra calls this behaviour

> a fidelity to trauma and its victims, the feeling, especially pronounced in certain victims, that there is something in the repetition of the past – say, in a nightmare – that amounts to the dedication or fidelity to lost loved ones and is a kind of memorial that is not based on suppression or oblivion. (*Writing History* 144)

In some cases, the traumatised victims will even deliberately evoke the dreams or nightmares that take them back to the memory of a loved one. Beside the ways that LaCapra maintains for "acting out" traumatic events which are flashbacks, nightmares and compulsive behaviour and words, other theorists also introduce descriptions of "acting out", ranging from those which focus exclusively on what occurs within, or "as a consequence of, analytic work, to descriptions which see it as an appropriate term to designate a whole range of impulsive, anti-social or dangerous actions up to and including enduring behavioural problems such as delinquency, drug addiction and various psychosomatic illnesses" (Abt and Weiseman 65). In addition, the term has been used by some to describe any form of "regressive trends" or "repressed strivings" present in analysis – which thus entails that symptoms are forms of acting out (Deutsch 185-193). Developing multiple identities, amnesia, a lack of memory, hypermnesia, an excess of memory, obsessive behaviour is the other ways that acting out manifests itself. Finally, acting out can manifest itself in a certain avoidance of the problem, when the victim does not come to terms with the trauma because of a belief that the traumatic event did not affect them. Related to this behaviour is the idea of "narrative fetishism", explored by Eric Santner in his essay, "History Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1992):

> By narrative fetishism I mean the construction and deployment of a narrative consciously or unconsciously designed to expunge the traces of the trauma or loss that called that narrative into being in the first place....Narrative fetishism...is the way an inability or refusal to mourn emplots traumatic events; it is a strategy of undoing, in fantasy, the need for mourning by simulating a condition of

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intactness, typically by situating the site and origin of loss elsewhere. (144)

In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, LaCapra describes this phenomenon as "fetishized and totalizing narratives that deny the trauma that called them into existence by [...] harmonising events, and often recuperating the past in terms of uplifting messages or optimistic, self-serving scenarios" (78). In other words, a traumatised person indulging in narrative fetishism relates the traumatic event in an optimistic and untruthful way, in order to pretend to others, as well as to oneself, that one is untouched by it, and in doing so avoiding the process of "working through".

1.6.3.2   Working Through

"Working through" is another possible reaction to trauma. Like "acting out", "working through" or mourning involves repetition with significant difference — "difference that may be desirable when compared with compulsive repetition" (*Writing History* 148). LaCapra states:

> In the working through, the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem, to be able to distinguish between past, present and future...for the victim, this means his ability to say to himself, "Yes, that happened to me back then. It was distressing, overwhelming, perhaps I can't entirely disengage myself from it, but I'm existing here and now, and this is different from back then." (*Writing History* 143)

Generating countervailing forces to "acting-out" is the way that a traumatized can palliate the symptoms of trauma. LaCapra explains what working-through trauma implies:

> Working-through means work on posttraumatic symptoms in order to mitigate the effects of trauma by generating counterforces to compulsive repetition (or acting-out), thereby enabling a more viable articulation of affect and cognition or representation, as well as ethical and socio-political agency, in the present and future. (History in Transit 119)

Besides, generating countervailing forces to "acting-out", LaCapra seconds the psychoanalytic requisite of testimony as the fundamental stipulation to "working through trauma":

> When the past becomes accessible to recall in memory, and when language functions to provide some measure of conscious control, critical distance, and perspective, one has begun the arduous process of working over and through the trauma in a fashion that may never bring full transcendence of acting out… but which may enable processes of judgment and at least limited liability and ethically responsible agency. These processes are crucial for laying ghosts to rest (*Writing History* 90).

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LaCapra sees "working through" of a traumatic experience as a process which starts with "acting-out". In "working through" process, the word process does not follow the original and accepted meaning of word process-to proceed from one place to another. "Working through" is a process which is not a linear, teleological, or straightforward developmental, and it is complex and involves various modalities of repetition. LaCapra writes:

> In any event working through is not a linear, teleological, or straightforward developmental (or stereotypically dialectical) process either for the individual or for the collectivity. It requires going back to, problems, working them over, and perhaps transforming understanding of them. (*Writing History* 148)

Working through does not mean "avoidance, harmonization, simply forgetting the past, or submerging oneself in the present" (*Writing History* 143). It means confronting with the trauma, including its details, and critically engaging the tendency to act out the past and even "to recognize why it may be necessary and even in certain respects desirable or at least compelling" (*Writing History* 144). Even when traumatic events are worked through, this does not mean that they may not reappear and require renewed and perhaps changed ways of working for them again in this sense, "working through is itself a process that may never entirely transcend acting out and that, even in the best of circumstances, is never achieved once and for all" (Writing *History* 148). Nonetheless, sometimes the stage of "working through" the trauma is not easily reached because of what might almost be termed a fidelity to trauma, a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it. LaCapra asserts this as one of the most difficult aspects of "working through":

> One of the most difficult aspects of working through is the ability to undertake it in a manner that is not tantamount to betraying the trust or love that binds one to lost others—that does not imply simply forgetting the dead or being swept away by current preoccupations. The feeling of trust betrayed or fidelity broken (however unjustified the feeling may in fact be) is one of the greatest impediments to working through problems. (*Writing History* 144)

In any case, certain wounds, both historical and personal, cannot simply heal without leaving residues or scars in the present; there may even be a sense in which they have to stay "as open wounds even if one strives to counteract their tendency to swallow all of existence and incapacitate one as an agent in the present. (*Writing History* 144)

In the recent criticism, there has perhaps been too much of a tendency to become fixated on "acting out", on the repetition compulsion, to see it as a way of preventing closure, harmonisation, any facile notion of cure, but also by the same token, to eliminate or obscure any other possible response or to simply identify all "working through" as closure, totalisation, full cure, and full mastery. In their article "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma", Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart wrote that "complete recovery" can only take place when "the story can be told, the person can look back at what happened; he has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography, and thereby in the whole of his

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personality" (176). Cathy Caruth, in *Unclaimed Experience - Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), views the repetitiveness of posttraumatic dreams as an attempt to "master what was never fully grasped in the first place" (62). However, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001), Dominick LaCapra critiques these extreme views on "acting out" and "working through", and writes:

> The result is a paralyzing kind of all-or-nothing logic in which one is in a double bind: either tantalization and the closure you resist, or acting out the repetition compulsion, with almost no other possibilities. Within this constricted frame of reference, politics often becomes a question of blank hope in the future, an openness toward a vacuous Utopia about which you can say nothing And this view very often links up with an apocalyptic politics or perhaps a politics of Utopian hope in the form of indefinite deferral of institutional change or even of substantive recommendations. (145)

To avoid these problem, LaCapra takes "acting out" and "working through" as a distinction between interacting processes, not a dichotomy or a separation into different kinds or totally different categories; in that "acting out" and "working through" totally separate from each other, and the two may always mark to be implicated in each other:

> Acting out and working through constitute a distinction, in that one may never be totally separate from the other, and the two may always mark to be implicated in each other. But it's very important to see them as countervailing forces to recognize that there are possibilities of working through that do not simply loop endlessly back into repetition compulsion or go to the (illusory) extreme of total transcendence of acting, or total transcendence (or annihilation) of the past.(150)

So far I have explicated how trauma is depicted and responded in the psychological level. As this thesis is examining trauma of displacement in literary texts, I used another concept (i.e., trauma and literature), which is the impact of trauma theory in on the formal and structural components of the literary texts that I explicate in the next section.

1.6.4 Trauma and Literature

One of the important concepts in my study is the impact of trauma theory on the formal and structural components of literary texts. One of the certain indelible characteristics of trauma that all trauma theorists agree on is the difficulty of representing traumatic reality. Cathy Caruth claims that trauma victims do not experience the traumatic event when it happens. Traumatic experience, as Caruth formulates it, "suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it" (*Unclaimed Experience* 91-2). Trauma remains latent and appears only in belated symptoms when it is triggered by another traumatic event. Since trauma cannot be experienced when it happens, it outstrips discursive and representational resources. Dori Laub adds, "The traumatic event, although real, took place outside the

parameters of 'normal' reality, such as causality, sequence, place and time" (69). Because of its peculiar nature, trauma is a shattering experience that distorts memory and is particularly susceptible and vulnerable to problems of understanding and reporting events. Perhaps the epistemological and ethical challenges of representing trauma are best captured in Theodor Adorno's statement, "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (qtd. in Rothberg 19). Although Adorno has been misinterpreted as calling for a ban on all representation, his writing suggests the need for new forms of representation capable of registering the traumatic shock of modern genocide, in particular, and of extreme experience, in general. Moreover, he acknowledges the need for a revision of what constitutes traditional realistic representation, one that will take into account the limits of representing traumatic experience—or nonexperience—and one that is sensitive to the estrangement of language. The attempt to gain access to the objective truth surrounding the "experience" of trauma is futile. For this reason, many trauma theorists including Freud turn to literature, privileging the mediated nature of literary works. Recognising that trauma can never be known in a straightforward way, Caruth argues that it must "be spoken in a language that is always somehow literary: a language that defies, even as it claims, our understanding" (*Unclaimed Experience* 5). Since trauma disrupts the structure of experience, the language used to describe it will always be a linguistic adaptation and therefore bound up with a crisis of truth.

An important aid in understanding literature's role in dealing with trauma has been LaCapra's work. Particularly appealing about LaCapra's theories of trauma is that he sees value in "working through" trauma, and, furthermore, recognizes the important role fiction can play with respect to understanding or reading events and experiences:

> Especially in the recent past, fiction may well explore the traumatic, including the fragmentation, emptiness, or evacuation of experience, and may raise the question of other possible forms of experience. It may also explore in a particularly telling and unsettling way the affective or emotional dimensions of experience and understanding. (*History in Transit* 132)

According to LaCapra, "many commentators would agree with Caruth in thinking that the literary (or even art in general) is a prime, if not the privileged, place for giving voice to trauma" (*Writing History* 190). Not only does fiction offer an avenue to explore new forms of representation, it also can aid what LaCapra terms "working through", a process that can help in the transition from victim to survivor. LaCapra contends that "Working through" means work on posttraumatic symptoms in order to mitigate the effects of trauma by generating counterforces to compulsive repetition (or acting-out), LaCapra is quick to add that "working through" is not a cure and that trauma may never be fully mastered; it is not a way to attain total integration of the self; it is not a total redemption of the past or absolute healing of traumatic wounds. LaCapra does not suggest a totalising form of "working through"; rather, he states that we can work to change the causes and effects of trauma. Advocating an approach to trauma that is not "oblivious to larger social and political problems," LaCapra wants *to claim the experience*, not transcend or betray it, but bear witness to it (*History in Transit* 112).

From the impact of the trauma theory on literary, studies a new literary genre, the trauma fiction is constructed. Identified as a genre by literary critics such as Laurie Vickroy and Anne Whitehead, trauma fiction is characterised by its attempt, through a narrative mirroring of traumatic symptoms, to "make overwhelming Psychological dilemmas [particularly those of historically marginalized people] available to individual readers by personalizing them" (Vickroy xvi, 221). For an analysis of the literature on the basis of trauma theory, however, it is important to go beyond this psychological analysis and consider the structural and formal components of the work of art. "Trauma narrative", Laurie Vickroy concurs "go beyond presenting trauma as subject matter or in characterization; they also incorporate the rhythms, processes, and uncertainties of trauma within consciousness and structures of these works" (Vickroy xiv). In trauma fiction, conventional narrative techniques do not suffice to represent the traumatic event. Trauma fiction instead pushes these conventional techniques to the limit. Anne Whitehead sums up some of the main characteristics of trauma fiction in her eponymous book, '*Trauma Fiction'* (2004). "If trauma is at all susceptible to narrative formulations" Whitehead argues, "then it requires a literary form which departs from conventional linear sequence" (6). Non-linearity, repetition and intertextuality form three important modes of representation in traumatic narratives in Whitehead's book. Non-linearity or the nonconventional beginning-middle-end plot as Dominick LaCapra calls it. This kind of structure is frequently applied because the more traditional plot serves to seek closure and this is what ultimately lacks in traumatic narratives. Other forms of narration are used in these cases because they "raise in probing and problematic ways the question of nature of the losses and absences, anxieties and traumas that called them into existence" (*Writing History* 54). It is important to know that most of the novels in modern literature apply this nonconventional form so it is not something that is exclusively used in the trauma literature; it can nevertheless be seen as one of its characteristics. One way of defying the linear structure can be found in the use of flash-backs and flash-forwards, which causes a disrupted chronology. Repetition, therefore, is one of the main stylistic features of trauma fiction on the level of language, imagery and even plot, which can act at the levels of language, imagery or plot. Repetition mimics the effects of trauma, for it suggests the insistent return of the event and the disruption of narrative chronology or progression. Besides fragmented storylines and repetition, intertextuality forms another important mode of representation in traumatic narratives. Whitehead suggests that "the term represents the notion that every text constructs itself as a tissue of quotations, absorbing and transforming material from other texts...Intertextuality is also used in a more specific sense to refer to the particular set of plots, characters, images or conventions which a given text may bring to mind for its readers" (89).

1.7 Methodology

This study aims to examine the trauma of displacement in Naipaul's selected fictions, namely *The Mimic Men* (1967), *In a Free State (1971)* and *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) through a textual analysis by using the trauma theory by some trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Shoshana Felman among others. In the first step, I depicted displacement as a traumatic experience for characters by the illness which displacement causes; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which in 1980 was included in the new edition of the American Psychiatric Association official diagnostic

manual. The first cluster of the symptoms of PTSD relates to the ways in which the traumatic event is persistently 're-experienced', i.e. through intrusive flashbacks, recurring dreams, or later situations that repeat or echo the original. The second set of symptoms suggests the complete opposite: 'persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma' that can range from avoidance of thoughts or feelings related to the event to a general sense of emotional numbing to the total absence of recall of the significant event. The third set of symptoms points to 'increased arousal, including loss of temper control, hyper-vigilance or 'exaggerated startle response'.

In the second step, I suggested two ways the characters go through to remember their trauma. These ways are two different kinds of memory: "acting out" and "working through" which are related to repetition, the concept which are developed by one of the prominent trauma theorists, Dominick LaCapra in his book, *Wring History, Writing Trauma* (2001). "Acting out" or melancholia is related to repetition compulsion, which refers to the tendency to repeat something compulsively. In "acting out", one keeps on repeating the painful events in the form of flashbacks, nightmares or compulsive behaviour. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to be haunted by ghosts or even to exist in the present as if one is still fully present in the past, with no distance from past. "Working through" or mourning involves repetition with significant difference—"working through" is a controlled, explicit, critically controlled process of repetition. In working through, the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between the past, present and future. In "working through" one tries to acquire some critical distance that allows one to engage in life in the present, to assume responsibility—but that does not mean that one utterly transcends the past but creates desirable possibilities to come to the terms with traumatic past. I take "acting out" and "working through" as different but not opposite processes. "Acting out" and "working through" may never be totally separate from each other, and the two may always mark or be implicated in each other.

In the third step, I argued that Naipaul is the voice of trauma of displacement of his indentured ancestors. Naipaul is the third-generation West Indian of East Indian descent. His ancestors were colonial transplants who were brought to the West Indies in the late nineteenth century to work on the British sugar-cane plantation, following the emancipation of slaves in the mid nineteenth-century. A traumatic experience cannot be grasped at the time when it happened. Traumatic experience, as Caruth formulates it, "suggests a certain paradox that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it" (*Unclaimed Experience* 91-2). As a traumatic experience cannot be grasped at the time it is happening, the trauma of displacement of Naipaul's ancestors' remains unclaimed. According to some trauma theorists such as Freud and Caruth, a traumatic experience remains "latent" and returns belatedly when it triggers; in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), Cathy Caruth explains, "in the term 'latency,' the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent, Freud seems to describe the trauma as the successive movement from an event to its repression to its return" (7). Almost a century later, by Naipaul's immigration to England, the trauma of his ancestors triggers. Thus, as Caruth explains, "the traumatized […] carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptoms of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (*Explorations*

in Memory 5). I argue that the representation of the trauma of displacement in Naipaul's works voices out his indentured ancestors' hitherto silent history.

1.8   Definition of Terms

1.8.1   Displacement

Angelika Bammer offers a succinct definition of displacement as an analytical construct: "Displacement refers to the separation of people from their native culture, through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles, or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture" (Bammer xi). The dynamics of the displacement framework lies in the fact that, as a theoretical construct, displacement shares with diaspora the notions of physical dislocation, banishment, and exile, but emphatically draws attention to the cultural dimension; that is, how one's ancestral culture or the culture of the birthplace has been dislocated, transformed, rejected, or replaced by a new one, one of "cross-connections, not roots" (Bammer xv).

1.8.2   Trauma

To define trauma, Cathy Caruth used the device of aporia or unresolvable paradox. Caruth states that trauma was an inherently "paradoxical experience" ("Trauma and Culture II" 417). Traumatic experience, as Caruth formulates it, "suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it" (Unclaimed Experience 91-2). Crisis of history is another paradox. Under the sign of trauma, "a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence", "its truth is bound up with its crisis of truth" ("Trauma and Culture I" 7). A further Freudian paradox is the strange temporality of traumatic memory; an event can only be understood as traumatic after the fact through the symptoms and flashbacks and delayed attempts at understanding that these signs of disturbance produce. The peculiar temporal, structure, the belatedness of trauma is another aporia; "since traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time" (Caruth, "Trauma and Culture I" 7).

1.8.3   Acting out

"Acting out" is one of the possible reactions to trauma. "Acting out" or melancholia is related to repetition compulsion, i.e. the tendency to repeat something compulsively. LaCapra writes "this is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to exist in the present as if they were still fully in the past, with no distance from it. (142-143) There are many different ways depicted by LaCapra and other trauma theorists in which a person can 'act out' his or her traumatic experiences. Flashbacks, nightmares and compulsive behaviour and words are common ways used by traumatised people when "acting out" trauma.

1.8.4   Working through

"Working through" is another possible reaction to trauma. Like "acting out", "working through" or mourning involves repetition with significant difference — "difference that may be desirable when compared with compulsive repetition" (*Writing History* 148). "working through" is a controlled, explicit, critically controlled process of repetition. In "working through", the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between the past, present and future. Generating countervailing forces to "acting-out" is the way that a traumatized can palliate the symptoms of trauma. Besides, generating countervailing forces to "acting-out", LaCapra seconds the psychoanalytic requisite of testimony as the fundamental stipulation to "working through trauma".

1.9   Organisation of the Thesis

This chapter has provided a background to V.S. Naipaul's writing on displacement. Moreover, the statement of problem of the thesis and the reasons behind the selection of the fiction, *The Mimic Men*, *In a Free State* and *The Enigma of Arrival*, are also given in the chapter. In addition, the objectives and significance of study have been explained. The chapter also elaborated on the conceptual framework for this thesis by explicating the trauma theory, cultural trauma theory, responding to the trauma and its impacts on literature. The method of textual analysis has also been elaborated upon.

Chapter two provides firstly a comprehensive reading of V.S. Naipaul's personality, biography, writing, critical remarks about him and what have influenced him for two reasons. As mentioned in the introduction part, one important reason for choosing an interdisciplinary approach for this study is that Naipaul is the product of a unique combination of circumstances, so a combination of approaches is necessary to deal with his works. Therefore, this chapter provides a comprehensive reading of V.S. Naipaul's personality, biography, writing, critical remarks about him and what have influenced him to clarify the mentioned uniqueness. Moreover, this study also claims that Naipaul is the voice of trauma of his ancestors who were colonial transplants who were brought to the West Indies in the late nineteenth century to work on the British sugar-cane plantation, following the emancipation of slaves in the mid nineteenth-century. Since Naipaul is considered the voice of trauma, a broad familiarity with him is needed to see what factors are important in making him a writer. In addition, there is a review of the scholarly literature on displacement on the selected fictions for this study.

Chapters Three, Four and Five explore trauma of displacement in the selected texts. The discussions are guided by the aforementioned conceptual framework. I assigned each fiction a separate chapter and dealt with them chronologically, starting with *The Mimic Men*. Chapters Four and Five analyse trauma of displacement in *In a Free State* and *The Enigma of Arrival*. Meanwhile, Chapter Six draws conclusions from the findings of the textual analysis. All the three main objectives of the study and how they have been achieved are also addressed. Moreover, recommended areas for further research are also included in the said chapter.

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