



British Pillage of India: A Postcolonial Analysis of Shashi Tharoor's "An Era of Darkness" and Naipaul's "India: A Million Mutinies Now"

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Abstract— Shashi Tharoor and V. S. Naipaul attempted to discuss the innumerable mistreatments perpetrated by the British Raj in their nonfiction works "An Era of Darkness" and "India: A Million Mutinies Now," respectively. The title plainly indicates that the British governed India for two centuries during which time there was darkness, mutiny, and exploitation. Because of them, Indians were subjected to terrible humiliation and misery, and they were pulled into poverty. The aftermath of such sad events is still present. Due to situations such as Britishers feeling smug, Indians were prohibited from public servant selections, prompting Jawaharlal Nehru to declare, "The Indian civil service was neither Indian, civil, nor a service" (Shashi Tharoor, 60). Both of them utilized a variety of strategies to split India in all areas, allowing exploitation to continue unabated. They devised the concept of a census. They did everything for personal gain. Whether that was the initiation of railways, the interruption of community schools, or the inability to give aid during the Bengal famine, there were many reasons for this. Tharoor does not want compensation for the British's wrongdoing; Rather, he intends them to recognize and apologize. Naipaul investigates the changes in society that occurred in India during British occupation. He captures the varied voices and viewpoints of the people living in India, delving into the country's intricacies via a series of tales and personal interviews. The title symbolizes the concept that India is undergoing numerous transitions, as represented by a million separate rebellions or mutinies. This study reveals a clear and comparable representation of Indian sorrow and British misdeeds via the words of the two authors described above.



Keywords— Post - Independence, Postcolonial, Orients, Occidentals, Injustice, Mutinies, Exploitations

I. INTRODUCTION

Shashi Tharoor, born March 9, 1956, is a prominent Indian personality noted for his contributions to international civil service, diplomacy, bureaucracy, and politics. Tharoor has been a Member of Parliament for Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, since 2009. He is also a public intellectual and author, known for his nonfiction writings.

"India: From Midnight to the Millennium" (1997), "An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India" (2016), "India Shastra: Reflections on the Nation

in our Time" (2015), and "Why I am A Hindu" (2018) are some of his most important nonfiction books. These writings highlight Tharoor's unique insights into India's history, culture, and present difficulties via a postcolonial and postmodern lens.

Tharoor's nonfiction work challenged the conceptions of colonialism and Ethnocentrism by presenting numerous topics from the perspective of the colonization. It is a heartbreaking scenario since, although having fled, the colonists were still experiencing the consequences of their deeds. Mr Sijo

Vergheese talks on this in a chapter on Gayatri Spivak's Theory of Subalternity:

"As a result of colonialism, the West continues to be regarded as an ideal state by the conquered people. Not alone were their lands invaded, but their brains as well". (Vergheese 121).

V.S. Naipaul (born August 17, 1932) was a Trinidadian-born British novelist and Nobel laureate known for his incisive investigation of cultures and society, notably via his nonfiction writings. Naipaul's contributions to literature extend beyond creative fiction to include travel writing and socio-cultural research.

In his nonfiction writings, Naipaul methodically portrays the nuances of the postcolonial world, providing readers with a deep grasp of the historical, political, and cultural landscapes he encounters. Notable among his nonfiction works is "An Area of Darkness" (1964), in which he critically investigates his ancestral country, India, contending with the conflict between expectations and harsh realities. "India: A Million Mutinies Now" (1990) exemplifies Naipaul's strong observation and analytical skills as he depicts India's changing social fabric under British control. His research on the Caribbean, detailed in "The Middle Passage" (1962), expands his nonfictional repertory by giving insights into the region's cultural and historical features.

Naipaul's nonfictional writings are distinguished by a unique combination of personal introspection, cultural critique, and intellectual rigor, establishing him as a distinct voice in the field of literary study. Across these books, Naipaul takes readers on a thought-provoking trip through several civilizations, illuminating the delicate fabric of the postcolonial world.

V.S. Naipaul's "India: A Million Mutinies Now" highlights the numerous changes and advancements that occurred in India. Though India's progress is positive, it is still a long way from becoming a developed country. Naipaul's investigation of India contributed to its development in the same way as western countries have. Naipaul communicates,

"The mutinies also helped to define the power of general intellectual life, as well as the completeness and humanism of the principles to which all Indians now feel they may appeal, and, strangely enough, the mutinies could not be wished away. They had a role in both the commencement and the restoration of a new

way of life for countless millions." (Naipaul)

II. ANALYSIS OF THEIR WORKS

In May 2015, Tharoor made a lecture at Oxford University condemning British enslavement and economic degradation. Despite the fact that they robbed India, instead of providing compensation, they should own their inconsistencies and apologize. Tharoor's book convincingly explains how Indians charged for their own subjection, as well as how the British government fooled us for 200 years and colonized Indians. Shashi Tharoor's novel "Era of Darkness," in which he critiques British imperialism, was a brave step as a debater. As a result, Indians have yet to heal from the suffering caused by British rule. That colonial time was a horrible epoch for Indians, with numerous riots, feminine, racial, and tremendous economic exploitation.

In 1930, Will Durant, a youthful historian and philosopher, says:

"The British conquest of India was the assault and destruction of a High Civilization by a commercial corporation [the British East India Company] absolutely without scruple or principle, careless of art and greedy of wealth, overrunning with fire and sword a temporarily disorganized and weak country, bribing and killing, annexing and stealing, and commencing that career of illegal and 'legal' plunder which has now (1930) gone on relentlessly for one hundred and seventy-three years" (Durant, 2007).

Tharoor's book "An Era of Darkness" expands on his Oxford Union speech, which he presented by compiling information from many witnesses and delivering it as a timed narrative. In his writing, he plainly expressed his beliefs, making criticisms against the English looting that Indians had to undergo. He talks about how everything the Britishers did was for their personal benefit. He makes comments that contradict historical accounts. He drew sharp evidence from reliable sources and condemned the Occidentals for everything that was detrimental to India.

They'd successfully divided the country. Furthermore, both Clive and East India Company officials gained from the Battle of Plassey. The British waged India's contribution to soldiers, wars, and anything else that, yet they haven't ever paid anything to India. Tharoor begins to claim that he has not found anything reviving during the entire period of British rule in India. Many historians felt outrage over how their reign was fading and vanishing. During this time, India faced disaster.

"They ousted nawabs and Maharajas for a fee, drained their treasuries, and took over their kingdoms using different tactics (including, beginning in the 1840s, the cynical "doctrine of lapse" whenever a monarch died without an heir), and deprived farmers of their ownership of the fields they had tilled for generations (Tharoor, 2016)".

Later, Tharoor describes how the Colonists ruined India's economy. It accounted for twenty seven percent of the global economy in 1700, which was more than all of Europe's economies combined at the time. Unfortunately, after the British departed India, the position was nearly identical to that of ragpickers. India's economy slowed to three percent. Thus, the author shows, "The rationale was simple: India was administered for the profit of Britain" (Tharoor, Oxford Union address, 2015).

The center was more commercially oriented while the British were in power. This may be investigated using the words "capitalist" and "imperialism." The colonists relied on natural resources. It all started with the "British Industrial Revolution," which had the primary purpose of undermining India's thriving manufacturing industry. This is evident in the textile industry and their issues.

"The British set about progressively dismantling India's textile industry and exports, replacing India's production and exports with British textiles made in England. Ironically, the British exploited Indian raw materials and shipped completed goods back to the Indian market and the rest of the globe, which is the industrial corresponding of adding insult to injury." (Tharoor, 2016).

"Beginning Postcolonialism Colonialism was a profitable commercial enterprise that brought money and riches to Western nations by exploiting the economic resources of others. It sought economic advantage, reward, and wealth. Consequently, colonialism and capitalism have a mutually beneficial connection" (Tharoor, 2016).

The center was more commercially oriented while the British were in power. This may be investigated using the words "capitalist" and "imperialism." The colonists made advantage of natural materials. It all started with the "British Industrial Revolution," which had the primary purpose of undermining India's thriving manufacturing industry. This is evident in the textile industry and their issues. Handmade textiles become obsolete with the emergence

of sophisticated equipment. Weavers in India were victims of product advancement. They went to great lengths to stymie India's industrial growth. India was formerly famed for its steel, textile, and ship building industries. Unfortunately, it was relegated to a raw material-producing colony under British authority. When the colonials withdrew, their inputs to the less manufactured goods exports plummeted from 27% to less than 2%.

The agony of British authority did not go away. Tax system in the name of exploitation started, and during 1765 and 1815, millions were robbed each year. It became a favorite pastime among the British, and we were treated like cash cows. They began collecting taxes at least 50%. This was just too much for the people. Two-thirds of the residents of British colonies left their territory in the late 18th century.

"Tax evaders were kept in cages and subjected to the scorching heat; fathers sold their children to pay the escalating rates" (Durant).

Tharoor also goes into great length about the ongoing disparity in the Indian Civil Service. Indians were denied every position, honor, reputation, and department that the most modest Englishman recognized. Jawaharlal Nehru made the following additions:

"The Indian civil service was neither Indian, civil, or service-oriented" (Tharoor).

Indian citizens were not permitted to participate in this system, in which the destiny of Indians was decided solely by British citizens. A few handpicked Indian soldiers confront a long and arduous road ahead of them. What they thought when they were met with shocking levels of bigotry and abuse from British citizens. This intolerance had a tremendous impact on the brains of a few Indian Imperial troops. Tharoor has presented the true picture of Indians' predicament in relation to the judicial system, including the court system and criminal legislation. Even when India had law and order, justice was skewed, especially in confrontations among Indians and British officers. They also identified additional instances when justice was not rendered equitably and how Indian people suffered as a result of the English judicial system. It was invented by foreigners and decided to impose on Indian people without their consent. They used it as merely a tool at their discretion. Because all the regulations benefited white people, they reigned, and Indians blindly accepted them as rulers. Dr. Dushyant Nimawat says racism exists.

"Europeans believed to be a better race to those

of the East. Thus, they validated colonization and colonialism. They believed that colonization was intended to civilize the uncivilized tribes of the East" (Nimiwat).

Naipaul investigates the number of Indian mutinies, including regional, religious, commercial, and caste-based ones. Movements such as Naxalite, Dalit, Dravidian, Khalistani terrorists, and South Indian are combustible but not a hindrance to

India's homogeneity. In contrast, Naipaul questioned whether India's agricultural, commercial, and industrial advances led to personal and societal advancement. People are unaware of the mutinies that occur in India when they are focused on sustainable development. Naipaul was astounded to witness two distinct characteristics of mutiny and advancement in every field of life from 1980 to 1990.

Naipaul's travels to Tamil Nadu and the DMK movement, which was started by Ramaswami Periyar, were depicted in a variety of ways. The Periyar movement was founded in 1930 to challenge Brahmin dominance. Periyar Ramaswami did not believe in conventional rites. He sought to alter the minds of those who were being stifled by the Hindu faith. Naipaul discusses the DMK movement, which was formed as part of the Periyar movement. In Indian politics, the DMK came to power in 1967, nineteen years after the movement's inception. The DMK was created by the disadvantaged and lower classes to oppose Brahmin dominance in all fields. Naipaul discusses lower-class people and how they were viewed as untouchables in India. Naipaul skillfully portrays the rivalry between Brahmins and non-Brahmins in India.

During his journey to Calcutta, Naipaul met Siddhanath Das, who introduced him to Shanti Niketan, which was founded by Ravindranath Tagore. Naipaul met Dipanjan, a communist, and founded the communist movement at Calcutta's presidential college. Later, he declared support for Naxalite activities that amplified the voices of peasants and the impoverished. They are fanatics who fight for the impoverished, marginalized, and oppressed.

During his tour to Punjab, Naipaul met with a variety of Sikh luminaries. He found a deep religious conviction among Sikhs. He learns about Bhindranwale, who visited the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Their radical ideals led to the death of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In Uttar Pradesh, he met with both wealthy and impoverished Muslim leaders. Some Muslim households were immensely wealthy, whereas the bulk of Muslims were extremely destitute. Naipaul

was referring to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue, which emerged as the major cause of Hindu-Muslim rioting. Both

Hindus and Muslims have strong opinions about the holy site. Naipaul was astounded to witness how the situation in Kashmir had changed as a result of terrorism. Tourism had completely collapsed, and the hotels and tourist attractions were deserted. He stayed at an empty motel near the lake. On his third journey to India, he met Aziz and Butt, both of whom like meeting Naipaul. They have hopeful thoughts regarding Kashmir. Naipaul observed that the Kashmiri schools were in good shape. The accommodations and restaurants were nicer than his previous visits.

Naipaul underwent significant modifications in Mumbai. Mumbai appeared more packed, hurried, and congested than the metropolitan city. The apartments, flats, and businesses are built on both sides of the lengthy highways. Some advertising boards were written in Roman and Latin. In Naipaul, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar Jayanti was well honored. To commemorate Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's birth anniversary, a large crowd gathered along the roadside. He met with Shiv Sena officials, who were strong Hindus, and vigorously promoted their beliefs. Naipaul witnessed the deplorable state of the Muslim community. He went to Mohammad Ali Road, which is densely populated with Muslim communities. He met Anwar, an intelligent young man. Anwar had a strong faith in Islam and believed that illiteracy hampered Muslim advancement. He says:

"It is unavoidable that they would battle for Islam. This is a conflicting role. They will continue their illicit operations while also reading the Koran and performing the namaz five times every day. The community does not appreciate these people, but they are captivated by the way the dons interact with ordinary Muslims". (Naipaul, 1990).

In this fashion, Naipaul highlighted India's darker side, anarchy, and mutinies. Societies are divided by religion, caste, location, and language. As a result, the Indian people place a high value on great national concepts that link them together in a single thread of uniformity.

III. CONCLUSION

To summarize, V.S. Naipaul and Shashi Tharoor saw colonialism and its good impact on the diverse perspectives of contemporary India in their works.

Despite mutinies and exploitation, India appears to be a strong, cohesive, homogeneous, and circumscribed nation. They meet and watch people contemplating modernity and globalization. Finally, Naipaul and Tharoor believe that India is prospering as a powerful and progressive third-world country.

Shashi Tharoor's book "An Era of Darkness" proved the correct option to resist British rule in India with force and power rather than efficiency. Until the mid-century, there was little literature that described the extent of India's destruction during British rule. Tharoor fills the gap by stating that there is a case that the British and other Western nations must address. Old imperialism, with its renewed zeal and rationalizations for the same "civilization," never destroyed the world, from far locations as the modern West Asian region and the Middle East region to Grenada, which is now forgotten. What should the English do as a result? As per Shashi Tharoor, wanting compensation for past economic losses is not practical nor acceptable for Indians. Instead of financial compensation, the best course of action may be a real apology from the British.

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