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THE IMPACT OF COLONIALISM UPON THE INDIGENOUS AND THE ENGLISH WOMEN CHARACTERS IN *THE MIMIC MEN*

Fatma KALPAKLI*

Abstract

The existence of the binary oppositions and the colonial tendencies in patriarchal cultures pave the way for the exploitation of women. In patriarchal societies, not only men oppress women, but also women oppress women. To exemplify, generally the white woman takes the role of a master and the black woman takes the role of a servant. Thus, patriarchal colonial tendencies implement the seeds of hatred within the same sex and therefore sisterhood among the women becomes impossible. Moreover, a close look at the patriarchal/colonial cultures will reveal that the patriarchal/colonial cultures disturb all women regardless of their racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds. In this article, all these issues will be discussed with reference to V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*.

Key Words: *Colonialism, Women Issue, Patriarchal Culture, Binary Oppositions, The Colonizer, The Colonized, Colonies, V.S. Naipaul, The Mimic Men.*

MİMİC MEN ADLI ROMANDA SÖMÜRGECİLİĞİN İNGİLİZ VE YERLİ KADIN KARAKTERLER ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Özet

Ata-erkil toplumlardaki, karşıtlıklar ve sömürgecilik eğilimleri kadınların sömürülmesi için ortam hazırlamaktadır. Ata-erkil toplumlarda, sadece erkekler değil, aynı zamanda kadınlar da kadınları baskı altına almakta ve sömürmektedir. Örneğin, bu toplumlarda beyaz kadına efendi rolü verilirken, siyah kadına da hizmetçi rolü verilmektedir. Böylelikle, ata-erkil kökenli sömürgecilik eğilimleri kadınlar arasında da nefret tohumları saçarak, hemcinslerin kendi aralarında bir bütünlük ve kardeşlik oluşturmalarını imkansızlaştırmaktadır. Bunlara ek olarak, ata-erkil/sömürgecilik kültürüne daha yakından bakıldığında, ata-erkil/sömürgecilik kültürünün ırk, din, dil ve etnik köken gözetmeksizin aslında tüm kadınları baskı altına aldığı görülmektedir. Bu makalede, V.S. Naipaul'un *The Mimic Men* adlı romanından örneklemelerle ata-erkil/sömürgecilik kültürünün yerli ve İngiliz kadınlar üzerindeki etkileri incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sömürgecilik, Kadın Sorunu, Ata-Erkil Kültür, Karşıtlıklar, Sömürgeci, Sömürge, V.S. Naipaul, The Mimic Men.*

THE IMPACT OF COLONIALISM UPON THE INDIGENOUS AND THE ENGLISH WOMEN CHARACTERS IN *THE MIMIC MEN*

At the heart of colonialism lies the power-struggles and the binary oppositions such as men/colonizer/rich/powerful and women/colonized/poor/weak in the WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) culture. In these power-struggles, generally the end justifies the means and Machiavellianist politicians come to the foreground. Thus, it becomes a struggle between the weak and powerful, and between the rich and the poor. And in the book entitled *Women: The Last Colony*, it is argued that in the absence of external colonies women become a last colony and eventually, a struggle begins between men and women. Moreover, in colonial studies/novels, women's bodies are depicted as the 'land' of male colonizers. Hence, women's bodies become an area to be possessed, controlled and to be exploited. Within the context of these binary oppositions, Simone de Beauvoir tries to define what a woman is in her article called "Woman as Other" and she conveys us the ideas of the great Western thinkers and states that

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> *[Woman] is simply what man decrees; thus she is called 'the sex', by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex - absolute sex, no less She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental[1], the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other. (21)*

Eventually, she is doomed to endure all the negative effects of patriarchy and as an extension of it, of colonialism. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyze the impact of colonialism upon the indigenous and the English women characters in The Mimic Men. In the light of the information given above, in Naipaul's The Mimic Men, it is seen that colonialism forces especially indigenous women to mimicry as they become dissatisfied with themselves. With the help of mimicry, they try to fit to the norms of the colonizer. For instance, Sally, who is Ralph's/the protagonist's childhood lover in Trinidad, is one of those mimic women. To catch up with the latest news and fashion in the West, she reads American magazines which impose the Western images upon their minds. And in the novel, we see that she is under the influence of Western culture and Western ideas and day by day she begins to be colonized by the Western culture. And this cultural colonialism washes the brains of the women to such an extend that Sally, who has a classical Aryo-Aryan nose in the shape of a pea (Naipaul, 93), begins to be dissatisfied with her own appearance and begins to admire Western actors' noses. This shows that through cultural colonialism the indigenous women begin to have a dislike towards their own appearance[2] and then towards themselves. However, Ralph informs us that "Sally is delicate and beautiful" (Naipaul, 107). Later on, "they sent [Sally] off ... to a girls' college in the United States. I knew she would never come back to Isabella. So she went out in to the contamination of the wider world and was absorbed in it" (Naipaul, 165) says Ralph. Then, she chooses the Western way of life instead of Caribbean way of life due to the fact that she is exposed to Western education and concepts. In other words, she is, like many other colonized women, doomed to feel in "exile" in her own country because of having been exposed to the Western education and culture.

In addition to Sally, Lieni, who is an Italian woman, begins to mimic London girls; "she was in the habit of talking of the smart London girl" and "it was like a duty owed more to the city than herself" (Naipaul, 11) says Ralph in the novel. Furthermore, Ralph informs us that "her own style had changed little. Her heels were still very high, her lipstick still a little too bright on her wide mouth: not the smart London girl, but a full-bodied woman who could be recognized at a glance as an immigrant, Maltese, Italian Cypriot" (Naipaul, 29). Yet, whatever she does, she cannot change the fact that she is an Italian woman, not an English woman.

On the other hand, colonialism does not promise a rose garden to the English women as well. Though English women are in a better situation than the indigenous women, still they have to face similar problems because of the variety of cultures, they are exposed to through colonialism. For instance, Sandra meets with Ralph/a Caribbean man and she marries to Ralph and then she goes to Isabella in order to lead a better life. Her marriage to Ralph exemplifies the mixed-marriages[3] and its problems as it does not work and it breaks up at the end. With regard to their marriage, in Isabella, rather than Sandra, Ralph is seen as a victim, though he does not see himself as "the victim" (Naipaul, 41). Ralph expresses that "it seemed

[1] The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities,' said Aristotle; 'we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness.' And St Thomas for his part pronounced woman to be an 'imperfect man', an 'incidental' being. This is symbolised in Genesis where Eve is depicted as made from what Bossuet called 'a supernumerary bone' of Adam (Beauvoir 18). White woman is perceived to be an incidental being by the white man. A man is in the right in being a man; it is the woman who is in the wrong (Beauvoir 26).

[2] Therefore, black feminists brings us the idea that "black is beautiful" and today black women get awards in beauty contests and begin to regain their confidence.

[3] Mrs.Deschampsneufs who is a French Creole advises Ralph not to marry to a white woman before he is going to London. Moreover, in a tale called The Niger and the Seine, a "girl kills herself" (Naipaul 213) when her parents do not let her to practise inter-racial marriage and interestingly enough both white and black women are not allowed to practise inter-racial marriages. Both races are very conscious and try to preserve their race and white men see the black men as "the Other" and vice versa.

a textbook example of the ill-advised mixed marriage. I was seen as the victim, the exploited, offering comfort and status to a woman who was denied these things in her own country" (Naipaul, 41).

If Sandra's childhood is taken into consideration, it can be said that these statements are partly true; In England, Sandra has problems with her father and like Bernard Shaw, she says, "a father is one of nature's handicaps" (Naipaul, 42). From these words, it can be deduced that she is suppressed by her father and she cannot act freely because of her father's restrictions. Then, she tries to escape from these problems by dreaming to become either "a nun or a king's mistress" (Naipaul, 42). In my opinion, through the dream of being a nun, she gets rid of all the men by avoiding from them. Moreover, in the dream of being a king's mistress, she expects to be rescued by a king or prince like the sleeping beauty[4] does. She has "no family, two or three school friends, now scattered: it was easy to see how she felt imprisoned and fearful and how important it was to her to be free of the danger of that commonness which encircled her. The king's mistress!" (Naipaul, 45). Though, she is a free English woman, she is not happy in England. In fact, Sandra is isolated and lonely in her life. Ralph says that "though of the city, her position in it was like my own. She had no community, no group and had rejected her family. She saw herself alone in the world and was determined to fight her way up" (Naipaul, 44) Therefore, it can be suggested that Sandra is colonized by the patriarchal society in which she lives. She cannot be successful in a patriarchal society and makes many mistakes. She fails in a qualifying examination, which means that she can have no longer her "government grant" (Naipaul, 46) and she leaves the school. In other words, there is not much room for her/women in a patriarchal society. Therefore, Sandra proposes marriage to Ralph as she is afraid of the future (Naipaul, 223). At this instance, it is noticeable that she is not a silent and passive female, on the contrary, she is daring and she breaks the patriarchal norms by making the marriage proposal herself and by expressing that she wants to marry. However, Ralph accepts this proposal happily and he even apologizes to Sandra for not offering it himself before.

Though most of the critics argue that white woman is superior to black man, this is not applicable to Sandra. In her case, she needs a male companion to feel secure. Ironically, Ralph marries her to feel secure and to be recognized as well: "It seemed to me that to attach myself to her was to acquire that protection which she offered, to share some of her quality of being marked, a quality which once was mine but which I had lost" (Naipaul, 47). He expresses many times in the novel that "Sandra is his luck" (Naipaul, 64). Women stand for security for him, "I could have stayed for ever at a woman's breasts, if they were full and had a hint of a weight that required support" (Naipaul, 25). This feeling can be traced back in his childhood as well. Mother's breasts represent "softness and freedom" for Ralph,

> *I had dreamt that I was a baby again and at my mother's breast. What joy! The breast on my cheek and mouth: a consoling weight, the closeness of soft, smooth flesh. It had been at dusk, in a vague setting, no lights, in a back veranda, all around a blue of dark bush. My mother rocked and I had the freedom of her breast. (Naipaul, 116)*

In their marriage, Sandra offers her breasts to Ralph as if he were a child, "Those breasts she was always ready to offer me, as to a child" (Naipaul, 70). Sandra colonizes him through her femininity and her sexuality. In other words, Sandra becomes the mother country/the British Empire and Ralph becomes the child/ the colonized in their sexual relationship. And since Sandra acts like a mother, she "was all that was positive" and "she showed how much could be extracted so easily from the city… her delight strengthened me" (Naipaul, 45). Thus, Sandra acts as a guide for him in London nights. Likewise, his mother and sisters are very helpful to him and they come to his help, whenever he needs as they do when he fails in politics too (Naipaul, 239).

Therefore, he begins to find comfort in feminine atmospheres. He finds dedication, mutual loyalty and soft speech in feminine atmospheres:

[4] Feminists are strongly against these stories which suggest passivity to girls.

> *Remember the cold kitchen and the terrazzo of empty rooms where a lost girl, pure of body, walked about, thinking of other landscapes. Fill these rooms now with a new and more appropriate feminine atmosphere. It is the atmosphere of dedication and mutual loyalty, in which speech is soft, statements, however inexact, are never violently contradicted, and even drink, served by loyal women to deserving men, is taken sacramentally. (Naipaul, 194)*

Furthermore, he emphasizes the goodwill and dedication in feminine atmosphere by pointing out that "in feminine atmosphere of the roman house all was goodwill and dedication" (Naipaul, 195). Moreover, according to him, "order expresses its sweetness in young girls" (Naipaul, 154) as opposed to the disorder of the colonized Trinidad. If we compare the indigenous women with the English women, it can be said that the English women have more freedom and security. For instance, the registrar at the wedding office gives Sandra information about the organizations which offer "protection to British women overseas" (Naipaul, 49). This shows that British women are under the protection of their state wherever they go. British government and Law can protect them everywhere. However, it is not easy for Sandra to be accepted into the Caribbean circles. Ralph's marriage to Sandra becomes a blow for his mother as the well-educated son brings a working-class white woman/an ex-colonizer. Ralph's mother, who is a Hindu widow, has expectations from her son and she wants him to marry an indigenous girl. Therefore, she silently resists against her daughter-in-law and Ralph puts it in these words, "silence and passivity on her part would have been the true danger signs" (Naipaul, 53). In other words, one day she would fast until death. In Isabella, it is perceived that Ralph's match is not suitable. Related to his wife, Ralph says, "she became a girl from the East End of London, without breeding or education, who had been rescued by myself, besotted by the glamour of her race (Naipaul, 67). Therefore, she is excluded by the Caribbean society and by Ralph's mother and eventually, she becomes "the Other" for the Caribbean women. With regard to "cultural and racial hybridization" in the Caribbeans, Ashcroft in *The Empire Writes Back* states that "it is again not surprising to find that it is in the Caribbeans in particular that these issues have generated the most intensive discussion" (154) and resistance. Notice, in the novel cultural and racial hybridization is protested through not discussion, but through silence and passive resistance by the mother-in-law. Therefore, as reflected in Ralph's words in the novel, Sandra feels uprooted in Isabella and has a fear of the place: "She had awakened in the night with a feeling of fear, a simple fear of place, of the absent world" (Naipaul, 69). Therefore, Ralph begins to pity her and this can be clearly seen in the following passage, "she shared a fear I knew so well strengthened me; and subtly my attitude towards her changed. The very things I had once admired in her -confidence, ambition, rightness - were what I now pitied her for; I felt we had come together for self-defence" (Naipaul, 69). In *The Mimic Men,* it is illustrated that only once, he feels responsibility for her (Naipaul, 72) in his whole life, and it is when he sees her in a weak and miserable condition.

Interestingly enough, as time goes by, Sandra begins to look down upon the indigenous people. It is interesting that she is not a racist at the beginning of the novel, but after coming to Isabella, her attitude changes as a result of being excluded by her-mother-in-law. Sandra calls the indigenous people as "inferiors"[5] in the following sentence, "I suppose this must be the most inferior place in the world… Inferior natives, inferior expats. Frightfully inferior, frightfully happy. The two must go together" (Naipaul, 69). On the other hand, she does not want to leave the island, the so-called inferior place. She does not return to home, as "no family or group [await] her" in England (Naipaul, 69). And she takes the benefit of being an English woman and she goes to dinners and enjoys herself. Therefore, from another point of view, Ralph's mother's rejection of Sandra may be taken as the rejection of colonialism in her person. Thus, the experience of colonialism makes sisterhood impossible between a white woman and a black woman. The past bitter

[5] Only in one occasion, Ralph praises indigenous women and it is the skill of the women to convert houses and furniture, which is a domestic activity, "the conversion of houses or articles of furniture constantly exercised the ingenuity of our women" (Naipaul 61). Ralph, though himself is a black man, does not show much respect to his own people and women.

experiences of colonialism makes Ralph's mother a racist. In Isabella, Sandra appears in "white trousers" (Naipaul, 62) which fits well to the image of the colonizer in general. Moreover, she sits on a "high settee" (Naipaul, 61) among the indigenous women, which reflects her superiority as well. Furthermore, she speaks like a man and smokes cigarette. Thus, her outspokenness and smoking are male qualities and therefore, she is not the typical submissive female. Her outspokenness may also seem strange to Ralph's mother. So, the silent Colonized woman and the daring Colonizer woman are juxtaposed through Sandra and Ralph's mother in the novel. Ralph informs the reader that "[i]n Isabellla, Sandra with her gift of the phrase, her North London tongue, battling where she should have succoured and consoled… She often spoke damaging words in public for my benefit alone" (Naipaul, 64).

Another kind of colonization of women is the prostitution of the women and Naipaul deals with this problem in his novel, as well. In *The Mimic Men,* many times Ralph is seen while visiting public houses both in London and in Isabella. At these times, Ralph becomes acquainted with many women from various races in Isabella and he becomes an addict to some of them and he expresses his satisfaction in the following sentence: "Darling, I've had a most marvellous afternoon. I've been in bed with a most skilled and delightful woman" (Naipaul, 72). Later on, Ralph conveys his experiences to the reader in these words, "I paid my companion the sum we had laughingly agreed on in the café. She stroked my cheek and said she didn't like taking money beforehand-it was modern and rapacious- but she had had unpleasant experiences" (Naipaul, 235). When he is a young boy, he and Cecil find "a booklet with photographs of naked women, blurred or depilated in patches. Plump little bodies in foolish attitudes: the weak enticing the weak" (Naipaul, 101). All these examples show that women are colonized; they are bought and sold like "a commodity" in the patriarchal societies as it is illustrated through the English and Trinidadian societies in the novel. Another woman character in *The Mimic Men* is Wendy. With regard to her, it is expressed that she is a French Creole, who lives in Isabella. She is educated in Europe. In the novel, it is stated that having "a very high IQ" (Naipaul, 169) she has troubles in getting into an ordinary school in Isabella. This illustrates the fact that in the colonies, there are not enough facilities for the white women to get "proper education".

On the other hand, education, in the hands of the English, becomes a tool to oppress the indigenous women. Thus, the indigenous women are suppressed not only through violence (Naipaul, 241), but also through the education system of the patriarchy and of the colonizer. Acceptance without complaint is taught to Caribbean women since their childhood. Later on, they are exposed to English education and culture as well. In the novel, it is noticeable that rich people are more under the influence of English education and this can be observed in these words: "Ralph's mother had received little English education, but her brothers and sisters did as wealth comes" (Naipaul, 89). Related to his mother's education, Ralph further adds:

> *[M]y mother had received little English education and so was separated as by a generation from her brother and sisters who came later, at the period of wealth. One result was that she exaggerated her age. She liked to think that she was old-fashioned and had more in common with her parents than with her sisters and brother. In this way, she tried to resolve a difficult situation. I think she succeeded. Her old-fashioned upbringing which prescribed acceptance without complaint was a help to her. She accepted my father's abuse; she accepted her family's tacit disapproval of my father. (Naipaul, 89)*

In *The Mimic Men,* colonialism influences not only the education system, but also the family relations. For instance, a boy called Hok becomes uneasy, when his friends find out that his mother is black. Related to Hok's mother, Ralph says, "she was indeed a surprise, a Negro woman of the people, short and quite unremarkable" (Naipaul, 96). This instance shows that colonized women cannot have a good relationship with their own children, because of the existence of racism in Britain. The implementation of the inferiority complex upon the indigenous children makes new generations ashamed of their own parents and this creates a gap between children and parents. Thus, the indigenous mothers cannot have a healthy relationship with their children because of the prevalent racism. Consequently, they cannot go with their children out as it is

illustrated in the case of Hok and his mother. A close look at the structure of the indigenous families in the novel will reveal that father is the head of the family. And mother has to be obedient towards the male-authority. Women depend on male and when Ralph's father leaves them, his "sisters who, having given up [their] father[6], had no close male to lean on" (Naipaul, 115). Then, Ralph becomes the head of the family and he does not permit his sisters to come to the races and social activities and these restrictions upon the women are parallel to the restrictions put by Britain upon the colonies. Ralph admits that he "became abusive" (Naipaul, 115) and he suppresses his sisters as it is shown in his words below, "I suppressed my sisters. They grew away from me as a result; they never again became close" (Naipaul, 105). His sisters are doomed to live their mother's fate since "they continued to live in the house. There they continued to meet young men to whom they had become engaged" (Naipaul, 166). While Ralph, the male is discovering new places such as England and trying to make a place for himself in the world, his sisters stay at home and wait for a husband.

Moreover, *The Mimic Men* is rich in examples, illustrating the similarities between colonial policies and patriarchal policies. For instance, in *The Mimic Men,* it is shown that in Trinidad, administrative positions are given to English men (Naipaul, 209) and similarly, administration of the family is given to Caribbean men and Caribbean women are governed by either their husbands or by their fathers. In the novel, Ralph points out the fact that foolish boys turn into husbands and masters of women at the end: "We were talking one day about marriage and the absurdity of the institution that would turn all the foolish boys we knew into husbands, lords and masters to girls, who, poor things, could not at that moment guess their maturing fate" (Naipaul, 136).

Under these circumstances, women become escapists and they attach themselves to the spiritual movements, like the widow of a transport contractor does in the novel. It is this woman who imposes her ideas upon Ralph's father and causes him to become a mediation leader. In this case, women become "initiators" of new movements,

> *to her he was the man attempting to live the good life as laid down by his Aryan ancestors. He had ceased to be a householder and man of affairs; she saw him entering the stage of meditation before the final renunciation. It was an idea he received from her and exploited; it was an idea which in its essence he lived out with her. (Naipaul, 128)*

Though women are suppressed under the yoke of colonialism, and though they are perceived to be weak and inferior, in fact they are the driving force behind the men. In the novel, Naipaul makes use of his English woman character functionally; she is used as a tool to bring skills of an indigenous man to the surface.

Though, they give all their support to the men, they cannot be saved from being victims of sexual exploitation at the hands of the men. For example, in *The Mimic Men,* an incestuous relationship is conveyed to the reader through the mouthpiece of Ralph, "the suspicion came to me that between Cecil and one of my sisters there existed an incestuous relationship. I had nothing to go by, but with these things one just suddenly knows" (Naipaul, 123). At this instance, the sexual exploitation of the niece by her uncle may be likened to the exploitation of Trinidad by her own native politicians and to the moral corruption in Trinidad. This is illustrated through the abuser's actions in the novel: "Cecil visited degraded Negro whores… he was like a man testing his toleration of the unpleasant" (Naipaul, 158) and he mocks with the poor old women, who sell bananas in the streets by giving money to them in an insulting manner in order to satisfy his ego. Cecil represents the cruel oppressor; he is the enemy within the country, who destroys his own people.

Unfortunately, there is not only Cecil, but also Eden who likes to abuse women in *The Mimic Men.* A character called Eden in the novel wishes to join the Japanese army as "the reports of their rapes were so exciting. He elaborated the idea cruelly and often; it ceased to be a joke" (Naipaul, 151). In time, Eden becomes obsessed with the idea

[6] Like the father in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia,* Ralph's father leaves his family and becomes "a preacher, a leader, with a growing frenzied following" (Naipaul 125).

of raping foreign women, "for Eden had fixed on Asia as the continent he wished to travel in; he had been stirred by *Lord Jim.* His deepest wish was for the Negro race to be abolished; his intermediate dream was of a remote land where he, the solitary Negro among an alien pretty people, ruled as a sort of sexual king" (Naipaul, 151). Though, he is a Negro himself, he wishes for the extermination of his own race, and he wants to take the revenge of his ancestors by becoming a sexual king among the white women. Women are perceived as "incubators" as well and in one occasion in *The Mimic Men,* Ralph and his friends make fun of a boy by saying, "yes, Spite I think we will let you breed. But we will have to cross you with a damn intelligent woman" (Naipaul, 137).

In addition to these problems, women in Isabella factories[7] have financial problems since they have very low wages. Therefore, "pay-day was especially painful. Everybody came in frowning, in a simulated temper, no one spoke; and all morning subordinates and superiors applied themselves with every sign of pain to their duties, which on that day seemed especially onerous" (Naipaul, 157). However, later on women begin to demand their own rights as narrated below. In Trinidad, nationalists kill a race-horse called Tamango to attract attention. Ralph likens this event to the suffragette movement in England. In other words, he puts Women's emancipation and Trinidad's emancipation into the same quota:

> *It was the killing of Tamango. That was the movement's most famous deed, as central to it as the race-course suicide was to the suffragette movement in England. They are both events which, becoming history, lose their horror and obscenity and appear the natural, almost logical, expression of mood; they are events which now seem oddly expected and dramatically right. (Naipaul, 141)*

But it should be noticed that nationalists' and women's demands for freedom are regarded as an obscenity in the beginning and therefore they are labeled as outcasts and terrorists.

In colonial novels, mostly it is the white women, who look down upon the indigenous cultures, yet in *The Mimic Men,* Lady Stockwell, who is a French Creole, is objective and respects to indigenous cultures. In the discussion about the children's books,

> *"Lady Stockwell said she disapproved of the cult of childhood and the cult of children's books; it was something else that was being commercialized. She added that it was an exceedingly English thing and that societies like my own, if she could judge from what I had said, were wiser in encouraging children to become adults with all due haste". (Naipaul, 227)*

At this point in the novel, white woman becomes a "mediator" between two different cultures, which may be a positive impact of colonialism upon the white women, as they work for the reconciliation of different cultures. Contrary to her, Lady Stella looks down upon the indigenous cultures and sees the Western culture as the superior culture in *The Mimic Men.*

One of the negative impacts of colonialism is that it brings disorder to both men and women[8]. "To be born on an island like Isabella, an obscure New World transplantation, second-hand and barbarous, was to be born to disorder" (Naipaul, 116) says Ralph. Thus, the order in England and the disorder/chaos in Trinidad are juxtaposed many times in *The Mimic Men.* And in a chaotic society, Wo/men cannot find a unity and wholeness in their lives.

Colonialism may be likened to a two-edged knife, which hurts not only the black women, but also the white women. To exemplify in the novel, it is told that "a lady, lower-middle-class but nice, who was in India until 1947; now, after Kenya and northern Rhodesia, her husband dead, her family scattered, she has given up the Empire" (Naipaul, 245). This may be taken as the white wo/men's burden and it shows that colonialism also consumes English women. They become ill and suffer from pain at colonies. Another example to this is seen when Ralph finds a diary of a missionary's lady; in the diary, it is told that the missionary's lady returns

[7] with industrialization after World War II, in Isabella black women begin to work in factories (Naipaul 216).

[8] Ralph defines personality as "one and indivisible", which is similar to Raymond Williams's definition of identity in *The Key Words,* but in a colonial and disordered society neither men nor women can achieve this unity and wholeness. Thus, colonialism becomes an obstacle both for men and women to establish one's own unique identity.

to home/England after being consumed by illness, which is caught in the colonies.

Interestingly enough, after the independence of Trinidad, black men try to colonize first the white women, not white men. Always the first victim and the first target are chosen from the society of women. White secretaries begin to serve the black politicians, which can be taken as the reversal of the roles. With reference to this, in the novel, it is said that "the spectacle of the black men served by the white: the revolution we claimed to have created" (Naipaul, 210).

There are two sides of the coin/colonialism for women. Colonialism either makes English women a lady and a world-power in the colonies (considering Ralph's declaration that "sitting next to our lady" is an honour (Naipaul, 247) or turns English women into "a weak and faint" servant (and this becomes more striking in the scene, where the old waitress serves another woman at the end of the novel). Moreover, we see an Irish woman in the role of a servant (Naipaul, 243) and it is a realistic depiction since Ireland is colonized by Britain as well.

Under the light of all the examples given so far, it can be suggested that neither black women, nor white women have the freedom to lead egalitarian lives, due to the fact that their actions are restricted by the patriarchal colonial policies and rules.

However, it may be suggested that colonialism increased the suppression of the indigenous women. Thus, the indigenous women are suppressed three-times since they are women, black and colonized. On the other hand, though colonialism offers wealth and prestige to English women, it is at the cost of losing their humanity and at the risk of losing their lives. Like Robert Brooke's soldier in *the Soldier* who dies in a foreign land, many white women die in the colonies either because of illnesses or because of conspiracies. Moreover, the English women begin to feel in "exile" in these colonies since they are uprooted and alienated. In other words, colonialism brings happiness neither to the indigenous women nor to the English women. And most important of all, colonialism creates a great gap between the white women and the black women and thus hinders the sisterhood of the women in the world.

In other words, colonialism puts the white woman on the position of a master and the black woman in the position of a servant and in doing so, colonialism implements the seeds of hatred within the same sex and in such an atmosphere sister begins to kill sister metaphorically. Eventually, colonialism makes sisterhood among the women impossible.

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