

*Original Article*

# Realism in V.S. Naipaul's "A Bend in the River"

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**Abstract** - Reality is a subject that has become a part of our life. Whether an individual desires or dislikes it, there is no complete removal of it. It is like one's own shadow, which is inseparable. One succeeds in evading it with clever methods. The farther one goes away, the closer one comes into contact with it. It is always wise to be with the facts of life. An individual tries his best to be away from it using several strategies. When he happens to encounter directly, he is unable to withstand the issues of life. It is good that one should ever be associated with it.

**Keywords** - Excellence, Reality, Determination, Nothing, Endeavors, Knowledge, Ideology.

Literature is the reflection of human life. No literary work takes a form in a vacuum. Society needs to be taught the values of life. They cannot be negated at the expense of life. A subject matter is reminded or repeated as it is so significant that there is no possibility of living apart from it. The Oxford learners' dictionary defines realism as 'the quality of being like real life'. The reality of life cannot be evaded and taken for granted at any point in time. Whether a person likes or dislikes, he or she has to encounter the reality of life. The world is activated and made for demanding standards and quality in all spheres of life. It is clear from the way people make selections for their lives. The entire world is wide open to the ones who prove their excellence. People achieve greatness slyly with all their endeavors. Such successes are temporary. 'Truth prevails' is the dictum which goes with universality. Pieces of literature all over the world agree with this fact. It is further evident in social life as well. The world witnesses excellent people as luminaries in all fields and all walks of life. The very novel begins with the apparent reality of life. The world goes with a standard and quality, a specific life feature. There is no denial of the harsh reality one encounters directly or indirectly. People apply perverse methods to obtain their profits and gain. They admit at last to the fact that they are misled. They wish to return to the truth. The protagonist of the play 'Dr. Faustus', written by Marlow, wishes to return to God at the end of the play. He realises his blunder mistake that the Evil angel has wrongly led him.

As he begins his life, he embarks his life with exhilaration and multiple offers before him. The choices he makes in his life change the course of his life. Individuals are at liberty to make or mar their own lives. God, the Almighty, has provided the options to select you can either abound or abolish in life. Dr. Faustus realises in the end that he has taken the wrong path. Though he tries hard to return, he is unable to get back. His determination to go on that route is well-established.

At last, he has a miserable end. The parable of Talents in the Bible has a vital message saying that the master is displeased with the third servant. The third servant is unlike the first two servants. The first two servants are industrious, decisive, and determinative to the core, but the last servant is highly sluggish, lazy,



and negligent. The master is dissatisfied with his indifference. He hands him over to be punished and tormented. This parable implies very clearly that expansion should be present with everyone. It is disheartening to find that people in a country make no progress. There is nothing less than that in life. Contempt is meted out to people with no improvement or growth. One should expect to live up to the world's standard. The lines of the novel remain highly philosophical.

"THE WORLD IS what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it." (3) [1]

The statements underline the scenario that the existence of men becomes complete and meaningful with something to grow with. Prolonged nothingness leads to an aversion to one's own life. A country or a society comes to bankruptcy when it does not realise this aspect of life. The novel's protagonist takes a daring step to move ahead despite setbacks in the Post independent Africa. In [5], the title 'novella', with its African setting, enhanced Naipaul's reputation as a critic of Western liberal notions of a positive postcolonial African upcoming years, in addition to being an "intrepid and brutally honest chronicler of the Third World." Following *Guerrillas* (1975), set on a newly liberated Caribbean island, Naipaul was brought back to an African setting for *A Bend in the River*. Salim finds Africa in its chaotic state. He has come to the realisation that he must do something to live with. Setbacks and disadvantages can never wane a soul with strong determination. One may lack potential. Constant efforts and continuous attempts bring upliftment in the lives of people.

Naipaul treats a violated and colonial society with understanding and detachment in *A Bend in the River* (1979). The author depicts a culture of third-world countries marked by a shared experience, a past threatened by a dark age of colonialism and the freedom movement. The novel focuses on the conflict between traditionalism and Westernism; it is this dynamic that has created many of the paradoxes now popular in all other postcolonial civilisations, which emerge themselves in the conflict between categories such as traditional and contemporary, new and old methods of life, and thus among Western and native values and cultures [8]. The predecessor of Salim has won the hearts of the people. Goodwill is the reward of his business. Though Salim finds his way hard, he continues his journey in life with persistence. Turning back is characteristic of cowards. Stepping forward is the mark of the valiant. He sets forth to make his livelihood whatsoever the situation is. Situations never appear to be conducive. Salim is the man who sees optimism in every pessimism. Though the way ahead is obviously bleak in a sense, he makes a daring attempt to live. Definitely, situations turn out to be better. Progress in his business sets in with amazing feats. Every individual is at the disposal of one ideology or the other. The cultural belief one holds on to makes a greater difference. Culture gives birth to an ideology. It is evident from the fact that knowledge is power. There can be no retreat in life with the application of sound knowledge. Excellence should become the mark of every individual. The truth is explicitly proven in the Bible.

"Do you see a man who excels in his work?

He will stand before kings;

He will not stand before unknown men." (Proverbs 22:29)[2]

It is dangerous to avoid one's duties and responsibilities. Excellence is the most sought-after trait for everyone. None settles down with the second best. The best is almost the aspiration of everyone. Everyone strives hard to get the best. Charles Dickens insists upon the planting of facts. Anything other than facts ought to be rooted out. He uses the word 'nothing' in this context. The conclusion of this paper is to live with the expansion of the given resources. When an individual comes to the end of his life, he admits to having either a sense of satisfaction or a heavy load of regrets. Everyone is endowed with all the needed resources. The resources can be named as talent, time, opportunity, and support of the well-wishers and parents. We are granted these resources to enhance us from one phase to another. Using them properly results in movement,

and wasting ends in lasting trouble. V.S. Naipaul touches upon the core part of life. The edifice of a building cannot withstand any forces without a strong base. The base is a vital part of the building, so it is the valuable and most important element of life. People derive a sense of fulfillment from relentless hard labor.

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