

**‘The trunks of trees washed up by the sea’: Of Uprootedness and Shipwreck in V. S. Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men***

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**Abstract**

This paper investigates the notion of uprootedness and cultural shipwreck in the Trinidadian novelist V. S. Naipaul’s novel *The Mimic Men* (1967). Although the novel’s fictional island may stand for Trinidad, this paper stresses the fact that, according to Naipaul, the disordered Isabella may well match the characteristics of other chaotic Third World nations. The narrator-protagonist symbolizes more of the disillusionment worthy of Naipaul’s other placeless characters like Salim in *A Bend in the River* and Mr. Biswas in *A House for Mr Biswas*. This means that Naipaul tries a writing of a (hi)story that adheres to his personal idiosyncrasies and beliefs, a narrative in which he exposes the abnormalities and pretences of a society in which nothing seems sure and lasting. As the title of the novel suggests, the pattern is that of mimicry; postcolonial countries, all together lacking a sense of creativity, duplicate and distort metropolitan models. Thus, this paper sheds light in the tunnel between the ‘us’ (Europeans) and the ‘them’ (Caribbean) arguing that for Naipaul the first stands for authenticity and reality while the second signifies mimicry and unreality.

**Key words:** alienation, homelessness, mimicry uprootedness, V. S. Naipaul

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