

NEO-COLONIZATION AND V. S. NAIPAUL

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ABSTRACT

V. S. Naipaul is a prominent writer of postcolonial period. However he has been affiliated with neo-colonialism by some scholars. This is a strong accusation to a writer who has been awarded with Nobel Prize in literature in 2001. Naipaul was born and raised in Trinidad. But his parents have descended from India. Both India and Trinidad are countries that have experienced the colonization process. Such a background makes the accusation more remarkable. A writer's ideas are best reflected in his/her works. In order to figure out the accuracy of the aforementioned accusation, Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* has been chosen. In this respect rather than speculation on the literary value or the set up of the fiction, Naipaul's and his characters' approach to colonization and post colonization periods will be scrutinized.

Key words: Naipaul, Neo-colonialism, Africa.

YENİ SÖMÜRGEÇİLİK VE V. S. NAIPAUL

ÖZET

V. S. Naipaul sömürgeçilik sonrası İngiliz edebiyatının öne çıkan isimlerinden biridir. Fakat bazı çevreler tarafından yeni sömürgeçilik kavramıyla ilişiği varsayılmıştır. 2001 yılında edebiyat alanında Nobel Barış ödülü alan bir yazar için böyle bir suçlama dikkat çekicidir. Naipaul, Trinidad'da doğup büyümesine karşın ailesi köken olarak Hindistan'a dayanmaktadır. Her iki ülke de sömürgeçilik akımı deneyimini yaşamış ülkelerdir. Naipaul yeni sömürgeçilikle suçlanması, böylesi bir geçmişe sahip olduğu için daha can alıcı bir özellik kazanmaktadır. Bir yazarın düşünceleri en açık şekilde çalışmalarında gözlemlenir. Bu bağlamda söz konusu ithamın doğruluğunu incelemek üzere yazarın *A Bend in the River* adlı çalışması seçilmiştir. Bu çalışmada yazarın ve romanındaki karakterlerin sömürge ve sömürgeçilik sonrası görüşleri ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Naipaul, Yeni sömürgeçilik, Afrika.

INTRODUCTION

V. S. Naipaul is a prominent writer of postcolonial period. However; he has been criticized as a neo-colonialist by some scholars. Some of the scholars and their claims will be mentioned further on in this study. The accusation of neo-colonialist indicates a strong criticism to a prominent writer like Naipaul who has been awarded with Nobel Prize in literature in 2001. Generally a person's ideas and theories can be figured out in his studies. In order to question the accuracy of the aforementioned claim, this study focuses on one of Naipaul's

best known fictions, *A Bend in the River*. In this respect; rather than speculation on the literary value or the set up of the fiction, Naipaul's and his characters' understanding of the colonization and the post colonization periods will be scrutinized.

Naipaul is a British writer but he was born and raised in Trinidad. His ancestors had descended from India. Both India and Trinidad are countries that have experienced the colonization process. In this regard Naipaul is quite internalized with the concept of colonization. Intrinsically Naipaul is expected to present serious reaction to the concept of colonization. Under these circumstances the accusation of 'being a neo-colonialist' becomes a strange matter of debate. Naipaul's background represents contrast with the philosophy of neo-colonization. If the claim is proven, Naipaul's status would be a sort of self denial. Such cases make the debate worthy of attention. Therefore this study tries to clarify the matter in question in scope of *A Bend in the River*.

DISCUSSION

The setting of *A Bend in the River* is mostly a place located in central Africa. In addition to the aforementioned countries Africa is another continent that suffered the colonization period. It can be suggested that Africa is one of the places which suffered most among the colonized regions. It is a well known fact that the Africans have faced severe racist conduct because of their skin colour. The reader may anticipate that the central characters of the novel will be the Africans that have suffered from the colonization period but this expectation comes to almost nothing because most of the leading characters are foreigners. The protagonist of the novel is Salim. Like Naipaul, Salim's ancestors had migrated from India and since they have been in Africa for centuries, Salim defines the old continent as his home. He defines the place as an Arab-Indian-Persian-Portuguese region. In other words the place is not considered as truly African. However; they do not express themselves as Arabians or Indians or Persians any more. They feel like people of Africa (Naipaul, 2002: 12). But they do not feel as Africans. Salim lives at the sea coast with his family before he leaves to central Africa where he names as the true Africa. The name of the region where Salim moves is not mentioned it is just stated as the bend in the river. Naipaul avoids mentioning the name of the place to expel the prospective reactions. This is because the delineated plight cannot be reviewed as flawless.

As stated above most of the characters of *A Bend in the River* are outsiders. The expression of 'outsider' is used by the Salim. It indicates that they literally do not feel domestic. There are only few African characters and they are not depicted in countenance. Other characters are Belgians, Greeks, Italians and Indians. All these minorities have a common point. They exist in Africa for the sake of commodity and Africa serves as a market place. Salim's role model is a successful tradesman who is good at making money in this market. Other than economical profit, the town at the bend does not offer any attracting quality to an outsider like Salim and there is nothing to be defined as a social life. These conditions confirm that they stay only for economical concerns. The town is a virgin area for tradesmen. The only attracting feature of the town is business. The system is constructed on the mutual interest which lacks any humanistic side in this relationship. As expected the region becomes a trading centre and becomes a goods depot. It is striking that the outsiders reveal their greed

sometimes unwittingly. They scoff at the Africans who put on gold ornaments. “Gold – how could it alter the man, who was only an African? But we wanted gold ourselves; and we regularly paid tribute to the Africans who wore gold” (Naipaul, 2002: 138). The gold is valuable only if it serves to outsiders and it becomes useless when Africans possess it.

The outsiders live in that sort of dilemmas. Another contradiction is the problem of security. On the one hand there is economical benefit but then there is problem of safety. The sense of insecurity is incessantly observed in Non-African characters. There is constant statement of necessity of protection. They are very concerned about the security of the region where they live. Ormerod claims that; “Naipaul is writing about an idiosyncratic society, a real society about which he feels considerable worry and concern” (Ormerod, 1968: 75). It is clear that he has worries about the society, but the society which he worries for is not the African society. The security problem shows up in a quite selfish manner which focuses only on foreigners. The upheaval at other places does not matter as long as it does not splatter to region where they live. “...two things – order and money – were enough to give us confidence” (Naipaul, 2002: 100). When the order is disturbed they feel insecure.

All outsiders are aware of the fact that they will eventually abandon Africa. Noimon, the Greek businessman, is the first who leaves the scene. His departure makes others feel betrayed. His departure becomes a boom for the remaining ones. They identify his departure with the end of secure medium (Naipaul, 2002: 232-234). They believe that life in the region becomes dangerous and it should be left when the necessary assets are acquired. Living in Africa becomes a jeopardy; that’s why the land should be deserted. “People who had been grown feeble had been physically destroyed. That, in Africa, was not new; it was the oldest law of the land” (Naipaul, 2002: 33). Metty states that; “We must go there, patron. I hear it is the last good place in Africa...It have a lot of white people up there still. They tell me that in Bujumbura it is like a little Paris” (Naipaul, 2002: 61). They feel as preys to be hunted. “...we all – Asians, Greeks and other Europeans – remained prey, to be stalked in different ways... It was in the history of the land: here men had always been prey” (Naipaul, 2002: 62). The outsiders are represented as preys. However; in reality Africans have been prey and they have been economically exploited for centuries.

It can be stated that the discrimination and humiliation of Africans are common in all foreigners. Mahesh claims that; “They are *malins*” (Naipaul; 2002: 63). Here ‘they’ indicates Africans. Salim does not object this claim; on the contrary he supports the idea.

He had used the French word, because the English words he might have used – ‘wicked’, ‘mischievous’, ‘bad-minded’ – were not right. The people here were *malins* the way a dog chasing a lizard was *malin*, or a cat chasing a bird. The people were *malins* because they lived with the knowledge of men as prey. (Naipaul, 2002: 63)

The features which are attributed to Africans are unacceptable. Rohlehr states that; "Naipaul himself regards these people with more contempt than compassion" (Rohlehr, 1968: 124). The pejorative approach reaches the limits of racism. One can claim that the ideas of the fictional characters should not be attributed to Naipaul. However; Roland-Santiago states that; "In Salim's voice one can hear Naipaul's personal views" (Roland-Santiago, 2002: 91). The Africans are humiliated at every chance. Even a servant like Metty scorns the Africans when the occasion arises. Metty has a child illegitimately. When he confronts Salim about this matter he disregards the woman; "She is an animal...She's only an African woman. I will leave her" (Naipaul, 2002: 122). This kind of humiliating behaviours can be observed in many foreign characters. Salim asks Indar whether he has travelled with the steamer or not, he responses as; "You're crazy. Cooped up with river Africans for seven days? I flew up" (Naipaul, 2002: 131). In the past Indar used to be a hater of Africa (Naipaul, 2002: 142). But he does not hate Africa now; on the contrary he supports the development of Africa. Even so travelling with Africans is out of question for him. Mahesh and Shoba is another couple who express their hatred quite simply (Naipaul, 2002: 238). What makes them to live in Africa is the luxury and comfort it offers to them. They live in a big house with servants. It will not be easy for them to have these means in another place. That's why despite the disadvantages they keep on staying in Africa. In the whole novel there is only one European character whose approach to Africans and Africa is humanistic. Father Huisman's Africa is a wonderful place, full of new things (Naipaul, 2002: 70). During one of his visits to bush, he is murdered, his body is mutilated, his head is cut off and spiked (Naipaul, 2002: 92). The savagery of the death scene is dramatized on purpose. The Father Huisman is in an illusion about Africa and he is punished for his humane approach to Africans. The murder proves the invalidity of Huisman's thoughts and humane approach to Africa. As a lover of Africa he pays his love with his life.

When Salim's general conduct is analyzed it can be claimed that he behaves as a colonialist. He is very eager to identify himself with Europeans. He acts as if his own country had not been colonized by the Europeans for centuries. His approach to Africa and Africans is pejorative. One of the most prominent African characters is Zabeth. She comes from the bush. People from bush are represented as more savage than the others. Salim introduces Zabeth as a magician, sorcerer and a woman with an unpleasant smell. She is depicted as a man rather than a woman. Ferdinand is Zabeth's only child. Salim avoids a close relation with Ferdinand who saves his life at the end of the novel (Naipaul, 2002: 319). But Salim does not consider the friendship between Metty and Ferdinand odd. Both of them come from lower classes. As long as he is excluded there is no barrier for their friendship. As Ferdinand goes to school he becomes more aware of his African identity. The awakening African spirit disturbs Salim; "...the thought of a lycée full of Ferdinands made me nervous" (Naipaul, 2002: 55). He cannot attribute a good education, development and personal progress to Africans. He always looks from the bad side. He does not believe in Africans, he attributes hypocrisy to them.

I noticed this alteration in the African staff in other places as well. It made you feel that while they did their jobs in their various glossy settings they were only acting for the people who employed them; that the job itself

was meaningless to them; and that they had the gift – when they were left alone, and had no one to act for – of separating themselves in spirit from their setting, their job, their uniform”. (Naipaul, 2002: 114)

He thinks that the African staffs work properly only when the employer is present. When the employer leaves they quit working. This kind of behaviours is determined as hypocritical acts. Hamner supports this claim as; “It is set in a Conradian Africa with different faces (black this time) wearing the same hypocritical masks of deceit and oppression...” (Hammer, 1985: 74). These claims generalize the accusation for all Africans which makes such an approach unacceptable.

Naipaul does not believe in the possibility of a rapid positive development of Africa. The new president takes the lead and he seems as if he will change the fate of Africa. He embraces the African values and language. Unlike the previous presidents he delivers his speeches in African language (Naipaul, 2002: 240). The new president tries to construct a new and flamboyant Africa. His efforts are criticized sarcastically by Salim. But his criticisms are subjective. President’s operations are represented as ostentation. However the new President achieves great changes. Salim is stunned by the improvements. He acts as if Africans are not capable of change and developments. Greenberg suggests that Naipaul; “...has had difficulty believing in the ability of new nations in Africa and the Caribbean to raise themselves to a condition of economic autonomy and cultural authenticity” (Greenberg, 2000: 215). To confirm his idea Naipaul leaves the country in a civil war. This kind of approach can be explained with the complex of inferiority.

There are only two outsider characters, Raymond and Indar, who aggrandize the new President at the beginning. Indar states that;

He is the great African chief, and he is also the man of people. He is the modernizer and he is also the African who has rediscovered his African soul. He’s conservative, revolutionary, everything. He’s going back to old ways, and he’s also the man who’s going ahead, the man who’s going to make the country a world power by the year 2000. I don’t know whether he’s done it accidentally or because someone’s been telling him what to do. But the mish-mash works because he keeps on changing, unlike the other guys. (Naipaul, 2002: 160)

However; by the end of the novel it turns out that all these glorifications turn out to be illusions. The president gives the signal of upcoming hard times. The disturbing sanctions of the president cause a rebellion in some parts of the country. The country turns into a mess (Naipaul, 2002: 250). The mess supports Naipaul’s thoughts about the incapability of Africa to rise.

Normally independence is a concept that colonized nations struggle for. In many cases during the independence struggle many people pay it with their lives. What happens in *A Bend in the River* is contrary to expectations.

At the independence the people of our region had gone mad with anger and fear – all the accumulated anger of the colonial period, and every kind of awakened fear. The people of our region had been much abused, not

only by Europeans and Arabs, but also by other Africans; and at the independence they had refused to be ruled by the government in the capital. (Naipaul, 2002: 75)

The independence does not bring peace to region. It causes more serious problems. The same independent movement is interpreted differently by two different outsiders. Salim shows strong repulsion whereas Raymond interprets the same movement just as a necessity. Raymond supports the independence of Africa. He states that Africa should be ruled by Africans (Naipaul, 2002: 156).

In *A Bend in the River* the independence movement is criticized but the European colonization period in Africa is not criticized. Quite to contrary there is a general yearning atmosphere to the European reign. When Nazruddin talks about Uganda he praises the colonial forces as follow; “The British have given the place the finest administration you could ask for” (Naipaul, 2002: 26). It is obvious that the same impression is common in most of the outsiders. Salim states that;

When I was a child Europe ruled my world. It had defeated the Arabs in Africa and controlled the interior of the continent. It ruled the coast and all the countries of the Indian Ocean with which we traded; it supplied our goods. We know who we were and where we had come from. But it was Europe that gave us the descriptive postage stamps that gave us our ideas of what was picturesque about ourselves. It also gave us a new language.

Europe no longer ruled. But it still fed us in a hundred ways with its language and sent us its increasingly wonderful goods, things which, in the bush of Africa, added year by year to our idea of who we were, gave us that idea of our modernity and development, and made us aware of another Europe – the Europe of great cities, great stores, great buildings, great universities. To that Europe only the privileged or the gifted among us journeyed. (Naipaul, 2002: 268-69).

In general the outsiders yearn for the old colonial period. It is because after the colonial period, their economical prosperity becomes imperilled. The new government proves their concerns to be right. When Salim comes back from England all his assets have been confiscated by government forces. The properties of all foreigners have been taken away. “What Big Man gives the Big Man can take away” (Naipaul, 2002: 302). The African dream of getting wealthy turns into a nightmare for the foreigners. The power of governing poisons the Africans in charge. As the life in Africa gets tougher, the outsiders’ hatred of Africa becomes more apparent. Africa and Africans are imposed as incapable of modernization. The whole process in *A Bend in the River* gives the image that Africa is not ready to access modernization. For instance in Uganda modernization functions as a disadvantage. As modern roads are constructed it becomes easier for a tribe to attack the enemy tribe. They become open to abrupt attacks so they lose their comfort with the modernization (Naipaul, 2002: 235). However; there is not any touch on the fact that the barriers between modernization and Africa have been built during the colonization period. These barriers have been built to block the development of Africa and to keep the continent with a primitive society. The final scene of the novel supports this claim.

The final scene is represents a tragedy which does not involve only foreigners. Everybody becomes a part of the tragedy. Ferdinand who has become an effective person of the government states that;

You mustn't think it's bad for you. It's bad for everybody. That's the terrible thing. It's bad for Prosper, bad for the man they gave your shop to, bad for everybody. Nobody's going anywhere. We're all going to hell, and every man knows this in his bones. We're being killed. (Naipaul, 2002: 319)

This state is specified from government's side. And there is a counter group who seems to be more radical and the news of that group which Metty brings in is more tragic;

At first they were only going to kill government people. Now the Liberation Army say that isn't enough. They say they have to do what they did the last time, but they have to do it better this time. At first they were going to have people's courts and shoot people in the squares. Now they say they have to do a lot more killing, and everybody will have to dip their hands in the blood. They're going to kill everybody who can read and write, everybody who ever put on a jacket and tie, everybody who put on a jacket de boy. They're going to kill all the masters and all the servants. (Naipaul, 2002: 322)

The novel comes to the end with this tragic scene. As Salim leaves, the town waits for the upcoming battle.

CONCLUSION

The region where most of the events take place has a dynamic characteristic. It has experienced many different processes during the history. The unstable structure of the region is briefly summarized as follows;

Forest at a bend in the river, a meeting place, an Arab settlement, a European outpost, a European suburb, a ruin like the ruin of a dead civilization, the glittering Domain of new Africa, and now this. (Naipaul, 2002: 306)

The land has experienced many different times and its inconsistency indicates that it will not become stable in the future as well. Despite the suffering people of the region, it is difficult to claim that Naipaul shows a tender approach to Africa and Africans. He avoids focusing on the destructive effects of the colonization. In the interview with Rowe-Evans, Naipaul criticizes the colonial state of Africa; "...that seems to be one of Africa's fundamental functions-to keep on being a perpetual colony; a little treasure-house; a playground for people who want a play-culture" (Rowe-Evans, 1971: 58). However; it is hard to set apart his approach to Africa and Africans from the colonial understanding. In *A Bend in the River*, the problems of postcolonial period are not mentioned. Only once an outsider, Indar, feels rage to colonialist just after he becomes a victim of the same forces (Naipaul, 2002: 169). When the reader starts to read the novel, he may feel that Naipaul is going to focus on the problems of colonization period. However; the reader will find out that he is mistaken soon. *A Bend in the River* is a story of Africa, but it is not the story of Africans. Raja supports this claim as; "In other words, this novel is largely a representation of Africa from a bourgeois perspective" (Raja, 2005: 226). Naipaul uses Africa only as a setting to provide an exotic atmosphere for his story. Moreover the indications of the caste system

are observed in Naipaul's style. There is not any clear criticism to the existence of servants (Naipaul, 2002: 236), slaves, and half-castes in novel (Naipaul, 2002: 272). His approach is like a white westerner, far from understanding the negative sides of colonial process. AbdelRahman defines Naipaul as a white traveller who puts on a dark mask (AbdelRahman, 2006: 168). She identifies Naipaul with Gulliver. After Gulliver goes to Houyhnhnms land he contacts the noble horses. He is impressed by the beauty and nobility of the horse nation. The beauty makes him blind. He turns his back to human race and wants to be a member of the horse society. Naipaul, himself, comes from a colonized society. But it seems that he turns his back to colonized societies. When Naipaul's background is examined, he is expected to represent a more tolerate approach to colonized societies. However; his style causes a disappointment. It may be a strong claim to accuse him as a neo-colonialist. But it is hard to claim that he develops an attitude towards colonialist philosophy.

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GENİŞ ÖZET

V. S. Naipaul İngiliz Edebiyatında sömürgecilik sonrası dönemin önemli yazarlarından biridir. Öte yandan bazı akademik çevreler tarafından yeni sömürgecilik anlayışıyla yazmakla suçlanmıştır. 2001 yılında Nobel Edebiyatı almış olan bir yazar için böylesine bir suçlama dikkat çekicidir. Bir yazarın düşünce ve teorilerinin izleri yazdığı yapıtlarda kendini gösterir. Bu çalışmada Naipaul'a yöneltilen eleştirinin gerçekliğini sorgulamak için Naipaul'un en çok bilinen romanı olan *A Bend in the River* ele alınmıştır. Naipaul, İngiliz yazarlar kategorisinde değerlendirilmesine karşın Trinidad'da doğar ve belli bir yaşa kadar orada kalır. Naipaul'un ataları Trinidad'a Hindistan'dan göçmüşlerdir. Hem Hindistan hem de Trinidad sömürgecilik sürecinden geçmiş ülkelerdir. Bu bağlamda Naipaul'un sömürgecilik kavramını oldukça içselleştirmiş olması beklenen bir durumdur. Bu koşullar altında yeni sömürgecilik anlayışını benimsemiş bir yazar olduğu eleştirisi önemli bir tartışma konusu olmaktadır. Naipaul'un geçmişi ile yeni sömürgecilik felsefesi birbirine ters düşen bir yapıya sahiptir. Naipaul'un yeni sömürgecilik anlayışını benimsemesi kendini inkâr etmekle eşdeğer bir yaklaşım olacaktır. Söz konusu eleştirilerin belli bir dayanağının olup olmadığını incelemek için ele alınan *A Bend in the River*'in mekânı orta Afrika'da bir yerdir. Burada şunu belirtmekte fayda vardır; Afrika da batılı ülkelerin yoğun bir şekilde sömürdüğü bir kıtadır. Ten renklerinden dolayı en ağır ırkçı yaptırımlarla karşı karşıya kalmışlardır. Bu bağlamda romanın öne çıkan karakterlerinin Afrikalılar olacağı beklentisi oluşabilir. Fakat beklentinin aksine romanın önemli karakterleri Afrika'da yaşayan yabacılarıdır. Romanın kahramanı Salim'in kökeni de Naipaul gibi Hindistan'a dayanır. Salim'in atalarının Afrika'ya göçü birkaç asrı geçtiği için Afrika'yı artık kendi evi olarak ifade eder. Salim yaşadıkları bölgeyi Arap-Hint-Pers-Portekiz karışımı olan bir yer olarak tanımlar. Başka bir ifadeyle söz konusu mekânda yaşayan yabancı nüfusun yoğunluğundan dolayı orası tam bir Afrika olarak düşünülmez. Öte yandan kendilerini Arap, Hintli veya Pers olarak da ifade etmezler. Kendilerini Afrikalı olarak değil ama Afrika'nın halkı şeklinde ifade ederler. Salim ailesi ile birlikte kıyı şeridinde yaşarken gerçek Afrika olarak tanımladığı orta Afrika'ya göç eder. Salim'in taşındığı bu mekânın ismi romanda belirtilmez. Sadece nehrin kıyısında bir yer olduğu ifade edilir. Salim'in kendisini ve kendisi gibi olanları 'yabancı' şeklinde tanımlaması tam anlamıyla yerel hissetmediklerini gösterir. Bununla birlikte romanda çok az sayıda Afrikalı karakter vardır ve bu karakterler çok olumlu bir şekilde betimlenmez. Afrika'da yaşayan azınlıkların ortak noktası ticari amaçla orada bulunmalarıdır. Onlar için Afrika bir pazar işlevi görür. Salim'in kendisine rol model olarak seçtiği karakter de başarılı bir tüccardır. Herhangi sosyal bir yaşam alanı bulunmayan bölgenin tek çekici noktası ekonomik getirisidir. Ekonomik çıkara dayalı ilişkiler insani ilişkilerden yoksundur. Hemen hemen bütün yabancıların Afrikalılara karşı ayrımcılık yaptıkları ve aşağıladıkları görülür. Afrikalılar için kullanılan ifadeler yer yer ırkçılık boyutuna ulaşır. Afrikalılar ciddi bir tehlike olarak ön plana çıkarılır. Bu güvensizlik duygusu içinde yaşayan tüm yabancı azınlıklar sonunda bölgeyi terk edeceklerinin farkındadırlar. Romanda yabancılar sürekli olarak birer kurban olarak betimlenir. Gerçekte ise kurban olanlar ve sömürülenler Afrikalılar olmuştur. Afrika'nın sömürgeye karşı özgürlük mücadelesi eleştirilir. Afrika'nın Afrikalılar tarafından yönetilmesinin getirdiği sorunlar vurgulanır. Batılı ülkelerin Afrika'yı sömürmesine hiç değinilmezken Afrika'nın özgürlük hareketi ciddi bir şekilde eleştirilir. Yabancıların eski sömürü günlerine bir özlem içinde oldukları görülür.

Romanın mekânı çeşitli süreçlerin yaşandığı bir yapıya sahiptir. Bu durum bölgenin istikrarsızlığını gösterir. Bu istikrarsızlıktan dolayı en büyük acıyı yine Afrikalılar çekmiştir. Bölgenin ezilen insanın durumuna Naipaul'un şefkatli bir tutumla yaklaştığını iddia etmek oldukça zordur. Sömürgecilik sürecinin Afrika ve Afrikalılarda neden olduğu yıkıcı etkiler üzerinde durmaktan kaçındığı görülür. Afrika'nın yüzyıllarca sömürülen bir kıta olduğunun farkında olmasına karşın bunu eleştiren bir tutum sergilememesi dikkat çekicidir. *A Bend in the River*'da sömürgecilik sonrası dönemim sorunlarına pek değinilmez. Romanın başlangıcında Afrika'nın sorunlarına değinileceği kanısı boşa çıkar. *A Bend in the River* bir Afrika romanı olmasına karşın Afrikalıların romanı olmayı başaramaz. Afrika'nın üst sınıf tarafından resmedildiği görülür. Naipaul, Afrika'yı romanına egzotik bir atmosfer sağlamak için bir sahne olarak kullanır. Bununla birlikte Naipaul'un tarzında kast sisteminin izleri görülmektedir. Romanda, zor şartlarda yaşayan hizmetçi ve kölelerin durumunu eleştiren herhangi bir ifade bulunmamaktadır. Naipaul'un yazım tarzına bakılınca beyaz bir batılının yazısı olduğu hissi doğar. Sömürgeciliğin kötü yanlarını yansıtmaktan oldukça uzak bir tutum içindedir. Naipaul, siyah bir maske takan bir beyaz seyyaha benzetilir. Jonathan Swift'in *Gulliver'in Gezileri* adlı romanındaki Gulliver ile özdeşleştirilir. Gulliver, Houyhnhnm'lerin ülkesine gittikten sonra oradaki asil atlarla karşılaşır. At toplumunun asilliği ve güzelliğinden çok etkilenir. Bu güzellik karşısında adeta körleşir ve kendi ırkına sırtını döner. Artık asil at toplumunun bir üyesi olmak ister. Bu bağlamda Naipaul da sömürge sürecinden geçmiş olan bir toplumdaki gelmiş biri olarak sömürgecilik sürecinin yaşamış toplumlara sırtını döner. Naipaul'un geçmişine bakılınca sömürülen toplumlara daha hoşgörü ile yaklaşması beklenir. Ama kendisinin benimsediği tarz bir hayal kırıklığına neden olur. Naipaul'u yeni sömürgecilik anlayışını benimsemiş olmakla suçlamak zorlama bir iddia olabilir ama sömürgecilik anlayışına karşı şiddetli bir tutum içinde olduğunu iddia etmek de zordur.