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On V. S. Naipaul's Spatial Writing

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This dissertation has made a penetrating study of V. S. Naipaul's Spatial Writing from the New Cultural Geography perspective. As an Indian-English writer, V. S. Naipaul won Nobel Prize for literature in 2001. He is one of the most influential writers in our times. Regarded as "the Father of Caribbean literature," he is considered to be "one of the most creative, most controversial and most outstanding writers of this era."

As far back as the sixties of the 20th century, V. S. Naipaul has already been recognized as one of the greatest writers in this age. Apparently, he is an extraordinary marginal writer, he reflects the marginal world with his special identity; actually, the theme of his writing is extraordinarily central. In his writing, he has sensitively reached such most noticeable hot issues of this era as identity, class, race and gender, etc. His writing has offered the topics for various kinds of present popular critical schools, he and his works become "the arena" of different critical schools, offering the targets for the academia, such as Post colonialism, Feminism, Identity Study, Religious Study, Race Study, History Study and the Geography Study. V. S. Naipaul has been being the theme for English literature, Caribbean literature, Post colonialism, Immigrant literatures, Diaspora Criticism, Traveling writer and writing, etc. However spatial writing is an important issue in his works, and there is almost no profound research in this aspect.

This dissertation argues that, the "space" is one of the important aspects in his writing. The space is a kind of active force for constructing V. S. Naipaul's cultural experiences. The existence and writing of V. S. Naipaul embody the distinct spatial characteristic: his spatial consciousness and spatial memory determine his spatial position, and influence upon his writing of spatial experience and his adoption of spatial narrative. By applying this concept "Spatial Writing," this dissertation
analyses the way of space consciousness writing in V. S. Naipaul’s works, and pays a close attention to its spatial memory, spatial idea, spatial position, spatial experience and spatial narrative strategy in an all-round way.


By applying this study mode of problematic way, the basic thinking of study is: putting forward the question—launching the question—expanding the question, it will be described as the following:

First of all, it is putting forward the question. There are three aspects of the work that maybe of some academic value. 1) The paper explores the meaning of spatial writing and its important status in V. S. Naipaul’s writing. Thus they can solve these questions such as “What does V. S. Naipaul’s spatial writing mean?” “Why does the paper choose this topic?” etc. 2) It is a detailed analysis of the defect of V. S. Naipaul’s spatial writing in academic field. Based on the discussion, the paper points out the reason why the spatial issue is neglected. In fact, there is a difference between the spatial issue in literature and the fictional space in literature. 3) The paper sorts out the space theory of the New Cultural Geography, and points out its superiority of the visual angle. It is not only a kind of comprehensive study visual angle, but also reflects the theoretical exploration in geographical study, space study and culture study. By applying it in literary research, we can find a new combination between one writer study and work study and a new combination between geographical study and literary research.

Then, the paper deals with V. S. Naipaul’s spatial writing from five aspects: the juxtaposition of spatial memory; the formation of spatial concept; the settlement of spatial position; the transmission of spatial experience; the application of spatial narrative. They belong to a link of the writing behavior separately, and a kind of logic relation exists between each other: 1) Spatial memory is a kind of passing spatial experience; 2) This kind of memory has formed specific spatial consciousness; 3) This kind of spatial consciousness has determined certain spatial position; 4) Spatial position influences the value of spatial experience; 5) The transmission of spatial experience demands a kind of spatial narrative; All the
organic combination is a kind of spatial writing. Finally it gives the conclusion of the new way of literature study. This analysis with a spatiality perspective has contributed to the literary research.

This dissertation shows the multi-dimensional aspects of space that it is a kind of social, cultural and geographic existence, so a kind of comprehensive approach is taken into consideration. It will combine cultural study with space study, and combine geographical study with literary research in response to this new perspective. In addition, other methods can be found in paper, such as statistical analysis, graphical illustrations, etc.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters besides the introduction and conclusion.

The first part serves as an introduction. It briefs the reasons for choosing this project and its academic value. Moreover, this part sorts out the space study in the New cultural geography, then demonstrates the feasibility of the whole dissertation. Moreover, it maps out the basic modes of thinking, research methods and original ideas of the whole dissertation.

Chapter One deals with the writer's life and writing. It is made up of three parts: 1) Writing plays an important role in V. S. Naipaul's life; 2) V. S. Naipaul's writing is a kind of cross-regional writing; 3) It demonstrates the present situation of study at home and the overseas.

Chapter Two focuses on the juxtaposition of spatial memory. This part also is made up of three sections: 1) Trinidad: diaspora memory; 2) Spanish port: colonial memory; 3) London: urban memory. In a word, the three kinds of different memories juxtapose and present in V. S. Naipaul's mind and provide the primitive material for his writing.

Chapter Three explores the construction of spatial concept through the comparable way. The spatial idea of V. S. Naipaul's agrees with the spatial idea of the neocultural geography in comparison with Andre Lefevere's, W. Soja's and Anthony Giddens's. This part consists of three sections: 1) The essence of space: the multi-dimensional existence of society, culture and region; 2) The history of space: the product of historical writing; 3) The negative space: the machine of production of exile.

Chapter Four analyses the settlement of spatial position in V. S. Naipaul's writing. This part consists of three sections: 1) The West Indian immigrant's writing: the
settlement of the relationship between V. S. Naipaul himself and London; 2) Exile writing: V. S. Naipaul as an eternal exile; 3) Traveling writing: the distance between V. S. Naipaul and India.

Chapter Five is a detailed discussion on the transmission of spatial experience. It belongs to a case study or a micro study. It presents the different spatial experience through V. S. Naipaul’s novels: *A House for Mr. Biswas; A Bend in The River* and *The Mimic Men*.

Chapter Six discusses on V. S. Naipaul’s techniques. In order to realize his spatial writing, V. S. Naipaul takes some measures to create many unique narrative strategies. Here the focus is the following five novels: *Miguel Street; The Mystic Masseur; The Enigma of Arrival; Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*.

The last part is a conclusion which aims at the further research on spatial writing. In order to emphasize on the contribution of spatial criticism for literary research, this section offers a difference between the spatial theory in the New Cultural Geography and others such as: the space theory by Fredric Jameson, the theory by Michel Foucault and the theory of spatial form by Joseph Frank. All the above points are conductive to understanding V. S. Naipaul more profoundly and reasonable.

In addition, this dissertation provides the indices for further research. They may serve as significant reference in deepening of V. S. Naipaul’s study.

**Keywords:** V. S. Naipaul; Spatial writing; New Cultural Geography