

Quest for individual identity in V.S. Naipal's "A House for Mr. Biswas"

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V. S. Naipal is a highly notable Caribbean novelist in English literature. He was born on 17th August 1932 in Trinidad. He completed his school education in part of Spain and started working as a school master, in the school where he studied, then as clerk in the sport Soain Registrar's Department. After obtaining a Trinidad government scholarship, he left for England to study literature at University College, Oxford and to become a writer. He emerged as a post-colonial writer representing three cultures namely India, Trinidad and Great Britain. He followed a peculiar style of writing to attract the attention of the readers by giving a travelling experience through his novels. His novels are set in many places and explore many themes like a theme of alienation, identity crisis, cultural chaos and a quest for identity et., Being a West India novelist, he mainly focused on the problems of colonized people. In particular, he presented a theme of alienation and fragmentation that are universal predicament of the migrated people according to the present condition in the globalized scenario.

As far as we are concerned, post-colonial is considered to be third-world in the production of literature, in which V.S. Naipal contributed to record his own feelings about the societies emerged recently from colonialism. He is known for his depictions of Trinidad, where he was born, his exploration of modern day India. His ancestral land and unsparing portraits of Post-Colonial countries in Africa, Asia and South America.

His fiction seemed to be auto-biographical in narration by exhibiting the same theme of alienation identity crisis and scared experience past.

He spent much of his life time in creating his own identity in the world and trying to square his ancestral culture within the adopted country. His main concern is about cultural identity that to be regained for the betterment of human life in order to lead a peaceful life. Such as, he mainly focused on the lives of immigrant people those who imitate their adopted culture and their human psyche in search in their own identity, being a stranger to others where they are living. He explored the various themes of homelessness, alienation and the problems of Diasporas. His style of writing is something unique in describing the various concepts from his own point of view about the different aspect of post colonial.

In this regard, crisis of identity means taking efforts to find out the exact position in the world where something is adopted. It can be defined as a crucial state of mind with which someone is very disappointed with his strange culture. He brought out the thematic elements of post colonial based on the cultural background, racial difference and the miserable condition of rootless society. So, his works often center on identify and turmoil of non-westerners. Naipal's intensiver version of questing personal identity is depicted in his novel 'A House for Mr. Biswas' through the portrayal of his character

Mr. Biswas, who was caught up in three cultures. Particularly the novel reflects his own cultural dislocation in which he takes effort to showcase his identity. The story revolves around the protagonist, who makes attempt to reveals his personal identity.

The novel is about the reflection of individual identity. Mr. Biswas is the protagonist of the novel, who is a victim of a strange culture. His primary intention is to place himself in a better position for leading a peaceful life as a native people experience. Being entangled with nerd culture, he happened to struggle a lot for seeking his own home. Home is used as a metaphor in this novel and it indicated ancestral culture or individual culture. Dislocation or displacement, alienations, soci-cultural realities are the main themes of this writings.

The novel 'A House for Mr. Biswas' deals with the problems of non-westerner, frustration, rootlessness and exploration of individual identity. It is based on the quest for self-identity of a Brahmin, who lived in Trinidad. Mr. Biswas is not lucky enough to feel satisfied in leading his life within the individual identity. He find it very difficult to have such a mark for beginning more individual. He himself represents the socio-cultural difference. The description of the novel is a specific social segment. This thing represents different stages at one's individual life.

The novel also brings out the scared experiences of migrant and his psychological disorder. In this novel, the house symbolizes a shelter for individual. Besides, it defines a search for self to be free from slavery system. The novel is based on the struggle between social pattern and individual pattern of life for creating new identity.

Mr. Biswas felt insecure as a partial member of strange culture. To him life becomes a struggle for getting shelter from the shackles of the social impact. Even though he tries his level best to attain social status but he fails to reach.

He is more conscious about his own status being isolated or rootless and tells the same to his son as follows

"I am just somebody nobody at all". (Lines-284)

His family members happened to accept their identity as a non-labor but Mr. Biswas could not digest. So, he constantly kept moving from one place to other for obtaining this identity. At first, he worked at his uncle's shop and very soon he left. Then, he assigned to a sign painter, he was attracted by Shama, daughter of Tulsi, with whom he got married later. Only after their marriage, he came to realize that marriage is not only a part of life but also the personal responsibilities. He did not have enough money to own house. So he got shelter at Hanuman house. There he was accommodated but he was dissatisfied due to lack of his personal identity.

Mr. Biswas dreamt of constructing his own house. Having own house was his main deserve. One day, his dream turned to be real. He started to construct a building but it did not seem his dream house. Somehow, this platform insisted him to his professional grounding for which he yearned hurdle as his quest, he become a report for the newspaper of Trinidad sentinel. As he was fully committed in the job, he realized that his urge to own house within a short-span of time was a major flaw in him and slowly forgot to leas his present life with family.

At this point, he adopted himself to lead a normal life both mentally and culturally. The portrayal of his character reveals both native consciousness and sub-consciousness. As Mr. Biswas is an expatriate of India, he experiences double consciousness in all his walks of life. His neighbours are also representative of different cultures coming from various countries like Africa, China and so on; and their adopted culture of Trinidad made a positive impact in him to be normal getting-together with them.

After this, he very often shifted from one house to another house. He faced the problems of adjustment because of chaffing pressure imposed upon him wherever he stayed. Mr. Biswas lived his whole life in tension. He heaved a high relief

of painful experience, when his son Anand became an educated man.

Even though he was assisted by Mrs. Tulsi' and her family in all the critical conditions, but he is not faithful to them due to his objective of life. To settled in own house, he behaved rudely to all and even towards Mrs. Tulsi's family, as he was betrayed in his marriage without giving dowry or financial assistance.

At the end of the point, he owned a beautiful house like a palingenesis or re-birth, which alleviate all his wretched life.

V.S. Naipal took effort to explore the problems faced by dislocated people around ethnic and social dimension. Through his novel, he successfully unfolds their attempt in revealing their identity from different parts of multi-cultural community, in which they are a member. In spite of this strange culture, they tried to neglect in the beginning, but came to understand that they are part of multi-culture. Their identity is not to be standard or fixed significantly. In this regard, Mr. Biswas also tried to prove his original identity but it is not more specific. In addition to the cultural change and diverse of culture, his identity becomes unstable and transferable; and he is unable to have unique identity as individual identity.

REFERENCES

- [1] Naipal V.S- A House for Mr. Biseas. Penguin Books 1982.