

Transculturality in Select Novels of V.S. Naipaul

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Abstract:

Transculturalism is defined as "involving embracing or extending over two or more cultures," according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. The practise of transculturalism encompasses all of the world's cultures. In the year 1940, the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz Fernandez provided the first definition of the word "Transculturalism." This definition was taken from the essay "Nuestra America" written by Jose Marti. A researcher of Afro-Cuban heritage, Fernando Ortiz was able to articulate the process of cultural assimilation and change from one tradition to another during his time in Cuba. It is generally agreed that VS Naipaul is one of the most well-known expatriate authors who also has first-hand knowledge with colonial life. This research paper's objective is to investigate the ways in which several novels by V.S. Naipaul address topics with transcultural identities, multi-culturalism, and the identity crisis experienced by immigrants. The study will primarily concentrate on the problems of identifying oneself in a transcultural setting that are experienced by immigrants.

Keywords: Transculturalism, Transcultural Identities, Multi Culturalism, Identity Crisis, Immigrants, Cultural Conflict, Hybridity, Indentured Labour, Expatriates.

Jennifer Hyndman cites that Multiculturalism was originally defined by the Canadian State under Pierre Elliot Trudeau in 1971 as strategy to assimilate new culture and people into its society. This occurred not long after Canada unveiled a new immigration system that was less focused on Europeans and was instead based on a point system. This new system made it possible for a much larger number of nationalities to migrate to Canada. Since it was passed into legislation in 1988, Canada's multiculturalism policy has been consistently applied throughout the country's institutions ever since. Homi K. Bhabha, a prominent post-colonial critic, is credited with popularising the ideas behind the terms hybridity and imitation. Because

of the resistance and injustice caused by colonialism, he came up with the idea of hybridity as a way to explain the birth of a new cultural form. This new cultural form emerges as a result of cultural exchange and identity. The apex of post-colonial studies is represented by hybridity, which goes hand in hand with transculturalism. In the context of the literary conversation, hybridity refers to a condition of "in between-ness" that a person experiences when they stand between two cultures.

The V.S. Naipaul has garnered big literary accolades and recognition for their work, and they are known for their prolific writing style. On a global stage, his literary presence has been felt to a significant degree. Societies in the twenty-first century have grown multi ethnic and much more diversified than in previous centuries. The number of people who have immigrated to a country is consistently increasing, and they are settling mostly in nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States of America, Russia, Australia, France, Malaysia, and so on. As time goes on, new concepts emerge, such as migrants, multi-culturalism, diaspora, transnational expatriates, and exile, to name just a few. These phrases are becoming more widespread in today's world as a direct result of the global movement of people. In order to analyse the select work of the novelist, it is necessary to deconstruct the fundamental concepts of transculturalism, transcultural identity, expatriates' sensibility, Indian indentured labour migration, ethnicity, identity crisis, and problem of displacement, homosexuality, cultural conflicts, hybridity, mimicry, foundation of history, and other related topics.

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born on August 17, 1932 in Chaguanas, Trinidad and Tobago, to a family of Indian Brahmin descent. He was given the name Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul. His full name is Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul. His family was part of the Hindu-Indian indentured labourers' Community, which is a group that consists of members of the community. His father, Seepersad Naipaul, was an Indian immigrant who joined his family in the United States when they were of the second generation. The Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago is where V.S. Naipaul spent his childhood. His great-great-grandparents left India in the year 1880 to make the trek to Trinidad, where they were forced to work as indentured labourers on sugar plantations owned and run by the British Empire. They endured this ordeal for the whole of their lives. The author's family is originally from a Brahmin group in Uttar Pradesh, which is located in India. The author is a third-generation immigrant. Because of his hard work and his father's forethought, he was given a scholarship from the government, and he used it to study English Literature at University College, Oxford, in England, in the 1950s.

His paintings provide not just a multi dimensional and colourful portrayal of the Indian Diaspora but also his own points of view on the subject. It is generally agreed that among of his most important works include the novels "A House for Mr. Biswas" (1961), "The Mimic Men" (1967), "In a Free State" (1971), amongst others. In addition, he was awarded other major prizes, including the Booker Prize for fiction for his work "In a Free State", and the WH Smith Literary Award in 1968 for his work "The Mimic Men." He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2001.

When a person abandons the values of his own culture and adopts those of another, he often finds himself torn between the two sets of beliefs. Because of the profound disparities that exist between the two societies and the two ways of life, this may cause a person to have a feeling of disillusionment inside themselves. Not only does participation in this movement result in an identity problem for those participating, but it also has an impact on the personal relationships of those individuals. When a person leaves his own culture and joins another, his old values come into conflict with new ones. This may lead to a sense of disenchantment inside a person because of the vast differences that exist between the two cultures and the two ways of life. This movement not only causes a crisis of identity, but it also has an effect on the personal relationships of those involved. It also contributes to a feeling of being suspended between two distinct worlds. The author VS Naipaul sheds light on the many challenges that are experienced by the diasporic population through his novels.

The majority of V. S. Naipaul's novels are about colonialism and post-colonial culture, and the main topics that they focus on are identity and feelings of alienation in a transcultural and multi-cultural world. When it was first released in 1961, the novel "A house for Mr. Bishwas" was not only a huge commercial success, but it also served as Naipaul's introduction to readers all over the world. It is an autobiographical novel. The tone of this novel was lauded for its harmony, and it was acclaimed for its rich characterisation as well as its underlying melancholy. This novel was widely considered to be the finest work of Caribbean literature ever produced. The author makes the bold assertion that he or she has figured out the "secret of writing" with this, the author's first substantial piece of work. It is a careful and unhurried account of one man's lifelong fixation with constructing his identity. Mohun Bishwas's ambition to buy a house in order to offer him both a physical and spiritual home is the focus of this obsession and enthusiasm.

Even if throughout “A House for Mr. Biswas” Naipaul is creatively reliving his own background, his work cannot be viewed as a family biography, and the author maintains a respectable distance from the protagonist despite his personal commitment to the novel. Mohun Biswas is shown as a character on the periphery of society from the very beginning, and he is shown to be in a perpetual state of motion as he attempts to find his place in the constrained world of Trinidad. In point of fact, the persona of Mr. Biswas was developed out of the author's personal experiences of alienation as he was searching for his own origins in the socio-cultural context that surrounded him. Mohun Biswas moves from the countryside to the city and from a joint family to a nuclear family as he searches for his own identity. However, he is unable to locate his own roots within the shifting socio-cultural landscape. While a great number of previous novels has portrayed identity crises in well-established cultures. Naipaul has portrayed the protagonist as living in a society that is chaotic and devoid of ideas and creativity. The expatriate experience of a minority culture adjusting to a global society and the changing situation of socio-moral norms are both represented by the character Biswas in the novel. Mr. Biswas, who is the protagonist of this novel, faces uphill battles throughout its whole as he attempts to carve out a place for himself in a hostile environment by purchasing a home and achieving independence from his in-laws. Mr. Biswas sees the purchase of the home as a step towards his eventual independence from his family. Mohun Biswas moves from the countryside to the city and from a joint family to a nuclear family as he searches for his own identity. However, he is unable to locate his own roots within the shifting socio-cultural landscape. On the Caribbean island of Trinidad, the events of the novel take place over the course of almost half of Mohun Biswas's life, which spans the first half of the twentieth century. Mr. Biswas, who is based on Naipaul's own father, is a protagonist who is dispossessed of all three of his cultures because he is caught up in all three of them at the same time: Indian culture, Creole culture, and British society. Because he is unable to culturally integrate in Trinidad, where he now resides, he rejects Hindu culture, which he finds offensive and which cannot assist him in achieving his goal of being a writer. At the same time, he is unable to connect with British culture, which is the only way for him to realise his goal of becoming a writer. Mohun Biswas is shown as a character on the periphery of society from the very beginning, and he is shown to be in a perpetual state of motion as he attempts to find his place in the constrained world of Trinidad. In the first part of the novel, which is titled "Pastorals," Naipaul provides a realistic portrayal of the Hindu way of life in the little Indian world that was

established by indentured Indian workers in an artificially manufactured colonial society of Trinidad. In the descriptions of Mr. Biswas's birth and early boyhood, Naipaul illustrates the whole communal life of East Indians, including their superstitious beliefs, their trust in the pandit, the customs and rituals they still observe, and most importantly, their belief in preordination. This is done by focusing on Mr. Biswas's family life. Mohun is an outsider even inside his own family since his horoscope has predicted from birth that he would have a string of unfortunate events throughout his life. The rites that Mr. Biswas performs after birth depict the orthodoxy of Hinduism in a way that defies its diluting even when it is practised in a foreign country. The Indian culture is brought to life via the birth rites, which include things like horoscopes, almanacks, and prophecies, among other things. It is far after midnight when Biswas's grandma discovers that her grandson was born with six fingers and in the incorrect direction. She makes strips out of cactus leaves and hangs them on the door in order to deter bad spirits from entering the home. The midwife makes the following prophecy to the pregnant woman: "No matter what you do, this kid will gobble up his own mother and father". The horoscope of Biswas is promptly analysed by a pandit who is instantly summoned in. When his father is trying to find Biswas in a pond, he tragically drowns and dies, making his prophesy come true.

"In a Free State," Naipaul, expands on his concepts of rootlessness, revolt, and the paradox of freedom. People in this book are not like the fictitious characters that Naipaul has created in his earlier works; they do not rise above their circumstances; instead, they are uncreative, fearful, fragile, and dependent. It is made up of three separate tales. Each chapter of the book takes place in a different part of the globe that was a post-colonial society in the 1960s. These chapters all have the same themes of being uprooted and transplanted into other cultures. The first tale in the collection is titled "One Out of Many," and it examines the terrible cultural adaptations that are imposed upon a lowly Indian servant named santosh after he is ripped from the streets of Bombay by his diplomatic employer and transported to start a new life in Washington, District of Columbia. The second narrative, titled "Tell Me Who to Kill," follows an anonymous West Indian's pursuit of his scapegoat brother Dayo to London. Once in London, the nameless West Indian is a victim of racial violence, slides into a realm of Hollywood movie fantasy, and seems to have a mental collapse. The novella "In A Free State" tells the story of two British expatriates named Linda and Bobby as they travel across a newly independent African country in the midst of a tribal civil war. Along the way, they experience growing

alienation from Africa and each other, as well as a sense that they are powerless to stop the senseless violence and brutality that is going on around them.

One of the greatest pieces of literature to deal with the topic of cultural incommensurability and the shattered symmetry of colonial relationships is "In a Free State." The combination of many tales by Naipaul enables him to provide a more balanced viewpoint than what would have been possible with a straight forward novel. The novel "In a Free State" is about English expatriates working as civil officials in a newly independent African state that is torn apart by civil conflict. The novel's epilogue and prologue give the more detached viewpoint of an experienced traveller.

Cultural identities are a reflection of the shared historical experiences and cultural rules that exist within a society. These offer a society, as one people, with stable, unchanging, and ongoing frames of references and meaning. Customs, practises, languages, and ideals are all examples of aspects of culture. The influence of culture on one's identity cannot be overstated. A robust sense of cultural identity may be beneficial to an individual's health in general. The question of one's identity in today's world has emerged not just as a key preoccupation for social scientists and psychologists but also for the general populace as a whole. Since the beginning of colonialization, there has been an increase in people's ability to travel to other parts of the world. Since the end of colonial rule, there has been an unparalleled transnational and transcultural movement of people, capital, and technology, as well as culture and religion around the globe. As a consequence of this, individuals from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds start to interact with one another, resulting in the formation of new spaces of identity and value systems. Because of globalisation, hybridity, and transcultural and religious migration, there has been a resurgence of the self-questioning and identity-questioning that has occurred over the last several decades. This has led to a redefining and moving of identities.

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