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Quest for a Genuine Identity and Home in V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*

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Abstract:

The prime objective of this present paper is to analyze the sufferings of the immigrants in V.S. Naipaul's novel - *A House for Mr. Biswas*. *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), is a reflection of trauma, hardships, psychological stress, nostalgia, home sickness, problems of adjustments, identity and assimilation. Mr. Biswas has been a victim of misfortune and bad circumstances from his birth. Poverty and pessimism squeezed him thoroughly. *A House* is a metaphor around which the whole story moves. He remains in this endless quest to find a place to which he can assign his ownership. From the beginning to the end of the novel, Mr. Biswas keeps on struggling to find his own home. V.S. Naipaul himself is dissatisfied about the cultural life of the Trinidad. He experiences discontentment in India and in England. Naipaul takes up his topics of shifting identities, homes, roots and altering realities of expatriates. Naipaul's sense of fragmentation brings about an intense sense of loss and rupture. He has written especially about different aspects of the post colonial world, he perceives from a post colonial point of view and his novels are a unique and fascinating study of the diasporans and their sense of loss and gloom leading to unhappiness. In his writing, he always longs for a certain whole state of being. V.S. Naipaul chiefly focuses on the issues of homelessness, alienation and displacement in almost all his works. Different critics suggest different adjectives for describing his works.

Keywords: displacement, identity, protagonist, imperialism, colonialism

Introduction

Vidiadhar Suraj Prasad Naipaul is one of the most accomplished English speaking Caribbean novelists. He is a writer of post imperialistic society. Naipaul deals with the issues of fragmentation, alienation and exile. It is already understood that "Imperialism played a key role in bringing a sense of alienation and disorder to the countries where imperialists ruled"¹ (Parag 135) Homi K Bhabha asserts:

"Colonial discourse wants the colonized to be extremely like, but by no means identical. If there were an absolute equivalence between the two, then the ideologies justifying colonial rule would be unable to operate. This is because these ideologies assume that there is structural non-equivalence, a split between superior and inferior which explains why any one group of people can dominate another at all."² (Huddart 59)

Naipaul has intense and solid connection with Indians, and this bond remains a reason of pain and suffering for him. In his works, fragmentation and rootlessness are perceived in the form of hatred and defeat. The fragmented and ruptured society shows a disorder which originates from within. Naipaul's works therefore attain a three dimensional importance - historical, social and psychological. Undoubtedly he is a chronicler, historian and biographer. Dislocation, displacement confusion disorder, mimicry, chaos, despair and rootlessness are the main ingredients and form the content of Naipaul's fiction. His set of first four works form the primary stake of rupture and breakage or fragmentation. Second set of four works form the basis for the first, and brings about a permanent alienation from, all the past connections. V.S.Naipaul has played an important role in postcolonial writings. The main focus of postcolonial discourse is on the location of colonial, particularly in Third World societies. Postcolonial discourse as a newly developed literary study concentrates on the process of formation of new identity and loss of old identity for non-westerners. Postcolonial literature focuses on the diverse ethnic communities which belonged to different cultural backgrounds, having their own cultural, racial ethnical and historical uniqueness. This domain brings forward the miserable condition of displaced and dispossessed people who are unable to find their own place and identity.

Andrew Gurr points out, "deracination, exile and alienation in varying forms are the conditions of existence for the modern writer the world over. The basic response to such conditions is a search for identity, the quest for a home, through self-discovery or self-realization."³(Gurr 14)

West Indian Islands act as a paradigm of the above situation where slave colonies had developed and became the final destination of displaced people. These people include Indians had got detached physically from their ancestral home lands and then transplanted to an alien land. This uprooting and transplantations gave them a sense of homelessness, rootlessness, alienation and placelessness. In order to recover their sense of belonging with their past they tried to develop an inner subjectivity in order to locate their authentic self. V.S.Naipaul himself is an expatriate and a wanderer and experienced this unique urge to stabilize his own unique identity. From the beginning he aspired to have a place his own with which he could be identified both in the physical and literary sense. Naipaul's journey in search for his cultural roots and potent identity started from his homeland (the Caribbean) then to his cultural land India, to his final, destination, England, a place of his education and writing. V.S. Naipaul possesses a multicultural background since his roots are Indian born in Trinidadian and educated in England. As a prolific and critical writer Naipaul always gives importance to the colonial oppression and a sense of dispossession in search of self-identity. Naipaul states that travel is a means to gain self-knowledge. In his work *Finding the Centre*, he agrees, with the conception that travelling is a way of self-realization, to understand oneself in a better way.

According to Tyson in *Critical Theory Today*, diaspora is a population of the colonized descendents who were separated from their native homeland.⁴(Tyson 421) All the diasporic societies experience a doubling sense of their identity, termed as double consciousness or double vision. Homi K. Bhabha extends the term double consciousness in *The Location of Culture*. "Double consciousness or double vision is the field of 'true' emerges as a visible sign of authority only after the regulatory and displacing division of the true and the false"⁵(Bhabha 120). In this sense, double consciousness is connected to an image as a symbol of authenticity

and as a source of debate for displacement. In Bhabha's definition true image manifests the outer appearance or image represents the real identity. Double consciousness is not only discussed in the world of colonized, but also appears in the literary zone under postcolonial literature.

Slavery is responsible for bringing about the double consciousness and it is connected to migration and displacement of colonized. Slavery was a violent act towards the local inhabitants because they were exploited and treated like animals. Indenture system of hiring labourers at cheap cost from Asian and African continents caused displacement or dislocation that affected thousands of people. Homi K. Bhabha expresses that cultural displacement incorporates the notion of dual consciousness. He further adds, "In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused, and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that, is, as divided as it is disorienting"⁶(9).

It can be said otherwise that displacement generates dilemmatic feeling in the minds of colonized groups, about their authentic identity. All victims of colonization find it difficult to decide to which culture they have been inherited; either of their land of origin or of the host land or culture. This dilemmatic state of mind of the colonized is termed as in-between condition of what Bhabha called double-consciousness. Historically, a Caribbean island was the final destination where an indentured labour from Asian and African continents was brought. Once upon their arrival on the new land, they did not have any other possibility to go back to their native lands but to live permanently in the hostland by force, to marry there and to bear their descendants for forming second generation diaspora. All expatriates and diasporic people in the West Indies collectively went under similar confused state of mind, and a sense of lost moorings and identity.

During an interview with Bernard Levin in 1983, Naipaul symbolically elaborated his notion of multi-cultural identities. "I don't think any of us can claim that we come from one single, enclosed, tribal world. We are little, bombarded cells, aren't we? – many things occur to make us what we are, and we can surely live with all the things that make us"⁷ (Naipaul 98). Massey's concept of identity and place clarifies that Naipaul as a migrant can dwell in different sites though he does not feel to belong to any of such sites and to feel being at home.

In the postcolonial context the notion of identity is connected with local sense of place. Colonialism and globalization in their own ways have affected the process of identity formation. Doreen, Massey describes his notion of identity and place in following words. Aiming to describe a stable identity he fixes the traditional sense of place to migrant's original roots. Even then "the concept of place is not static but unstable"⁸ (Massey 155).

Doreen Massey declares that "Places are processes" (155). And places reproduce themselves again and again, "Places do not have single, unique "Identities", they are filling of internal conflicts [...] [such as] conflict over what its past has been (the nature of its "heritage"), conflict over what should be its present development, conflict over what could be its future. None of this denies place nor the importance of the uniqueness of place. The specificity of place is continually reproduced. (155)

James Clifford proclaims that travelling and roaming contribute in creation of one's conception of place and home. For a traveler, a culture is a location for dwelling and travelling. For Clifford travel and dislocation are similar. Roamers are comfortable with travel as they go from place to place, culture to culture so now the question is not "Where are you from?" but "Where are you between?"⁹ (Clifford 109). Travelers are influenced by the locations and cultures they pass through and travel so both travelling and staying in different sites influence the traveler's identity. Thus it can be said that identity of a traveler is unified, unpredictable and changeable. As Naipaul has been a constant traveler, he can be regarded as a "Citizen of the World". Like Naipaul, all those migrants, refugees' exiles and travelers need to have a unique and specific strength and flexibility to maintain their multiple cultural identities.

Homi K Bhabha's conception of mimicry, hybridity and the third space perfectly define Naipaul's colonial condition or plight, his duality and his quest for identity. The word 'mimicry' defines the technique through which the British imperial power dominated and controlled the colonized people in the nineteenth century. The British rulers suppressed and made the colonized to mimic western culture and language. Thus the colonizers forcefully and greatly changed the ideology of the colonized. They distorted and misinterpreted the original culture. This imitation by the colonized was a result of inferiority complex. But in the post-colonial period the term 'mimicry' started getting used as an opposite strategy. Mimicry was used for writing about imperial power while discussing their role, importance and place with reference to the native place. In fact, the process of mimicry helps in creating ones' separate identity by maintaining a difference between self and other.

Homi K Bhabha has further developed the concept of "third space" to clarify in detail the concept of hybridity. The third space as a new procedure provides enough place for cultural discourse by going beyond cultural dominion after eliminating historical margins. Bhabha elucidates the main problems emerging out of cultural heterogeneity and multi-culturism specifies racial discrimination. Thus he searches for a "productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in spite of alterity or otherness", for demonstrating that multiple cultures exhibit their own specificities and they are out of proportion¹⁰ (Bhabha 209). No doubt, Naipaul got his education in England, but it could not replace his original homeland and remained his second home. Even on his land of birth, Trinidad, he felt like an alien. He could not establish a real connection with any one place, so all homes of Naipaul create his hybrid identities. Homi Bhabha states this hybridity as "the most common and effective form of subversive opposition"¹¹ (Astrocraft 9)

Bhabha further expounded on the concept of "cultural translation", a procedure of settlement between two cultures. This translation is actually mimicry of original and this imitation can be "Simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum"¹² (Bhabha 210). Translation is a bridge between the authentic and Simulacrum cultural translation "opens up the possibility of articulating different, even incommensurable, cultural practices and priorities" (210-11).

During translation between original and initiated Bhabha's so-called third space has been created. And this settlement and negotiation between two cultures take the form of vigorous destabilization out of which a new site appears. Here new site means creation of new identity

through the process of translation or hybridization Bhabha thus proclaims that “Cultural and political identity is constructed through a process of othering” serve history of involvement takes secondary place and minority discourse originates”(219). Thus transaction or debate between two cultures eliminates the possibility of new imagination of a given culture.

A House for Mr. Biswas (1961) is a magnum opus that deals with the problems of isolation, frustration, anguish, and exploration for identity. *A House for Mr. Biswas* is undoubtedly termed as his master piece. This work concentrates on the search for freedom and independence and exploration of identity of a Brahmin Indian living in Trinidad. The protagonist, Mohun Biswas has been unfortunate from his birth and above all he wants his own house as a solid mark of his inner identity and existence. Each segment of the work states different stages of Mr. Biswas’s life, his struggle for different jobs, from sign painting to journalism *A House for Mr. Biswas* deals with the historical period of colonialism, indenture labour and bitter experiences of migration and displacement. This work of V.S. Naipaul is an significant account which evokes the memory of indenture and post indentured man with psychological preciseness and emotional truth.

As is well known, *A House for Mr. Biswas* is Naipaul’s a partial autobiographical work. Through this work, Naipaul brings forth the traumas of a ruined and troubled past. And the protagonist tries to find a direction and objective in life by examining the sense of alienation and the sharp pains of exile experienced by protagonist¹³ (Parag 2008: 135). The novel is a most sincere attempt to portray Naipaul’s own disintegrated society. The novel depicts an authentic picture of ruined Hindu society, the poverty and disorder of the Creole society and the hard and traumatic struggle of a man to rise above both. *A House for Mr. Biswas* seems to relate with the lives of poverty stricken pregnant with anxiety and frustration. Kenneth Ramchand states, “A House for Mr. Biswas is the West Indian novel of rootlessness par-excellence”¹⁴(Ramchand 102).

Naipaul provides a space for his characters to move and experience a sense of not belonging at home and discomfort and in the language of novel a “familiar temporariness”¹⁵(Naipaul 201). The condition of Naipaul is too pitiable and he finds himself dipped into the well of anxiety and frustration.

“Everything he now saw become Sullied by his fear, every field, every house, every tree, every turn in the road [. . .] so that by merely, looking at the world, he was progressively destroying his present and his past.”(281).

In the novel, the house remains the most significant symbol of the need for physical and spiritual shelter. The symbol of house depicts a quest for emancipation form dependence and slavery. The house can be termed a representation of the existentialist journey and a symbol of fatalistic Indian philosophy. Mr. Biswas hard struggle and wish to own his house and the tight hold of the Tulsi’s household symbolize a man’s want to develop a way of life completely achieved him only¹⁶(Cooke 73). Naipaul focuses on the struggle between the individual will or desire for a new identity and the opposing will of the surroundings. Mr. Biswas has been described in the world as “Six fingered and born in the wrong way”.

“First of all, the feature of this unfortunate boy. He will have good teeth but that will be rather wide, and there will be spaces between them. I suppose you know what that means”¹⁷ (Naipaul 12).

Mr. Biswas does not feel secure psychologically without a help, support and identity offered by a family group but even, and then he constantly reels against the Tulsis household. In this situation he becomes a totally isolated person, who tries hard to achieve a social status but fails to locate it. Mr. Biswas becomes conscious about his isolated and dilemmatic condition and tells his son, “I am just somebody nobody at all” (284). Mr. Biswas’s father and brothers have attained their social identity as labourers but Biswas himself cannot inherit this identity, given his life for freedom.

Mr. Biswas looks after his uncle’s shop but his brothers are labourers. Biswas leaves one job and adopts second one after leaving his uncle’s shop, joins a second job as sign painter where he comes across Shama a daughter of the Tulsis, with whom he gets married later in the novel. After marriage he comes to know in fact that marriage is not just a romantic affair, but an act full of responsibility. Mr. Biswas does not have money and dowry, has no any other option but to move to Hanuman house. Hanuman House provides accommodation for Mr. Biswas but with dilution of his identity. In this novel, “Hanuman House” is described as:

“[...] Hanuman House stood like an alien white fortress. The walls looked as thick as they were and when the narrow doors of the Tulsis store on the ground floor were closed the House became bulky, impregnable and blank. The side walls were window less and on the upper floor the window were more slits in the facades.”(81)

The “alien white fortress” provides shelter and security to its old members with capability to adjust with the new atmosphere. But Mr. Biswas still feels isolated and unwanted in Hanuman House. He is dealt with disregard rather than an antagonistic behaviour on the whole. Mr. Biswas can never free himself completely from the bonange of the Tulsis.

The Chase is another section that depicts the independent life of Mr. Biswas with his wife Shama. In this section, Mr. Biswas feels isolated, detached and unwanted. He also realizes that this isolated life assists him in finding one his identity. But due to his sense of isolation and detachment he fails to attain his authentic selfhood. Mr. Biswas is identified as a mimic man in Hanuman House inspite of feeling a sense of bitterness. V.S. Naipaul expresses the fact that the social identity of a person depends upon the society in which he lives. The family is the smallest unit of the society and it supports, assists and strengthens borderline individuals like Mr. Biswas. Mr. Biswas being a social person cannot live in isolation and his life without his wife Shama and his children is useless so he forced to go to Hanuman House very often against his wishes.

The Experience of Mr. Biswas at Green Vale is more upsetting and traumatic. No doubt, Green Vale provides him a sense of liberty and importance. He feels insecure both physically and mentally Green Vale:

“He waved the stick. He moved to the window and, looking at her, waving the stick, began to draw the bolt. ‘Don’t touch me, he bawled, and there were sobs mixed with his words [. . .]. He

began screaming and crying. He pressed his palms on the window still and tried to hoist himself up [. . .].”(288).

Mr. Biswas wishes to construct a house of his own and his dream turns into reality when he starts building it house in Green Vale. But this house is not the replica of his dream house. Due to this he passes through the sense of isolation and dislocation continuously. He experiences a sense of rejection and fails to gain acceptance in Tulsis family.

The second segment of *A House for Mr. Biswas* is set in Port of Spain, a place that provides new ways and opportunities for Mr. Biswas. This new location assists him in his professional grounding for which he has had long lasting quest. He takes up the job of a reporter for the newspaper ‘Trinidad Sentinel’ for fifteen dollars a month. This job assists him in earning some regard from the Tulsis too. Mr. Biswas forgets his urge for a short time to create his own space and enjoys his success and family life. His happiness however, is of short term lived. But due to many distressing situations such as total control of the Trinidad sentinel by new authorities, Seth’s separation from Tulsis and Mrs. Tulsi’s decision to live in Shorthills disturbs the hierarchy of Tulsi family. When Owad comes back the whole family situation changes because Oward slaps Anand for arguing with him back. Upon this, Anand, feels embarrassed and insists his father to move away. Mr. Biswas who had undergone this insulting experience several time during his childhood, is influenced by his son’s request.

Mr. Biswas purchases his own house in Port of Spain after getting loan from Ajodha. He nicely paints a word picture of his house: “The sun came through the open window work and frosted glass was hot to touch. The inside brick wall was warm. The sun went through the home and laid dazzling strips on the exposed staircase”(572). In this extract Naipaul makes use of words “Sun” and “dazzling” while describing his, house illustrates Mr. Biswas’s sense of satisfaction and happiness. Mr. Biswas has attained a semblance of success at the age of forty six. He is now ready to give opportunity to his children and can wait for their success,

“there was nothing Mr. Biswas could do but wait. Wait for Anand, wait for Savi; wait for the five years to come to an end, wait, wait (76).

Kumar Parag expresses his opinion about significance of house, “a house is not just a matter getting a shelter from heat, cold or rain. In fact, it is both an imposition of order and a carving-out of authentic selfhood within the heterogeneous and fragmented society of Trinidad”¹⁸ (Parag 2008: 139). The character of Mr. Biswas has been constructed to depict a man’s struggle against his hostile environment. Kenneth Ramchand proposes that *A House of Mr. Biswas* is a novel of “rootlessness par excellence.”¹⁹ (92). *A House for Mr. Biswas*(1961) explores and describes the truth about man’s struggle for finding out something new out of a restricted and mediocre life. Mr. Biswas struggle’s a lot for owing a house, which in a way, is to own his own life. Even the prologue of this novel highlights this struggle of man to attain a house of his own: “How terrible it would have been at this time to be without it ... to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one’s portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born.”²⁰(p. 8)

Home and exile are the two sides of a block. The meaning of one side cannot be explained in full without describing the other side. Home is a place of identification for the persons living in

it. The place provides cultural, spiritual, communal and national identification to all its dwellers. It is the symbol of security, for providing nourishment to both body and spirit. Home is the place with which we remain deeply connected even in the time of intense separation from it.

A *House of Mr. Biswas* was published in 1961. In this novel, Naipaul reflects double consciousness through the psychological state of Mr. Biswas. He is the chief protagonist who becomes a victim of colonization and indenture. Mr. Biswas is Indian and represents Indian diaspora in Trinidad. He experiences confused sense about his identity. This dual and confused sense about himself is called double consciousness in postcolonial criticism. Mr. Biswas experiences double consciousness which emerges out of slavery and displacement. He lives in Trinidad as a descendant of colonized. He is a man caught between two different cultures, one, his native Indian culture and the other, the mixed culture of Trinidad. This displacement and shifting of place makes him experience a confused state of identity and he cannot understand to which culture and place does he belongs fully.

Mr. Biswas experiences double consciousness, as a descendent of Indian expatriates. No doubt, physically he belongs to India; otherwise he associates himself culturally, ethnically, with Trinidad. In this new place Mr. Biswas tries hard to adapt and to assimilate himself since the culture of India and Trinidad is quite different. Even the neighbours of Mr. Biswas are a blend of a variety of cultures; they do not belong to the same native land but came from various different countries like Africa, China, etc. Thus the culture of Trinidad is more intricately mixed than that of India which puts a constant pressure on Mr. Biswas for finding an authentic identity. Homi K. Bhabha highlights that double consciousness is experienced through displacement. In case of Mr. Biswas “the liminal point of this ideological displacement is the turning of the differentiated spatial boundary, the ‘outside’ into the authenticating ‘inward time of tradition’”²¹(Bhabha 159).

This statement brings into light the fact that separation and displacement of diasporic individuals leads them towards a feeling of double sense of their authentic identity. Such nomadic people are unable to decide how to combine their native identity with their acquired identity. Mr. Biswas undergoes this experience and encounters difficulties when he tries to combine Indian and Trinidadian identities, so he keeps moving in-between this nagging double consciousness.

Mr. Biswas represents Indian diaspora so as an Indian his whole life gets linked to colonial debate. Since he is a colonized figure and colonization affects him adversely while living in diasporic population, he comes to the conclusion how hard the quest for genuine identity is, as he lives in the confused and amalgamated Trinidadian culture. Besides this, western culture has a great impact on the new culture and hybrid society of Trinidad.

Mr. Biswas’s dilemmatic feeling about his identity exposes itself out when he starts writing a story about a superhero. “Sometimes his hero had a Hindi name; he was short and unattractive and poor, and surrounded by ugliness, which was anatomized in bitter detail. Sometimes his hero had a Western name; he was then faceless, but tall and broad-shouldered; he was a reporter and moved in a world derived from the novels Mr. Biswas had read and the films he had seen.”²²(Naipaul 166)

Mr. Biswas's hero like him experiences unstable sense of identity. The super hero's fractured sense of cultural background manifests Mr. Biswas's fragmented concept of identity. Here the term 'faceless' represents the existential condition of Mr. Biswas who has been caught between two different cultures. The superhero is the portrayal of Mr. Biswas's own self in real life. Similarly the psychological trauma the superhero experiences appears like manifestation of Mr. Biswas's problem as an expatriate, a one who is caught in a family he dislikes, losing his liberty and patent identity.

"None of these stories was finished, and their theme was always the same. The hero, trapped into marriage, burdened with a family, his youth gone, meets a young girl. She is slim, almost thin, and dressed in white. She is fresh, tender, unknissed; and she is unable to bear children."(166). Another illustration conveys Mr. Biswas confused sense when his son demands money for going to London theatre. Mr. Biswas said, "When you get to my age you wouldn't care for westerns".

In *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Mr. Biswas is displaced from his native country through earlier generations of migrants. It becomes difficult for him to regalanize and re-enliven Indian culture in Trinidad. Mr. Biswas lives in mixed web of difficult cultures, for reanimation of Indian culture in new place, first he needs to adapt Trinidadian culture. During his search for real identity he interrogates himself whether he is an Indian, Trinidadian or even English.

This inconsistent sense of self makes him anxious about his real identity. He desires to connect himself to one authentic culture though he becomes conscious of the fact that, it is tough to attain his goal to retain his original identity by living in the mixed diasporic population. "For the next thirty-five years he was to be a wanderer with no place he could call his own, with no family except that which he was to create out of the engulfing world of the Tulsis." (18)

The above explanation illustrates Mr. Biswas aspiration to connect to one true culture. Mr. Biswas as an expatriate cannot be kept away from cross cultural interaction. While interacting with different people and cultures he realizes that the new place is actually detached from his ancestral place. During cultural interaction he has been influenced by the culture of place he lives in. Mr. Biswas as a colonized figure gets influenced by the colonizer's culture, when he goes to English school for getting formal education. In another situation, when Biswas acts as a diasporic person he gets attracted by the host culture so it is difficult for him to go back to India.

Displacement, in addition to causing double consciousness, also makes diasporic figures to undergo nostalgic feeling. Mr. Biswas gets nostalgic when he sees his mother Bipti work in the garden:

"In the setting sun, the dark dusk, with Bipti working in a garden that looked, for a moment, like a garden he had known a dark time ago, the intervening years fell away. Thereafter the marks of a fork in earth made him think of that moment at the top of the hill, and of Bipti." (18)).

This extract demonstrates that Mr. Biswas is pulled towards pines for his ancestral roots, though his situation is that of a displaced descendent of indenture Indian. He is brought back to imaginig India while recalling his mother Bipti and garden. At that instant he feels like true

Indian. This craving for past proves that Mr. Biswas still has latent associations and a sense of belonging to Indian culture.

But, on the other hand, Biswas experiences a bondage in the new Trinidadian culture since he lives in Trinidad and he sees his future in the place. He has turned into a more civilized person by getting formal education in a colonial school run by Britishers. As this has been an old practice of colonizers, giving good formal education to the colonized, making them civilized and assimilating them into host culture. Mr. Biswas's curiosity and attentiveness towards knowledge takes him to the path of acquiring western idea of being civilized. Gradually this process asserts him to become a civilized person and makes him different from other backward, illiterate Indians in Trinidad.

“Mr. Biswas was taught other things. He learned to say the Lord's prayer in Hindi from the King George V Hindi Reader, and he learned many English poems by heart from the Royal Reader. . . [I]n arithmetic he got as far as simple interest and learned to turn dollars and cents into pounds, shilling and pence.”(21)

This knowledge and education makes him different from the other Indians who are considered illiterate, uneducated and uncivilized. Mr. Biswas thus turns out to be a different Indian who has the skill of reading and writing in his young age.

“And it was through the association that Mr. Biswas discovered his gift for lettering...

[D]uring an arithmetic test one day, finding himself with an astronomical number of hours in answer to a problem about cisterns, he wrote CANCELLED very neatly across the page and became absorbed in blocking the letters and shadowing them.”(21)

After acquiring education, he is blessed with an extra- ordinary and unexpected gift, when he becomes a journalist of The Sentinel a Trinidadian newspaper that is published in English. This calling boosts and makes stronger Mr. Biswas's dissimilarity from other Indian people. In this situation, his real identity becomes more intricate whether he is a Trinidadian or a diasporic Indian. Through this professional opening, he searches his potent identity as an Indian-Trinidadian.

This last venture made by Mr. Biswas illustrates and throws light on the bitter fact that he actually wants to exhibit to the whole world his fruitless efforts for locating a genuine identity and home. The term 'Roving Reporter' passed on, seems like manifesting Mr. Biswas true feelings about his uncertain, vague and ambivalent identity and he realizes how difficult and tough it is for an expatriate to locate an authentic self and identity.

Conclusion

V.S. Naipaul tries to delineate characters that are the outcomes of an ethnic and cultural blend and exhibit their endeavor and attempts to locate their identity in multi-cultural community of which they are part of. They intend to negate one or more cultural characteristics to show they are pure and pious but finally they become aware of the fact that they are the products of multi-cultural confusion and their identity cannot be authentic and fixed. Mr. Biswas is shifting from

place to place without a solid and patent identity. His identity is uncertain, unfixed transferable, and changeable because of cultural diversification, therefore he cannot attain one fixed identity and a place of his own.

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