



V. S. Naipaul in Post-Colonial Third World

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ABSTRACT

Naipaul's writings are mere result of colonial and post colonial socio-political discourse. His social, cultural and political portrayals of emerging nations are about the dependencies of third world countries on supreme powers. His observations are very pessimistic, squalid and sever. Though he writes from west's affiliation as his critics mark about him, he indirectly makes all eastern countries and people aware about the mimicry, rootlessness, nativism, westernisation and ultimate fate of dependency.

KEYWORDS

Post colonialism, Multi-culturalism, democracy, rootlessness, political paradox, westernisation, identity crisis.

V.S.Naipaul is an important writer of Indian diaspora who figures his themes around the Third World in relation to post-colonial ethos. His social, cultural and political portrayals of emerging nations are about the dependencies of third world countries on supreme powers. Sir Vidiyadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, no doubt is a global personality with his global sense of literature, attracted the attentions of worldwide critics, academicians, scholars and genuine readers due to his subject matters and superb representations of it. Like Patrick White, Chinua Achebe, Katherine Mansfield, Roger Mais, V.S. Reid, George Lammings, Wilson Harries, Samuel Selvon, Mulk Raj Anand, Naipaul explores the colonial and postcolonial ethos. He emerges out as a citizen and a sincere writer of Third World predicaments as displacement, exile and rootlessness which are major issues of post colonial societies. His typical colonial and postcolonial universal crises are 'global' but are outcome of 'local' experiences. Naipaul gets 'Third World Trauma' as an ancestral catastrophe.

His literary profile is vast and admirable. We will get rarely another writer in the Third World who can surpass him in quality, quantity and potentiality. Being a Nobel Laureate, Naipaul has become a 'living tradition' in colonial and post-colonial literature who talks on loss of history, indigenous folk traditions, cultural loss and search for authentic selfhood of the Third World countries. He is an Indian in the West Indies, a West Indian in England and nomadic intellectual in Third World philosophy. The present communication covers his *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Suffrage of Elvira* in details.

Before going to observe comprehensive global image of Third world we will skim through the background of colonial and post-colonial literature. Colonization means not just economic oppression but a total control over every aspect of the lives of the colonized through the process of cultural colonization. The scholars call this process a systematic cultural colonization which has fractured Third World individuals forever. In this relation famous scholar, Ashish Nandi remarks in *The Intimate Enemy*;

The modern colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once for all. In the process it helps generalize the concept of a modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West is now everywhere, within the west and outside, in structures and in minds. (1983; xi)

We observe that the education spread through missionary campaigns in the colonies and the myths about their superiority have constructed the mindset of colonized as an inferior

entity. The colonizer's humanistic approach was a diplomatic make up and with the help of this, colonizers made 'colonized self' for new generation which is now totally western and a broken too. Naipaul minutely inspects in these historical contexts and presents socio-cultural and political legacies of post imperialism.

A House for Mr. Biswas(1961) is a prose epic of Trinidad and depicts the civilization and journey of the islands from the colonial feudalism to Twentieth century capitalism by narrating the story of three generation of Hindu immigrants settled in Trinidad. The 'Hanuman House' is a place of immigrants where Hinduism exists in a fossilized form. Mrs. Tulsis is owner of Hanuman House and a strict follower of Hindu code of conducts but when Mohan Biswas being a son-in-law rebels, the whole family destructs under the cross culturalism. The collapse of Tulsis household symbolizes the ultimate breakdown of the East in West. *House* marks the Third World's universal crisis of homelessness.

"And so Mr. Biswas came to leave the only house to which he had some right. For the next thirty five years he was to be a wonderer with no place he could call his own, with no family except that which he was to attempt to create out of the engulfing world of the Tulsis." (p.40)

In this relation, Mohan Champa Rao, a scholar observes this novel as:

"House is epic in scope and tells the story of Mohan Biswas from Birth to Death...While cultural clash and the gradual disintegration of the East Indian community still forms the major preoccupation in the novel, Naipaul, at the same time focuses on related problems of the East Indians' finding a foothold in the new World."²

He also rightly expresses.

"Deeply involved in the colonized people's quest for order and identity, Naipaul makes these aspects central to his novel."³

Naipaul says that East Indians who have missed the meaning of religion, culture and rituals, are again caught up with a strange culture, religion and code of conduct. Sharada Iyar aptly remarks on this;

"In a way he is a representative figure caught between the security of old world and the possibilities of a new, a man trapped in this transitional phase between two worlds."⁴

We observe that Mr. Biswas vigorously claims for the independence and individuality deprecating Hindu codes and im-

mediately accepts another positive option for security, financial and psychological support.

Naipaul even harshly talks on the various problems arising out of democracy in multi racial, multi cultural and multi communal societies like Elvira in *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1959) A totally new concept of democracy to these people has become a source of money making business and so the real meaning of democracy or nation or government is lost. Naipaul's main intention is to depict how this democracy is unsuitable to the societies like Trinidad. The protagonist, SurajPat Harbans is an East Indian Hindu who contests the election and for the votes and victory goes through tremendous compromises, schemes and illegal deals. For the Hindu votes he has to appease Chit-taranjan and for Muslim votes, he has to appease Mr. Baksh. We observe that how Naipaul peeps into the mind of the people about democracy as a possibility to earn money only. The novels begins with these lines:

"Democracy had come to Elvira four years before, in 1946; but it had taken nearly everybody by surprise and it was not until 1950, a few months before the second general election under universal adult franchise that people began to see the possibilities." (12)

Elviran society is a representative of most of hybrid societies and having same critical socio-political and communal issues of it. Naipaul attacks on the root issue-Democracy, which is totally a new concept and so uneducated and half-made society like Elvira is not strong enough to have a responsibility of broader responsibility of democracy. Elviran Society is as Pathak R.S. calls;

"The tradition ridden, decadent, degrading and demoralizing..."⁵

Naipaul even makes it clear that what kind of people, society and leaders are to be expected in 'democracy.' Elvira society loses all the meanings of Democracy which is "a government of the people, for the people, by the people." Here Naipaul minutely observes that democracy is 'for the people' not for 'the mob' only.

He observes paradox of freedom and fake powers in the ex-colonies. The life is totally deserted due to limited society and lack of internal real political power. He regretfully remarks that the neo-colonialism has spread everywhere and consequently the old order of socio-cultural and political oppressions is another fate. The typical characteristic of the Third World society is its paradoxical nature of freedom. He observes that the politics has become 'a farce'.

The depressing images of culturally fractured society emerge realistically in his writings. The Third World individuals are not happy with their mother societies as it does not provide anything productive and original. The economic and intellectual dependences of Third World nations on West are leading them towards defenceless position of neo-colonialism.

Naipaul cites on the East Indians' cultural fall through their dress codes, food habits, manners and changed religious rituals. In the case of language, East Indians' use of Hindi is replaced by English. The use of English even at the performing traditional rituals marks the total westernization of Eastern. The cultural disintegration of the Third World provides a complete picture of the confused society. The society is neither purely East Indian and nor purely Western. A cultural mimicry and complete surrender of community to the western culture is criticized by him. He focuses on the identity crisis which is the outcome of cultural disarray. An indigenous culture is the prime source of identity but when that culture is replaced by multiculturalism; society is led to a 'controlled chaos.'

These are heterogeneity and fractures inside the societies. Thus, the mimicry of the white master or flights to the western world remains inevitable fate. The mimicry of westerns

has resulted into the permanent dependency and inferiority complex. The society depicted in his novels is 'half made', the sign of the 'brutal past'. 'The society' is always seen ideally as an organization of people for common values and norms in order to have total progress of society, community and nation. But Third world is still under the influence of colonial power.. Naipaul is not satisfied with this surface reality, so remarks that multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-communal, inorganic and disordered societies are 'million mutinies' now. These societies are not yet stable, mature and ordered therefore the individuals too are selfish, fickle minded, corrupt and divided.

The economic bankruptcy is the major cause for overall collapse of the Third World. The lack of local expertise and the continuous dependence on western countries for ideas, technologies and financial aids is usual for post-colonial nations. Here Naipaul reckons that the political dependence is a complete surrender to the West.

Conclusion:

Naipaul's comprehensive image of the Third World is negative and pessimistic. Therefore he is criticized by a number of critics and scholars for his unsympathetic descriptions of socio-cultural and political realities. The scholars call these observations 'intellectual disease' as they are connected with limited portion of society. Critics say that his journalistic comments can be superficial and sensational therefore cannot be a completely true. However, the study of his novels clearly indicates that he reflects post-colonial sensibility fully and sincerely. He does write with West's affiliation, moreover, he indirectly provides an insight to the betterment of the Third World. Though Naipaul's attitude is pessimistic, it goes deeper into the reality and that contributes to the adequate perception of society.

His fictions are an eye-opening experience to the Third World nations. Though his images disturb the sincere reader, his realistic observations do not turn wrong or exaggerated. They are exact and factual. In the 'Quest Interview', Naipaul argues that by this sort of brutal analysis, he hopes to be able to open up "the situation to some sort of action which is not based on self deception" (Raw-Evans, 1972; 51).

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