



QUEST FOR IDENTITY & VISION IN THE NOVELS OF V. S. NAIPAUL

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Abstract:

Many individuals migrated during the post-colonial period, often to other states or even nations without taking any of their possessions with them. Their history and traditions are lost, and they are reduced to being only a name. They go to a new area and, to assimilate, abandon many of their long-held practices in favour of those of the dominant culture. Adjusting to a new environment causes an identity crisis in a person, which may have serious consequences for their mental health if left untreated.

When a person is going through an identity crisis, they may become intensely emotional and curious about their origin narrative and original land. Countries nowadays are more open and tolerant of persons of varied backgrounds. The struggle to discover and accept one's true self, however, is an internal one, fought by the person against any accumulated mental distress. The emotions experienced by the protagonists in this article are similar to those experienced by the protagonists in the writings of V. S. Naipaul.

Keywords: Identity Crisis, British Writers, Indian Origin, Colonialism, Culture

Introduction

The Indian Nobel laureate Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul stands apart from the crowd of other authors of the Diaspora. Naipaul could feel more of a connection to Joseph Conrad. Like Conrad, he writes in a certain style and deals with similar issues, such as an affinity for forgotten nations and a pessimistic view of the world's unfinished cultures. His disappointment and feeling of alienation only serve to darken his outlook as time goes on. V.S. Naipaul, who is of Indian descent and the third generation of his family to live in Trinidad, has written about his desire to leave the country. After six years, he received a government grant to study English at Oxford and decided to leave. Part of why he turned his back on his land was because Trinidad is a melting pot of people of all colours and beliefs. There was no anti-imperialist sentiment among Trinidadians since they did not share a common West Indian identity, but they do feel a sense of belonging as a part of the British Empire. As a fiction writer, V. S. Naipaul's main task is to represent with great care the intricate destiny of people, communities, and civilizations. For him, fiction is a tool for introspection, and the conceptual underpinnings of a story are more significant than the action itself. As a result, his books often centre on universal themes like cultural confusion, identity crises, and war between colonial and postcolonial societies. As a master writer, he does his best to weave his ideas together using the vibrant threads of creative fiction.



Naipaul admits:

"I preferred the natural way of describing how, at different stages as one's life capacities, one looked at one's place in the world. And one does this through the series of narratives and the linking of themes and emotions."

V. S. Naipaul, an enormous figure in the canon of commonwealth literature, has struggled mightily to carve out a niche for himself outside of his family's literary canon. Naipaul's grandeur comes from his ability to transcend place, tale, and ethnicity via his creativity, rather than any allegiance to the establishment. His literary characters don't have to feel like aimless nomads questioning their own identity, fate, and destiny since he gives them a stable, permanent location to call home in his stories. V. S. Naipaul's worldview and beliefs are reflected in the central issue of an identity crisis in almost all of his major writings. His protagonists go through a lot of ups and downs, but all they want is a fair and liberated life.

A work of fiction, or any other literary form, is a window into the real world. As a result, proper comprehension of a work of fiction requires a broad context of social reality. There are many competing interests at work in every given society. Culture, worldview, and ideology vary widely across socioeconomic strata. Religious, economic, political, and social institutions are all shaped in major ways by the prevailing beliefs of the people who live in a given community. Such tensions and schisms are integral to or distorted by, the fabric of a fictitious universe. Collectively representing the experiences and ideas of individuals and social groups in a manner that is at odds with the material reality from which those experiences and ideas originate is what is meant by the word ideology. Ideologies are intricately tied to the power and interests of ruling social groups. The ideology that forms the basis of human awareness. Throughout history, the ruling economic and social elite have used their ideology to secure their position in power.

Marxist opponents argue that the various classes are symbolic of competing ideologies and social forces. Disagreements arise between the privileged and the working class, the well-off and the poor, and the haves and the have-nots, because of the ideological disparities between these groups. Meschery's opinion is that the fictional world sits between ideology and theory, and he does it by portraying a contrast between the two. To many, great works of literature are the perfect symphonies of favoured ideologies or worldviews. V. S. Naipaul's account of colonial and postcolonial societies and the self in the Third and First Worlds is an analysis of the social conflicts and contradictions among various groups and individuals to establish an identity for him or in a malignant and dogmatic society of conservative ideas and ideology.

In other words, an identity crisis occurs when a person has a breakdown in their sense of who they are and where they fit in the grand scheme of things. This sentiment is the root cause of people's feelings of isolation and upheaval. Taking advantage of opportunities when they arise is important to them, but they can't find a happy medium. They cannot focus on the long term and be patient with their progress, and they also lack internal and external consistency. They believe they lack a foundational set of social, philosophical, or religious ideals around which to build their worldview, and as a result, they are always uncertain about the outcomes of their actions. V. S. Naipaul is often hailed as the most talented novelist of our time. In his treatment of the many different types of literature, he has shown considerable skill and deftness.



He uses the lingering effects of the colonial and postcolonial eras—including a feeling of dislocation, alienation, exile, homelessness, and the mystery of individual and collective survival—to drive the plots of his literary works. His writing has resolute protagonists who reveal their quest for family and individuality. The panic, anxiety, and marginalisation of his characters are the true strengths of his fictional universe, even though his writing is good and his characters are finely developed. The topic of V. S. Naipaul's identity arises because of his immigration history and the upheaval it produced. Naipaul's fictitious universe is a nuanced and compassionate description of the tragic experiences of the people of the Third World, and their search for identity and a place to call home in the microcosm of the colonial and post-colonial eras. He insists there was never an issue with his identification. According to Naipaul, the purpose of his writing is not introspection but rather an expansion of one's knowledge of the world. As a writer from the Caribbean, the West Indies, or the Third World, Naipaul is not content with his designation. The political bias and eventual meaninglessness, in his view, inherent in such labels with patriotic, racial, or ethnic implications are striking. He opposes political parties and ideologies in favour of devoting all of his time to his writing profession, which he hopes to pursue in the humanist tradition. He prefers the labels "expatriate writer" "rootless" or "displaced guy" to describe himself. However, he now sees himself as a well-known writer who has had an impact on the English-language book industry. Though he was born in Trinidad to a family of Indian Hindu indentured labourers, V.S. Naipaul's success as a writer can be traced back to his time spent in England, where he established a second home and the hub of his career. He was always an alien in England and was unable to draw inspiration from the local resources. He uses just his memories of Trinidad as a springboard for creating a fantastical setting. The country of his birth, India, was the subject of his fantasies, but his experiences there left him disillusioned and he never felt at home there. He saw much of the globe before deciding to become an expatriate writer in England.

As a Diaspora writer, he delves into the complications and difficulties that result from such situations. Due to nationalist agitations, the Hindu immigrants to the West Indies have renamed Hindustanis rather than East Indians, and they were indistinguishable from the New World's indigenous Indian population. They brought a piece of the old world with them to the new location in the form of a sense of nostalgia for India or a desire to maintain historical traditions. But as each new generation grew up, they embraced the New World's principles and the influence of their ancestors faded away. V. S. Naipaul is a member of the new anglicised version of immigrant Indian Hindus in the West Indies, and he is also an outsider in England.

The early works of Naipaul are reflections of his upbringing and the social climate of Trinidad. During this period, he paints a moving portrait of the Indian immigrants' efforts to hold on to their cultural heritage while forging a new, genuine identity in a foreign place. Because of how far removed they are from their society, the protagonists and protagonists of these books are always on the lookout for a new place to call home. The protagonists of these books are experiencing an identity crisis, which is common among uprooted immigrant communities and individuals. These books take place in Trinidad and follow the characters as they ascend to power in the West Indian government. In his stories, he often uses resolute protagonists who, via a variety of means, reveal their struggles with identity confusion. Naipaul's characters represent many nuanced aspects of his own emotions, and they are a reflection of this fact. 'The Mystic Masseur' is the book that may be found in this paper. In The Mystic Masseur, we follow



the heroic saga of a prosperous West Indian from the era before the island nation gained its independence. Naipaul's debut book, *The Mystic Masseur*, follows the life of one Ganesh Ramsumair, who finds success after a difficult childhood. The story takes place against the backdrop of Trinidad, and it follows one man's journey as he assumes many roles in an attempt to find himself and succeed in life. Ganesh has all the necessary and appropriate traits to achieve success and establish his place in Caribbean culture. Everything he has is the result of his hard work, and he has nothing, to begin with except the unwavering conviction that he is destined for greatness. The self-awareness and practicality that he has allowed him to successfully navigate any situation that arises. brilliance and wit, qualities held in high esteem and love by his community. In time, he gained notoriety and respect throughout the Southern Caribbean. After saving the residents of lake Success, he was to become the British government's official agent there. However, he would always be a poor masseur. This individual is heroic because he fought for his independence and succeeded. In his autobiography, "The Years of Guilt," Ganesh relates his narrative from the perspective of an imposing expert, while in the other, a young Trinidadian child describes Ganesh's achievement in life as the product of a chain of illogical coincidences. Through this character, Naipaul pokes fun at both the Indian community and mainstream Trinidadian culture. To satisfy his materialistic needs, Ganesh worships Goddess Laxmi.

Conclusion

The resolve to live against or despite all difficulties is one manifestation of the struggle for identity, which has a wide range of possible meanings. All of the major protagonists in V. S. Naipaul's fictional world experience the tragedy of being uprooted, dismantled, isolated, rootless, etc. from their land and original identity, and Naipaul himself appears to identify with their struggle to forge an authentic identity through their heroic deeds. The estranged souls, cast adrift from their homeland, struggle with feelings of discord and division as they aimlessly roam across the faceless wilderness of a meaningless world. Naipaul's progressive heroes are frantic to chisel a new acceptable image in the mirror of time and space, and his works reveal the dramatisation of the immigrant's search for selfhood and identity in a strange reality. V.S. Naipaul's fictional worlds, which draw their power and inspiration from the author's own life, include an underlying thread that symbolises the growth and continuity of the themes explored in them. Naipaul's candid admission is that the characters of his works are all representations of the same symbolic figure: an exiled Indian immigrant restlessly yearning for some other identity in limbo justifies this notion:

"All my work is really one work. I'm really writing one big book."

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