

Exile and Alienation in V. S. Naipaul's A House for Mr. Biswas

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Abstract

Diasporic literature elucidates the experiences of a diverse group of people in an unfamiliar environment. Great dreams and desires fade away over time, and all is for naught. V.S. Naipaul is an English-language writer from Trinidad. Exile and alienation are common themes in V.S. Naipaul's work. One of Naipaul's masterpieces, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, expresses the sentiments of those living in diaspora. In an alienated setting, the novel sheds light on the protagonist's psychological workings. Mr. Mohun Biswas, the protagonist, settles at Shama's residence after their marriage. While residing with his in-laws, the protagonist suffers from a major mental breakdown. The protagonist's self-exile was caused by the setting and atmosphere failing to provide him with a sense of freedom and independence. This study examines Mr. Biswas' life and cognitive process, which demonstrates exile and alienation characteristics.

Keywords: Exile and Alienation, diaspora, freedom and independence.

V. S. Naipaul, the 2001 Nobel Laureate in Literature, is a literary giant admired around the world. His fame is mostly based on *A House for Mr. Biswas*, a fiction with an autobiographical nature, which is one of his twenty-seven fiction and non-fiction works. The oft repeated themes of alienation and exile, in fact, reflect the nomadic feelings of V. S. Naipaul, who, despite his long stay of twenty-seven years at Wilshire cottage in London, feels himself an alien and an outsider there, as his remark clearly reflects: "London is my metropolitan centre ; it is my commercial centre and yet I know that it is a kind of Limbo and that I'm a refugee in the sense that I am always peripheral. One's concerns are not the concerns of the local people" (Joshi 84). Throughout his life, he is enraged and alienated by his sense of being an outsider.

For those readers who are familiar with third-world difficulties, Naipaul's books have taken on the aura of a mission. The purpose has been to find a path to another dispute. Because Naipaul's writings and their idiomatic inflectors have been simultaneously celebrated and castigated between descriptions that range from objective or a historical unsentimental or culturally ignorant, Naipaul's habits of representation appear to be increasingly made up of

misperceptions and inappropriate inquiries, Naipaul's writings and their idiomatic inflectors have been simultaneously celebrated and castigated between descriptions that range from objective or a historical unsentimental or culturally ignorant.

Exile is curiously interesting to contemplate yet terrifying to go through. It's the unbridgeable chasm that has been created between the self and its ultimate home. Its fundamental grief will never be overcome, and while literature and history do contain heroic passionate brilliant even triumphant events in the lives of exiles, these are nothing more than attempts to overcome the paralysing sorrow of alienation. The accomplishments of exile are permanently harmed by the loss of something that can never be replaced. Townsend explains it as, "An extraordinary variety of psycho-social disorders including loss of self, anxiety states anomie, despair, depersonalization rootlessness apathy, social disorganization, powerlessness, meaninglessness isolation, pessimism and the loss of belief or values" (12-13).

As a result, loneliness is the sensation of being cut off from others, while alienation is the act of experiencing loneliness. All of these themes are present in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, a novel about a man who struggles to find self-identity and a sense of belonging.

Mohun Biswas feels lonely and alienated since he is often separated from his family. But the protagonist, Mohun Biswas, lacked both; he has felt alienated and lonely since birth, having been neglected by his own family. Because Mohun Biswas was born with six fingers, pundit Sitaram predicted that he would be a spendthrift and a lecher with an unlucky sneeze. He also predicted that Mohun Biswas would be responsible for his parents' deaths, that he would eat up his father and mother, and that his father should not see his face for twenty-one days. Mohun Biswas carves a desire to explore the outside world and roam freely with others. But for him life "life was unpleasant only because the pundit has forbidden him to go near ponds and rivers". Another repeated humiliation that Biswas experienced was when his teacher, Mr. Lal, instructed him to write "I AM AN ASS" on the blackboard, and this constant humiliation has caused him to develop hate against others, making him feel lonely and alienated.

Biswas was sent to pundit Jairam to learn religious scriptures because his feelings of being neglected by his family made it difficult for him to concentrate on learning religious scriptures. This enraged pundit Jairam, who scolded Biswas harshly, telling him that he would never make a pundit and telling him that he had killed his father and that he did not want him to do the same to him. As we can see from these occurrences, the protagonist's sense of alienation and loneliness, as well as his exclusion from society, is palpable.

Biswas personal identity in marriage to Shama and the struggle for his personal identity has led him to the fate of the protagonist's death as Mohan Biswas chance marriage to Shama and here he expects to merge his personal identity with food and shelter, but Biswas was neglected by the family members of Shama and he feels a sense of loneliness and alienation, and his mental state says that nothing in the world except death could change that later Mr. Biswas' psyche began to be corrupted by alienated feelings as a result of all these experiences, and he pondered how many nights he would spend behind the shuttered façade of Hanuman House.

The ideological and political differences between them have caused a great chasm between them, and he used to feel alone in the largest family, even Shama, his wife, would not share his difficulties. When Govind, in the presence of Shama, did not try to intervene or console him after the incident, rather "she maintained her martyrs attitude throughout," a sense of isolation began to emerge in his mind, as the wife is supposed to act as a backbone to a husband in all his problems, but in Biswas' case, it acts in the opposite way, as even his wife began to neglect him, and Biswas feels very much alienated. The ideological and political differences between them have caused a great chasm between them, and he used to feel alone in the largest family, even Shama, his wife, would not share his difficulties.

Biswas's descent into death is caused by a loss of identity. Mr. Biswas' ambition was to live according to his heart's desire, but he had neither money nor a job, therefore he felt immense pressure to become a Tulsiin order to establish his identity as the unyielding soul who has somehow managed to keep his cool despite the circumstances. Mr. Biswas' efforts to become self-sufficient were cruelly stifled. When he disclosed his heart to Govind, another son-in-law who wants to "earn his own bread "by paddling his own canoe", he instantly reported it to Seth, enraging everyone in the family. Seth chastised him in front of everyone

We want somebody to work on the estate. Is nice to keep these things in the family. And what you say? You want to paddle your own canoe. "look at him" Seth said to the hall Biswas the peddler. it runs in the family. Seth said "They tell me your father was a great diver. But where has all these peddling got you so far? (112)

He was publicly chastised and humiliated, but no one spoke up for him, and he naturally thought that he had no one in the Tulsi family who sympathised with him.

Biswas was then forced to labour at the Green Valley estate. Mr. Mohun Biswas was in a kind of exile away from his family, having to stay here in the company of enraged labourers. He remained in such a pitiful condition that at times he has a strange mindset, and once, when his wife Shama sent a message that she was bringing the children there for a few days, he immediately indulged in all kinds of negative thoughts. It's eloquently described by Naipaul.

Mr. Biswas waited for them with dread. on the day they were to arrive he began to wish for some accident that would prevent their coming. but he knew there would be no accident. if anything was to happen he had to get rid of Anand and Savi and himself all morning he was possessed of vision in which he cutlasses poisoned strangled burned Anand and Savi; so that even before they came his relationship with them had been perverted about myna and Shama he didn't care he wish to kill them. (284-285)

"I am not your father God is your father I am just somebody Nobody at all," he informs Anand later during his stay with him. I'm just a regular guy, you know." (291) It helps to explain Biswas's tumultuous mental state. He discovered that he was completely unable to form any emotional contact with his family, which only added to Mr. Biswas' alienation.

This eventually distanced him from others, including Shama. Biswas stayed in the tulsi house for a long time, but he felt alone and confined. His wife Shama used to humiliate him by saying, "That's what your family does to me, trap me in this house" (232). Because he is unwilling to confide in anyone, he has become increasingly isolated as a result of his failure to form relationships with other family members. The members of the Tulsi clan were boring; Tulsidom is based on a form of traditional servitude, with food and security being bartered in exchange for independence" (Chakroberty 47). Because Mohun Biswas has lost all of his wealth and rank in life, he has become a stranger in Hanuman's house, and because he was disloyal and trusted, he was weak and so contemptible.

Mohun Biswas begins to exaggerate him as a slave bird caught in the sage, as he has been caught in the Hanuman home, and he loses all of his identity, suffering from exile, alienation, and suffocation in a stifling world, symbolised by Hanuman house. His hunt for the residence was prompted by a sense of estrangement. House was a big need in his life since it became a symbol of personal identity, solace, self-respect, and independence, all of which he lacked throughout his life. When he bought a house on Sikkim Street, his endless battle came to an end. Here he "found himself in his own house, on his own half-lot of land, on his own percentage of the earth; it was the end of his alienation, and he died happily in his own dwelling."

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