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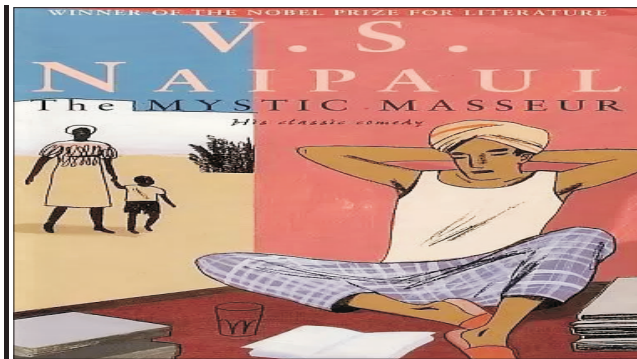
PROTAGONIST AND ALIENATION FEELINGS IN THE MYSTIC MASSEUR NOVEL OF NAIPAUL

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ABSTRACT :

V.S.Naipaul's first novel *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) is an amusing of the rise of a west Indian politician from humble beginnings in a rural Hindu community. He represents his personal experience enriched by some form of a tone, i.e. the writer's attitude to the experience. It is clear that Naipaul has refused the traditional base of the society and adopted attitude which is ironical or sarcastic. The phenomenon of loss of identify, the quest for identity, alienation and double consciousness can be explicated and analyzed from the perspective by evaluating the mystic masseur. Search for 'I' or search for 'self' has been the pivotal and perennial question concern from humanistic perspective remains the 'quest for identity amidst the 'maze of Deracination'. It is interesting study of exile and alienation Vis- a Vis double consciousness. The feeling of 'not



belonging' to a place yet trying to relate while being torn apart with a longing for home is found to be a predominant feeling experienced by an exile. The multi sided themes involves in the novel revolves around an exile, uprootedness of the protagonists psychology and their psychoanalytical study their consciousness, their exile and alimentation and their feeling of rootlessness.

KEY WORDS:

Protagonist, alienation and rootlessness.

INTRODUCTION:

Naipaul's memories of his whole life experiences are covered in the autobiographical

material, represented in his writing. To begin with, *The Mystic Masseur* is a dramatic fictional biography in which the autobiographical elements are blended in it. The character Ganesh is the protagonist of the novel. He represents events and actions that are real in the life of both Naipaul and his father. *The Mystic Masseur* is a straight forward comic novel. Except for the handling of narrative point of view, there is nothing technically innovative in the book. Naipaul has used the traditional novelistic techniques. He has created a character, Ganesh, that is a target of comedy and the recipient of affection.

The narration is chronological, except for the narrator's introduction of himself and Ganesh at the novel's beginning. The narrator also shows a skillful use of the participant narrator.

The novel is set in Trinidad. It highlights Ganesh's success chronologically. This shows his ostensibly struggle after accomplishing his study at Queen's Royal College, a Christian school in Port of Spain, where Naipaul himself studied before travelling to England. At the college, Naipaul himself, as other Hindu migrant students, was a subject to the same humiliations that Ganesh is experiencing in the novel.

The Mystic Masseur itself shows in good measure this element of deracination and quest for identity. There is a feeling of discrimination and therefore there is a continuous search for self. *The Mystic Masseur* is placed firmly in the East Indian milieu of

Trinidad. This protagonist has been apparently taking shape in Naipaul's mind since he was a child of eleven. This protagonist is a representative figure. The narrator in the novel expresses the view of the writer that the history of Ganesh is the history of the people of his times. This comic novel moves between farce and acerbic social commentary on Trinidad, the country of his birth. The characters are mainly members of Trinidad's South Asian community. The protagonist is a frustrated writer of Indian descent. His full name is Ganesh Ramsumari. He rises from poverty on the back of his dubious talent as a 'mystic' masseur. He is a masseur (Pundit Ganesh) who can cure illnesses. In the end, he becomes a successful colonial politician as G. Ramsumair.

This story of achieving the impossible dream is often humorous. But it is more a tale of one of many achieving the "American" dream of becoming whatever he wants to make of life. It is a story of attaining the impossible dream through hard work and perseverance. This shows that one can achieve the goal or complete his impossible dreams if he/she works with enthusiasm and keeps patience and tolerance.

This is really a slyly funny and lavishly inventive novel. V.S. Naipaul traces the unlikely career of Ganesh Ramsumair. He is a failed school teacher. He is an impecunious village masseur who in time becomes a revered mystic, a thriving entrepreneur, and the most beloved politician in Trinidad. V.S. Naipaul imbues the story with an authenticity that draws the reader in his use of dialogue gives the characters a genuine authenticity. His description of the island empowers the tale with the sights and even the smells of the setting. It is easy to lose oneself in the island and to become one with the characters. It shows our separation of the oneness and togetherness of oneness. It is through the simplicity of the storyline and the words failings of the characters that a reader fully relates to Ganesh and his family and finds to become one with the study and lose oneself in the tales. At one time, it is the felling of separation and at the other time, it is the feeling of togetherness. It is amazing that Naipaul is able to transport the reader to Trinidad and make the reader an integral part of the tale. The reader becomes the character himself in the novel. The Mystic Masseur is a triumph of storytelling that makes readers want more of not only the study to be drawn to the further works of this storyteller. This novel out of Trinidad uncovers a rich vein of ethnic humour in the world of the Caribbean Hindu. V.S. Naipaul works in terms of good natured satire.

Naipaul reflects his understanding of the East Indian community in this novel. This spans nearly twenty-five years (1929-54) of the first migrant generation of the East Indians. It is concerned with the problems of "arranged marriages, the inevitability of one's karma or fate, tradition versus modernity, and the act of writing as a means of appropriating ones reality."

PROTAGONIST GANESH : THE MAJOR CHARACTER

Ganesh fumbles his way through life. It is mainly through luck that he is able to achieve success. Ganesh has a dream that, while many think that it is unrealistic, he pursues in a relentless yet haphazard fashion with the sometimes inept support of those around him. Although he makes many mistakes on the road to fame and wealth, he is able to achieve his dream through his unending supply of perseverance and an equal if not greater amount of even good luck. He is aware of this fact. He has that much ability and patience to wait. He is psychologically fit for that. He has that much unending power of patience. He has that much unending supply of perseverance and tolerance. He comes across many obstacles, disasters, adversities, trials, odds. He overcomes that are put in his path by never giving up in the face of adversity with a large dose of good fortune and a touch of business savvy.

Ganesh is really lucky, he has a large and enough good fortune and luck. Ganesh does not falter in his pursuit of his dream. He makes up his mind to achieve the dream. At last, he accomplishes what many would call insurmountable odds. He rises above his given place in life and society to become more than he could even deem possible. He rises down to earth. He proves himself to be worthy of his good fortune and luck. He has no limits of joy. The sky is no limit for him. He becomes successful in his life and society because of his consciousness, perseverance, patience, tolerance and psychological fitness.

Ganesh's ascent is variously aided and impeded by a Dickensian cast of rogues and eccentrics. There is his skeptical wife Leela. Leela's schooling has made her excessively, fond of punctuation marks! Her father, Ramlogan is a man of startling mood changes and an ever-ready cutlass.

Portraits of spiritual politicians also appear in Naipaul's other early novels. In *The Mystic Masseur*, Ganesh is the East-Indian hero. He is driven by people and circumstances to become, first, a mystic masseur, and, second, a politician. The influence of God is everywhere. Man is psychologically and mentally under the impression and influence of God or Godly things, Godlike things. It is the system or psychology continuously transferring from one generation to another, one culture or another, one religion to another or from one country to another. Then Trinidad is a mixture of all generations, cultures, religious from various countries. Although Ganesh later finds himself metamorphosed into an indifferent Anglicized politician, throughout most of the novel he fits the pattern of Naipaul's "savior".

FEELINGS OF ROOTLESSNESS/ALIENATION:

Naipaul is a rootless man and a novelist of exile just like Joseph Conrad. Naipaul is a keen observer of civilizations, cultures and histories across the world that can be compared to his great precursor Joseph Conrad – also a novelist of exile and a rootless man. Really Naipaul is called as Conrad's heir. Naipaul seeks in 'himself the annalist of the destinies of empire in the moral sense: what they do to human beings.' His authority as a narrator is grounded in his memory of what others have forgotten, the history of the vanquished. He portrays, just like the portrayals of Conrad in his novels, the real depiction, reflection, interpretation and reinterpretation of history, politics, culture, empiricism, multiculturalism, hybridization, effects of imperialism in his novels. While depicting, he creates a different language having the various influences on it or we may say an Anglicized English. Sum up :

The *Mystic Masseur* reveals that Naipaul is a fatalist. The desire to stick to one's culture always makes one consciousness about one's heritage and he tries to preserve it in any manner. He sticks to his traditional food, manners and most importantly his mother tongue. Pain of forgetting the mother tongue finds an important place in the mindset of the colonized. Existence is meaningless unless it is expressed appropriately and language is the poor and tool of expression. Displacement brings dispossession of this power which aggravates the sense of alienation. The immigrant is always at a disadvantage in a foreign land and his/her escape depends on the degree of his/her adaptability to that conditions which is essentially alien.

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