



## Displacement: A Diasporic Experience in V.S. Naipaul's A House for Mr. Biswas

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**ABSTRACT:** The term "displacement" strongly connects to diaspora literature that looks at how people in the diaspora feel about pain and pleasure. The lives of diaspora people are not pleasant. It is difficult for them to integrate into the new mainstream society because they are far from home. Language, culture, customs, religion, and belief, among other variations, will encounter difficulties in the host nation. Key experiences alienation, homelessness, identity crisis, and other forms of displacement. That is connected throughout the diaspora. Being an age of a contracted work migrant family, V. S. Naipaul himself has gone through such tormenting encounters that are, by implication, communicated through the educational meetings of the characters in his composition. In the novel *A House for Mr. Biswas*, it is clear that Naipaul's life story and Mr. Biswas's voice are strikingly similar. Naipaul demonstrates in the book how Mr. Biswas, and, more importantly, the generation of indentured labor immigrant parents in Trinidad, suffer from homelessness, displacement, alienation, and other issues. The experiences of displacement, including homelessness, separation, and other issues, are the primary focus of this paper, confronted by Mr. Biswas and other characters who are members of the Indian diaspora.

**KEYWORDS:** Displacement; alienation; homelessness; diaspora; dispersion; immigrants.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

"Displacement" means "being out of one's place." It is a circumstance when a person or thing is uprooted in new spots from his/her unique predicament. The removal condition is not happy for migrants, as McLeod (2015) says: "They might be thought not to belong there, and they might not be allowed to consider the new land their home. The relocated subject loses their native language, culture, beliefs, religion, etc. It hurts a lot for them. Now, the question of how a state of "displacement" occurs needs to be answered. Moving from one location to another, from one nation to another, or from one continent to another has become increasingly common in the modern era.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Safran (2005), people do not wish to remain in their homeland for an extended period: "Millions of people do not live in the countries in which they were born and raised" is the reason for this (p. 39). They travel to different locations, typically for work, business, a visit, additional education, etc. This has been made simple by the progression in correspondence, transportation, and innovation. They might like being in a new place and seeing many new things if they stay there for a short time. However, suppose they remain there for an extended period or settle there for the rest of their lives. In that case, they may experience a sense of alienation from the things that made them who they are—their homes, families, friends, languages, cultures, etc. they have departed from. The specific portrayal of 'removal' up to now is just the general feeling of it yet explicitly, as indicated by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1998), it "happens on account of royal occupation and the encounters related with this occasion. "It is not easy for them to assimilate them into the new situations over there" (p. 73). "The phenomenon may result from transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, invasion, and settlement, or a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from a known to an unknown location." Their experiences are diasporic as they form a diaspora.

According to Galvan (2008), "the idea of "dispersion," "scattering," derived from the Greek language *dia* "through," and *speirein* "to scatter," the term "diaspora" means "dispersion." When discussing "diaspora" and "dispersion," it is very important to go back to Jewish history around the eighth century BCE and the dispersion of Jews who were forced to leave their state of Palestine because it was embedded in Babylonia and held there from 527 to 538 BCE. They were granted freedom and forced to immigrate to the countries around them for security or survival after about forty years. They received the moniker "Jewish diaspora." They were weakly uprooted from their country. They were forced to depart from their customs, language, and culture. They were in the hostland, a brand-new world. It's the Jewish diaspora, and their experience of being displaced, alienated, and without a home is sporadic. The old definition of "diaspora" has been expanded, however, "to accommodate a wide range of fluid spatial, cultural, and political locations" (Walsh, 2003, p. 3) as a result of the mass movement of people into other countries, either voluntarily or involuntarily. As a result, various diasporas, such as the Armenian, Indian, and African diasporas, have already been established. Galvan (2008) adds the following to support this idea:

Moreover, its initial metaphorical ascription to the dispersion of a particular people, the Jews, after the Babylonian captivity, and then later with the Jewish people being forced to leave Palestine, has been extended to other peoples and communities. Thus, the classical, Jewish diaspora has carried over its meaning, extending it to other similar dispersions. We now view the African diaspora, the Asian diaspora, the Indian diaspora, and others, as equivalent to (similar to or like) the Jewish diaspora. (p. 114)

In Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Indians migrate to the Caribbean Island as indentured laborers, particularly during the colonial era. Because everything was brand-new in the new world, these Caribbean Island immigrants were not content. They were forced to endure the agony of being evicted, alienated, dislocated, and other forms of displacement. As a result, this paper aims to examine the novel's protagonist, Mr. Biswas, and his generation of Indian immigrants to the Caribbean Island who experienced displacement.

Mohun Biswas has a place with Indian workers aged on a Caribbean Island. This indicates that he was born into an Indian immigrant family. Many other Indian immigrants tried to adjust to Trinidad like him, but they always had a "precarious and fragile existence" in Trinidad (Nandan, 2008, p. 83). As a result, the struggles of all Indian immigrants in this country are portrayed in the novel by Biswas's struggle for independence from his home country. Since Mr. Biswas was born into a family of Indian immigrants or others like him there, Leela (2012) considers: "The author has presented Mr. Biswas as his representative character." Mr. Biswas's life is similar to Naipaul's, who lived a series of experiences of exile and alienation.

These immigrants from the Caribbean islands were dissatisfied because everything in the new world was brand new. They were compelled to go through the agony of being evicted, alienated, dislocated, and displaced in other ways. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate Mr. Biswas, the novel's protagonist, and his generation of Indian immigrants to the island in the Caribbean who were forced to relocate.

### **III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

Mohun Biswas has a place on a Caribbean Island with Indian workers of the same age. This suggests that he was born into a family of Indian immigrants. According to Nandan (2008), p. 83, numerous other Indian immigrants attempted to adapt to Trinidad in the same way as he did. Still, they always led to "precarious and fragile existences" in Trinidad. Consequently, Biswas's struggle for independence from his home country serves as a metaphor for the efforts of all Indian immigrants in this country. According to Leela (2012), "Mr. Biswas was born into a family of Indian immigrants or others who were like him there" Mr. Biswas has been portrayed by the author as his character. Mr. Biswas' life is like Naipaul's, who carried on with a progression of encounters of exile and estrangement:

You will never make a Pundit. I was talking the other day to Sitaram, who read your horoscope. You killed your father. I am not going to let you destroy me. Sitaram particularly warned me to keep you away from trees. Go on, pack your bundle. (p. 56)

As a result, he becomes the target of social resentment. He bears all of these accusations and lives with his mother. He tells his mother about his suffering, "You see, Ma, I don't have a father to care for me, so people can treat me however they please." Raghunath, his father, was also without a home and working hard to support the family. Now, he has passed away, delegating all responsibilities to Mr. Biswas.

Mr. Biswas has no place to call home. He is a dislodged individual, "a man without a home" (Leela, 2012, p. 36), and has no spot to consider his own. He has never owned a home in Trinidad. He battles for his family's presence in a place away from his unique country. Accommodation is a problem for his family. As a result, he longs to own his own home for his family. (Garebian, 1984, p. 494) He calls it his "restless quest for the dream house." He imagines that he becomes free just when he claims a house there since "Home can have meaning once one experiences a degree of relocation from it" (Leela, 2012, p. 36). This is the general idea behind people who live in a host nation away from their home country. Mr. Biswas wants to build a house to alleviate the stress of moving.

He does not enjoy living in the Hanuman House. He dislikes living there with a lot of people. Leela believes that everyone is like Mr. Biswas because they lack a place to call home: The state of the disjointed and seized is powerful and convoluted. After all, they can't find a 'home' of their own" (p. 35). Mr. Biswas is feeling isolated. He heads to The Chase, a village searching for tranquility, where he runs a Tulsi food store. He moves to The Green Vale because he can't find a place to live. He carries all of his belongings into a room given to him by the barracks. He hopes to enjoy himself there but also feels more isolated there. He remembers to construct his very own place. "As soon as he saw the barracks, Mr. Biswas decided that the time had come for him to build his own house, by whatever means," he seems excited about this thought (p. 214). He purchases secondhand materials with all his savings and begins building a house, but it is not finished. He starts living in a single room—the only one complete. Despite his ownership of the house, the angry laborers set it ablaze and prevented him from staying there for a long. He is not a good friend to the laborers who is now homeless once more. Displacement issues do not liberate Mr. Biswas.

One fact about diasporic life is that people can't stay out of a state of displacement, alienation, rootlessness, and identity crisis, among other things. Similar conditions of "out-of-placeness" are also present in Mr. Biswas (Nandan, 2008, p. 85). He must relocate to various locations in search of happiness, as Leela (2012) observes: Mohun Biswas moves from a village to a town and from a joint family to a nuclear family in search of his own identity, but despite the shifts in society and culture, he never finds his roots. He moves to Port of Spain and rents Mrs. Tulsi's house with his family. He is currently making a good living as a reporter for the Trinidad Sentinel. He also has good relationships with Mrs. Tulsi. He builds a house in Tulsi Estate in the Short Hills to be more independent and satisfied. He is content to live in his own house, but this contentment fades once more when another house catches fire and burns down. With the "sense of displacement" (Leela, 2012, p. 36), Mr. Biswas repeatedly loses his place.

Mr. Biswas and his family have moved back into Mrs. Tulsi's house in Port of Spain. Numerous others have entered the house alongside him. The house is crowded. He cannot tolerate the discomfort in the place because the peace is completely disturbed. In addition, he and his children cannot enjoy living there. He also has disagreements with Mrs. Tulsi and her son Owad simultaneously. Owad hits his son Anand with his hand. As a result, Anand informs his father that "they must move. He) can't tolerate living here one more day" (p. 551). He will look for a new home because of all these issues. His significant other, Shama, consents to leave Mrs. Tulsi's house when she says: "I'm not looking for anything larger. For me, this is just right. Something nice and small" (page 580). Mr. Biswas is constantly tormented by his state of uprooting, sadness, distance, and so forth. He won't get a place to live permanently in Trinidad. His quest for his very own position is as yet going on.

Mr. Biswas once unexpectedly encounters a solicitor's clerk in a cafe. He discusses with him both his interest and the issue. The receptionist is aware that Mr. Biswas needs to buy a house. The clerk can use this opportunity to sell Mr. Biswas his house. They arrange the cost at \$ 5,500. In his excitement about getting his own house, he only looks at some corners of the house before buying it. He pays the clerk after borrowing \$4,000 from Ajhodka. He moves into the house on Sikkim Street with his family. He moves in with his family there. Because "The Sun came through the open window on the ground floor and struck the kitchen wall," they are content to own a house. The frosted glass and woodwork were scalding hot to the touch. The brick wall inside was warm. The Sun lit up the exposed staircase in dazzling strips as it passed through the house (p. 572). However, over time, they discover several flaws in the house. There is no door in the house. Two decayed wooden pillars support the staircase. The house needs extensive repairs. They are unable to afford all of these repairs. The clerk has badly cheated them.

Despite this, Mr. Biswas takes out a loan from Basdai. The fact that they have left Mrs. Tulsi's house makes them happy. They forget about the house's flaws in this achievement. After all, Leela (2012) asserts that "this is his own house for his family." He fights for a long time and gets tired, but in the end, he wins and gets a place he can call his imaginary homeland. He now possesses independence. Sadly, though, he owes a lot of money. His worries get worse over time. He experiences cardiovascular failure and passes on going out for his family to get shielded.

Even though the novel focuses primarily on Mr. Biswas and his family, other characters like Seth, Mrs. Tulsi, Govind, W. C. Tuttle, the widows of Hanuman House, and others are also included there to experience being displaced, being apart from others, being rootless, etc. in places other than India, their original homeland. Their grandparents or parents had immigrated there as indentured laborers. According to Bruce King's (1995) thorough analysis, the majority of them do not own a home:

Naipaul examined the difficulties of the Trinidadian Asian Indians in finding the economic means to become independent individuals. Yet without such independence, symbolized by Biswas's need for a home or his own place in society, they could not really be part of the New World and would remain homeless, angry exiles dependent on a decaying past. (p.212)

Since their parents' and grandparents' time, they have been displaced and deprived of their property. To lessen the aggravation of being dislodged, they have laid out an Indian people group and proceeded with Hindu culture, convictions, customs, and so on within Trinidad. Trinidad is home to an Indian diaspora and diaspora. Despite

numerous challenges in the host nation, Indians are dispersed, and all struggle to build a home that reflects their identity. In addition, they are continuing their Hindu cultural activities in remembrance of their ancestral homeland, India. One crucial question is whether Mr. Biswas has successfully achieved his goal of building his own house. Is he wholly settled in the new country?

Even though the house is not in the best condition, he has put in a lot of effort and endured a lot of ups and downs to achieve this. He has been successful in providing his children and wife, Shama with a home. After "the desperate struggle of Mr. Biswas," it should be regarded as his most outstanding achievement (Leela, 2012, p. 36). However, his sudden death at the age of 46 was "a tragedy," leaving his family with significant debt (Leela, 2012, p. 36). Mr. Biswas's father, Raghu, died when he was a young child, and the state of displacement was passed down to him. Now, Mr. Biswas has placed his children in a situation similar to removal, as Nandan interprets it:

Inheritance is thus shown to be patriarchal as Biswas's struggles are passed down to the son as his were passed down by the father. Biswas inherits from his indentured father, Raghu Biswas, the congenital trauma of the experience of displacement from the originary center, the geographical and illusory homeland, India, which contributes to his sense of displacement in the present home. (p.80)

He has labored hard to provide complete independence for himself and his family, but he is only partially successful. To get out of the debt, a symbol of displacement and identity crisis, the family must move with a lot of hard work.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the novel has established a world where immigrants live their lives, particularly those from Caribbean islands. In addition, it has depicted Mr. Biswas and other Indian immigrants on indentured servitude's agonizing experiences of displacement, homelessness, alienation, and different adverse outcomes. In the new world, far from where they came from. He is a member of a Caribbean Island family of Indian indentured workers who came to the Caribbean Island as indentured laborers during colonialism. They were Indian immigrants from the very beginning. To eat every day in a new world with everything new—language, culture, tradition, beliefs, etc.—they had to endure many hardships. Despite their strong desire, they could not construct their own homes to maintain their permanent settlement. He is now there to inherit the state of homelessness that his immigrant ancestors experienced. Even though he died building a house for his family, he left a significant debt for them to pay. As a result, he, his family, and subsequent generations of Indian indentured laborers are experiencing displacement, eviction, alienation, and other similar conditions. After all, since Naipaul was born into a Trinidadian family of Indian indentured immigrants, his diasporic experiences and others reflect Naipaul's own life experiences to the fullest extent.

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