

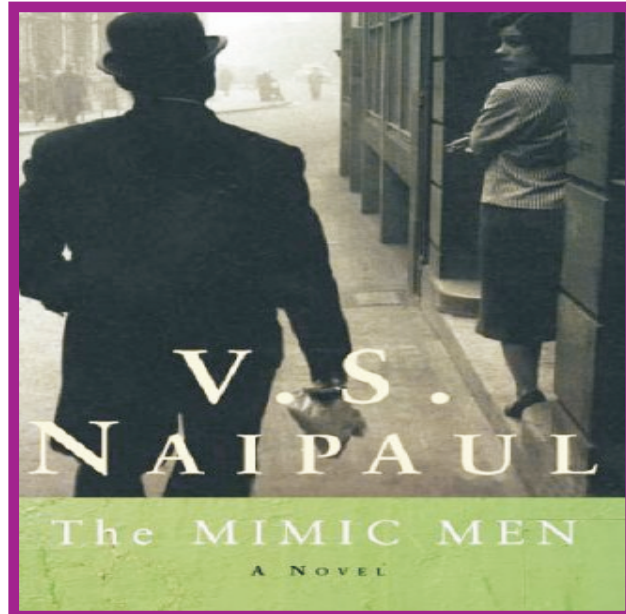
Abstract:-

The word 'exile' when used as a verb means 'to banish from a country' and when used as a noun means 'a person who has been banished from a country'. They reflect the general disillusionment that resulted from the two world wars and man's feeling of a stranger spiritually isolated in an estranged iniverse.

Works of the twentieth century deal with fragmentation of the social order, sense of

Void, and meaninglessness of endeavour, absurdity of man's situation

(Joshy VI). As Camus says in his 'The Myth of Sisyphus' (1942), "In a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. He is an irremedial exile."



POST COLONIAL DYSLEXIA IN V.S NAIPAUL'S 'THE MIMIC MEN'

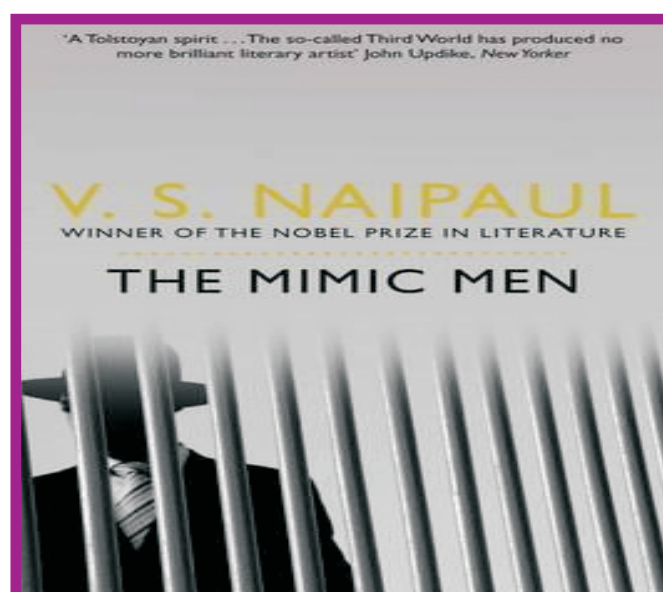


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INTRODUCTION

The divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity". (Abrams 1) Eugene Ionesco makes a similar comment. "Cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; and his actions become senseless, absurd and useless" (Abrams 1)

As a result people drown in meaninglessness. It is emotional alienation in one's own country that creates a fertile ground for physical exile. It is when these writers react against a particular political set up or a social anomaly that they are exorcised from their native pervade their creations with a sort of 'emotional anxiety'. "Having no allegiance to a country or community they examine the world with an unclouded eye" (Intro. Joshi). Their writings are an attempt to define their own situation and find answers to it. They are "individuals in half made societies groping for self definition". (Joshi VII)

'Exile' and 'Home' are two faces of the same coin. Home not only refers to the place where one lives. Its meaning ranges to a wider gamut. It also refers to the soul that nurtures a person, the language one speaks, the food one eats etc... The trees, flowers, sight, sounds make up one's home. Home is that ambience in which one blossoms. Exile makes a person homeless. Love of home and anguish of homelessness are basic human emotions. The concept of exile begins with the banishment of Adam and Eve from their first abode of bliss. The pain that ensues from being expelled from a perfect home begins here. Exile was a kind of punishment earlier when travel and communication were not easy.

A writer who suffers exile, in an effort to discover himself and to shape his identity uses words to rebuild his lost home. He himself becomes the subject of his writings. When talking about the concept of 'exile', it is necessary to comment upon what 'diaspora' is. Historically 'diaspora' referred to the dispersal of the Jewish people. The word comes from the Greek words 'Dia' which means 'through' and 'Speirein' meaning 'to scatter'. According to Webster's Dictionary, the word means 'dispersal from', a deviation from the centre. It evokes the image of a journey but not all journeys are diasporas. It is the conditions that lead to this that matters. Slavery led to diasporas in Africa and the Caribbean. A diaspora exists precisely within the memories about the original homeland. They, in the new land create a version of the homeland they remember.

I would like to focus on V.S. Naipaul's work 'The Mimic Men' and how his protagonist Ralph Singh had to face an identity crisis as a result of these experiences. Naipaul's writings issue from a desire to understand his position in this world. In spite of being related with three different kinds of societies he was still homeless. His writings mainly spring from his displacement from India, Trinidad and the influence from his father. But Naipaul could never write anything while he was at Trinidad. He was on the verge of an artistic sterility. Naipaul believes that "A distance between the place and yourself is crucial to write about an experience which took place there". (Joshi 18) It was only after he left Trinidad for England that he could start writing. But he was really in a deadlock. England was not a fully satisfying place for him. "Living in England has been a kind of castration really. I haven't enjoyed England...." (New Week, August 1980 38)

Ralph Singh, the hero of 'The Mimic Men', after his education in London marries an English lady Sandra and goes back to the island 'Isabella' but finds that his relatives do not accept Sandra. This results in their separation. Ralph Singh becomes a politician. But later he gets disgusted and returns to London and starts writing his autobiography in a suburban hotel in London. But he faces some difficulty in reconstructing the circumstances and events in his life. Fawzia Musthafa, in her 'V.S. Naipaul' terms the situation of Ralph Singh in 'The Mimic Men' as 'post colonial dyslexia'. Dyslexia refers to difficulty in reading. Here, by the term 'Dyslexia' we refer to a lack of clarity with reference to one's identity and position in this world. We can find an autobiographical relationship between the author and the character 'Ralph Singh'. Hence, the term 'post colonial dyslexia' can not only be referred to Ralph Singh alone but also to V.S. Naipaul, the author.

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