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This introductory study offers a critical overview of the major works of V.S. Naipaul from 1950 to the present day. Professor Mustafa's main concern is with literary issues, but historical, political, and cultural questions are also addressed, with comparative references to other postcolonial works. Paradoxically, a major segment of Naipaul's non-western, pro-decolonization readership seized on negative elements in his thinking, while western reaction to his ideas and themes led to set notions about Third-World society. Thus, his work has always been the object of radically divergent views, dependent on the perspective of the reader. In examining this issue, Mustafa introduces general debates about postcolonial literary production and its contemporary interrogation of narrative techniques, language, gender, race, and canon formation.

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V.S. NAIPAUL

FAWZIA MUSTAFA

*Fordham University*



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*For my dear parents, Sophia and Abdulla Mustafa*

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Everyone I know has a well-articulated opinion about V.S. Naipaul, and no one I know has neglected to express his or hers to me, including my sister, Hana, and my brother, Mali. Among the many others to whom I am greatly indebted, Dale Lasden, Jamie Macguire, David Lelyveld, Nuzhat Ahmad, Carole Murray, Bonny Kwoh, Bonnie McDougall, Alison Bailey, Kate Mulvey, Terence McGuigan, and Mehreen Sadik all at one time or another have helped me think through my early engagement with Naipaul's work. I owe particular thanks to Susan Berger for reading portions of the manuscript and for continuing to speak her mind quite plainly. Finally, I would not have written this book but for Sara Suleri Goodyear, whose friendship over many undocumented years has always found unusual ways to force the issue. I thank her with the long-overdue salutation, "What next, Sach?"



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## Chronology

- 1932 Born, Chaguanas, Trinidad, August 17.
- 1948 Awarded Trinidad Government Scholarship.
- 1950 Travels to England to read English at Oxford University; starts occasional pieces for the BBC World Service *Caribbean Voices*.
- 1955 Marries Patricia Ann Hale.
- 1957 *The Mystic Masseur*.
- 1958 *The Suffrage of Elvira*; awarded John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize for *The Mystic Masseur*; begins to write reviews for the *New Statesman*.
- 1959 *Miguel Street*.
- 1960 Commission by the government of Trinidad and Tobago to write on the Caribbean.
- 1961 *A House for Mr. Biswas*; awarded Somerset Maugham Award for *Miguel Street*.
- 1962 *The Middle Passage*; embarks on first trip to India.
- 1963 *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*.
- 1964 *An Area of Darkness*; awarded Hawthornden Prize for *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*.
- 1966 Travels to East and Central Africa.
- 1967 *The Mimic Men*; *A Flag on the Island*.
- 1968 Awarded W. H. Smith prize for *The Mimic Men*.
- 1969 *The Loss of El Dorado*.
- 1970 Settles in Wiltshire, England.
- 1971 *In a Free State*; awarded Booker Prize for *In a Free State*.
- 1972 *The Overcrowded Barracoon*.
- 1975 *Guerrillas*; D.Litt. University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.

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*Chronology*

- 1977 *India: A Wounded Civilization*.
- 1978 Teaches at Wesleyan College, Connecticut, USA.
- 1979 *A Bend in the River*; travels through the non-Arab Islamic world.
- 1980 *The Return of Eva Peron with The Killings in Trinidad*; awarded the Bennet Award.
- 1981 *Among the Believers*.
- 1983 Awarded the Jerusalem Award.
- 1984 *Finding the Centre*.
- 1986 Awarded the T.S. Eliot Award.
- 1987 *The Enigma of Arrival*.
- 1988 Travels through the southeastern United States.
- 1989 *A Turn in the South*.
- 1990 Awarded Trinity Cross, Trinidad; knighted; *India: A Million Mutinies Now*.
- 1994 University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, MacFarlin Library opens its Naipaul archive; *A Way in the World*.