

ABSTRACT

From Seepersad Naipaul to
V.S. Naipaul

The Development of a Writer

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This thesis will seek to examine the significance of Seepersad Naipaul's writings and the influence of this writing on his son, V.S. Naipaul. It will also look at the development of V.S. Naipaul as a writer; the ways he may have developed the earlier vision of his father, and the manner in which other influences would have imposed themselves upon this vision.

In the Introduction there will be a brief look at the Beacon writers. This group is dealt with for two reasons. Firstly, they were important as writers because they have generally been credited with the introduction of social realism in West Indian literature, and secondly, they would show that Seepersad Naipaul was, by comparison operating in isolation; unaffected and perhaps unaware of literary conventions, and possessing no ideological indignation or any desire to change the perceptions of his society.

The first chapter will give a brief biographical account of Seepersad Naipaul. This is included because, as will be shown in the thesis, the conflicts and despair that marked his life, had a considerable influence on the attitudes of his son.

The second chapter will look at the stories themselves; the thematic concerns, the use of language, the authenticity of his characterization, the structure of his stories, the ways he may have differed from his literary contemporaries and finally, the ambivalence that seeped through many of his stories: the combination of both frustration and romance.

Chapter three will examine some of the variations in the vision of both Naipauls but it will also show that these differences were inevitable since both writers were operating in different environments and were participants in differing experiences. It will show however, that even though the vision may have been altered, it was never entirely replaced or negated.

The following chapter will look at the various environments -- Trinidad, England, and India where V.S. Naipaul sought to assuage his sense of rootlessness. It will try to show that this feeling of alienation increased because the writer either rejected these places or felt rejected by them.

Chapter five is divided into four sub-sections. In each of these sub-sections, particular influences would be traced. Here, the debt to his father, and to other writers, as well as the

influence of his environment would be examined; the elements that are considered pertinent to his development as a writer. It would also try to establish the modification of the father's vision towards a more universal presentation.

And finally, the conclusion, which will review all the assertions made throughout the course of this thesis.

This thesis is not meant to be a biographical study showing how Seepersad Naipaul deliberately steered his son towards a literary career nor is it an examination of specific works by both writers. It is hoped however, that it will convey not only the importance of Seepersad Naipaul as a writer but would also indicate how much he has transferred his vision to his son, V.S. Naipaul, and the extent to which the younger Naipaul's preoccupation were in many ways similar to those of his father, years earlier. It is hoped also that the thesis will, on a broader perspective, give some idea of the development of V.S. Naipaul as a writer, examining the influences that helped to shape his attitudes and his perceptions.