V.S. NAIPAUL'S THE MYSTIC MASSEUR: DEFINING FAILURE AND SUCCESS FOR THE COLONIAL SUBJECT

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Subject(s): Language and Literature Studies, Literary Texts
Published by: Editura Arhipelag XXI
Keywords: social and political satire; colonialism; decolonization

Summary/Abstract: The Mystic Masseur is the story of Ganesh Ramsumma's journey from the margin to the centre, from colonial Trinidad to the imperial metropolis of London. The particulars of Ganesh's local and later metropolitan success are inscribed into the larger picture of a colonial society and its maladies. Ganesh's rise to prominence is premised on the bastardization of Hindu and western cultural capital. Yet what at a superficial level appears as achievement is revealed as a deeper failure. Instead of fighting for equal access to education or championing the rights of the subaltern, Ganesh proves a supporter of the status quo. He uses opportunities only to further his own interest, and never takes a wider view on issues of social injustice. Through Ganesh's character and the story of his meteoric rise to power the novel satirizes the limited social and political understanding of colonial society, directing a powerful critique at the effects of economic imperialism. Due to the lack of authentic cultural
traditions and real values, Trinidadian society appears as artificial, halfmade, and is thus incapable of fostering and promoting excellence.

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Mr. Naipaul, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2001, wrote about the liberation movements that swept across Africa and the Caribbean, where he was born. The author V. S. Naipaul in 1991. He was compared to Conrad, Dickens and Tolstoy, but was also a lightning rod for criticism. Credit...Neal Boenzi/The New York Times. By Rachel Donadio. Aug. 11, 2018. V.S. Naipaul, the Nobel laureate who documented the migrations of peoples, the unraveling of the British Empire, the ironies of exile and the clash between belief and unbelief in more than a dozen unsparing novels and as many works of nonfiction, died on Saturday at his home in London. He was 85. His family confirmed the death in a statement, The Associated Press reported. Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, TC (/ˈnɑːpʊl/ or /ˈnaɪpʊl/; born 17 August 1932), is a Trinidadian Nobel Prize-winning British writer known for his comic early novels set in Trinidad and Tobago, his bleaker later novels of the wider world, and his autobiographical chronicles of life and travels. He has published more than 30 books, both of fiction and nonfiction, over some 50 years. VS Naipaul after receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2001. EPA. Email. Vida's father Seepersaud Naipaul was the first Indo-Trinidadian reporter for the Trinidad Guardian. He wrote short stories that he hoped would be published in London and lift the family from its genteel poverty. A House for Mr Biswas, Flag on the Island, The Suffrage of Elvira, The Mystic Masseur, and his brother Shiva's Chip Chip Gatherers and Fireflies were the first great novels coming out of the history of indenture. Both Vidia and Shiva went up to Oxford, but their writing was both an act of faith to their origins as much as an act of treason against the language bequeathed them by Empire.