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Acknowledgements

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Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul is unquestionably one of the region's highest achievers and an internationally acclaimed literary talent. Throughout his writing career he has been the recipient of numerous awards, but in 2001 he rose to the pinnacle of literary acclaim by cropping the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature. His superb feel for the complex human condition affords him the uncanny ability to strip the layers of the often paradoxical nuances of motive and behavior, making him an invaluable analyst of our contemporary global order that still struggles to reshape and rename itself in the aftermath of Empire, but most of all still remains challenged by the timeless stumbling blocks of an imperfect humanity. His unique and exquisite voice has indelibly marked the art of writing, as much as it has invited new ways of seeing the world.

On August 17th, 2007, V.S. Naipaul celebrated his 75th birthday. This was the year that the St Augustine campus of The University of the West Indies deemed appropriate to stage a series of events in celebration of the life and work of this most distinguished Caribbean man of letters and son of the soil. The initiative was in fact the brainchild of then Campus Principal, Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, whose Office spear-headed the promotion and coordination of the events. In addition to a number of lectures held under the University of the West Indies Distinguished Open Lecture Series, the newspaper serialization of *The Suffrage of Elvira* and an evening of appreciation and reading, a symposium entitled, *V.S. Naipaul Created in the West Indies* was organized and hosted by the Literatures in English section of The Department of Liberal Arts on April 19th, 2007.

The context of the Naipaul celebrations offered a rare and an ideal opportunity to stimulate wide-ranging public interest in the author and to open fresh fields of debate on Naipaul's significant body of work. His phenomenal literary output, his unabashed reflection on the history of the colony that had made him, and his provocative critique of world affairs invite an equally passionate and rigorous critical engagement with a writer who is clearly among the most talented and controversial voices to have emerged from this Caribbean. Given the intense nature of a one-day forum, we wanted to focus on issues that have preoccupied Naipaul, the man and writer. Papers therefore clustered into panels such as "Home and Belonging," "Naipaul and Writing," and "Representing History." These panels drew attention to the trauma of cultural loss and displacement, the condition of the migrant in a world of crumbling borders and the reality of difference, the conundrum called home, the enigma of identity, and the mysterious ways of the creative imagination.

From its inception, the symposium was envisioned as an interdisciplinary forum intended to net a cadre of regional and international scholars in the humanities. The response was enthusiastic from the outset, attracting the interest of accomplished scholars from literature, linguistics, cultural studies, film studies, and history inclusive of Edward Baugh, Rhonda Cobham-Sander, Mark McWatt, Evelyn O'Callaghan and Sandra Pouchet Paquet, as well as St Augustine's own Jean Antoine-Dunne, Bridget Brereton, Barbara Lalla, Paula Morgan, Jennifer Rahim, Brinsley Samaroo and Vijay Maharaj.

We are grateful to all the contributors for agreeing to be part of this most important collection of essays. The collaborative nature of the celebrations is reflected by the contributions included in this special issue of *Anthurium*. The essays by Gordon Rohlehr and Edward Baugh, for instance, were delivered as part of the Distinguished Open Lecture Series on Naipaul, with Baugh's presentation delivered at the close of the symposium. Rhonda Cobham-Sanders's essay was delivered as the Cultural Studies Distinguished Lecture and was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Our only regret is that we are unable to publish all the presentations. Additionally, because their contributions are not represented in this collection, we reserve a special word of thanks to Kenneth Ramchand, Evelyn O'Callaghan, Lawrence Scott, Al Creighton, and Merle Hodge who, with Gordon Rohlehr, participated in an energetic and rewarding roundtable discussion on the author, "Matters Arising: Conversations on V.S. Naipaul."

Events of this nature are primarily the outcome of a great deal of hard work and the goodwill of many. We are grateful for the generous funding for this project provided by the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine and for the support offered by the Office of the Principal. The Faculty of Humanities and Education is fortunate to have in Dr Ian Robertson, a Dean who is unwavering in his support of the initiatives undertaken by faculty members. We are thankful for his graciousness in this regard. We also thank Paula Morgan, Coordinator of the Cultural Studies Graduate Programme at the St. Augustine campus for her role in making the lecture by Rhonda Cobham possible. To all our colleagues, the conference secretaries Jacinta Mitchell and Adele Bain, and many students who gave of their talent and time to make this event possible, we are grateful.

Finally, the Liberal Arts Department is gifted with a longstanding relationship with the English Department and the Caribbean Literary Studies Program at The University of Miami, Coral Gables. We are deeply grateful to Sandra Pouchet Paquet and her team for collaborating with us in making these papers available to the public in this special issue of *Anthurium*. I assembled the papers and *Anthurium's* editors and staff including Patricia Saunders, Sheri-Marie Harrison, and Nadia Johnson edited the papers for publication. The paintings on the home page were selected by *Anthurium's* editor Sandra Pouchet Paquet and are reproduced courtesy Richard Bolai and Adele Todd of thebookmann. We trust that this issue in design and substance will bear fruit in generating future Naipaul scholarship.