

Vivid Description is the Hallmark of V. S. Naipaul: With reference to “A Turn in the South”

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Abstract:

This research paper examines the artistic ability of the narrative style of V.S. Naipaul, which is based primarily on giving a vivid description of the details in his Non-Fiction works. For this research paper, the researcher has chosen the book “*The Turn in the South*” as a reference to substantiate his observations on the narrative style of V. S. Naipaul. The researcher explains the basic details of the narrative technique in the introduction part of the paper, in the second part of the paper, the researcher explains the factors that contribute to say that the vivid description is the hallmark of V. S. Naipaul. They include: picturing nature to perfection, describing the climate and atmosphere to minute details, dwelling into the memory lane to give the describe the experience and unfolding the truths without having any sort of inhibitions. The researcher concludes the paper by saying that the narrative style of Naipaul is artistic more than historical.

Keywords: traveler, recreation of memory, vivid rendering, art form of novel, bare facts, aesthetic pleasure.

Introduction:

V.S. Naipaul is among the few American and Commonwealth writers who has emerged as one of the most prominent and successful exponents of this new technique of narration. In recording the impression of his travels to various countries he has shown such skill both in his use of language and form that he has come to be known as a superlative traveler who misses nothing worth the record in a narrative which is beautifully written and almost impossible to put down. His dependence on the candour and the recreation of the memory is quite phenomenal. While narrating his experience, he appears to recreate his memory by linking the same to wider visions and experiences which almost appear to function like creating an experience within experience, a kind of art that In this context it may be noted that the writers who attempt this kind of art form are always seen keeping off the central point: not that they don't have a central point, but actually, they are involved in split attention that keeps them at a remove and yet intellectually their minds are throwing light on the central point from different angles.

“Naipaul makes use of literary allusions in depicting the salient traits of his characters in a brilliant way. Not only such allusions create rich associations in the minds of the readers but also render the character in question all the more life-like and vivid”(Dalleo 2005:211)

Features of V.S Naipaul's vivid description:

Naipaul is an unparalleled narrator when it comes to picture nature. It triggers his poetic imagination in such a way that the readers' aesthetic pleasure gets satiated. For example, in the following passage, he uses his art of poetic ability to transform the objects of nature into superb elements of beauty. He is like a painter when it comes to rendering the subject clearly and vividly. He has the gift of describing the sense of colour and sensuousness of imperative meaning of the colour. Thus, Naipaul can be compared to be a painter, who also possesses the same skill. Projecting the same skill, he always succeeds in vividly rendering landscape giving a replica of the picture as a whole in the mind of the reader like in the passage where he describes the location of the party in Atlanta:

“The party was in a rough, long-grassed field between woods and in front of a grey, patched-up wooden hut on low pillars. the hut was said to be very old. It stood almost at the foot of a slope; and when you looked through the back door and window directly to the green of the land sloping up in the shade of pines, the site did have the feel of an ancient, protective solitude, quite different from any solitude one might arrange for oneself today”. (Naipaul V.S 2011:34)

Close to this lies his art of narrating the climate and atmosphere of a particular moment with such minute observations and artistic touches that the reader cannot but feel like partaking in the beautiful surroundings that the writer creates, if the reader reads the passage given below, he can imagine he/she is in the church partaking time and distance:

“The Church is so white and plain outside was full of things inside. It was much used and looked like a living room or a meeting place for the congregation. the main hall was about fifty feet long by thirty feet wide. It was full of flowers, and it had a piano and organ. the carpet was green-blue: the pews were upholstered in a green fabric. At the end of the hall was a very big picture of Jesus and Mary Magdalen. It was at least fifteen feet wide and five feet high. The Christ was noticeably white, blond and long-haired, a little bit as I had noticed in other places-like some paintings of General Custer”. (Naipaul V.S 2011:121)

The most striking feature to note here is the fact that while the writer is expressing facts, he is at the same time transforming these facts into the literary art form of the novel. In other words, nonfiction which means facts are recreated here into fiction by the highly poetic and imaginative mind of the artist who is pulling all the strings together with his art of centrifugal technique piling all the time memory upon memory and experience upon experience, transforming thereby the whole record of his experiences and facts into a highly literary work of art. a deeper and searching probe into the salient features of his narrative technique evinces that Naipaul has made use of many more devices than used by other artists in this field to make it a powerful mode of communication.

It was well-kept roads and an enormous artificial lake created by the Army corps of Engineers was hard to associate with the blood tensions of 1912. the country town in the midst of these spring woods was very American: the fast-food places, the banks looking like churches, the bill-boards-ordinary. A woman stepped out of her grocery shop to direct me to the sheriff's office. Across the main town road, past the cemetery, and then on to a low brick structure. And then there, in the busy little redbrick town it was a new building, not the one of 1912, but still as flat and basic looking as a sheriff's office in a western film; FORSYTH COUNTRY JAIL, but with a large asphalted forecourt full of parked cars-the jail and the sheriff's office, like the fast food places, serving the motorized community. the United States flag and the Georgia flag hung side by side from flagpoles.

(Naipaul V.S 2011:51-52)

In the above passage, it would wonder a reader, if Naipaul writes every detail while he sees the surroundings or he just recalls every detail from his memory lane. he remembers the name of the jail, he remembers the colours, locations and directions. the setting is imprinted in the minds of the readers as he reads through his description. Naipaul appears most refractory; he does not use a limited set of instruments like an engineer. On the contrary, he has everything at hand, and he uses all materials to make his performance as much ceremonial as practical. In other words, while describing a thing he bases his narration on the circumstances that tend to be centrifugal rather than centripetal and with this particular feature of style he can illustrate his point of view with many materials as a rush into his mind.

Unlike the other non-fiction writers who attempt to give the filtered truth Instead of stating bare facts, Naipaul makes a deep probe into the heart of things based on revealing the truth there is no inhibition in his narration to give the picture-perfect narration, consider the following passage that describes the people of Charleston:

“It was at times pleasure and excitement to see them, to see individual way each human frame organized or arranged its excess poundage’s: a swag here, a bag there, a roll there. A kind of suicide it might have seemed; but I might also began to wonder-in the Graceland ticket hall, among all these proud and excited folk-whether for these descendants of frontier people and pint landers there wasn’t, in their fatness, some simple element of self-assertion”(Naipaul V.S 2011:226)

While describing the people of Charleston, especially the women and the gay people, V.S.Naipaul, describes them with absolute candour in the above passage. It could easily have been seen as body shaming and other writers might have filtered the description, but it is not the case with V.S. Naipaul. Some people admire him for this quality and some people loathe this style of narration as Chaubrey (2013) says:

“Naipaul is an author whose works are often the subject matter of many disputes among the critics of the contemporary literary landscape. This controversial writer has divided the critics into binaries—some praise him as one of the most gifted authors of these days; the others blame him for “racial arrogance” He is known as an author who is either loved and admired or renounced. After all, there is one thing that most of the critics concur on and it is the fact that Naipaul is the master of observation and depiction who always provides his reader with very sophisticated descriptions”. (Chaubrey 36)

Conclusion: Without any second thoughts, it is evident that V.S Naipaul is one of the pioneers in using aesthetic tools to transform realistic experiences into aesthetically pleasurable fiction. Many writers have taken up the task of doing the same but Naipaul stands out in this art. It is mainly because of his unfettered attitude to give the picture-perfect narration of every detail that he sees and experiences.

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