

John Gross, Esq.,

22nd September, 1971

Dear John,

Thinking over our telephone conversation this morning it occurs to me that it might be useful to repeat one point and re-emphasise a couple of others.

The point I would like to repeat is that the rules of the Booker Prize were deliberately changed from 1970 to 1971 to make quite sure of excluding novels which were not full length i. e. the clear intention was to exclude the novella.

The points I wish to re-emphasise are these:-

I think it would be extremely helpful to the Booker Prize and to the Prize committee and, indeed, to the judges themselves if the reasons why the judges thought the V.S. Naipaul book is a full length novel (or why they do not think it is not a full length novel) could be put on paper and agreed by as many as possible of the judges. The most effective way probably is for people to initial such a statement. Of course, this may not be practical but I think it would be a great help.

More basic, and perhaps in one way more important is the question of making sure to all and sundry that the judges do indeed believe that the Naipaul book is a full length novel - irrespective of the reasons for so thinking (i. e. a simple assertion of opinion). And here I think it would be almost vital for it to be recorded by way of signature that all the judges (or at least three of them) have decided that the book is eligible in terms of being a full length novel.

I think with these bits of paper that everybody concerned with the Booker Prize, including the judges, is thoroughly protected

against the barrage of questions and possible criticism that may arise on the publication of the short list.

If you wish to circulate this letter you certainly may. I would just like to repeat that the Prize committee is in no way going back on its own rules or trying to affect the decision but simply to make sure for everybody's sake that the rules have been followed and that the judges' decision - which is final - has been made.

Yours sincerely,

(J.N. Murphy)