



Naipaul's Writings and the Diasporic Vision

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ABSTRACT

The most well-known author of the twenty-first century is V.S. Naipaul. Since his protagonists live distant from their hometowns, alienation and dislocation are recurring themes in his works. Homelessness, dispersion, and identity issues are something that V. S. Naipaul has personally experienced, and he has written about this need in his novels. The current effort attempts to recognize this fundamental idea that appears throughout his works.

Introduction

V. S. Naipaul the 2001 Nobel laureate is the quintessential diasporic writer. He is uprooted twice first from his native India to Trinidad and Tobago and subsequently to Britain. In the British colony of Trinidad, Naipaul was born in 1932 into an Indian diaspora group. His parents were the offspring of enslaved laborers who were employed on the island's sugar cane fields. There were a ton of low-income, uneducated Indian families. Naipaul was awarded a scholarship by Oxford University to study there. From then on, his true journey began.

Naipaul said in his address upon receiving the 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature, "It is a wonderful compliment to England, my home, and India, the land of my ancestors." The term "diaspora" in literature refers to a movement, migration, or departure from a place of origin or established home. "The movement of people from any nation or group away from their home country" is how the Oxford Dictionary defines diaspora.

A few writers from the Diaspora have an unsatisfied need for self-expression, which they channel into their writing. One author who comes to mind is Vikram Seth. *A Suitable Boy* (1993), his most extensive

work, was published in the English language in a single volume. It narrates the experiences of Rupa Mehra, a mother who searches for an appropriate groom for her daughter Lata. The similar identity motif appears in his second work, *Two Lives*. Bharati Mukherjee is a fantastic advocate for oneself. Her book *Jasmine: Identity in Exile* is a brilliant work that explores identity issues head-on. Jasmine, the main character, goes through many transformations in her life—from Jyoti to Jasmine—and frequently feels deeply estranged from herself. Her second book, *Middleman and Other Stories*, is about a young Indian woman who was left behind by her hippie mother when she was a young girl. Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* is set in the Bay of Bengal and Sunderban areas, two of the most fascinating places on the Indian coast.

A young marine biologist named Piyali Roy is searching for a rare and endangered river. His second novel, *The Calcutta Chromosomes*, is a Kolkata-based story about delirium and fevers. This work encompasses a description of the discovery of Calcutta. His other novel, *The Shadow Lines*, tells the story of Ila, Jatin's daughter, who marries Nick Price in order to become an English citizen and escape the stifling Indian society. The second character, Magda, is born with an innate yearning to be English. The main character Tridib is an extraordinary person with a creative intellect, but he is tragically assassinated by a mob from the community, therefore his search for identity is never fully satisfied. Many of V.S. Naipaul's writings are based on these topics, much as all of the ones mentioned above.

V.S. Naipaul was born in Chaguanas, Trinidad, on August 17, 1932. He was the eldest son of a second generation Indian. Seepersad Naipaul, the father of the author, was an Indian Brahmin who was born in a little hamlet and worked as a writer for the *Trinidad Guardian*. He authored and published short tales as well. The family went to Port of Spain, the capital, when Naipaul was barely six years old. Seepersad passed away from a heart attack before he could see his son's career as a writer take off. His articles had served as an encouragement to Naipaul. He says in an encouraging remark, "Do not be frightened to be an artist." D.H. Lawrence was first and foremost an artist, therefore view him as such for the time being. Remember his old phrase: "Art for my sake." Naipaul authored his first novel at the age of sixteen, but the publisher rejected it. After winning a government scholarship and finishing his schooling at Queens' Royal College in Trinidad, he went to University College in Oxford, England, where he worked as an editor and writer for the BBC's "Caribbean Voices" program. He was the author who received the 2001 Nobel Prize for Literature. Naipaul, a Trinidadian by birth, Indian by heritage, and British by choice, began his professional career. His early writings, including *Mystic Masseur*, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, and *In A Free State*, cemented his reputation as a gifted writer. Remember the ancient phrase "Art for

my sake"? Naipaul wrote his first novel when he was sixteen years old, but the publisher rejected it. He attended Queen's Royal College in Trinidad and completed his education there on a government scholarship. He then proceeded to University College in Oxford, England, where he worked as an editor and writer for the BBC's "Caribbean Voices" program. The 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature awarded to him as the author. Naipaul began his professional career in 1950. He is Trinidadian by birth, Indian by descent, and British by preference. His works *In A Free State* (1971), *Guerrillas* (1975), and *A Bend in the River* (1979) all illustrate the isolation and disintegration that characterize post-colonial countries.

Naipaul received his education at Port of Spain's Queen's Royal College. In 1949, Naipaul wrote to his elder sister, "I never felt my face was fat," following the shooting of several images of himself for his university application. The picture suggested as much. An Indian from India could not appear much more Indian than I did by staring at the Asiatic on the page. He tried suicide after suffering a mental breakdown, but thankfully the gas meter ran out. In Oxford, he met Patricia Hale, with whom he was married in 1955. After she passed away from cancer in 1996, Naipaul wed the divorced Pakistani journalist Nadira Khanum Alvi. Naipaul began his work as a freelance writer after graduating. Naipaul was feeling hopeless at the time, but he managed to find a home for his poetry in the BBC's Caribbean Voices. He also worked as a regular fiction reviewer for the *New Statesman* from 1957 to 1961. In the late 1950s, Naipaul released his first books, but neither he nor his publisher, Andre Deutsch, made much money from them. *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) by Naipaul tells the story of a clever young man. *Miguel Street* (1959) marked Trinidad's departure from Port of Spain. The boy who tells the story grows up, begins making his own money, and eventually travels overseas to further his education. "I went quickly toward the jet, ignoring everyone else and focusing only on my shadow—a damning dwarf on the tarmac—in front of me." *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), which took home the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1958, was made into a movie in 2001 using a script written by Caryl Phillips. *Miguel Street* (1959), a collection of short stories, received the Somerset Maugham Prize for nonfiction. His father's existence in Trinidad inspired his highly acclaimed 1961 book, *A House for Mr. Biswas*. *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963), his first work set in England, received the Howthorden Prize. *The Mimic Men* (1967) won the 1968 W. H. Smith Literary Award. The novel *In a Free State* took home the Booker Prize. Africa is the setting for both *A Bend in the River* (1979) and *Guerrillas*. A first-hand narrative of his life in England can be found in *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987). *A Way in the World* (1994) is a historical account of the Caribbean that blends non-fiction with fiction. It was once an experimental story. The 2001 book *Half a Life* chronicles the travels of Indian Willie Chandran in post-World War II

Britain. His narrative is continued in *Magic Seeds* (2004). His non-fiction writings include two volumes about Islamic societies, *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions* (1998) and *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (1981), as well as three works about India: *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990). In 1889, he was knighted. In addition to receiving the 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature, he was honored with the 1993 David Cohen British Literature Prize from the Arts Council of England. In addition to honorary degrees from the universities of Cambridge, London, and Oxford, he also holds honorary doctorates from Columbia University in New York and Cambridge University. England's Wiltshire is home to him. There are numerous threads of diaspora and related themes in Naipaul's books. Ganesh Ramsumair, who is born in a small Trinidadian village to a Hindu Brahmin family, is the protagonist of Naipaul's novel *The Mystic Masseur*. To find his place in the world, he must take on multiple vocations. His dad holds him to a lot of standards. In *Miguel Street*, a collection of short stories by Naipaul, numerous characters are depicted as doing nothing. Despite having no interest in their line of work, Bogart and Popo merely brag about it.

Regarding Popo, opinions vary: "Popo is a man-woman." Not a respectable man (10). The life narrative of Mohun Biswas, a Brahmin kid who is deemed unlucky at birth, is told in Naipaul's novel *A House for Mr. Biswas*. The consensus among critics is that *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) is Naipaul's best work. Mohun Biswas, the protagonist and Naipaul's "everyman" from the third world, is searching for his place in the world and, more importantly, for a house he can call his own. When the pundit speculates that the boys might be to blame for his parents' deaths and he is born with six fingers. Under pressure from Shama's family, he must wed her after passing her a love note. He moves in with the family as a gharjamai. His quest for his home is still unresolved, and it becomes feasible only in the latter phases. So, in order to "appropriate (his) piece of the Earth" (8), he leads a permanently unhappy life. He has a sense of being lost and without purpose. "The entrance of Mr. Biswas into the Tulsi household in an environment more liberal than the one which prevailed at Hanuman House," notes N. Sharada Iyer. (Iyer 22) Because of his unusual upbringing, Naipaul's writings often deal with this sense of rootlessness. The overall plot of Mr. Biswas's novel is that of a guy who is frightened by an unstructured society and tormented by social constraints. The protagonist is constantly in suspension, always prepared to declare his identity but ultimately unable to do so. (Prasad, 7)

Having visited numerous nations, Naipaul once criticized India, saying, "Everything is inherited, nothing is removed, everything comes out of something else." *Darkness* (194). *India: A Wounded Civilization* is Naipaul's second travelogue, published in 1977. In 1975, Naipaul traveled to India. It was

during the most contentious era in post-colonial India, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi established the state of emergency. It was a chaotic period marked by social and political rivalries, panic, dismay, and striving. Suppressing poverty and illiteracy as well as increasing the efficiency and productivity of industry and agriculture were the main objectives of the emergency. Indians have sentimental recollections of their past. They still live on the splendor of ancient India and worship it. India remained unchanged even in the midst of the global crisis. Returning to India meant regaining insight into the world's fundamental structure, where everyone was safe and everything was sanctified (Wounded Civilization, 36). According to Naipaul, Indians are no longer oblivious to filth, poverty, the outdated system of government, and a weak economy. They yearn for reformation, are unable to look back on their history, and believe that their political, economic, and social structures will not undergo a drastic change in order for them to remain competitive in the modern world. Indians attempt to imitate foreign cultures, but they lack a thorough understanding of these cultures' customs, which mutually transform in the Indian setting into useless imitations devoid of concepts. They are sterile, cut off from reality and utility, in Naipaul's words (Wounded Civilization 121). Such concepts and actions have no foundation in India. These concepts are taken out of context and do not make sense for Indian society. He goes on to discuss how Indians are simply copying western technology, saying, "It is imitation inside mimicry imperfectly grasped notion within imperfectly understood idea."

The way that Naipaul views Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and his contribution to the creation of the contemporary Indian country has changed significantly. The author of *India: A Wounded Civilization* no longer views Gandhi as generally favorable. His judgments in *An Area of Darkness*, where he gives him good ratings for making the correct decisions, differ greatly from those in *India: A Wounded Civilization*. In his book *Wounded Civilization*, Naipaul criticizes Gandhi of having a "defect of vision." According to *Wounded Civilization*, *A Million Mutinies* is Naipaul's third travelogue on India. This book differs significantly from the previous two, especially in terms of Naipaul's attitude toward India. India has seen multiple changes and reforms since the author's initial visit, and there is still a lot of change to come. Now that India is moving in the right way, Naipaul is a little relieved. Naipaul arrived in India during a period of rapid industrialization and change in agriculture. By vividly describing real people and their tales, he exposes the reader to the reality state of affairs in India. Although Naipaul attempts to interview people from all social and cultural backgrounds, the majority of those he speaks with are men who are primarily "urban, middle-aged, and middle class." (Pierce 110) "Living in a borrowed culture, the west Indian, more than most, needs writers to teach him who he is and where he stands," says Naipaul in *The Middle*

Passage (1962). In summary, while Naipaul explored a variety of topics in his writings, the themes of identity, rootlessness, and diaspora were the most prevalent. Naipaul has done a masterful job of depicting these concepts. In conclusion, he is among the greatest novelists Patrick Swinden.

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