

# **V.S.NAIPAUL'S BIOGRAPHY "THE WORLD IS WHAT IT IS" BY PATRICK FRENCH DEPICTING TRINIDADIAN NAIPAUL AS AN INTELLECTUAL OF INDIAN ORIGIN HIT BY DIASPORA.**

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**Abstract:** Though Diaspora literature has been part of English literature, it is actually a part of Anthropological History. It pertains basically to the Jews who dispersed throughout the world after Moses led their exodus from Egypt. There are two kinds of people who fall under the Diaspora. First are those members of a mass of the population who were forced to leave their native countries in batches, groups, and crowds to various other countries as refugees and who are hated by native populations of host countries and have become stateless like the Islamic refugees from Syria or the Islamic Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. Second are those who, after experiencing subjugation for an extended period ranging decades to a couple of centuries, get deliverance and spread in many countries of the world in search of a better and happier life with dignity and stability. The temporal causation of Diaspora is linear. Holocaust → Exodus → Diaspora → Reuniting at the promised land. The order is Subjugation → Slavery → Massacre → Mass hysteria filled with a feeling of escape → Exodus → Diaspora. Those who escaped unemployment, poverty, superstition and, the filth of their own third world country never feel any loss. Sir V.S. Naipaul (Nobel Prize winner in English Literature 2001) himself never felt any loss for his ancestors alienating from India nor does Kiran Desai (Man Booker Prize 2006) feels any loss. The feeling of loss is a myth. On the contrary, those writers and other successful men and women who left India sigh relief that once for all they have migrated from India, where filth, poverty unemployment, corruption, and maladministration prevails. This paper tries to show how V.S. Naipaul falls under the second category of diasporia.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Escape, Exodus, Feeling of Loss, Promised Land.

**Introduction:** Teachers, students, and readers of English literature are aware of the staggering height V.S. Naipaul reached in the field of English Literature. He became the second man of Indian origin to hit at the coveted Nobel prize after Gurudev Ravindra Nath Tagore. Naipaul's Biographer Patrick French has candidly narrated the story of the roots of this great author and his geographical and literary journeys across the world. Naipaul never wrote to please anyone or any class of people. He wrote what he saw and felt. It would not be out of place to say Naipaul liked to be hated for his accurate description of the world and its societies. He was never nostalgic about India where his roots lie, nor was he nostalgic about Trinidad where he spent his childhood and schooling days. Biographer Patrick French said "the aim of biographer should not be to sit in judgment, but to expose the subject with ruthless clarity to the calm eye of the reader." (French xvii). Just like his biographer, Naipaul too was critical about everything he saw and felt in all corners of the world.

Naipaul visited India thrice at length in order to assess India culturally and politically. The first visit in 1963 culminated in his book on India, *India: An Area of Darkness*. Second time he visited India in 1976 and wrote *India: A Wounded Civilization*. The Third visit was in 1990 when he wrote about politically turbulent India. The title of his third book on India was *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. These three books written by Naipaul on India do not show any signs of nostalgia, but the three books with a temporal gap show the acute pain the author is feeling for the country of his ancestors' origin since it is languishing in backwardness, filth, and poverty, alongwith the directionless agitations, the unnecessary movements, the regional chauvinism, and the corrupt politicians.

India is a notorious country the people of which want to run away from, get rid of. In Naipaul's book *India: A Wounded Civilization*, the author visits Delhi to talk to ordinary middle class people. The lady he interviews said "We are like a zoo". In the interviewed lady's opinion India was like a zoo because "India was poor and cruel and had lost its way" (Naipaul, *India: A Wounded* 135). In the same chapter, Naipaul says the driver of his taxi cab was a Sikh, and the Sikh knew the English language. When Naipaul got the Sikh into talking the Sikh told Naipaul that he is trying to get out of India to escape poverty. He also told him that he had given a significant sum to a broker who would get him a job and work visa in one of the Arabian Gulf countries. The Sikh was worried if the broker would cheat him.

Naipaul cannot be nostalgic for India as a Diaspora hit intellectual of Indian origin since he is full of disdain for filth-loving Indians. In *India: An Area of Darkness*, Naipaul writes with contempt, malice and pain "Indian defecate everywhere. They defecate mostly beside the railway tracks. But they also defecate on the beaches: they defecate on the hills; they defecate on the river banks; they defecate on the streets; they never look for cover" (Naipaul, *India: An Area* 69-70). Naipaul says in a complaining tone "these squatting figures –to the visitor, after a time, as eternal and emblematic as Rodin's Thinker- are never spoken of ; they are never written about; they are mentioned in novels and stories; they do not appear in feature films and documentaries." He calls them as "Collective Blindness." Naipaul for sure is not having any nostalgic feeling of loss. While speaking to the *Illustrated Weekly Of India*, he said "I suppose you do not want me to enlarge upon the poor sanitation backward villages, and the dishonesty prevailing everywhere. I never thought that Indians were such consummate hypocrites, preaching austerity, preaching godliness and indulging in the grossest type of materialism in any society" (qtd. in French 237).

Naipaul detests India though we may feel proud that the Nobel Prize winner is of Indian origin. Naipaul's ancestors who migrated as indentured labourers from India were poor north Indian priestly class people. They served as priests for other migrated Indian in Trinidad and Tobago. Naipaul did not happily call himself a Trinidadian. Professor Harish Trivedi of Delhi University in his article "Locating Naipaul: Not English, Not Indian, Not Trinidadian" says Naipaul was not happy to be identified by his Indian origin nor with his Trinidadian origin. He was not happy to be associated with his Status as Londoner too.

Patrick French, as a biographer of Naipaul, collected Naipaul's family history from scratch. Naipaul's ancestors arrived in Trinidad as indentured labourers in 1894 by Steam Ship which brought a couple of hundred labourers from Calcutta seaport to Port of Spain. They were all bony, emaciated people. They all looked old in their prime age. It was not like skilled people like computer engineers going by flight to the USA on H1B Visa. It is the exodus when people want to escape subjugation, neglect amounting to cruelty.

The biographer of V.S Naipaul cites an incident in the biography *The World is What It Is*. In a hotel by the sea side a band of musicians was playing. Patrick goes to them, talks to the singer by name Keith Eugene Davis and asks how the group brings current topics in their songs. He said "I read the newspapers". Patrick offers them a bottle of rum and asks do they know Naipaul and could they sing on him. They immediately started beating drums, and Keith started singing

Now I must tell you after all,  
People know about V.S.Naipaul,  
But is very sad to explain,  
That man don't live in Trinidad again,  
So now the facts I must unfold,  
One of the best writers in the world,  
But then I give you my view,  
He was very international too,  
So I think it very wise,  
When they give him the Nobel Prize (French xvi-xvii)

**Conclusion:** Diaspora is the aggregate of scattered people of single culture single language, in various countries. The question arise as to whether these people want to unite. The connotation is 'yes' they do. The reality is that they 'do not'. The yearning to return to one's origin is presumed to be there, but the fact check says it is not there.

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