



## India: A Wounded Civilization

By V. S. Naipaul

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**India: A Wounded Civilization** By V. S. Naipaul

In 1964 V.S. Naipaul published "An Area of Darkness", his semi-autobiographical account of a year in India. Two visits later, prompted by the Emergency of 1975, he came to write "India: A Wounded Civilization", in which he casts a more analytical eye over Indian attitudes. In this work, he recapitulates and further investigates the feelings that the vast, mysterious and agonised continent has previously aroused in him. What he sees and what he hears - evoked so superbly and vividly in this book - only reinforce in him his conviction that India, wounded by a thousand years of foreign rule, has not yet found an ideology of regeneration. 'A devastating work' - "The Times". 'Brilliant' - "Spectator".

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Trinidadian journalist-novelist Naipaul stresses that much has changed since his 1962 trip to India, which yielded his darkly pessimistic book *India: A Wounded Civilization*. In this kaleidoscopic, layered travelogue, he portrays "a country of a million little mutinies," reeling with "rage and revolt," as percolating ideas of freedom shake loose the old moral ethos rooted in caste and class. Despite what he terms regional, religious and sectarian excesses, Naipaul sees possibilities for regeneration in the new freedoms, yet this skewed essay is fraught with bewilderment and sorrow as he reels off a familiar litany of problems--terrible poverty, shoddy manufactured goods, ugly neo-modern architecture, etc.--and comes to terms with his own past: his ancestors were indentured servants of Indian descent. Most interesting here are the dozens of first-person stories by Indians themselves, ranging from a wealthy young stockbroker to anti-religionists to a publisher of women's magazines. 50,000 first printing; \$50,000 ad/promo; author tour.

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From Library Journal

This book by the Trinidad-born Indian author of *A Turn in the South* (LJ 3/1/89) elicits pity, anger, disgust, and a sense of betrayal at India's development since Independence. It tells of an India gone wrong, filled with economic and political corruption. Violence between conflicting religions and a greedy society obsessed with self-interest has smashed the idealism and hope of Nehru's developing secular India. Unfortunately, Naipaul concentrates on urban life, interviewing business, religious, and mob leaders in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, and Delhi while ignoring the rural villages where the majority of India's people live. The result is an unfocused work of social-political commentary that is fine for public libraries but adds nothing new to more specialized collections. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 9/15/90-- John F. Riddick, Central Michigan Univ. Lib., Mt. Pleasant

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Review

'A devastating work' The Times; 'Brilliant' Spectator

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**Frank Hegarty:**

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