



Institute for Social and Economic Change

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Golden Jubilee Lecture Series

**Understanding A Wounded Civilisation: A Sociological Reading
of V. S. Naipaul's Indian Trilogy**

by

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Abstract

Of the very few writers who could grasp the heart and mind of post-independence India, Nobel Laureate V. S. Naipaul was the foremost. In and to India, he was an outsider-insider. Born and socialised as a child in colonial Trinidad, rejecting his Brahman and Trinidad background, and settling down in England, Naipaul honed an astute skill for observation and conversation to become one of the best writers in the English language in the twentieth century. Drawing from his three long sojourns in India — 1962–63, 1975–76, and 1988–90 — he wrote three non-fictional books on India: *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990). Based on a sociological reading of this trilogy, this lecture discusses the seminal original insights of Naipaul on the unfolding of India since independence.