

V. S. Naipaul

Quotes

*People, Writing, Ideas, Book, World, Men, Thinking, Past, India, Two, Years,
Intuition, Father, Needs, Lying, Fiction, Gone, Waiting, Life Is, Wish*

That element of surprise is what I look for when I am writing. It is my way of judging what I am doing - which is never an easy thing to do.

~V. S. Naipaul

The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it.

~V. S. Naipaul

One isn't born one's self. One is born with a mass of expectations, a mass of other people's ideas - and you have to work through it all.

~V. S. Naipaul

Most people are not really free. They are confined by the niche in the world that they carve out for themselves. They limit themselves to fewer possibilities by the narrowness of their vision.

~V. S. Naipaul

It is wrong to have an ideal view of the world. That's where the mischief starts. That's where everything starts unravelling.

~V. S. Naipaul

The only lies for which we are truly punished are those we tell ourselves.

~V. S. Naipaul

Home is, I suppose just a child's idea. A house at night, and a lamp in the house. A place to feel safe.

~V. S. Naipaul

One always writes comedy at the moment of deepest hysteria.

~V. S. Naipaul

The world is always in movement.

~V. S. Naipaul

All the details of the life and the quirks and the friendships can be laid out for us, but the mystery of the writing will remain. No amount of documentation, however fascinating, can take us there.

~V. S. Naipaul

I read a piece of writing and within a paragraph or two I know whether it is by a woman or not.

~V. S. Naipaul

An autobiography can distort; facts can be realigned. But fiction never lies: it reveals the writer totally.

~V. S. Naipaul

After all, we make ourselves according to the ideas we have of our possibilities.

~V. S. Naipaul

If a writer doesn't generate hostility, he is dead.

~V. S. Naipaul

I will say I am the sum of my books.

~V. S. Naipaul

My life is short. I can't listen to banality.

~V. S. Naipaul

Ignorant people in preppy clothes are more dangerous to America than oil embargoes.

~V. S. Naipaul

The Europeans wanted gold and slaves, like everybody else; but at the same time they wanted statues put up to themselves as people who had done good things for the slaves.

~V. S. Naipaul

And it was strange, I thought, that sorrow lasts and can make a man look forward to death, but the mood of victory fills a moment and then is over

~V. S. Naipaul

Making a book is such a big enterprise.

~V. S. Naipaul

But everything of value about me is in my books.

~V. S. Naipaul

Argentine political life is like the life of an ant community or an African forest tribe: full of events, full of crisis and deaths, but life is always cyclical, and the year ends as it begins.

~V. S. Naipaul

People come and go all the time; the world has always been in movement.

~V. S. Naipaul

I have trusted to my intuition to find the subjects, and I have written intuitively. I have an idea when I start, I have a shape; but I will fully understand what I have written only after some years.

~V. S. Naipaul

The melancholy thing about the world is that it is full of stupid people; and the world is run for the benefit of the stupid and common.

~V. S. Naipaul

We cannot understand all the traits we have inherited. Sometimes we can be strangers to ourselves.

~V. S. Naipaul

I came to London. It had become the center of my world and I had

worked hard to come to it. And I was lost.

~V. S. Naipaul

I'm thought to be a tough writer, but I'm really a softie.

~V. S. Naipaul

Some writers can only deal with childhood experience, because it's complete. For another kind of writer, life goes on, and he's able to keep processing that as well.

~V. S. Naipaul

Many writers tend to write summing-up books at the end of their lives.

~V. S. Naipaul

Everybody is interesting for an hour, but few people can last more than two.

~V. S. Naipaul

As a child I knew almost nothing, nothing beyond what I had picked up in my grandmother's house. All children, I suppose, come into the world like that, not knowing who they are.

~V. S. Naipaul

Life doesn't have a neat beginning and a tidy end; life is always going on. You should begin in the middle and end in the middle, and it should be all there.

~V. S. Naipaul

I'm my own writer. My material means I'm entirely separate.

~V. S. Naipaul

The world outside existed in a kind of darkness; and we inquired about nothing.

~V. S. Naipaul

In England people are very proud of being very stupid.

~V. S. Naipaul

This is unusual for me. I have given readings and not lectures. I have told people who ask for lectures that I have no lecture to give. And that is true.

~V. S. Naipaul

What was past was past. I suppose that was the general attitude.

~V. S. Naipaul

My grief is that the publishing world, the book writing world is an extraordinary shoddy, dirty, dingy world.

~V. S. Naipaul

Writing has to support itself.

~V. S. Naipaul

Trinidad may seem complex, but to anyone who knows it, it is a simple, colonial, philistine society.

~V. S. Naipaul

I profoundly feel that people are letting you down all the time.

~V. S. Naipaul

There are two ways of talking. One is the easy way, where you talk lightly, and the other one is the considered way. The considered way is what I have put my name to.

~V. S. Naipaul

His ignorance seemed to widen with everything he read.

~V. S. Naipaul

A civilization which has taken over the world cannot be said to be dying.

~V. S. Naipaul

The biography of a writer - or even the autobiography - will always have this incompleteness.

~V. S. Naipaul

Africa is not a fun place, you know. A fun place is somewhere that lifts the spirits, that cossets the senses. I don't think that can be said of the Africa I traveled in.

~V. S. Naipaul

If ever you wish to meet intellectual frauds in quantity, go to Paris.

~V. S. Naipaul

Africans need to be kicked, that's the only thing they understand.

~V. S. Naipaul

Writers should provoke disagreement.

~V. S. Naipaul

Judgment is contained in the act of trying to understand.

~V. S. Naipaul

If writers just sit and talk about oppression, they are not going to do much writing.

~V. S. Naipaul

It isn't that there's no right and wrong here. There's no right.

~V. S. Naipaul

The past has to be seen to be dead; or the past will kill.

~V. S. Naipaul

If you decide to move to another country and to live within its laws you

don't express your disregard for the essence of the culture. It's a form of aggression.

~V. S. Naipaul

Small things start us in new ways of thinking

~V. S. Naipaul

It is important not to trust people too much.

~V. S. Naipaul

When I learnt to write I became my own master, I became very strong, and that strength is with me to this very day.

~V. S. Naipaul

I could meet dreadful people and end up seeing the world through their eyes, seeing their frailties, their needs.

~V. S. Naipaul

Each book, intuitively sensed and, in the case of fiction, intuitively worked out, stands on what has gone before, and grows out of it.

~V. S. Naipaul

I know my father and my mother, but beyond that I cannot go. My ancestry is blurred.

~V. S. Naipaul

If it was Europe that gave us on the coast some idea of our history, it was Europe, I feel, that also introduced us to the lie.

~V. S. Naipaul

Great writing can be done in biography, history, art.

~V. S. Naipaul

I've never abandoned the novel.

~V. S. Naipaul

In England I am not English, in India I am not Indian. I am chained to the 1,000 square miles that is Trinidad; but I will evade that fate yet.

~V. S. Naipaul

I really wasn't equipped to be a writer when I left Oxford. But then I set out to learn. I've always had the highest regard for the craft. I've always felt it was work.

~V. S. Naipaul

I went to India and met some people who had been involved in this guerrilla business, middle-class people who were rather vain and foolish. There was no revolutionary grandeur to it. Nothing.

~V. S. Naipaul

Where jargon turns living issues into abstractions, and where jargon ends by competing with jargon, people don't have causes. They only have enemies.

~V. S. Naipaul

I am the kind of writer that people think other people are reading.

~V. S. Naipaul

I have a very small public.

~V. S. Naipaul

I still think it's really quite wonderful when I read a sentence of mine and it has that quality of lastingness.

~V. S. Naipaul

You need someone to see what you've done, to read it and to understand it and to appreciate what's gone into it.

~V. S. Naipaul

Some lesser husbands built a latrine on the hillside.

~V. S. Naipaul

Life is a helluva thing. You can see trouble coming and you can't do a damn thing to prevent it coming. You just got to sit and watch and wait.

~V. S. Naipaul

Men need history; it helps them to have an idea of who they are. But history, like sanctity, can reside in the heart; it is enough that there is something there.

~V. S. Naipaul

One must always try to see the truth of a situation - it makes things universal.

~V. S. Naipaul

I've been a free man.

~V. S. Naipaul

Whenever I have had to write fiction, I've always had to invent a character who roughly has my background.

~V. S. Naipaul

If you write a novel alone you sit and you weave a little narrative. And it's O.K., but it's of no account.

~V. S. Naipaul

I had no student friends to talk to about literature. My tutor was a really nice man, very charming - but he had no literary judgment.

~V. S. Naipaul

My publisher, who was so good as a taster and editor, when she became a writer, lo and behold, it was all this feminine tosh.

~V. S. Naipaul

I grew up in a small place and left it when I was quite young and entered the bigger world.

~V. S. Naipaul

Africa has no future.

~V. S. Naipaul

In a way my reputation has become that of the curmudgeon.

~V. S. Naipaul

I have always moved by intuition alone. I have no system, literary or political. I have no guiding political idea.

~V. S. Naipaul

I don't feel I can speak with authority for many other people.

~V. S. Naipaul

The writer is all alone.

~V. S. Naipaul

A cat only has itself.

~V. S. Naipaul

I feel that at any stage of my literary career it could have been said that the last book contained all the others.

~V. S. Naipaul

In the beginning, before the arrival of the white men, I had considered myself neutral. I had wanted neither side to win, neither the army nor the rebels. As it turned out, both sides lost.

~V. S. Naipaul

I always knew who I was and where I had come from. I was not looking for a home in other people's lands.

~V. S. Naipaul

The ancillary aspect of every British city now is the council estate.

~V. S. Naipaul

Nothing was made in Trinidad.

~V. S. Naipaul

All the things that were read to me by my father were stories about things becoming all right.

~V. S. Naipaul

I became very interested in the Islamic question, and thought I would try to understand it from the roots, ask very simple questions and somehow make a narrative of that discovery.

~V. S. Naipaul

All cultures have been mingled forever.

~V. S. Naipaul

You can't deny what you've learned; you can't deny your travels; you can't deny the nature of your life.

~V. S. Naipaul

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