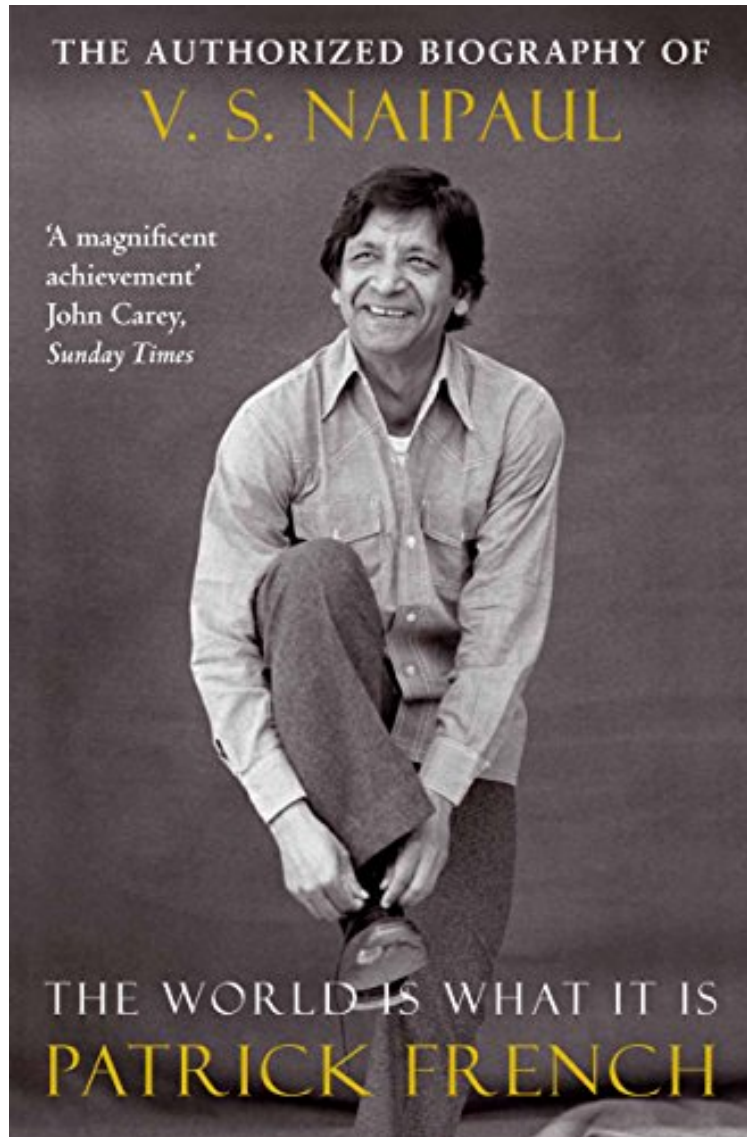


[Mobile ebook] The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V.S. Naipaul (English Edition)

## The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V.S. Naipaul (English Edition)

Von Patrick French

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**Von Patrick French : The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V.S. Naipaul (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V.S. Naipaul (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen5 von 5 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Ich bin der grte... Unsympath!Von HansBlogMultikultur-Meisterschreiber extraordinaire V.S. Naipaul setzt privat neue

Standards in Arroganz, Besserwisserei und Geiz, im Ausnutzen von Hilfsbereitschaft, Gastfreundschaft, emotionaler Abhängigkeit und relativem Prpotenzdefizit. Sein Biograf Patrick French referiert Naipauls gesammelte Unglaublichkeiten relativ nüchtern. Und es ist keine ble Nachrede: Naipaul stand ausführlich Rede (rund 24 mal 80 Minuten), öffnete sein Archiv rückhaltlos, hat selbst zu dieser Biografie eingeladen und dem fertigen Text zumindest nie widersprochen. French lobt die meisten Naipaul-Bücher aber ein, zwei Abstriche, zitiert aber stets auch zahlreiche Pressestimmen und schildert die intensiven Recherchen auf mehreren Kontinenten. Nur wenige Naipaul-Werke erhalten kein Lob. Zwischen den vielen Tagesereignissen lehnt sich French gelegentlich zurück und versucht größere Orientierung zu schaffen: An welchen Wegscheidungen änderte sich Naipauls Schreibstil nach Jahrzehnten? Wo fand er früher und heute seine Themen? Was wechselte? Erstaunlich Naipauls lange, arme Jugend und Studentenzeit, die Geldknappheit selbst nach ersten Erfolgen auf dem Büchermarkt, das gleichwohl unerschütterliche, ja pompöse Selbstbewusstsein schon als bettelarmer Student im fremden England. Viele frühe Motive der Biografie kennt man schon aus Naipauls "Haus für Mr. Biswas" oder aus den "Briefen zwischen Vater und Sohn". Verblüffend, dass der verkniffene, bettelarme Spätzwanziger solche lakonischen Meisterwerke wie "Mr. Biswas", "Miguel Street" oder den "Mystischen Masseur" texten konnte. Aber es geht nicht nur um V.S. Ausführlich lernen wir auch seine ältere Schwester Kamla und vor allem seine Frau Patricia kennen - aus ihren zahlreichen Briefen und Tagebucheinträgen. Sie ist gebildet, zurückgenommen, sympathisch und wird von V.S. über alle Maßen ausgenutzt. Aufopferungsvoll, ehrerbietig und belesen wie vielleicht nur Vera Nabokov, aber mit weniger Statur. Sehr eigentümlich liebevoll, freigeistig und nachdenklich klingen "Pats" frühe Briefe aus der Oxford-Zeit. Ihre Ehe mit V.S. bedeutete 40 Jahre Untergang. Sie ertrug still leidend seine Schrullen, Demütigungen, Hassausbrüche, Pufftours, Liebschaften. Als sie schließlich selbst mal schlicht fremdgehen wollte, probierte sie es aus Versehen mit einem Schwulen. Mit dem Tod von Patricia Naipaul, 1995, endet auch das Buch - also Jahre vor Naipauls Nobelpreis. Allerdings deutet French in einer schelmischen Fußnote eine Fortsetzung an. Er sagte in einem Interview, dass sein Material für die Zeit nach 1995 zu heikel für eine ehrliche Veröffentlichung sei. Naipauls Reportagen beeindruckten durch nüchterne Offenheit: er berichtet, was er vorfindet und was die Leute ihm erzählen, und zwar sehr genau (dass er verflucht, wird ihm auch in der Biographie nie vorgeworfen). Und eine ähnliche Erzählhaltung scheinen French und Naipaul selbst auch in dieser heraus indiskreten Biographie einzunehmen: wir hören, was tatsächlich passiert ist, und sei es noch so privat. Naipaul selbst lässt sein Leben so wiedergeben, wie er andere Leben geschildert hat - nüchtern, vollständig, ohne Sensationslust. Wer Naipauls Bücher mag, dem gefallen wohl auch Stil und Ansatz dieser Naipaul-Biographie. Mit einem gewissen Triumph präsentiert Autor Patrick French andere Autoren, die es vor ihm monatelang mit einer Naipaul-Biografie versuchten und wieder abgesetzt wurden. French sprach mit unzähligen Naipaul-Wegbegleitern - V.S. würde sie wohl Gehilfen nennen - und nicht wenige hassen die Person Naipaul, bewundern aber den Autor selben Namens. Auch Paul Theroux, ein anderer brillanter Weltbeschreiber, Unsympath und Naipaul-Bekannter, fehlt natürlich nicht. French liefert durchaus eigene Einstufungen, montiert aber gleichzeitig dank Archivzugang und mehrjähriger Interviewphasen eine riesige Zitatcollage. Die Zitate fasst French allerdings nur in einfache Anführungsstriche, erst das Zitat im Zitat bekommt doppelte Anführungsstriche; so hebt sich die direkte Rede nicht gut vom eigenen Text des Biografen ab. Ich frage mich, warum diese gelungene, dezent analytische, weithin spannende und immer lesbare Biografie eines Nobelpreisträgers nicht auf Deutsch erscheint. Immerhin gibt es Shakespeares weniger wichtige Bruce-Chatwin-Biographie auf Deutsch. Karin Graf muss ran. Meine englische Picador-Taschenbuch-Ausgabe hat rund 550 Seiten, dabei zahllose Fußnoten und ein ausführliches Register. Das Buch klappt generell zu, man muss es immer mit einer Hand aufhalten oder ein Telefon über nicht benötigte Teile einer Doppelseite legen. Ich habe meine Ausgabe nicht mehr als nötig gebogen, dennoch fielen ein paar der nichtsthetischen, aber hochinteressanten Fotoseiten kurzum heraus. Das Titelbild wundert mich: V.S. Naipaul auf einem Bein stehend, den Schuh bindend, leicht hilflos lachend. Das hätte er niemals selbst ausgesucht und es passt weder zu seinem Werk noch zur Person. Warum? Weil er so freundlich-angstfrei daherkommt? French schreibt leichtgünstig, aber kein leichtes Englisch, andere englische Bücher machen mir weniger zu schaffen. Eine Doppelseite enthält schonmal fünf oder acht mir unbekannte Vokabeln, die ich tatsächlich hier gern kennen würde. Willkürlich von Seite 230 mir unbekannte Vokabeln: "reefer", "pilchard", "caustic". Gibt es vergleichbare Biografien vergleichbarer Hauptfiguren? Nicholas Shakespeare schrieb lesenswert über Bruce Chatwin, eine ebenfalls dicke Fleiarbeit über einen weiteren fast heimatlosen, vielreisend schreibenden Exzentriker mit Basislager in der englischen Provinz und sehr geduldiger Ehefrau.

**Kurzbeschreibung** This is the first major biography of V.S. Naipaul, Nobel Prize winner and one of the most compelling literary figures of the last fifty years. With great feeling for his formidable body of work, and exclusive access to his private papers and personal recollections, Patrick French has produced a lucid and astonishing account of this enigmatic genius: one which looks sensitively and unflinchingly at his relationships, his development as a writer and as a man, his outspokenness, his peerless creativity, and his extraordinary and enduring position both outside and at the very centre of literary culture. Its clarity, honesty, even-handedness, its panoramic range and close emotional

focus, above all its virtually unprecedented access to the dark secret life at its heart, make it one of the most gripping biographies I've ever read Hilary Spurling, Observer A brilliant biography: exemplary in its thoroughness, sympathetic but tough in tone . . . Reading it I was enthralled and frequently amused (how incredibly funny Naipaul can be!) Spectator A masterly performance . . . If a better biography is published this year, I shall be astonished Allan Massie, Literary Remarkable. This biography will change the way we read Naipaul's books Craig Brown, Book of the Week, Mail on Sunday Pressestimmen PRAISE FOR PATRICK FRENCH'S "THE WORLD IS WHAT IT IS" "A great writer requires a great biography, and a great biography must tell the truth. V.S. Naipaul wanted his monument built while he was still alive, and, sticking to his own ruthless literary code, he was willing to pay the full price....Now Naipaul has his monument, "The World Is What It Is" is fully worthy of its subject, with all the dramatic pacing, the insight and the pathos of a first-rate novel. It is a magnificent tribute to the painful and unlikely struggle by which the grandson of indentured Indian workers, born in the small island colony of Trinidad, made himself into the greatest English novelist of the past half century. It is also a portrait of the artist as a monster. How these two judgments can be simultaneously true is one of this book's central questions. Whether Naipaul himself understood the enormity of the story to which he contributed so much candor is another....rich narrative....impossible to put down....Pat's voice is faltering and uncertain where Naipaul's is relentlessly in command, but its small observations, evasions and sudden bolts of understanding haunt the reader up until her death of cancer, which gives this story its heartbreaking end."- George Packer, on the cover of the "New York Times Book" "a prodigious achievement, a wonderful biography, a justification for the art of biography itself."- A. N. Wilson, "Times Literary Supplement" "astonishing (and astonishingly "authorized")....With the aid of this exhaustive and efficient biography, one can make some more-educated surmises about the connection between Naipaul's rigidly maintained exterior and the many layers of insecurity...that underlie it....shrewd and intelligent."- Christopher Hitchens, "The Atlantic" "I doubted whether an honest book could be written by anyone while Naipaul was still alive. I was wrong. The truth is not skimmed in Patrick French's excellent book....The great merit of a superb biography, such as this one, is that it can deepen our understanding of the literary character by telling us more about its creator....French...gets it right."- Ian Buruma, "The New York Times" "extraordinary biography....French has handled an immense amount of materials with a deft hand, and the reader actually wishes he had extended the book's 487 pages of text and pursued his subject past 1996....authorized but not compromised....It's hard to see how French could have been more objective if his subject had been dead for ten years....French is so thorough that it's likely no further biography of Naipaul, at least one covering the first sixty-odd years of his life, will ever be needed....French is very good on Naipaul's writing...."The World Is What It Is" adds depth and clarity to the discussion of Naipaul's work....French has met his own rigorous standards and, one feels, Sir Vidia's as well."- Allen Barra, "Bookforum" "one of the sprightliest, most gripping, most intellectually curious, and well, "funniest" biographies of a living writer...to come along in years....Mr. French is a relative rarity among biographers, a real writer, and at his best he sounds like a combination of that wily bohemian Geoff Dyer and that wittily matter-of-factual cyborg Michael Kinsley. Even the cameos in Mr. French's biography are crazily vivid....crafty and inquisitive book....Mr. French quickly and adroitly steps back to give us a wide-angled and morally complicated view....vivid prose....Mr. French writes with wit and feeling."- Dwight Garner, "The New York Times" "nuanced and generous....distinguished biography, one that aims to understand rather than simplistically condone or chastise....a superb, clear-eyed study, always sympathetic, balanced and thoughtful, as well as rich in what Joseph Conrad called 'the fascination of the abomination.'" - Michael Dirda, "Washington Post" "extraordinary....Patrick French shrewdly...give[s] us an idea of...the world Naipaul had to join and beat....full of intimate and moving revelations...thrilling pages....masterly, mournful book...hideously just."- James Wood, "The New Yorker" "candid....well-researched and fair-minded....French skewers nothing and...illuminate[s] aspects of a life full of entanglements and opposing selves."- Alexander Theroux, "Boston Sunday Globe" "shrewd and honest...[French is] a writer not given to extremes....French is a graceful, confident and subtle writer....offers a vivid, and sometimes enthralling, portrait of a deeply enigmatic writer....rich account....French skillfully evokes the atmosphere of political turmoil and transition....with brio and wit....French is alive to the nuances, quirks and contradictions in Naipaul's character, and he has an acute sense of his subject's displacement and rootlessness....a formidable achievement....contains a remarkable accumulation of rich, minute detail; covers a vast amount of history and politics in an effortless manner; and navigates difficult emotional territory with a very high degree of compassion, subtlety and authority....engrossing, with French pulling surprises out of his hat from the opening pages."- Scott Sherman, "The Nation" "shocking moments...startling candor...as haunting and harrowing a psychological document as you could ask for....French pursues his prey with an acuity worthy of the man himself....The particular achievement of "The World" is to flesh out the two potent forces that Naipaul has often seemed to repress: women and Trinidad, where he grew up....French grippingly develops an account of the writer's life as cool and undeluded as Naipaul's former friend Paul Theroux's was rivetingly emotional....French is ...as plainspoken as his subject."- Pico Iyer, "Time" "perhaps the most shockingly 'authorized' biography in the history of authorized biographies....French handles the incendiary material with novelistic subtlety and grace."- Sam Anderson, "New York Magazine" "a major achievement....harrowing....frank....Naipaul's work will inevitably be read differently in light of this biography."- Floyd Skloot, "The Philadelphia

Inquirer" "sweeping ....Highly recommended."- Stacy Russo, "Library Journal "PRAISE FROM THE UK FOR PATRICK FRENCH'S "THE WORLD IS WHAT IT IS"longlisted for the prestigious BBC Four Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction "French's character analysis is not flattering, but it does justice to its subject's complexity....French's book is a magnificent achievement....But the achievement is partly Naipaul's. For he did not have to agree to these conditions, or speak to French so openly. He has chosen to submit himself to the truth-telling and ruthless objectivity that have always characterised his own work."- John Cary, "The Sunday Times" "penetrating, wide-ranging and unflinching biography....The closing pages...are enough to draw tears.""- The Economist" "He has written a biography of a living person that is every bit as honest, perceptive, compelling and plain good as if his subject was dead. It is a masterly performance, and if a better biography is published this year, I shall be astonished....It is rare to wish that a biography running to over 500 pages was longer, but this is an exception."- Allan Massie, "Literary " "French's character analysis is not flattering, but it does justice to its subject's complexity....French's book is a magnificent achievement....But the achievement is partly Naipaul's. For he did not have to agree to these conditions, or speak to French so openly. He has chosen to submit himself to the truth-telling and ruthless objectivity that have always characterised his own work."- John Cary, "The Sunday Times" "penetrating, wide-ranging and unflinching biography....The closing pages...are enough to draw tears.""- The Economist" "Patrick French has brought off something very difficult, so difficult indeed that I would have thought it impossible. He has written a biography of a living person that is every bit as honest, perceptive, compelling and plain good as if his subject was dead. It is a masterly performance, and if a better biography is published this year, I shall be astonished....It is rare to wish that a biography running to over 500 pages was longer, but this is an exception."- Allan Massie, "Literary ""a brilliant biography: exemplary in its thoroughness, sympathetic but tough in tone. Against Naipaul's own increasing 'tendency to caricature himself in public, ' and against the distortions peddled by snubbed friends and ideological enemies, French has set down a complex and credible portrait. Reading it I was enthralled -- and frequently amused (how incredibly funny Naipaul can be!). I was also continually aware of a great and unrelenting pressure on the developing writer; it suffuses the book like suspense....lovely to read....French's accounts...have their own entertainment value..."- Sebastian Smee, "Spectator" "Patrick French's brilliant and candid "The World Is What It Is" lays bare the demons that drove one of our greatest -- and most controversial -- writers....one of the brutally frank interviews that provide the backbone of this extraordinary book....a biography that reads on one level like a contemporary variation on Bluebeard's Castle, the kind of malign fairy tale at which, according to Naipaul, English writers excel...."The World Is What It Is" must have taken nerves of iron to write. Its clarity, honesty, even-handedness, its panoramic range and close emotional focus, above all its virtually unprecedented access to the dark secret life at its heart, make it one of the most gripping biographies I've ever read."- Hilary Spurling, "The Observer" "Few people expected Patrick French's biography to be a full account of the writer's life ... It turns out thatdoubters

Shortlisted for the 2008 BBC4 Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction