The responses that emanate from the diasporic space towards home, homeland and native ethos are not homogenous for a number of reasons. One, Indian diaspora as such is not a monolithic category. The distance that each diasporic travels in space and time away from his homeland, in a way decides his responses towards both his filative and affiliative spaces. Also the different native backgrounds of the diasporic writers also impinge a lot upon their poetics of negotiation in the alien land. Indian diaspora, spread as it is across space, time and native languages, reveals a range of response towards the homeland, its institutions and nationalist icons. Gandhi is one of the most prominent icons of India and its Indianess, and almost without exception has been the perennial subject of diasporic re-visiting. Gandhi emerges as India’s hope as well as despair in the revisionary diasporic writings. The present chapter undertakes an extended study of one such account of Gandhi as it emerges in the writings, particularly the travel writings of V.S. Naipaul. Often described as an Indian who is not quite an India, Naipaul has made a number of critical comments on Gandhi.

Naipaul’s credo lies in his prose works as well as fiction. Born in Trinidad, having spent most of his adult life in England when bearing ancestral roots in India. Naipaul dangles between the neo-colonised and the developed nations as a writer in self-exile. Prompts his attitude towards the homeland. His travelogues on India— An Area of Darkness, India : A Wounded Civilization and India : A Million Mutinies Now and party his India-based The Overcrowed Barracoon, believed to have been written during the darker phase of his career, bring forth a disappointment attitude towards life, as they exhibit Naipaul’s critical fixations with India. In this chapter Naipaul’s attitude towards Gandhi in his non-fictional writings has been graphed. The travelogues mentioned above have been placed chronologically as far as possible so as to reveal the changing Naipaul treatment of Gandhi over a period to time. Towards the end of reference has also been made to the treatment of Gandhi in Naipaul’s fictional works as well.

As a British citizen to an Indian origin with a West Indian address, Naipaul is a postcolonial subject of multiple affiliations who is not obliged to look at any space, be it native or foreign with unqualified adoration, or romantic indulgence. A descendant of indentured
labour, and a third generation diasporic, Naipaul is may times away from the homeland both in space and time, Gandhi is his favourite icon for it offers him a ready frame to approach, understand and subsequently indict India.

Naipaul’s diasporic ideology transcends root fixity unlike that of diasporic writers as Raja Rao. Despite the melange of cultures, attitudes and religions, Naipaul encounters fixities of attitude in India and that is what perplexes his postcolonial psyche. Naipaul’s writings sum up his experiences as an expatriate searching for an identity beyond the easy binaries of the colonised and the colonial, the native and the alien, the home and the abroad.

During his initial visits to India, Naipaul was taken back by the sense of historical amnesia, orthodoxy ad a community in India that was intellectual flawed and was obliterating individuality owing to Ganshism. And thus Naipaul began what can be describe as the anti-Gandhi drive in his writings, especially non-fictional. Either this contempt is evident in direct attack on Gandhi or though character that exhibit pro-Gandhi attitude who then do not come across as enlightened or matter-of-fact individuals. Critics time and again comments on Naipaul’s fascination with Gandhi. His Gandhi is a dramatic character standing amidst as figure of national tragedy. Gandhi represents a pious approach leading to a vicious failure.

Naipaul is an itinerant observer scrutinising the postcolonial world. In fact Amit Choudhuri frames Naipaul for making the colonised societies to bear the burden on being ever vibrant, Naipaul’s journey through India is rather an account of a colonial experience, In fact, he has often been hailed as the minion of neo–colonialism. And it is perhaps his colonial toning that leads him into categorising Indians. He too is a distant observer. In Naipaul’s own words, the books he wrote about journeys to India have taken him to unthought-of realms of emotions, giving him a fresh yet startling world-view and making him realise the colonial schizophrenia he was suffering from in his writings.

Describing himself as the sum of his books, Naipaul offers an onlooker’s account of the outsider in his travelogues as already mentioned. These travelogues are sketches of Naipaul’s study of India in various paradigms—social, political, cultural, economic and historical. One of his major concerns while analysing these different aspects of India is Mahatma Gandhi and Gandhism. Gandhi, according to Naipaul, is a significant signifier of India and he explores the figure in both literal as well as philosophical terms to present a new criticism of Gandhi.
altogether. These travelogues collectively constitute a full-length discourse on Gandhism and its impact on India. Naipaul goes back rather compulsively to the phenomenon of Gandhi to account for India’s darkness.

The chapter is divided into section in accordance with Naipaul’s categorisation of Gandhi. His attitude is measured against some of the notion about Gandhi as they are bandied about with great nationalist fervour. Views that support or contradict Naipaul on his various stands on Gandhi have also been incorporated to signify the relevance of the issues that Naipaul has selected for criticising Gandhi.

Gandhi— A Colonial

Gandhi in general is considered the pictogram of anti-colonialism. He is weighted in a sanctified scale to be labelled as the carrier of patriotic endeavour. Bijay Kumar Das (Das, Bijay Kumar, 2003, 23) believes that cosmic exaltation of the image of Gandhi is in itself a process of de-colonising him. In this conventional Gandhiana, Gandhi is seen as an indigenous leader. Ancient scriptures are used to describe both Gandhi and Gandhism. For Ramashray Roy (Roy, Ramashray, 1985, 38), Gandhi was the moral protector of Indian civilisation. He perfectly understood the relation between the inner and outer reality and his criticism of modern civilisation stands rational and in tandem with moral requirements. Jayanta Mahpatra wrote of poem “Requiem” on Gandhi, decolonising his very character. Upholding Gandhi’s call to the past, he asserts that by stressing on going back to one’s roots Gandhi was solely implying authenticity and originality. Special attention must be paid to the tone of the poem, especially in the line below:

In me
Your body opens slowly
As if you have been bound tight all your life
As if flesh could see
what the mind believes is true

(Bijay Kumar, 2003, 23)

In the above lines, Gandhi is absorbed within the poet’s being. There does seem an ecstatic exaltation in the poem as the writer communicated with Gandhi. He indigenises Gandhi in absolute.
But Naipaul overturns this thesis. Contrary to the decolonised version of Gandhi, he locates Gandhi deeply in the colonial discourse. One of the foremost allegations the Naipaul has laid against Gandhi is that he is an outsider, a colonial product. And colonialism, according to Naipaul, is a symbol of retrogression. Naipaul is not only one in the diasporic space to opine so within Indian diaspora. To Bikhu Parekh also, who is another prominent critical writer on Gandhi from the space of Indian diaspora, Gandhi is a colonial leader, Parekh (Parekh, 2001, 13) refers to Gandhi as non-player who in a calculated fashion manages to play the colonial politics to defeat the colonisers. In Gandhi: A very Short Introduction he elaborates the paradox that is colonialism brought about in Gandhi. He writes, “Gandhi was thus caught up in the paradoxical position of wanting to appropriate part of the spirit of modern civilization while rejecting the very institution and social structure” (Parekh, 2001, 74).

Gandhi’s return to India, what otherwise is marked as a legendary event, according to Naipaul, is the failing advent of Gandhi for he brings his alien methods into India that proved destructive. According to him, Gandhi was a distorted product of the colonial experience outside India. To use Giriraj Kishore’s title for Gandhi, he was a “Girmitya”. Naipaul boils down the play the East meets West in Gandhi politics to confusion. In Gandhi he sees an Indian caught in the middle of crossfire of western and Indian ideas and therefore he mingled the two without realising that he East was not to be infused with the West. In An area of Darkness, Naipaul introduces Gandhi as colonial and defines as to what goes into definite his colonialism. He also defends contamination of India by anything foreign. He lashes out at Gandhi in a chapter titled “The Colonia”. The title stands for Gandhi. Naipaul holds that it was Gandhi’s colonial vision that disabled him to see through the Indian truth. To prove his point, Naipaul deliberately quotes Gandhi’s words. “India is a country of nonsense” (Naipaul, 1968, 68). These words together with the chapter’s title portray Naipaul’s intention to alienate Gandhi.

Chapter goes on to say that Gandhi has become a colonial observer with a borrowed attitude. His treatment of Indian has become critical, and this was evident of Gandhi’s acquisition of a colonial attitude. Instead of taking India forward he was concerned about sanitation and beggary and cancellation of free meals and why the Tamil delegates ate by themselves at a Congress gathering. Naipaul mentions that Gandhi after his return to India from London began experiencing and magnifying “India sentimentality” and this, according to him,
“is the opposite of concern” (Naipaul, 1968, 215). Describing Gandhi as a visitor Naipaul writes:

He looked at India as no Indian was able to; his vision was direct, and this directness was, and is, revolutionary. He sees exactly what the visitor sees: he does not ignore that obvious. He sees the beggars and the shameless pundits and the fifth of Banaras; he sees the atrocious sanitary habits of doctors, lawyers and journalists. He sees the Indian callousness, the Indian refusal to see. No. Indian attitude escapes him, no Indian problem; he looks down to the roots of the static, decayed society (Naipaul, 1968, 69).

He adds the Gandhi’s attitude was that of a foreigner who fails to comprehend the truth of India. Gandhi could not “understand the function of the better in India and is judging India by the standards of Europe. He is too radical to succeed and of course in this matter of beggary he has failed” (Naipaul, 1968, 69).

Naipaul finds ignorance of the obvious in India as not only permissible but also necessary. And failure counts as the inability to see through the truth. Scorning Gandhi for his overwhelming concern for the poverty in India and further beautifying it. Naipaul reduces Gandhi-poverty relation to a theatrical performance of an “empty phrase” (Naipaul, 1968, 65). Not only is Naipaul outraged with Gandhi’s observation of the obvious in India but also finds this concern to be a parody of the Indian sensibility. These observations are unless, they do not elicit new concerns. It is rather an encroachment on the privacy of India’s own affairs. In tune with Gandhi’s West-oriented fixation, non-violence, poverty and beggary became an obsession with Gandhi and were converted into a political attitude. Non-violence was the biggest obsession with him and so were the rest of the ideas that he advocated, but these, according to Naipaul, were necessary for Gandhi to upkeep his colonial vision. Gandhi being under alien influence undermined the real problems of India and aggravated irrelevant issues out of proportions only to leave the country behind to battle them in futility. Herein lay the shortcoming of Gandhi’s adopted approach as Naipaul comments:

Nothing remains of Gandhi in India but his name and the worship of his image; the seminars about non-violence, as though this was all the taught; prohibition; rich in symbolism and righteousness, proclaimed as a worthy goal event at the height of China crisis: and the politician’s garb (Naipaul, 1968, 81-82). Naipaul finds Gandhi a complex phenomenon for India
after his foreign experience. Toned by his western education and experience, Gandhi began a process of comparison between India and England, which Naipaul fails to register as justifiable. Describing the nullity of his imported vision, Naipaul writes:

> Complex imported ideas, forced through the retort of Indian sensibility, often come out cleansed of content, and harmless; they seem so regularly to lead back, through religion and now science, to the past and nullity; to the spinning wheel, the bullock cart (Naipaul, 1968, 108).

This comparison subsequently resulted in an unconscious mimicry of the West, propelled in India by Gandhi. And this to Naipaul (Naipaul, 1968, 213) was nothing but “a pleasing piece of theatre”. It was the genesis of the Indian Schizophrenia. The British-Indo encounter in Gandhi lead Indians into a double-fantasy and thus became abortive. The Indian were stuck between the old and the new and thus jammed. Naipaul assets that experience with a new culture tends to make one revisit his own. Thus a gulf is created and the individual stands at a crossroad unable to reject or to accept completely. They wander aimlessly in an “in-between” situation as Naipaul explains that “The new self-awareness makes it impossible for Indians to go back; their cherishing of Indianess makes it difficult for them to go ahead” (Naipaul, 1968, 216). Naipaul strongly oppose corruption of Indian civilisation by anything foreign. To him India was meant to be experienced and not judged by the standards of the world outside. He perhaps wanted to see Slavoj Zizek’s “Nation—Thing” In India, which he fears is threatened by the act of universalising and taking India out of its pre-defined and structured territory in order to globalise it. Gandhi is accused of casting his imported ideas over the Indian frame, advocating imported institutions to function in India that were a misfit for the Indian social, cultural, economic and political landscape. Gandhi blundered by offering himself as an English endeavour to answer India needs. Naipaul further supports these thoughts in India: A Wounded Civilization wherein he quotes a dethroned prince of Rajasthan, “I tell you, we’re happy in India….. You people must leave us along. You mustn’t come and tell us we’re subhuman” (Naipaul, 1979, 24). Thus, Naipaul does not accept setting up of foreign parameters to evaluate India, as India can only be understood through Indian experience. Its reality is within and not outside.

In The Overcrowded Barracoon (Naipaul, 1984), Naipaul once again scoffs at Gandhi as colonial, however, he does mention that he is not again blending of the East and the West per se, but cautions that the process must involve no distortion and no return to the past and mythology.
Naipaul detests the way Gandhi mingles the two positions as he finds Gandhi imposing the West on India. The whole affair to him is vulgar and philistine as Gandhi returns to India with a “chip” on his shoulder and in a crippled from converts a religious view of life, laudable in one culture, steadily into self-love that is disagreeable in another. Naipaul summarises this as the misunderstanding and futility of Gandhi’s indo-English encounter. In the book Naipaul is critical of a 21-years old student who return to British Hondus from U.S. and brings the infection of revolution based on his experience there. Naipaul writes that the message of revolution was alien as it has come from another country and has evolved in alien circumstances. It wasn’t suited to the local blacks in the Hondus leading a simple city life. This it is clear that mimicry by a colonised nation of the coloniser is a nihilistic phenomenon as it tries to negate the very essence of nativity.

Another issue that Naipaul take up to strengthen Gandhi’s position as a colonial is the fact that Gandhi’s struggle for India began in South Africa. Naipaul has questioned the homogeneity of the Indian community in Africa to be good enough for Gandhi to prepare him for the struggle of entire India. For instance, to elaborate the impossibility of homogenising experiences of Indians throughout the world, in India: A Wounded Civilization, he write:

My ancestors migrates for the Gangetic plain a hundred years ago, and the India community they and other established in Trinidad, on the other side of the world, the community in which I grew up, was more homogenous than the Indian community Gandhi met in South Africa in 1983, and more isolated from India. (Naipaul, 1979, Foreward xi)

In India: A Million Mutinies Now, Which came later, Naipaul despite blaming Gandhi for being the imposing outsider, nevertheless, compares his own experience with Gandhi’s and traces similarity in their realisation as expatriates:

Like Gandhi among the immigrant Indians of South Africa, and for much the same reasons, I had developed instead the idea of the kinship in Indians, the idea of the family of India. And in my attempt to come to terms with History, my criticism, my bewilderment and sorrow, was turned inward, focussing on the civilization and the social organization that has given us so little protection (Naipaul, 1998, 399).
It is interesting to observe that even Ashis Nandy has also referred to Gandhi as an outsider. He opines that when outsiders enter the native land, they do so with inherent native identity yet at all time are aware of "outsider" status. So Naipaul is not alone in this thought when he says that Gandhi behaves like a visitor. While making a comparison between Gandhi and Tagore, Nandy asserts that Gandhi being an outsider modern India developed a politicised view while the insider Tagore has a more intellection approach. However, both personalities agree on one point that Indian nationalism as well as universalism has to be built on a critique of the modern West. Tagore has identified the ideological difference between the coloniser and the colonised nations, which makes synthesis impossible. In his essay entitled “Nationalism in India” Tagore opines, “to accept imposed conditions is but a sign of impotency”. India, according to him, should follow its own destiny. He mentions, “When you borrow things that do not belong to you life, they only serve to crush, you life”. Naipaul in his stand on colonial vision comes close to Tagore’s school of thought.

But there are thinkers who do not agree with Naipaul’s portrait of Gandhi as an outsider and find his accusation of Gandhi as coloniser ironical. Critics opine that Naipaul’s stress on the directness of vision that the West provides fails to negate Gandhi’s faith in Gita’s message that he always advocated. Instead of a coloniser, Gandhi, on the contrary is regarded as a revolutionary, the propagator of new ideas whereas Naipaul himself is labelled as a colonial, busy in categorising India into stereotypes. Naipaul is often accused of failure to grasp the ordeal of daily Indian Life when he overlooks the hind races associated with caste system or when he denounces the importance of Bhagwad Gita.

GANDHI AND MODERNITY

Another of Naipaul’s major concern with Gandhi is that of the leader’s stand on modernity and technology. From his position, Gandhi was archaic as he took a backward view of India. He was lost in ancient India and its spirituality and thus instead of taking India forward he took it further back. According to Naipaul, Gandhi being under authority for long had developed and outdated outlook that entailed reverting to the old political and social stricture. Not only does Naipaul mock at Gandhi’s application of the ancient to the present but also adds that Gandhi is a part of the various factors responsible to make Indian civilization old and
wounded. He comments that India is inadequate owing to its treatment at the hands of Gandhi. Also it is without any intellectual means move ahead. Gandhi’s stress on the past in all its glory and worthiness in addition to propagation of anti-machinery attitude led the country into the retrogressive drive. Naipaul believes that the past is good for the purpose of commemoration but by no means can it be adopted as a reference to steer the present.

Naipaul asserts that the biggest and the only crisis of India is a decayed civilisation created by Gandhi. He mentions that the Ramrajya that Gandhi has always been talking of at length and which his followers have advocated is a mockery, as such idealism has already created a Kalyug—a kalyug a archaic emotions and nostalgic memories. Gandhism retreated India into archaism by creating a conscious possession of an ancient culture. Naipaul equates simplicity with the old India and Gandhi. Gandhi is accused of aggravating irrelevant problems arising from his narrow spiritual perception and making them the problems of India. Though Gandhi also gave the solution to these problems simultaneously, but again these answers came “from myths and metaphysics” and were mockingly “eternal answers” (Naipaul, 1968, 209). The Indian sentimentality that he made a big issue of was far from any sort of genuine concern for India. Thus by treading the path led by Gandhi. Naipaul sees in India the immense crisis of a decaying civilisation whose only hope lay in further decay. The progress is devoid of all rational and pragmatic consideration. Gandhi guided by personal philosophies and aversion to modernisation not only arrested India’s development but also led it to a post-colonial decay.

Naipaul is against what he terms as “unifying interpretation of history”. An Area of Awakening: Interview with Sir Vidiadhar Naipaul on the but Gandhi, according to him, did just that. For Naipaul the momentary is supreme. It is better just to face what there is. The situations “at hand” and not what “they should be”, must be the basis of all action, Naipaul’s vendetta against Gandhi is also mainly because of his obsession with living in the past was all the time supplemented with talks of ancient India and its spirituality. Thereby with his constant hammering of the ancient he made Indian civilisation old and wounded. He saw the freedom fervour in the nation and in it reaped an opportunity for arousing people through destructive spiritual inspiration that was aimed at an un-intellection motivation.

In Area of Darkness Naipaul accuses Gandhi of having created a conscious reification of ancient Indian culture (Naipaul, 1968, 212). Such an approach recognised fantasy as means to live while acknowledgement of 81 considered. “painful and humiliating” (Naipaul,
Another factor was “impracticality” that Gandhism set into tend. Gandhi’s non-pragmatism is the product of his preoccupation with the spiritual. Naipaul scoffs at the weird sense of Ganshian logic that stems from irrational corners. Thus Naipaul seems to suggest that Gandhi allowed his reason to be taken over by unfounded notions, Naipaul (Naipaul, 1968, 200) cites various cases of Gandhism requiring impractical rituals such as walking barefoot or bareheaded in the sun because Gandhi in spite of finding sun helmets sensible discouraged their usage for reasons of national pride. Gandhi thus only disrupted the prevalent order. Naipaul adds that even today Gandhi is considered as one of the strongest medium to relate to India. And this is a measure of the damage he caused. (Naipaul, 1968, 81).

Another fact that Naipaul brings to light in this regard is how Gandhi has throughout been referring to the Bhagwad Gita and the Vedas during his teachings. In fat, he presents a Gandhi who was all about Bhagwad Gita. He says that the “Veda preaching Gandhi” befits the age when scribes wrote on leaves and strips of brass and people travelled on foot and definitely not in times when a scientific and pragmatic attitude is the need to the hour. To this extent, Naipaul does not even spare the Aryans Gita taking a jibe as its message of doing one’s own duty “even if it be humble rather than another’s, even if it be great” (Naipaul, 1968, 81). He fails to register the relevance of these teaching in an age of modernism. Naipaul has clearly stated his disbelief in the notion that no Indian manual is so old that it cases to be irrelevant. He has consistently projected disapproval of Gandhi’s constant reference to the Vedas as the guiding force. In Area of Darkness he writes on Vedic Gandhi thus, “He is a mere holy man or the sadhu who strengthens the private contract with God of all who revere him” (Naipaul, 1968, 81).

In The Overcrowded Barracoon, Naipaul also lambastes other political leaders who advocated Gandhi, especially Vinobha Bhave, a Gandhian land reformer. Gandhi died but Gandhism lived trough his followers. One of them was Bhave who Naipaul describes as the self-proclaimed Gandhi’s heir and advocator of spirituality, symbolism and archaism, Bhave went around propagating the idea that state should wither away (Naipaul, 1984, 150). He too used the Mantra of spirituality to reach and win the masses. He created a new political jargon in terms of love and god. Economy was linked to donation, charity and compassion; calamities were linked to sin: education to trees; agriculture to birth control; western literature was to be replaced with Lord Krishana’s teachings. Thus was reduced to self-indulgence and holy arrogance. Naipaul comments that in this way his followers have made Indians victims of an
ancient surviving civilisation. He mentions in India: A Wounded Civilization that ideas propagated by the likes “of a Vinoba Bhave can only express the dust the defeat of the India village” (Naipaul, 1979, 156). Referring to Bhave as “imitation-Gandhi” and “an idle fellow”, he criticises Bhave for offering himself as the magician of Gandhian magic. Lost in the cycle of irrational notions and logic, Bhave is lampooned Naipaul. In the lines below, Naipaul projects the decayedness of Bhave’s Gandhism by writing:

Bhave has described himself as the fire. It was his duty simply to burn; it was for other to use his fire. Humility, once it becomes a vow, ceases to be humility, Gandhi said in his autobiography; and Bhave’s interpretation of his function in India is a vain and decadent as it appears (Naipaul, 1979, 153). Naipaul describes Bhave as a decadent Gandhi successor and the religion that he was propagating as barbaric. He was taking people back to the bush age with his nonsense political ideas. He describes him as “a medieval throwback” and his importance was because of his “moral” references. He has become “The authorized version of Gandhi”, leading India into the fixities to the Gandhian way. His task was confined to keeping “The Gandhian prayer wheel turning” (Naipaul, 1979, 137).

And then there was another politician Desai (who in all probability is Morarji Desai) in The Overcrowded Barracoon to whom Naipaul sadistically bestows the title of “Mr”. Naipaul ways that he was using Gandhism to advocate anti-machinery sentiments. Replacing economics with nationalism, dharma and impiety, he endorsed Gandhi-cap, homespun clothes, asceticism and spinning. Naipaul finds the absurd. Later in India: A Wounded Civilization. Naipaul denounces Desai’s Gandhism as fake and useless. Its emphasis lay on emotional outburst instead of reasoning and was in a defeatist attitude. It was a cal as the past. Naipaul writes:

…..Mr. Desai has been arrested, no doubt to his own surprises (‘I prefer to believe that before committing such a monstrousy Mrs. Gandhi would commit suicide,’ he had told that interviewer, unwittingly showing up the vanity and shoddiness of his Gandhian posture) (Naipaul, 1979, 122).

In the same travelogue, Naipaul elaborardness in the freedom struggle that Gandhism had created. Procession singing ‘p had distributing sweets were forms of all-India protest decreed by people finding faults with these were considered anti-political. The combination of marxism and Gandhism offered by politicians as Jaya Prakash Narayan is in fact “an old religious exaltation” (Naipaul, 1979, 134) to Naipaul. He has
deliberately quoted a speech by Narayan that, according to him, elicits the archaic nature of Gandhian politics:

The passage that beings with an antifascist call (and gives India a working class, almost as if to equip it for that modern struggle) quickly becomes less straightforward. India become the ancient and sacred land of Bharat, and its past is mystically invoked: leaping the defilement of the British period, the speaker looks back to the eighteenth-century Maratha bandit kings, glances at the Moslem conquerors (the Mughal, the Pathan), jumps a thousand year to the purely Indian Guptas, and goes back a further five hundred years to the Mauryas (Naipaul, 1979, 134). Naipaul fails to register how Gandhi could relate democracy to rediscovery of the past and to the revival of Ramrajya. Jaya Prakash Narayan carrying the same message forward was guiding people back to the time of Hindu past. Naipaul further comments that such leaders are eternalising Gandhi and offering Gandhism as the perennial solution for India and the irony of it all was mingling of”…. The sterility of contemporary Indian political life-immovable power on one side, and on the other side frustrated and obsessional “Gandhian” protest, mixing political and historical fantasy with religious exaltation…." (Naipaul, 1979, 133).

Naipaul denies all possibilities of mingling of the spiritual with the real. Religion has its own place in the temple and not in politics and certainly not matters pertaining to nation-building. But Gandhi was a spiritual leader. Religion was his strongest weapon and for Naipaul here lies the dilemma of India. A nation was finally awakened but not to intellect, rather to benumbing spiritualism. Naipaul (Naipaul, 1979, 159) has commented that spirituality in the grab of national assertion can only lead to nihilism. He accuses Gandhi can only lead to nihilism. He accuses Gandhi of relating everything to Karma and propagating the idea of religious merit being the sole criteria to lead his followers. Dharma was imposed as the axis of Indian life and Naipaul suggests that Gandhi’s overbearing advocation of dharma has done nothing but built a reverence for servitude. Naipaul also accuses Gandhi of giving the Congress a rural base and thus establishing rural India as the true Indian identity. He states that “Four out of five Indian live in villages; and the Congress—only party in India (except for certain regional parties) which has rural organisation” (Naipaul, 1979, 133). Gandhi had created an aversion to machinery. He made people believe that machine tended to dehumanise. And thus the people were more concerned about improving the performance of bullock cart rather than adopting changes. “To be, just to be” (Naipaul, 1979, 95) was enough. Naipaul contrasts this
backwardness with Indira Gandhi who he believes has an ideal modern approach. He mentions that Indira believed in living with the times and has asserted, “While people must know of the past, they must move towards the future” (Naipaul, 1979, 17), Naipaul asserts that the modern world cannot be caricatured or done away with as fabricated and neither can a pastoral past be re-established.

In his book Half a Life that came a few years later than the above-mentioned travelogues, Naipaul discusses the price that India is paying for its Gandhi’s anti-modernity ideals. India caught in between nuclear power on one hand and religious riots on the other is unable to go forward or backward. Naipaul’s view are in tune with the likes of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy from within India. Coomaraswamy believes that those who state that the Vedanta has nothing to do with magic or with the exercise of occult powers are taken for granted in India. He regards magi as an applied science of the basest kind and occult powers as a dangerous deviation from the path. Nissim Ezekiel, though not of Indian origin but born/bred here and constantly engaging with America and England, become a sort of diasporic himself. In his poem “The Patriot” too has spelt such fanciful notion as remote possibility now. Making a mockery of Ramrajya he writes:

In India also
Gujaraties, Maharashtrians, Hindiwallahs
All brothers-
Though some are having funny habits.
Still, you tolerate me,
I tolerate you,
One day Ram Rajya is surely coming.
You are going.

From Naipaul’s writings it seems Gandhi has no intention of humanising politics, rather what he in India only regionalised it. Gandhi’s idea seemed to be retain the Indianness of politics without any concern whatsoever to level it down to a rational place. Gandhi feared the state and viewed it as entrammelling on ind 85. Thus in Naipaul’s writings: Gandhi came to the realisation that religion could be used to bring about a great change in consciousness. Gandhi by going around following his holy calling turned India into a theatre where an old drama was being enacted and re-enacted. The Indians have made Gandhi holy leader of the nation and this has led to grounding in fatalistic philosophy that is ignorant to the ideal of self-improvement. Intellect
gave way to sentimentalism wherein feelings became the supreme consideration. People joined in the freedom struggle merely for the sake of individual merit and earning the “Gandhiite” label. Gandhi and later distorted Gandhianism in Bhave become a play of magic and glorious past. It spelt the end of the intellect and the beginning of a futile play of spirituality. But Naipaul also adds that the validity of Gandhian principles lasted only as long as Gandhi was there to manoeuvre. Gandhian effort to restore the traditional world and uproot the West were but a waste of effort, and Naipaul ways that India is coming out of this backwardness syndrome and opening up to a new historical awakening. He asserts that Gandhi filed to realise that the marvels that the West has given to India has not only been absorbed into the Indian system but also India could no longer do without them. Thus, Gandhi was not purely a freedom leader as the freedom struggle was accompanied by his drive to cleanse the society of the caste system, to create moral awakening and to attain Ramrajya. Such fusion created a sense of love of false glamour in his followers, spelling danger for national politics.

Gandhi’s modernity has evoked comments from many thinkers and writers all over the world and Naipaul has both his supporters as well as critics here. Gandhi’s orientalism and return to backwardness has been at the receiving end from B.R. Ambedkar as well. Gandhi focused on return to the village and making the village self-sufficient. Ambedkar feels such motives made Gandhism a mere matter of decadent regionalism. The call “back to nature” implies leading the masses to nakedness, squalor, poverty and ignorance. Gandhism is thus, primitivism, In his essay “Gandhism: The Doom of the Untouchables” he writes:

The ideas which go to make up Gandhism are just primitive, it is a return to nature, to animal life..... There is, however, no doubt that his practical instinct of men—which seldom go wrong—have found them unfruitful and with society in search of progress has though it best to reject.

But Gandhi’s supporters tiiiiiii: Gandhi is often clubbed with Max Muller. Both belonged to the school of thought, 86 that the study of religion is incomplete unless it is studied with references to India. Muller too linked his own religious faith with the progress of the Asiatic. Muller and commented:

Take religion and where can you study its true origin, its natural growth, and its inevitable decay better than in India, the home of Brahmanism, the birth place of Buddhism and the refuge of Zoroastrianism even now the matter of new
superstitions—and why not, in the future the regenerate child of the purest faith, if only purified from the dust of nineteen centuries (Muller, 13)?

In Gandhi’s defence we also have Ramashray Roy from the native space who believe that politics and religion are inseparable. Roy finds Gandhi’s critique of modernity as radical and total. Modern civilisation, according to him, is unacceptable on moral grounds as it tries to take over human freedom. He asserts.

As such, the realm of politics cannot operate on principle derived from its own functioning or from the givens of nature and society. It must draw its motivating ideals from the transcendental i.e. religious, and make them the guiding principles of its operation (Roy, Ramashrya, 1985, 159).

At the western end, E.F. Schumacher finds Gandhian ideologies modern and says they could be relevantly applied alongside modern technology. Mark Lindley and Lavanam Gora hold that Gandhi was critical of contemporary air on humanitarian grounds. In fact, they go on to add that Gandhi was wise player of politics and his handling of the past was rendered with modern treatment that was best suited to the times. He was “adept the filling old containers with new contents” (Gora, 273). They add that “Gandhi’s capacity for idiosyncratic interpretation is illustrated by the way of downplayed the most likely historical meaning of the Gita in order to interpret it as a tract against violence” (Gora, 273). Gora and Lindley do not see the mingling of politics and religion as manipulative but rather as a patriotic endeavour towards realisation of Moksha, Teresa Hubel too in her book Whose India? Finds Gandhi “the father of modern Indian nationalism” (Hubel, 77). She, in fact, holds Indian nationalism responsible for creating the mythical Gandhi.

Naipaul belongs to the section of diaspora that views India a-historically. He places the past under watchful assessment. The past only becomes a point of investigation and reference. The present needs to be involved led through its means. Naipaul may be supported in his opinion though the words of Tagore that “experimentalism as opposed to entrammelling by the past is the sign of country’s youth”.

87
GANDHI AS MESSIAH OF POOR

Gandhi in heralded as the messiah of the poor. He was “pro-poor” without a doubt but Naipaul accused Gandhi of spiritualising poverty and not offering a concrete programme or eradicating it. Quite a few western thinkers too agree to the view that Gandhi aggrandised the harijan issue beyond reasonable proportion and his approach to deal with the underprivileged was not based on a well-thought of national plan. Gandhi’s holy poverty proved to be the stalling feature in India’s progress.

Naipaul lashes out at Gandhi for ridiculously converting poverty from a fact of Indian life to something holy. It was a badge of piety for the Gandhian drive. Gandhi’s treatment of poverty was orthodox and replete with conservative Hinduism. Gandhi adopted a sentimental mode to interact with the harijans. To Naipaul this was unrealistic. Gandhi has dual stands regarding untouchability. At one end, he was trying to deal with their problem and the other, he worked on the harijan mind in such a manner that they not only felt the necessity of harijanism in society but also became the violent protectors of the same. Naipaul says that deified poverty is a religious theatre playing the mimicry of karma, where beggary becomes a professional and breed of beggar multiply fast and pose a menace to the society. Naipaul fails to accept the eradication of untouchability with the cleansing of society as Gandhi voices time and again. He transformed untouchability into a moral obligation. In Area of Darkness Naipaul attacking Gandhi’s untouchability campaign writes: “Untouchability, viewed from his outsider’s eye has become the most important factor for inaction as dignity and function are defined by mere symbolic acts” and this according to Naipaul is “dangerous, decayed pragmatism of caste” (Naipaul, 1968, 80). In his attitude towards the harijans, Gandhi, as Naipaul often accuses, was no different from the colonial outsider.

To Naipaul, Gandhi’s observation of the shuddering nature of poverty was a drained out observation. Naipaul considering Gandhi and outsider finds him incapable of comprehending the issue of untouchability. He is being a non-native approach to the matter and instead of guiding the untouchables he rather spoilt them by teaching dignity in inaction and clubbing symbolic acts with essential tasks to be performed. Naipaul mentions that owing to Gandhian misguidance, service became a source of prestige while the responsibilities and duties were ignored. Gandhi encouraged the idea of division in society leading to structured economy states.
Thus his anti-untouchability drive was only worsening things. He was propounding in Naipaul’s words a “society based on positions carrying fixed defined functions (Naipaul, 1968, 75). And Naipaul considers this far cry from removing caste-based distinctions. It is only with pun that Naipaul (Naipaul, 1968, 80) remarks that Gandhi has make a “revolutionary assessment” that with the departure of untouchability. “purification of society” would have been attained.

Next in The Overcrowded Barracoon Naipaul hints at the danger that harijans were posing with their violence. They were getting out of control. In India: A Wounded Civilization Naipaul becomes even more vehement towards this issue. Here he mocks at the very title given to the untouchables by Gandhi—harijan meaning “children of god”. Naipaul puns at the title, defining it as a “remarkable linguistic coincidence” and adds that the untouchables “have remained God’s chillum” (Naipaul, 1979, 37). Untouchability, according to him, prevailed since ancient times and so did the attitude towards it. He writes (Naipaul, 1979, 37). “The antique violence remained: rural untouchability as serfdom. Maintained by terror and sometimes by deliberate starvation. None of this was new…. But all of a sudden it has become a burning issue due to the outsider-Gandhi’s observation.

Naipaul (Naipaul, 1979, 48) further adds that Gandhi betrayed the untouchables. Not only he failed to remove untouchability but rather left them being dangling in a nowhere position. In fact his campaign left them all the more “dispossessed” and “humiliated”. They either retracted further from the society or converted to Buddhism. The situation worsened with time. Gandhi’s “pro-deprived” movement awakened uontouchablity and holy poverty in uncalled for terms. Strengthening castism and creating a society based on positions carrying fixed defined functions, it aborted hopes to awaken the underprivileged to a broader vision (Naipaul, 1979, 159-160). On the issue to poverty too Naipaul again resorts to an “Indian-Mahatma” comparison. While Mahatma Gandhi deified poverty, Indira Gandhi tried to remove it. Later on, Naipaul mentions that Indira Gandhi was...ver poverty and this in fact was the failure of Mahatma Gandhi 89 (Nai... that Nainpaul quotes Gandhi’s discussion regarding the search of solution for the problem. Gandhi has suggested that the remedy of the situation lay in fusing the castes into one big caste and further making four such castes. Naipaul finds this an act of intensification of castism.
But later in India: A Million Mutinies Now Naipaul after establishing Gandhi as the culprit behind harijan menace takes pleasure in describing Ambedkar instead of Gandhi as the leader of the dalits – the terms that was adopted by untouchables in defiance to Gandhi’s term. Naipaul favour the progressive Ambedkar to the antiquated Gandhi. Ambedkar has a more realistic outlook towards the condition of the untouchables when he told them that needed to get out of their miserable plight whereas Gandhi nursed as illusion that by spiritualising poverty he was actually finding a solution. Ambedkar approached the untouchables less politically as compared to Gandhi. Gandhi has reduced the untouchables to a mere object of “sentiment and a passing piety” (Naipaul, 1998, 4). Harijans was a ridiculous title and the name dalit was not only defiance of Hinduism but also of Gandhi’s harijanism and Naipaul writes:

It was Dr. Ambedkar who has encouraged the untouchables—the harijans, the children of god, as Gandhi called them, and now the dalits, as they called themselves—to abandon Hinduism, which had enslaved them, and to turn to Buddhism (Naipaul, 1998, 3).

Gandhi violated the untouchables; reduced them to mere object of discussion and then became ignorant of their plight, In fact, Naipaul questions Gandhi’s integrity on the untouchability issues. For instance, he mentions the case of a Congress school working for the spread of Gandhian thought where untouchability was practised in full rigour, and when matter came to Gandhi, Naipaul comments, “his response was ambiguous and light hearted” (Nainpaul, 1998, 219).

In short, Naipual dismisses Gandhi on the untouchability issues also. He ignited the fire to untouchability but then carelessly left it burning. His relation to the untouchable started by provoking sentiments of harijanism and by making them realise their problems but then it also ended there itself. This proves the short-sightedness of Gandhi.

GANDHI’S OBSESSION WITH THE SELF

Aurobindo once stated: “Arise, transcend thyself, Thou art man and the whole nature of man is to become more than himself”. In between tradition and modernity Tagore has stated that obsession with the self is lack of higher moral power and it can only lead to degradation. The
should needs to be searched in the spiritual unity of all human beings. In fact, higher morality according to Tagore, could be achieve only by opening the self to the universe.

According to the conventional stands, Gandhi was for purity of the soul. Naipaul reverses this notion and portrays it as Gandhi’s obsession with the inner self. In fact, Naipaul detects selfishness as an indelible trait of Gandhi from the very beginning of his journey abroad to London till his death. Naipaul is not so much against the radical fervour started by Gandhi in India as he is to Gandhi’s process of making his personal charisma the guiding force behind the movement. This was a retrogressive step, which was to have adverse effects on the mental make-up of the nation.

In An Ares of Darkness, Naipaul points at the selfishness of great healers whom he believe to use their powers for self-rescue alone. He hints time and again how Gandhi colonial transformation responsible for the development of the self-centredness in him. As Gandhi detached himself from India, he receded further into his own self, “lost in the process of self-inquiry” and “contents to be himself along” (Naipaul, 1968, 188). Gandhi had become an island. Referring to his stay in London, Gandhi has been portrayed by Naipaul as an idler who turned his idle whims into obsession. Gandhi’s account of his travel to London and of his stay there makes it sound almost as a legend. He (Naipaul, 1968, 71-75) mentions the subjects of books that Gandhi read while abroad: “Vegetarianism, clothes-washing and bookkeeping”, only to highlight that Gandhi’s main concern in a new land, centred on his personal needs alone. Later back in the country, carrying the same attitude within him, his obsession culminated in a revolution that was devoid of progressive ideas. His upheaval only led to the idea of self-fulfillment.

Naipaul also associates this self-centredness with Gandhi’s obsession to become a “Mahatma”. People has transformed him into a legend, a demi-god. And this obsession disabled him to communicate with India effectively. But in The Overcrowded Barracoon though Naipaul does comment on Gandhi’s transformation to a larger-than-life figure and depicts that egoism took the better of him, however, his focus is on Gandhi’s autobiography, which he opines is replete with Gandhi’s self-obsession. Every outward experience is described in context to the self. The journey to London became a spiritual journey wherein the assertion of self was more evident than anything else. He describes the autobiography in the following words:

For its first half Gandhi’s autobiography…dealing with the acknowledged marvel of his early life….reducing people to their functions and their simplified
characteristic….turns everything to legend. When the action becomes more complex and political, the method fails; and the book declines more obviously into what it always was: an obsession with vows, food experiments….an obsession with the self (Naipaul, 1968, 61-62).

In **India: A Wounded Civilization**, Naipaul explicates the religious exploitation of the idea of the self. He infers that “Identify became an aspect of Karma, self-love was bolstered by an ideal of nonviolence” (Naipaul, 1979, 17). Gandhi was guided by his Hindu morality in pursuit of self-realisation. Naipaul senses a decayed and defeatist attitude in the ideal of contentment in having one’s “being”. He again comes back to Gandhi’s autobiography (Naipaul, 1979, 86), mentioning that Gandhi wrote it after having become a mahatma, and that he can remember the voyage as a great “personal” adventure. Throughout the journey Gandhi was concerned with the inner being. The focus lay on “anxieties felt and food eaten” and there is hardly any reference to London itself. The seasons, the beauty of the place. Its people and London life have been ignored all together. One can only infer London from Gandhi’s detailed discussion on the experiences of the self there. “The inward concentration” Naipaul mentions “is fierce” and “the self absorption complete” (Naipaul, 1979, 86). The book (Naipaul, 1979, 87) becomes an account of Gandhi’s constant self searching. His experiments and discoveries and vows answered his own needs as Hindu the need constantly to define and fortify the self in the midst of hostility; they were nor of universal application. Naipaul locates the genesis of Gandhi’s “mahatmahood” in South Africa. There Gandhi became “the great-souled” while engaged in internal adventure all the time. Naipaul adds that the supreme example of this is in the omission of African in his biography accounts his twenty years stay in South Africa. And even when he mentions the problems faced by Africans at one place, Naipaul remarks that their plight failed in more Gandhi who was too involved in self-searching. The voyage is internal and Gandhi was oblivious to the external world around. The outside world was mentioned only if it affected Gandhi in any possible way. Thus the autobiography boils down to a journey or adventure of self-searching and the consequences of it. The outer reality for him was only a means to preserve the inner self and this according to Naipaul is negative way of perception. (Naipaul, 1979, 91).

According to Naipaul , Gandhi’s self-absorption was his driving force, his only vision. There was no attempt at an objective view of the world. The outer world mattered only so far as
it affected the inner. His main concern was to locate himself in this wide world. Gandhi has been exposed to foreign experience but instead of developing a globalized vision, he went further inwards. The inner bordering on lunacy was the only thing that Gandhi had to offer to the world in the form of Gandhism. Lost in himself, Gandhi failed to understand India. The inner voice of Gandhism was followed always. He made personal obsession a public experience as Naipaul writes:

He became his emblems, his holy caricature, the object of competitive piety. Knowledge of the man as a man was lot; mahatmahood submerged all the ambiguities and the political creativity of his early years, the modernity (in India) if so much of his though. He was claimed in the end by old India, that very India whose political deficiencies he has seen so clearly, with his South African eye (Naipaul, 1979, 140).

Naipaul says that in Gandhi’s case, everything was meant to satisfy only personal needs and the country paid heavily for the same. Gandhi followed his “inner voice” in an arbitrary fashion and taught Indians to live in fixities. Naipaul senses in India: A Wounded Civilization that no one was ready to extend beyond his defined duties and this aspect of lassitude was created by non other than the search of the self. Since Gandhi’s foremost tool to motion people into the Independence movement was religion, therefore many people were enticed to joint the same for “individual merit”. A religious view of life was conveniently converted into self-love.

In India: A Million Mutinies the nation for making a “mahatma” out of Gandhi because of which, “Gandhi outgrew his cause. He was not happy being a local figure” (Naipaul, 1998, 222). Thus Gandhi was transformed into the “great-souled”. Quite an few writers have studied Gandhi critically following the arbitrary dictates of his “inner voice”. And thus Naipaul too centres Gandhi’s faults in his over-involvement with the self. The biggest misconception that Gandhi carried was that of being a “mahatma”. He allowed himself to be worshipped and this only encouraged his self-centeredness. Naipaul has not spared Bhave too and says that he was even a worse case than Gandhi himself. His self-absorption was more intense due to the Gandhian effect. Nehru in opposition to Gandhi in Naipaul’s writings has been portrayed as more practical and less keen of deification of the self.

Some thinkers have been strong supporters of Gandhi’s concept of the self and inner drive is preference of the self to society. He mentions “The importance to individual growth as
an essential condition or corporate growth does not, however, mean the supremacy of the individual over society” (Roy, Ramashray, 1985, 109). In fact, Gandhi was simply displaying the principle unity of life wherein all individuals were but the drops of a single ocean. He considers the inner self inseparable from the world outside. He states that the soul is sensitive to the external happenings to an extent that outside concern become supreme and become the concerns of the self. According to him, Gandhi rightly advocate social reconstruction through a revolutionary transformation of the self. This was based on the theory that such an equation was the only means to obtain and sustain normal civilisation. Gandhi’s importance to the inner voice was justifiable as this inner voice has always been “Closely following the march of civilisation, it has kept strict watch on its progress and has, as and when the march of civilisation, it has kept strict watch on its progress and has, as and when the occasion demanded, raised alarms about the approaching precipice” (Roy, Ramashray, 1985, 14). Roy further says that after having absorbed as much as possible of the outside world, man must turn inwards to search for the void and that is when the motion begins and obstacle encountered in external pursuit would imply an obstruction in the progression of the self. The “self” is both rational as well as desirable and restricting the flowering of the self can only result in impeding “flowering of individuality” (Roy, Ramashray, 1985, 41).

On the western end, Gora and Lindley comment that Gandhi was not self obsessed, rather he was only executing the responsibilities of governing. This stress on the self in Gandhi’s politics can be related to Frantz Fanon’s statement in The Wretched of the Earth that national consciousness, which is not synonymous with nationalism, provides us with an internal dimensions (Fanon, 73), But Naipaul disagrees and dismisses Gandhi’s nationalism and political as nothing but self-obsession.

GANDHI’S POLITICAL SYMBOLISM

The conventional thought system states that Gandhi has a well thought out system of political struggle. Writers belonging to this school view Gandhian strategy as based on symbolism. It is respected as well-though of approach aimed at gaining man’s appeal. The
Gandhian symbols had their source in Hinduism and were carefully selected in order to enable the different sections of the masses to identify with them.

But according to Naipaul, Gandhi’s politics according to Naipaul mingled with religion reducing postcolonial/anti-colonial challenge to symbolism. Naipaul says his symbolism was a mere weapon. In India: A Million Mutinies Now, he calls Gandhi a performer of stunts. Gandhi in his hurry to weep the Indian minds used the magic of symbols. Naipaul defines symbolism as one of Gandhi’s weapons. His symbolism was a means to exploit the Indian masses politically. The symbols aided in breaking the ignoble privacy of the Indian attitudes using domestic analogies wrapped in legend, myth and history. They were quickly grasped by the Indian masses without any concern for deriving a definite conclusion from these. Gandhi in his hurry to sweep the Indian minds used the magic of symbols. The minds were conquered and prepared for the situation at hand but this preparation was momentary as the long term implications involved were ignored.

Amongst Gandhi’s symbols the most popular were the techniques of “fast” and that of the “spinning wheel”. Naipaul labels the fast as means to quick publicity. In An Area of Darkness (Naipaul, 1968, 80) he stresses on how Gandhi’s symbolism was responsible for leading to an atmosphere of inaction. Gandhi created a chain of symbols and rituals and this was a magic that enraptured the masses. It has left behind useless ritual to follow in India. Naipaul mentions the ritual of the long walk on the hot sands to the site of Gandhi’s cremation. He finds it unnecessary and “the curse of symbolism” (Naipaul, 1968, 91).

Naipaul (Naipaul, 1968, 78) seems to be protesting against the image of Indian spirituality, the Indian passion for speech-making, for gesture and for symbolic action. Even Gandhi’s concern for the untouchables has been reduced to mere symbolism. He states that “Untouchability, viewed from his outsider’s eye has become that most important factor for inaction as dignity and functions are defined by mere symbolic acts” which acc to Naipaul is “dangerous, decayed pragmatism of caste” (Naipaul, 1968, 80). He states that “That growth failed; it became the symbol of a symbol. It was a spiralling, deliquescent logic” (Naipaul, 1968, 170). Elaborating on the uselessness of Gandhi’s symbolism in The Overcrowded Barracoone, Naipaul characterises them as a hollow approach. The symbolism was more significant for the symbols than the message as “Ritual and magic forever claim the world, however new its
structure” (Naipaul, 1984, 100). Spinning wheel was more of a symbol rather than a significant message.

Naipaul even compares Gandhi to other foreign political figures on the issues of symbolism. He mentions Norman Mailer—a campaigner from New York who too makes use of symbols such as blue suit, walking out tours and handshaking. These symbols added a whole lot of seriousness, Naipaul writes, but only to prove the fickleness of the masses that is swayed by such symbolism so easily. Naipaul (Naipaul, 1984, 184-185) associates Mailer’s strategy with orthodoxy. Then there is a mention of the Japanese reformer. Mr. Matsuda. “Fast”, according to him, was a political gimmick that he uses to startle others. Naipaul comments that it is “a part of his calculation and has no ethical relevance” and is just “means to publicity” (Naipaul, 1984, 157).

In India: A Wounded Civilization (Naipaul, 1979, 66) the hollow legacy of Gandhi’s symbolism is detailed in various observations around. There are schoolboys in khaki trousers and white shirts, walking barefooted but the thing to note is that they are wearing white Gandhi caps. Political gimmicks based on symbolism no longer work, as Naipaul writes:

But it was also easy to understand why the revolution had evaporated….the India of 1975 was not the India of 1930 and the Dandi Salt March. Political action couldn’t be concentrated in a single symbolic act (picking up a handful of salt from the shore at Dandi), a religious act, a ritual cleansing of a subject and defiled land, (Naipaul, 1979, 128).

The symbols have lost the energy associated with them. They are now mere rituals. The message is ignored all together. The Gandhian spinning wheel though till used symbolically no longer signifies means of livelihood or signifier of manual labour. It is now a mere “sacred tool, an aid to though (as with this politician) or (as with others) a yogic means of stilling the waves of the mind, an aid to mental vacuity” (Naipaul, 1979, 130). Bhave again faces critical treatment in this book for using Gandhian symbols to propagate what Naipaul views as groundless performance. Gandhi’s defective approach reduces his Gandhism to mere symbolism. His symbolism bordering on convenience and not doing anything remarkable but just picking “up salt, in this way breaking an easily breakable law and demonstrating to all India his rejection of British rule” (Naipaul, 1979, 150). In India: A Million Mutinies Now Naipaul reduces Gandhi’s symbolic gestures to a poetic concept. He blames it for locking all thinking in place. A daily
ritual of praying was considered a means to glorify Gandhism. The result is nullity of analytical perception as Naipaul states, “There is no scope for change; difficult for people to withdraw and analyse” (Naipaul, 1979, 90).

Thus Naipaul accuses Gandhi of creating a vicious circle of symbolism in India on for personal propaganda. Though some wirthers opine that by encouraging spinning Gandhi was trying to convert everyone to some recognition of the redemptive value of manual labour, yet Gandhi has been repeatedly put in the line of fire for his symbolic spinning at the wheel both in fiction as well as non-fiction works. Western thinkers such as Teresa Hubel and Robert Bernay comment positively that the means occupied that supreme position in Gandhi’s scheme. Both Hubel in Whose India? And Rohert Berney, earlier in 1932 in his Book Naked Faqir, have commented that the India peasants could very well identify themselves with Gandhi’s loincloth and shawl. Gandhi’s consistent image of working at the charkha has been pigeonholed as a mechanical involvement of Gandhi in a world that made him ignorant of reality and which only perpetuated further passivity among his followers. The wheel was nothing but a clever instrument of collective tactic. These symbols became Gandhi’s tools with which he played on the susceptible minds of the masses to steer them for his own purpose.

Naipaul’s views on Gandhi’s symbolism do not resemble that of Sunil Khilnani, Instead, Khilnani recognises the functional values of Gandhi’s symbols. In Idea of India he defines Gandhi’s business of symbol as an armoury that worked psychologically on the masses by creating anti-colonial temper. The marches and public meetings were all a part of a strategy: He writes:

Gandhi’s politics of the city carefully spliced together tow strands. He conducted a high politics of parleying with the British, and equally, he devised an everyday, colloquial politics that brilliantly captures the colonial city’s alien and commanding space for nationalist purposes, that defied and mocked colonial rule of public behaviour. Gandhi did this with a mixed armoury: he invented, for e.g. a sartorial ensemble—the dhoti, shawl, cap and staff—that conjured up the village and that he wore in the public territories of the Raj (Khilnani, 126).

Therefore, Gandhi’s symbolism that is still held in high esteem in India and figures as a necessary of not as prominent part of historical, political and social set-ups, is rubbished by Naipaul as nothing but a collection of hollow instruments used for hollow purposes.
GANDHI'S EFFECT ON INDIA

The conventional view unquestioningly believes that Gandhi was an asset to India, a positive influence. It is believed that India even today needs to be led by the Gandhian spirit but critical writings on Gandhi discussed the discrepancies in his teachings, the decayedness in his ideas and his religious capture of the masses. He has promised swaraj within a year, long time before independence. People who put their complete faith in him as their Messiah slowly realised that Gandhi was not the unquestionable answer to all problems of India and Gandhism after him has ended up as mere window dressing alone. From the native space, N.C. Choudhuri agrees that despite Gandhi’s best efforts, he failed to sense the pulse of the masses and his attempt to infuse positive value into his mass movement was ineffective because he failed to consider the uncreative side of the masses.

Naipaul considers Gandhi a liability. Gandhi has an adverse impact on post-Gandhi India. All in all he was a failure and the price of this failure has to be and is still being paid by India. John Chathanatt has suggested "The new society of Gandhian thought cannot come about without intense suffering....." (Chathanatt, 211). India “India would have been better off and much healthier in mind had it done away with Gandhianism. These words best describes Naipaul’s desire for washing out the Gandhian ligancy from India. Naipaul has a direct vision as the looks at India historically ad this account for his approach to Gandhi. Naipaul’s biggest claim of Gandhi’s failure is the effect he has on the masses. He became a spiritual guru and a freedom-leader. This combination turned disastrous, especially for the people who forgot how to use intellect and present of mind.

In An Area of Darkness Naipaul elaborates on the lethargic attitude and passivity that Gandhism has brought about in India. His ideas of non-violence and self-sustenance led to be negative habit of endurance, which in turn became an act of bravery. Gandhi was lost in philosophising the masses and thus killed their spirit of creativity and initiative, “Shiva has ceased to dance,” Naipaul comments (Naipaul, 1968, 217). There is a tendency to avoid physical effort to dance,” Naipaul comments (Naipaul, 1968, 217). There is a tendency to avoid physical effort in India. Indian energy has turned sour; the prevalent order has been disrupted owing to the
colonial vision that Gandhi brought in India. Indians have learnt to live in fixities. Lassitude prevents one from going beyond one’s duty.

Naipaul writes in the book, “Besides, this was India, and in India it was necessary to take people’s feelings into consideration” (Naipaul, 1968, 49). Gandhi emphasised on the moral factor in all his teachings and thus created an “Indian sentimentality” and Naipaul (Naipaul, 1968, 215) does not register this sentimentality with concern. Besides, Gandhi’s concepts of truth and non-violence have been dismissed as a case of his muddled thinking. Commenting on the effect of Gandhism on post-Independence India Naipaul writes, “The growth failed: it became the symbols of a symbol. It was a spiralling, deliquescing logic” (Naipaul, 1968, 170). He describes Indian as old people and adds that they might continue to be so. The fault lies with defective Gandhian approach. Gandhi magically transmuted India failings as inactivity, ignorance of logic and spiritual drama into great “values”. He dumped irrelevant issues, a spirit of withdrawal, confused values and a sense of denial into India. In his concern for India, Naipaul mentions in the book that India cannot afford to be passive. Only Gandhi’s name and reverence are left behind. The purpose of his fight and the advocates of his teachings have been forgotten. Naipaul locates the fault in Gandhi’s aggrandised irrelevant problem and made them the problems of India.

In the *Overcrowded Barroacoon*, Naipaul elaborates on the intellectual deprivation, lassitude and intellectual parasitism that Gandhian outlook brought about. Besides India, the travelogue also cities Naipaul’s experience in Mauritius. He perceives Mauritius to possess similar conditions as that of India. His criticism of people, leaders and ideologies in Mauritius reminds of his critique of Gandhian India. In *India: A Wounded Civilization* Naipaul Mentions that “India is now dependant on other imperfectly understood civilization and this has resulted in India’s intellectual second ratedness” (Naipaul, 1979, 92). The end result of Gandhism in India is limit of comprehension from the government. (Naipaul, 1979, 284) India left behind is country dependant for everything on other—not only for the question but also for the answer. Naipaul remarks, “The new a world cannot be denied. Incapable of lasting reform, or of a correct interpretation of the new world, India, profoundly dependent” (Naipaul, 1979, 101). Naipaul (Naipaul, 1979, 97) adds that regeneration could come only through magic or reverential contact with the wise or holy or powerful. The Indian mind was no longer capable of playing on problems and a mental effort of any short could only lead to frustration. Despite having created
a “welfare state” and that too, as Naipaul has to add, at the expenses of development, the country is only headed for more poverty, unemployment and further confusion.

In is in India: A Wounded Civilization that Naipaul details how Gandhism has wounded the India civilization. Everything from effect of Gandhi on India people, politics and social life has been brought to scrutiny: Naipaul derides Indian politics based on Gandhism. Referring to the Emergency that took place in 1975, Naipaul picture the shoddiness of Indian politics in the following words:

In is the method of the word: in the beginning was the world. A twelve-lettered mantra will be chanted and written fifty million times; and that is what— in this time of Emergency, with the constitution suspended, the press censored-five thousand volunteers are doing  (Naipaul, 1979, 4).

The irony, Naipaul points out, is that the politicians in independent India resemble those whom Gandhi began to draw into politics in 1917 and this is dismaying. These politicians come from small places with narrow look. Their concerns lie in issues of “caste and region”. The rural India still be Congress party carries the spirit of Gandhism and is therefore “people’s party” (Naipaul, 1979, 133). Besides politics, Gandhi has affected the very make-up of the Indians. Naipaul, as already mentioned, as critical of Gandhi’s treatment of the untouchables who has bee pampered by him into an uncontrollable group. A journalist in the book comments that kindness of the individual can be detrimental for the race and this is what perhaps Naipaul stresses upon when he discusses Gandhi and untouchables. Then there is the effect of Gandhi on Indians. Naipaul states that the instability in India is not the work of invaders rather it is the doing of those within India, and this is perhaps a clear indication of Gandhi and his Gandhian successors. Gandhism created a sense of defeat, dependency on others and at the same time withdrawal. Each man became an island. Existence was sufficient as evident in a statement made by a lady character in the book, “I see people having their being” (Naipaul, 1979, 29). The thing to note is that Naipaul remarks that she said so “mystically, blankly, and with truth”. This clearly indicates the attack on Indian non-violent passivity. There is a reference to the same attitude in the untouchable class also as Naipaul writes of a sweeper.

Veiled, squatting, almost motionless, but present, earning her half rupee, her 5 cents, she does with her finger dabs in a day what a child can do in single push of
long handled broom. She is not expected to do more: she is hardly a person. Old India requires few tools, few skills, and many hands (Naipaul, 1979, 64).

Naipaul also takes up the character of Jagan from P.K. Narayan’s fiction Vendor of Sweets to strengthen his stands on Gandhian passivity. He describes him as a Gandhian “volunteer” and freedom fighter only to add how during a demonstration, he allowed himself to be beaten unconscious by the police. Mocking at is as “The genius of Gandhi: intuiting just were the Hindu virtues of Quietism and religious self-cherishing could be converted into selfless action of overwhelming political force”, Naipaul” (Naipaul, 1979, 32) derides the idea of satyagraha that sought virtue in submitted oneself quietly to violence. Naipural does not consider is a fight fore freedom but rather for the ideology of truth. “Jagan’s was a holy war: he has a vision of his country cleansed and purified rather than a political vision of his country remade” (Naipaul, 1979, 32). The effect on India as a result of such Gandhian Jagans in Naipaul’s terms is:

…Self-cherishing "’101 social indifference, Jagan seeks only to maintain the stability of his capable of nothing else. To be sure in the midst of “the grime of this earth”, secure in the midst of distress: that is all he asks. When his world shatter, he cannot fight back: he has nothing to offer. He can only run away (Nainpaul, 1979, 32).

Gandhi had an unplanned approach. The London returned and South Africa enlightened Gandhi proposed a lot of change for India but used the medium of religion of communicate. Therefore what wasn’t associated with religion and morality, wasn’t followed either. Attacking Gandhi’s “simplicity” in this religious grab, Naipaul (Naipaul, 1979, 101) considers it a mockery of Indian independence. It can only prove a stumbling actor in industrial development. The Hinduism left behind by him is decayed barbarism. The aggressiveness exhibited was not rebellious bet rather a ceremonial demonstration of rebel. Further, the Hindu equilibrium created by Gandhism stunted the growth of man. Man thereon who talked much and did little was content to be ruled in all things by others Ghandhi’s religious ideology rendered all the ideals that he advocated as merely sacred. Their relevance was lost. This ideology led to stillness of mind.
Naipaul sense doom for India if it continues on the path of Gandhism. Gandhian India is unsuited to deal with contemporary situations. Equating the Gandhian era in India as “crisis,” Naipaul asserts that Gadhian India needs to be done away with. He observes:

India cannot respond in her old way, by a further retreat into archaism. Her borrowed institutions have worked like borrowed institutions; but archaic India can provide no substitutes for press, parliament, and courts. The crisis of India is not only political or economic. The larger crisis is of a wounded civilization that has at last become aware of its inadequacies and is without the intellectual means to move ahead (Naipaul, 1979, 8).

India stands disadvantaged without any living tradition. Attacking Gandhi’s emphasis on the importance of the past, Naipaul shows lack of faith in the India past and adds that it “can no longer provide inspiration for the Indian present” (Naipaul, 1979, 112). India continues to imitate the West. Naipaul says a country with such immense population has potential for lot more but:

……now has litt 102 the world except its Gandhian concepts of holy poverty and the 1 ked comedy of its holy men, and which, while asserting, the antiquity of its in every practical way or other, imperfectly understood civilization (Naipaul, 1979, 133).

Gandhi’s Ramrajya is mockery of modern democracy. And it is unfortunate that not only Gandhi with his retrogressive ideas has been absorbed into the Indian system but also his loss is considered immense. “Everyone in India is Gandhian; everyone has his own ideal of Gandhiasnism, as everyone has his own intimation of the Ramrajya he offered” (Naipaul, 1979, 136). Gandhi awakened India as a holy land and therefore due to lack of reasoning in his approach, he left it directionless. What mattered to him was his “mahatmahood” and his it’s grab he return India to archaism and transformed the country into a land of vain Gandhi followers. Not only does Naipaul condemn Gandhi’s infiltration of borrowed ideal into India but also the fact that the India left behind after his death depended solely on borrowed ideas and institutions without even assessing the reliability of the same. India created by Gandhism was no longer capable of interpreting the reality around as “Intellectual confusion in India is so complete that is impossible to clarify principles” (Naipaul, 1979, 116).
GANDHI IN NAIPAUL’S FICTION

Naipaul’s earlier fiction works have been dealing with Indians’ experience as expatriates of exiles in foreign lands, especially Trinidad and London. It was in his recent fictional work Half a Life and its sequel Magic Seeds that Gandhi enters Naipaul’s fiction in more visible forms. And the treatment of Gandhi in these two works has not undergone any drastic transformation despite the fact that Gandhi-effected India. Has both the books deals with life of protagonist Willie Chandran. In Half a Life, we come across criticism of Gandhi’s removal of untouchability” drive. During the pre-Independence era, Chandran’s father is impressed by Manatma Gandhi’s campaign of untouchability. He abandons his studies and swept in the radical Gandhi wave, marries a low-case woman. The shoddiness of his Gandism is depicted in his treatment of his untouchable wife and later his children. Willie, and offspring of the high-low caste alliance grows up to face the dilemmas of his parentage. Just as Gandhi left for London of study, Willie flees to it in search of identity. Unlike Gandhi who held on to Indianess to survive in London, Williae realises freedom from cultural bindings and feels free to go ahead and explored. He has learnt that:

……the old rules were themselves a kind of make-believe, self-imposed. And one day… he saw with great clarity that the old rules no longer bound him…. he was free to present himself as he wised. He could, as it were, writes his own revolution…. He could, within reason, remakes himself and his past and his ancestry (Naipaul, 2001, 60).

Naipaul had commented in his travelogues that Gandhi remained unaffected by the plight of Africans in South Africa. A reference to Wille concerned about the balcks in Africa with similar colonial background seems an intentional pun on Gandhi. Magic Seed is a sequel to Half and Life. Gandhi is introduced in the very beginning of the novel. The treatment of Gandhi is similar to that in India: A Wounded Civilization. There is an attack on Gandhi’s colonial vision and obsession with the self. Willie just like Gandhi re-enters India after his England, Africa and Berlin experiences. He has failed in the search of the self but unlike Gandhi he fails to locate himself back in India and leaves. Though Naipaul’s treatment of Gandhi in these works is not as elaborated as it is in the travelogues yet the attitude remains the same, that of rejecting Gandhi.
Naipaul’s sketch of Gandhi in the travelogues studies produces the images of Gandhi as a failed reformer. In India: A Wounded civilization Naipaul summarises defeat of Gandhism in India in the following words:

Now the people who fight about him fight about nothing. Neither her nor old India has the solutions to the present crisis. He was the last expression of old India, he took India to the end of that road. All the arguments about the Emergency, all the references to his mane reveal India’s intellectual vacuums, and the emptiness of the civilization to which he seemed to give new life (Naipaul, 1979, 160).

Gandhi’s failure, according to him more obvious during the later stages of his political career. People who worshipped him earlier were throwing thorns on his path; there were open protests against him and ultimately he was killed by a Hindu. Gandhi isolated himself from the game of politics he had begun with such fervour but his ligancy was nevertheless disastrous. Naipaul writes:

The many-sided Gandhi permeates modern India. He is hidden….but the drama that is being played out in India today is the drama he set up more than sixty years ago… Gandhi gave India its politics: he called up its archaic religious emotions. He made them serve one another, and brought about an awakening. But in independent India the elements of the awakening negate one another. No government can survive on Gandhian fantasy; and the spirituality, the solace of a conquered people, which Gandhi turned into a form of national assertion, has sourced more obviously into the nihilism it always was (Naipaul, 1979, 159).

Under the impact of Gandhism India remained stalled. It was unable to see it is way ahead. Gandhi’s ever-sentimental concern about the condition of India and his constricted vision sealed the fate of the country for a long time. Doom loomed large for the future of the nation where any constructive work could only ends in ashes. The intermingling of culture and the intellect, religious revival with politics, led to irrational ways of thinking. Thus India suffering from want of intellectualism did not even have the questions, forget the answers. Gaandhi’s was an ethical agenda where everything boiled down to morality and which was ridiculous. Naipaul
was taken back by the sense of orthodoxy that has replaced creative thinking owing to Gandhism. Aurobindo recognised spirituality as the “matter of key of the Indian mind” and also denounced social change supported by religion that appealed to western exemplars and ideals or to the genius or pattern of the ancient time. Such a reformation lacks in robust sincerity and fails to get at peoples’ spirits. Gandhi kept equating swaraj with Ramrajya and Naipaul failed to comprehend how self-government was linked to the rule of Rama. But this is what worked in India to his surprises. He mentions in India: A Wounded Civilization that colonially enriched Gandhi rediscovered India from his newly acquired position but used the inappropriate medium of philosophising and created a country of mere spiritual and moral followers. Naipaul sense a suffocating saintly atmosphere all aground, in which Gandhi’s propagated dharma had one nothing but build a reverence for servitude. In the same book again he mentions that the mixing of religion inextricably with political awaking gave birth to a race at peace with the world of religious ecstasy. Dharma becomes the axis of Indian life. Everything was related to Karma (Naipaul, 1979, 158-159).

According to Tagore, the true basis of nationalism lies in wanting but. Naipaul asserts that for Gandhi this wanting was inwards and thus arose the controversial Gandhi’s “self” When Naipaul associates the Hindu code taught by Gandhi as that with the realisation of self, he compares Gandhian religiousness to nihilism. Thus to Naipaul (Naipaul, 1984, 170) the Gandhian myth was created through a series of “fact, fiction, folklore, death, gaiety homage” and all this was unsettling. Gandhi ignorant of the need of time was pre-occupies with his inner being. He subsequently began to realise the vast reality around through his own self and thus misled the nation into false idealism and idleness. People entered the post-Independence era but with the same stagnant Gandhian ideology. Another prominent Gandhian issues with Naipaul is that of non-violence. March Edmund Jones defines Gandhi’s non-violence as summit of bravery but Naipaul describes it as more destructive than violence itself. Naipaul says that Gandhi’s movements were usually named with the prefix “non” such as non-cooperation and non-violence and therefore are more significant for absence of action rather than doing. Naipaul equates non-violence with “non-doing”. Gandhi used it to quicken social conscience by offering it as means of securing undisturbed clam. Again this non-doing was directed at the self rather than others. It was another of Gandhian religious way of withdrawal and defeat.
In all his travelogues Naipaul has not spared other politicians who as per his evaluation in Gandhi-like way misguided. After Gandhi died, the legacy left behind embodied in Bhave and Jaya Prakash Narayan and thousand others was nothing less than destructive. The unconscious Gandhian mimicry was disabling. These followers of Gandhi were a bunch of dullards retrogressive in nature. Gandhi’s extremist approach had produced a likewise following. In a nutshell, Naipaul accuses Gandhi of leaving India without an ideology, violent non-violence, rigid Hindu identities, people without any racial or historical sense, absence of ideal of statehood, moral chaos, quietism, religious, self cherishing minds incapable of playing on problems, version to mental or physical effort of any sort and intellectual starvation. Gandhi created a secure living tradition, which disintegrated after him but made the masses compulsively dependent on always seeking some sort of security. Gandhi left India to an intellectual parasitism that sucked the vigour out of its civilisation. Self-defeat became virtuous and existence itself became bliss. Naipaul blames it on Gandhi’s sentimentality, which was taken for concern and turned into a nationalistic fervour. People have lost vitality but were ever ready to complain and they complained even without any everything after Gandhi rested on shallow Gandhism and Naipaul says it was a mere show of rituals. He mentions, “However it is resolved, India will at the end be face to face with its own emptiness, the inadequacy of an old civilisation which is cherished because it is all men have but which no longer answers their needs” (Naipaul, 1979, 155).

Naipauls and outsider in the Caribbean and later too weaving in and out of nation spaces, experience a sense of looseness, of something not there at all times. Before coming to India, Naipaul in his darkness has assessed India as a simple nation. The desire to know his “ancestry and history” drove him to India. The nostalgia and pain of Naipaul as evident in the travelogues is the result of destruction of the minimised imaged of India that was given to him in his childhood and the writer interestingly attributes this destruction largely to Gandhism. In Naipaul’s case, his attitude to Gandhi stems from his intermediate position of “no-location”. He has not been able to reject India but neither has he succeeded in accommodating it. His travelogues on India depict his personal confrontation with the reality of India. The confrontation is between Indian reality and Naipaul’s western observation. Positioned outside, Naipaul does hold Gandhi as a significant essence of India but it is his disappointment with India that has been targeted at Gandhi to a great extent. Initially India was total darkness to Naipaul. He found India weak and incompetent and the fault was placed with Gandhism. And Naipaul is equally critical of Gandhi and Gandhism.
And since Gandhi has been exposed to a global culture, Naipaul frames him as a colonial. He cannot understand as to why the stability of the country has to be disrupted and presented a chaos. Ignorance could be bliss but Gandhi became unsparing with his colonised vision. Often described as an Indian who is not quite an India, Naipaul has made the maximum critical comments on Gandhi from the space of Indian diaspora. And anti-Gandhi sentiments in the Indian diaspora can be largely related to his observation on Gandhi.

Naipaul has expected stability and smoothness of life in imagined India of Ramayana and Mahabharta, culture and traditions but on being confronted with Indians who were religiously politicised more than anything else, he was disappointed. India from the outside also stands out for its poverty and if this poverty is transformed into a holy issues it is but obvious that the critical diasporic society will react. Gandhi is condemned of misleading the poor of Indian by forcing them into thinking poverty is something great. Interest of teaching them ways to get out of their miserable position he only strengthens the sense of pride in them. Gandhi by setting an example of selfishness for the followers perpetuated in tendency amongst Indian to turn inwards. Each Indian becomes an island. Naipaul has blamed both the nation as well as Gandhi for his transformation into a “mahatma”. Another of Gandhi’s significant contribution is that of his symbols. Naipaul’s is against these symbols as they have stemmed from Gandhi’s Hindu instincts and therefore they cannot hold any significance other than being merely symbolic. Gandhi played on the gullibility of the masses and used the various symbols to muster support for his political movements and Naipaul mocks at the overwhelming response of the masses to these symbols and their subsequent misuse till date. Non-violence and Satyagraha have been completely disowned by Naipaul for sharing its periphery with cowardice and submission. Non-violence to him is not to be taken as a show of strength as resilience, rather in modern and postmodern times it can only border on a defeatist attitude that quietly give in without any protest. And Naipaul adds that since Gandhi lived too long, it would take generations to recuperate from the loos. Arvind Krishna Mehrotara agrees that Naipaul condemns Gandhi for the decay and staleness in India to a great extent but even his image of India is now changing. Naipaul realises that Gandhism has lost its prior significance India has slowly realised that it cannot respond today in its old way. Gandhi signified the old India. Mehrotra writes:

The India that Naipaul believed condemned to statis and decay still exists—he continues to notice great economic and human distress—but he finds many
institutions and people, who in many different ways, are addressing those problems. His India now is an Indian on a roller-coaster ride, lurching from crest to trough, still stomach-turning in its intensity but also a source of invigoration, and seemingly in continual forward motion (Mahrotara, 242).

In *India: A Million Mutinies* Now he mentions that Gandhi is held in contempt and his non-violence is despised. There is frustration among the people as Gandhism spelt submissive for India. In an interview by Dileep Padgaonkar wherein he tries to collect Naipaul’s comments on the *Rama janmabhoomi* movement in India, Naipaul expresses that India is now developing a sense of history despite Gandhism. He states:

> There is a big, historical development going on in India. Wise men should understand it and ensure that it does not remain in the hands of fanatics. Rather they should use it for the intellectual transformation of India.

Thus, there is definitely a toning down of the bitterness that Naipaul has for India of the recent. Later on in his writings he even describes the darkness referred to as the of his mind rather than the nation. He feels that slowly the Indians are coming out of the ignorance and realising the damage that has been done to the country by following trodden paths blindly. Passion is giving way to intellect and creativity based on liberalism is stepping in. Naipaul adds that India now appear to parody the old idea of itself. Ashish Nandy’s words on what is left of Gandhism in India can also summarise Naipaul’s stand on Gandhism as well as on India now. Nandy writes: Today, 50 years after Tagores death and 40 years after Gandhi’s their version of patriotism has almost cases to exist, even in India, and for most modern Indians this not a matter of sorrow but of pride” (Nandy, 2004, 227).

A state of mental disorder marked by illusion and inability to distinguish between the real and the unreal. Slavoj Zizek is a Slovenia philosopher and a (Lacanian) psychoanalyst. He writes on the importance of maintaining the exclusivity of a nation and is against the act of globalisation that hampers the strength of a nations. R.S. Pathak has drawn a comparison between Naipaul’s colonial Gandhi and Salman Rushie’s character Salahuddin Chamacha in *The Stanic Verses* Pathak assesses Salahuddin as one who “in trying to become more English than the English becomes a nobody, an uprooted, cosmopolitan mimic without a true identity of the authenticity of soul that comes being true to the original self” (Pahak, 2003, 243).
Quite a few other writers think that the foreign experience did Gndhi good. Madhuri Wadha’s reference to Gandhi as a pragmatic person in all his approaches to situations or that of Rajni Bakshi as a man of scientific attitude are evident of a less critical attitude towards the foreign impact on Gandhi’s mental make-up. Those who do not support him do so from conventional perspectives. For instance Gandhi’s advocating of the ancient and rejection modernity is a sensitive issue that even his supporters have failed to openly support. On the anti-machinery stand Gandhi is supported by B.A. Pathen agrees that machine tends to take over man and therefore justifies Gandhi’s anti-machinery stand. In term of nationalism, from the conventional position Gandhi was heralded as innovator and experimentalist, particularly for his politics of non-violence and truth. (Pathan, 1996) But there are many writers and thinkers who support Naipaul’s stands on Gandhi’s anti-modernity. M.M. Sankhder writes, “For his reason, i.e., the danger of conformity. Gandhi was fearful of the power of state, for such a power would demand compliance and narrowing down of the area of human liberty” (Sankhder, 4). He accuses Gandhi of changing the nature of Indian politics by spiritualising it and this has destructive consequences. M.M. Kothari comments “Gandhi never realised that spiritual power with all its extraordinary manifestation as seen and reported in the lives of many yogis has its definite limitations” (Kothari, M.M. 1996, III). Gandhi made Orientalism stronger and made it the axis of Indian way of living after him. Kothari has also condemned the play of divine allusion in Gandhi’s politics and states “He exhibited an utter lack of sense of relevance when he claimed that an atom bomb is nothing alleges that “God” had become a simple excuse for Gandhi to explain anything beyond his rational sense. Levanam Gora and Mark Lindley point to the double standards that they perceived Gandhi to maintain regarding the untouchables. Lindley remarks: “Yet now and then he would soften the tone of his argument. In 1920 he said that while caste does not cannot superiority or inferiority, nonetheless a hierarchy is inevitable, but by the mid-20’s he would own play the latter idea” (Gora, 109).

Pabitra Kumar Roy commenting on Tagore writes: “The ego is sually robbed of its reality. The self-will be not to be negated. The ideal of the utter extinction of the individual would rarely be a rarely be a moral ideal for Tagore” (Roy, Pabitrakumar, 2002, 99). R,N. Sarkar (Sarkar, 2004, 203) in India Related Naipaul best describes Naipaul’s attitude towards Gandhi’s self when he says that for Naipaul Gandhi was a political leader who finally devoted all his attention to the Hindu idea of the self. M.M. Kothari in Critique of Gandhi blames the creation of
the self on Gandhi himself and the credulous nature of the Hindus further blinded by spiritual delusion who in haste built a halo of divinity around him. Gandhi used the weapon of sermonising, speaking in god-like manner to the wanting masses. The blame is put largely on Gandhi himself for his effort to become a larger than life figure—“He gave sermons to others to eradicated their ‘I’s, but was unaware of the abundance of ‘I’s in his own writings” (Kothari, M.M. 1996, 102). Himanshu Roy (Roy, Himanshu, 2001) in Poverty of Gandhian of Philosophy, has boiled down Gandhi’s life to but a spiritual mission wherein self-realisation, which was to be attained through realisation of others.

Taking the other view, Omesh Saigal (Saigal, 66) in his poem “Never Gandhi, Not Again” describes the spinning wheel as a movement towards non-violence and truth. In Fact, her erases all distinction between Gandhi’s life and politics and says that each and every act in Gandhi’s life was but symbolic including his retirements. The spinning wheel is not only means to earn one’s livelihood, it symbolises in its being the highest striving one can have his urge for non-violence and peace. Madhuri Wadhwa (Wadhwa, 19) in Gandhi between Tradition and Modernity suggests that Gandhian practice of prayers was an active orientation more anything else. M.M Kothari’s comments on the spinning wheel may be referred to here. He writes, “Spinning wheel may be useful for some people who have abundant of spare time but not for everybody. For some it may be a sheer waste of time” (Kothari, M.M.1 1996, 119). Naipaul writes about MauritiusL: But tranquillity recedes. The barracoon is overcrowded; the escape routes are closed. The people are disaffected and have no sense of danger” (Naipaul, 1948, 309).

M.M. Kothari quotes Gandhi’s lamentation to highlight the miserable mockery that Gandhi has become towards the end. He writes that in sheet frustration he would wail as under:

Who listens to me today? I am spent bullet.  
Regard me as bankrupt, I am a furnace.  
I am surrounded by darkness.  

God blinded my vision, and so on. (Kothari, M.M. 1996;v)

Thus according to Kothari, Gandhi towards the end realised his failure. He was no longer the voice of direction but “a tortoise withdrawing his neck in a dangerous situation”; “a hermit in the cave” and thus is portrayed as a despicable figure rather than a leader. He further adds that Gandhi by playing with negations in the form of non-violence, non-cooperation, non-indulgence and so on, developed the emotional capacity of Indians but in the process they lost their heads.
Kothari (Kothari, M.M. 1996). Defines truth/non-violence as delusion of Gandhi as he himself did not fully comprehend these concepts but went about beating the bush, confusing the minds that followed him, especially in matter of non-violence not only did Gandhi prove to be incompetent but ended as a disastrous failure. Jacques Soustelle, an exiled politician-writer makes art out of his experience just as Gandhi turned his personal experience in London and South Africa into a national movement (Naipaul, 1984, 216). Robert Bradshaw of St. Kitts is a leader initially but then loses popularity, Naipaul comments, “he’s an interesting man. He knows a lot about African art and magic and so on. It perhaps explains his hold, you know” (Naipaul, 1984, 246).

R.N. Sarkar observes that Naipaul’s attitude towards India has undergone transition from antagonism to neutrality. Initially he was confronted with the strangeness of the native land and passed through a severe emotional response but then later the passion toned down and he too has come to term with the reality of India, to some extent. “Now he is neither too soft nor too bitter in his response, and attained seriousness of approach shows him less moody and more sober” (Sarkar, 194), Sarkar assessens Naipaul’s summary of Gandhi as an awful irony, himself meeting an ironical end in 1948, already giving rise to another irony of a Himalyan blunder of partition and in its train a great holocaust of bloodshed and displaced humanity. He says that Gandhi is the ineffectual angel in Naipaul’s writings. According to him, Naipaul feels “The post-Gandhian period of unintelligent obsessive imitation of Gandhian from and formalities has something yet to follow as a countervailing force in the Indian political panorama” (Sarkar, 214). Himanshu Roy blames this loss of faith in Gandhism on the impatient nature of the masses but blames Gandhi again for creating in it the masses by exciting his blind followers again and again with false promises. Roy says that Gandhi due to his impractical nature did not understand the moves of politics. It was as if he dwelled in his “dreamland” and was lost in the ethical rather than the real world. Many a times he was confused and would make a statement but then later contradict it in radical terms. For instance, he cites the cites the case of Japan when Gandhi earlier voiced his apprehension regarding Japan’s intention and later said they were to be regarded as friends. Roy sums up his assessment of Gandhi as failure in very unkind terms:

In practice, he was the dictator in Congress politics, the creator of dynasty in Indian democracy the inductor of religion in politics, the barrier of entry into national political of the young intellectual revolutionaries and so on so forth. And
above all he, was the founder of partition. In theory, he was acting as a duello in dualism” (Roy, Himanshu, 2001, 206)

Roy believes that spiritualising non-violence was a self-centric concept of Gandhi’s Here too Gandhi has no authority to advocate an idea that he himself and not mastered as yet.