

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Halo, the Haze and the Fait accompli

“A courageous, selfless, and nonviolent foe of oppression anywhere may be dubbed a Gandhi... Despite his fame, or perhaps because of it, Mohandas Gandhi the individual is not sufficiently felt, or seen, or understood. ... Foes, critics and psychoanalysts have exposed to view aspects of Gandhi missed by admirers” (Gandhi R Preface ix-xii).

Seen from the Indian perspective, the dawn of the 20th century marked the genesis of a socio-political renaissance of sorts. The initial years of the century saw the rise of numerous luminaries on the intellectual, social and political fronts. The Indian novel in English took roots in such a fertile landscape. While the choice of English as a language provided the writers a medium that was free from much of cultural, ethical, religious and ideational baggage, it also provided them a fresh tone in which the new ideals of national identity, social equality and political experimentation could be carried forth with a sense of purpose and direction. The general atmosphere was conducive for exploration of new concerns that promoted goals of unchartered social engineering. The quest for new identity prompted creative writers to search for new ideologues that could hold appeal for beneficiaries of the upcoming educational set up.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi naturally fitted the bill here. He had returned to India in 1914 after a fervent stint of political activism spanning two decades in South Africa. His considerable successes in infusing political consciousness amongst the disenfranchised community of Indians in South Africa, an overwhelming majority of whom belonged to the labouring class, experiments in Hindu-Muslim social engineering and development of new tools of mass usage that could be effectively used to counter the imperialistic machinations of the Western political establishment, together held great promise not only for political activists but

significantly for the literary imagination too. His success in stirring the socio-political psyche of Indians to challenge and thwart English stranglehold over the vast territory of India, his method of involving multitudes from various regions, religions, classes, castes and creeds in complex action programmes of politico-spiritual nature, his concern for vindication of eternal human values for which India had been known down the ages, and his commitment to forge an inclusive concept of nationhood based on a blending of traditional values with modern ethics, drew writers of all hues to his ideology, experiments and persona.

In the given milieu it was natural for writers of English in India to be drawn by the magnetic pull of the Gandhi phenomenon. Another reason for their bonding to Gandhi could be that the flowering of such writers in India was co-terminous with the flowering of Gandhi, both of whom entered the phase of spring tide during the 1920s. This phase of bonding, like the Indian summer, turned out to be fairly long and lasted till well after India's independence. During the 1930s and 40s as the Indian masses stood charged up behind Gandhi in their quest for freedom, more and more Indian writers were inspired by the Gandhian approach to social and political issues. The weapons of non-violence, truth, non-accumulation, etc. reinvigorated by Gandhi, found further validation for such writers with the outbreak of the 2nd World War. As large segments of humanity stood on the precipice of existence due to the greed and aggression of the Western World, not only an increasing number of writers of Indian roots, but also writers from the West itself saw rays of hope in Gandhi. The overall scenario generated a discourse structured around the values being practiced and propagated by Gandhi and his numerous followers. A substantial chunk of Indian fiction in English belonging to the first half of the twentieth century forms an inalienable part of this discourse.

However, during the 1950s as the newness of Indian freedom started wearing off, the idealistic fervor that imbued it also began losing its sheen. Gandhi was now no longer at the forefront of Indian society. The new constitution of free India that was promulgated in 1950 had clearly chosen to stay away from the spirit of Gandhian values, even as it had the compulsion of retaining perfunctory ties with them. The constitution in spirit and letter emulated the legacy of the policies of India's erstwhile rulers – the British in particular and Western in general. In its new zeal for progress the country, especially its educated elite who saw more roles for themselves in the task of nation building, found it more attractive to follow the footsteps of the Western world whose progress and pelf it had been witness to. The Gandhian way to the amelioration of the country would have been painstakingly slow and would have been a test of the patience of the policy makers. Furthermore as it envisaged the upliftment of society beginning with its fringes, i.e. its dispossessed segments, the potential implementers of such arduous process of change saw no tangible rewards for themselves in such a path. As such it was self-gratuitously satisfying for stakeholders of policy—the political, administrative and intellectual class—to think big and to promote bigger dreams to an expectant nation. The country had definitely entered an era of fomentation of euphoria where Gandhian principles did not hold value as currency. It was the era when writers of fiction in English in India started seeing the benefit of having a wider acceptance when in works dealing with Gandhian ideology they projected a scenario that was clearly inclined towards questioning the relevance or efficacy of his methods, casting doubts about their practicality or feasibility, and sometimes even rejecting them as being inherently flawed. This can be called the second phase of Indian writers' engagement with Gandhi.

The first phase embraced Gandhi with open arms and heralded his methods being quintessentially Indian in their core, being of eternal values that have shown and will continue showing civilisational beacon-light to humanity, and consisting of lasting solutions in the strife torn world. The second phase, on the contrary, consisted of a conscious distancing from the Gandhian orbit of thought. If Gandhi could not be obviated by writers, he could at least be obfuscated. If he couldn't be obliterated from the Indian psyche, there was no need to keep him in the foreground of action at least. If he couldn't be lionized, he could at least be projected as being ineffectual. For approximately a quarter century following the mid 1950s, several works of fiction structured around the Gandhian concepts of life find such a way of life as being untenable, unctuous or at least being insufficient and out of sync with the times.

Gandhi was not a man of time and history like so many other individuals that make their appearance on the contemporary scene like creatures crawling on earth and pass away leaving not single sign of how they lived and thought. Mahatma, as he was called, Gandhi was like the prophets and seers of India, and true to his genius, is still living with us in his ideals, for he is surely one of the few rare souls humanity can be proud of. Not tied down to a particular nation and not preaching gospels which acquire significance and meaning only in a particular age or era, Gandhi lives in the memory of all mankind all over the world. He had a vision and a mission which he wished to be implanted into the hearts not only of the millions of people of his country but also those of the world. He in his personality embodied those ideas which still remain unimplemented but which nevertheless are the only cure for all our ills. Gandhi did not want to leave any 'ism' or sect in his name. He said: "There is no such thing as Gandhism and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried, in my own way, to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and

problems. There is, therefore, no question of my leaving any code like the code of Manu” (Tendulkar IV: 66). When Gandhi said that what he stood for should not degenerate into sectarianism he clearly meant that we must look for the enduring part of the phenomenon that was Gandhi in his life-work and life-style and in the social philosophy which explained both. The social philosophy that sustained his life-work and life-style was as eclectic and open ended as Gandhi himself.

Gandhi’s meaning system, his world-view, his social philosophy, his personal religion was deeply rooted in the oriental lineage in general and Indian heritage in particular. “Gandhi’s religion was broad and deep. Growing out of the triple Indian heritage of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, influenced by modern reform movements and by ideas and personalities from the west, it penetrated the whole of his thought and action, social, political and economic” (Jordens 24).

To comprehend the factors which influenced Gandhi himself we have to consider, first of all, his formative period in Gujarat, England and South Africa and then study the Indian period from three points of view: Gandhi as *Sanatna Hindu*, his Religion of Truth, and his place in the Hindu ascetic tradition. Gandhi belonged to the *Modh Bania* subdivision of the *Vaisya* caste.

The banias are said to be strict vegetarians, shunning liquor, prudent, sober, quiet, forbearing and inoffensive. The majority of them and all the modhbanias, were followers of the vaishnavite vallabhacharya sect. ... There was, nevertheless, one type of ‘bhakti’, called ‘maryada’, which required restraint of the passions.... Their gurus observed celibacy, and gave readings and conducted Kirtans hymn singing sessions in the temples. (Jordens 24)

Gandhi's father, Karamchand Gandhi, was a Vaishnava; his mother, Putlibai, used to visit Shiva temple and their house was visited frequently not only by Jain Monks but by Muslim and Zoroastrian friends also. Thus Gandhi's home was a confluence of various faiths and cultures and the influence on Gandhi's life is discernible in his equal respect for all religions.

These rules had a religious or cultural basis. Kaba Gandhi was faithful to the Vaishnava tradition he had inherited, which called for ceremonies at temples of Rama and Krishna. More liberal than some other Modh Banias of his time, Kaba and his wife also went to the 'rival' Shiva temple, and their home was often visited by Jain Monks. At times Muslim and Zoroastrian friends visited Kaba in his home and talked about their faiths – Mohan thought that Kaba listened with respect and often with interest. (Gandhi, R 5)

Putlibai was brought up in another sect, that of 'Pranami'. "The Pranami sect to which her parents belonged was said to bear an Islamic influence and did not worship idols, but Putlibai seemed entirely comfortable with the Krishna, Rama and Shiva images honoured by the Gandhis"(Gandhi, R 5)." The practices of Gandhi's mother, especially her vows, left indelible impressions on Gandhi. She forbade him not to touch Uka, the untouchable boy who served in the house. "Apparently, Mohan had 'tussles' with her on the question and smiled at her reasoning, yet he tried to obey the injunction.... Another firm injunction was against touching or eating meat... Smoking, too, was forbidden. (Gandhi, R 5) The play of *Shravana*, example of heroic parental devotion, and that of *Harishchandra*, who sacrificed all to truth did leave the lasting impression on Gandhi. It is Rama again, and not the Krishna of his own sect, who is the hero and god of the book that enraptured him when hearing it at the age of thirteen: the '*Ramcharitmanas*' of Tulsidas.

We can by no means leave out of account the role that religion plays in moulding and shaping human behavior and adjusting it to purpose and aims which the individual can accomplish for the welfare of the community. Gandhi was a man with firm convictions about the social significance of the Hindu religious traditions and by what he taught, spoke, and practiced he demonstrated the truth of the fact that the temporal powers of the earth cannot vanquish the eternal flame of the spirit and that it is by the application of the spiritual laws to our social, economic, and political problems that peace, prosperity and happiness can be ensured. “He called himself a Hindu, but his Hinduism was eclectic enough to discard the authoritarianism and sectarianism of what has gone by the name of Hinduism” (Ganguli 18). Quite in keeping with the best aspirations and ideas of Hindu thought and culture Gandhi firmly believed that religion alone can be the cure of all our ills on the individual and collection levels.

“Gandhi was always a great absorber. Jainism, as well as Buddhism, perceptibly coloured Gandhi’s thoughts and shaped his works” (Fischer 25). Gandhi appears to have been deeply influenced by the Jain teachings on the soul and its path to liberation. These influences began operating in his youth through the Jain monks who advised his father and his mother. They affected him most strongly through his intimate friendship, conversation and correspondence with the Jain reformer and poet, Raychand Mehta. Such an analysis would interpret within a Jain framework: Gandhi’s *satyagraha* concept, his insistence on truthfulness and non-violence as paramount virtues, his fasts, dietary restrictions and use of naturopathic courses, his taking the vow of *brahmacharya*, or chastity within the married state, his limiting his clothing and other possessions and so on. However, this type of analysis would not replace the conventional interpretation of these ideas and practices within the framework of Hindu traditions. Gandhi

regarded the Buddha's dharma as part of the Indian tradition in the same selective way of perception by which he claimed to have been following the Indian tradition.

In one sense it is true that nothing that Gandhi said had not been said before and he never claimed any originality for them but his originality and unique contribution lay in bringing together the teachings of various thinkers and religious and political sects. Although his ideas and ideals were uniquely his own but he freely admitted to the numerous influences that operated upon him. These influences were indigenous as well as Western. He came to know several church divines like Dr. Andrew Murray of the Dutch Reformed Church and Mr. Coates, a Quaker, who believed in total abolition of war; he also attended Bible classes. He read Butler's *Analogy* which he found to be a very profound and difficult book, Madame Blavatsky's '*Key to Philosophy*, Parker's *Commentary* etc. He discovered the Bhagavadgita which made an indelible mark on his mind. He read Arnold's *Light of Asia* on the Buddha, the Old Testament which sent him to sleep, the New Testament of which the *Sermon on the Mount* went straight to his heart, Carlyle's chapter *The Prophet* in his *Heroes and Hero-worship*. He was also much influenced by his study of the lives of saints like St. Francis of Assisi.

What impressed him most was the ideal of universal compassion shared in common by Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism. His young mind tried to unify the teachings of the Gita, *The Light of Asia* and the *Sermon on the Mount*. His close contact with Christianity, after leading to crisis, brought him to the enthusiastic study of the Hindu heritage. "There was a time when I was wavering between Hinduism and Christianity. When I recovered my balance of mind, I felt that to me salvation was possible only through the Hindu religion and my faith in Hinduism grew deeper and more enlightened" (Tendulkar II: 49). Gandhi read widely the Western philosophers and he acknowledged his close link, in thought as well as in spirit, with a

number of thinkers and writers from some of whom he received direct inspiration, according to his testimony, such as Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and Emerson.

When his inability to resolve the conflicting claims of Christian and Hindu doctrines produced in him a mental churning, a spiritual crisis which he could not resolve he decided to consult a number of religious authorities in India. The only answers that satisfied him were those of his friend in Bombay, the Jain poet jeweller Raychand Mahta also known as Rajchandra. “The more I consider his life and writings, the more I consider him to have been the best Indian of his times. Indeed, I put him much higher than Tolstoy in religious perceptions” (Hay 16). What particularly satisfied him was the way Raychand’s teachings resolved the conflict between the competing doctrines of the world’s major religions, especially Hinduism, Christianity and Islam and he found no need to change the religion in which he had been raised. “I became convinced that those (religious ideas) we can accept are found in Hinduism. Raychandbhai was responsible for bringing me to this position. The reader can imagine how much my respect for him must have increased” (Hay 21). Gandhi was struck by Raychand’s views on the beauty and effectiveness of *brahmacharya* or celibacy, even for married person, “I have a recollection that predominant factor was the influence of Raychandbhai. (Sharma, S 3) The effect on Gandhi was so immense that he brought about some dietary changes. “The first of those was the giving up of milk. It was from Raychandbhai that I first learnt that milk stimulates animal passion.” (Sharma, S 3) Gandhi was equally impressed by Raychand’s efficiency as a businessman and by his spiritual insight. In his moments of spiritual crisis, therefore, he was his last refuge. Raychand was not only his friend but he was his guide also. Gandhi’s intellectual and spiritual kinship with Tolstoy has become legendary. It is quite significant that at the turning point of his life in South Africa, Gandhi found strength in both Ruskin and Tolstoy. “Three moderns have left a deep impress on

my life and captivated me: Raychandbhai by his living contact; Tolstoy by his book *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, and Ruskin by his *Unto This Last*” (Sharma, S 2).

Gandhi studied Tolstoy’s works in South Africa with deep interest. In appendix to his *Hind Swaraj* we find mention of some of Tolstoy’s works as recommended readings: “*The Kingdom of God Is within You, What is Art, The Slavery of our Times, The First Step, How Shall we Escape?, Letter to a Hindoo*”(Narayan IV:202). Gandhi came into direct contact with him during 1909-10 – the last two years of Tolstoy’s life. Tolstoy took a keen interest in Gandhi’s life and his career of civil resistance in South Africa.

It was forty years back, when I was passing through a severe crisis of scepticism and doubt, that I came across Tolstoy’s book, ‘The Kingdom of God is Within You,’ and was deeply impressed by it.... Its reading cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believer in ahimsa. What has appealed to me most in Tolstoy’s life is that he practised what he preached and reckoned no cost too great in his pursuit of truth. (Tendulkar II: 418)

Ruskin wrote *Unto This Last* at the turning point of his life around 1860, which was marked by a change in his world view. A similar change came over Tolstoy around 1878 when he was fifty, as the result of spiritual travail. He became a truth seeker; “He was the most truthful man of this age. His life was a constant endeavor, an unbroken tide of striving to seek the truth, and to practise it as he found it” (Tendulkar II: 418).

Gandhi sent Tolstoy a copy of *Hind Swaraj* as well as a copy of Gandhi’s biography by Doke by way of introducing a like-minded reformer and kindred spirit to the celebrated exponent of non-violence and pacifism. “He was the greatest apostle of non-violence that the present age has produced. No one in the West, before him or since, has written and spoken on non-violence

so fully or insistently and with such penetration and insight as he” (Tendulkar II: 418). For Tolstoy love was the only way to rescue humanity from all ills and considered it a never failing source of inspiration. “True ahimsa should mean a complete freedom from ill will and anger and hate and an overflowing love for all. For inculcating this true and higher type of ahimsa amongst us, Tolstoy’s life with its ocean-like love should serve as a beacon light and a never failing source of inspiration” (Tendulkar II:419).

Gandhi held very firmly to the view that the future world of humanity should consist of those who contributed by their body labour to the service of society. He mentioned “a doctrine of ‘bread labour’, that everyone was bound to labour with his body for bread and most of the grinding misery in the world was due to the fact that men failed to discharge their duties in this respect. Gandhi appealed youth to be on their guard as the virus of self-indulgence was flooding our country from the West. Next to Bible Tolstoy’s pacifist teachings influenced Gandhi most. Tolstoy’s *The Kingdom of God is Within You* is an elaboration of the teachings of the *Sermon on the Mount*. As the Phoenix Farm was Gandhi’s tribute to Ruskin, so also the Tolstoy Farm, established in 1910, the year of Tolstoy’s death, was a symbol of Gandhi’s admiration for Tolstoy.

Henry Polak, sub-editor of *The Critic* happened to bring a book for Gandhi to read during the twenty four-hour journey from Johannesburg to Durban in 1904.

The book was John Ruskin’s *Unto This Last*. Gandhi could not put it down; it more than captured him. Before his train had reached Durban he was resolved to reduce to practice to book’s principles. As he saw them, these were, one, the good of the individual was contained in the good of all; two, a lawyer’s work had the

same value as a barber's, and three, a life of labour, of the tiller of the soil or the handicraftsman, was the life worth living. (Gandhi, R 10)

In his Autobiography, Gandhi mentioned this book which exercised very deep influence on his life and work. "In May 1908 the *Gujrati* Indian Opinion began publishing Gandhi's translation of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. To his *Gujrati* version Gandhi gave the title *Sarvodaya*, or the welfare of all" (Gandhi, R 134-135). A very close parallelism can be ascertained between Ruskin's and Gandhi's thinking on each of these issues of social philosophy. On each of these issues viz. the relation of ethics, or what he called social affections to economics; economic inequality and reform of the economic system. Gandhi expressed his own ideas on many occasions. On the issue of the relation of ethics to economics he said, "That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values" (Bose 129). He derived many of his economic views from Ruskin, particularly his views on money and distribution of income. Under the influence of Ruskin, he in his early writings advocated a doctrine of absolute equality. "Now let us consider how equal distribution can be brought about through non-violence" (Bose 78). Later Gandhi changed the emphasis from absolute equality to proportionate equality. A reference may here also be made to the Gandhian concept of trusteeship – "Indeed at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must lie that of trusteeship of the wealthy for superfluous wealth possessed by them" (Bose 78).

Another prominent feature of the Gandhian ideology is 'simple living, back to the village', this ideal sometimes described as Gandhi's villagism. According to Gandhi, "High thinking is inconsistent with a complicated material life, based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship" (Tendulkar VII: 224). Here, once again, we can trace the influence of Ruskin, Tolstoy, Thoreau and others.

Thoreau's social philosophy centered round his doctrine of civil disobedience. In the Appendix to *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule*, Gandhi listed Thoreau's *The Day of Civil Disobedience* and *Life Without Principle*. Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience fascinated Gandhi and which he made his own in his characteristically selective manner.

We must voluntarily put up with the losses and inconveniences that arise from having to withdraw our support from a government that is ruling against our will. Possession of power and riches is a crime under an unjust government, poverty in that case is a virtue', says Thoreau.... But we must combat the wrong by ceasing to assist the wrong-doer directly or indirectly. (Tendulkar I: 357)

Thus Gandhi shared the belief with Thoreau that complete civil disobedience would be the rebellion without violence in it.

Other works listed in the Appendices to *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule* were Sherard's *The White Slaves of England*, Edward Carpenter's *Civilization, its Cause and Cure*, Taylor's *The Fallacy of Speed*, Blount's *A New Crusade*, Mazzini's *Duties of Man*, Plato's *Defence and Death of Socrates*, Max Nordan's *Paradoxes of Civilization*, Naoroji's *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, R.C. Dutt's *Economic History of India* and Maine's *Village Communities*. Romesh Chander Dutt's *Economic History of India* traced a decline in standards of living due to the Nineteenth century deindustrialisation of the sub-continent and the narrowing of sources of wealth. This book exposed the profit oriented policies of the colonial rule and made Gandhi aware of the economic exploitation of the Indians by the British rules. Dutt's analysis of the poverty of India provided some of the most powerful weapons in the armoury of the nationalists.

An analysis of the roles played by Tilak and Gandhi in the second decade of the twentieth century, a period when their paths crossed, serves to highlight the basic divergences inherent in their political styles. Both were leaders of people, working towards an ideal of self-governing India. On Tilak's death Gandhi expressed his feelings of loss and loneliness: "To whom shall I go for advice now in moments of difficulty? And when the time comes to seek help from the whole of Maharashtra, to whom shall I turn? ...it is up to me to keep Lokmanya's slogan (of Swaraj) alive and effective, it must not be allowed to sink into silence" (Kalelkar 50). Both were devoted to politics and of both it was maintained that they applied the lessons of unselfish sacrifice embodied in the Gita to their own practical politics. Gandhi saw in Gita not a literal warrant for violence as some of his critics interpreted it but a philosophy of restraint, non-violence and truth. He utilised the Gita in justifying the application of non-violence to the nationalist agitation. The absolute values of *satya* and ahimsa which Gandhi read into the Gita were denied by Tilak who put forward a more militant and aggressive view, one that was not bound by absolute spiritual ideals. Despite differences in outlook, methods and ultimate ideals, Gandhi respected Tilak for what he had achieved. It is often unproductive to indulge in contrasts and comparisons between personalities and the processes of which they were part, the method can be of value in providing an insight into their nature and function.

Gokhale and Gandhi both had a kind of mutual admiration. At his very first encounter with Gokhale at Poona in 1896 Gandhi met him with great affection and later he was to describe as his guru (teacher). With Tilak's passing away, Gandhi became the natural mass leader of the Indian people. He sought, consciously or otherwise, to combine these techniques of Tilak with Gokhale's insistence that politics must be spiritualized. In the preamble to the constitution of the Servants of India Society, Gokhale wrote:

Public life must be spiritualized. Love of country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little moment by its side. A fervent patriotism which rejoices at every opportunity of sacrifice for the motherland, a dauntless heart which refuses to be turned back from its object by difficulty or danger, a deep faith in the purpose of Providence which nothing can shake – equipped with these, the worker must start on his mission and reverently seek the joy which comes of spending oneself in the service of one's country. (Aiyar 87)

This passage undoubtedly captures the essence of Gandhi's own ideals. In 1896 when Gandhi came to India to get support for his struggle against the iniquitous laws passed against Indians in Natal, he looked up to Gokhale for support and secured his unstinted co-operation. Thereafter, Gandhi and Gokhale were in constant communication with each other.

Gandhi often acknowledged the profound effect of the Gita on his life. It is ironical that it was England that made him move back to some fundamental values of his tradition.

English friends made me read the Gita.... They placed before me Sri Edwin Arnold's magnificent rendering of the Gita. I devoured the contents from cover to cover and was entranced by it. The last nineteen verses of the second chapter have since been inscribed on the tablet of my heart. They contain me all knowledge.

The truths they preach are the "eternal verities. (Narayan IV: 329)

Gandhi believed that all aspects social, political, economic, educational and personal are closely integrated and have to be seen as a composite whole, that is why, his ideology includes various domains of human experience.

These tenets in brief are: Ahimsa (Non-violence), Satya (Truth), Asteya (Non-stealing), *Brahmacharya* (Chastity), Asangraha (Non-possession), Sharirashrma

(Physical labour), Aswada (Control of the pallet), Sarvatre bhyavargna (Fearlessness), Sarvadharmasamatva (Equality of all religions), Swadeshi, removal of Untouchability and caste system. With all these traditional Hindu ideas he blended the concept of nationhood and work ethics which he imbibed from Western thought. (Jha 6)

Gandhian Ideology

In the fight against social injustice Gandhi made practical plans and decisions necessitated by the exigencies of the circumstances. It was basically his ability to analyse a situation, to draw the right conclusions from it, and to follow the suitable action, that was decisive in the end. He never attempted to construct a systematic philosophy. “He was not in the habit of indulging in abstract thinking. His was essentially a philosophy in action” (Pyarelal Preface v). The structure of his thought, therefore, has to be pieced together from his scattered pronouncements which were expressed in his weekly paper *Harijan*, earlier called *Young India*, in his *Autobiography* and in a few other works which were primarily occasioned by various incidents in his career. We have to glean his thoughts on different subjects including philosophy, religion, culture, art, literature, science, economics, politics, sociology and education to comprehend his ideology in a proper way. Much has already spoken or written on Gandhi and his ideology “and more will be written” (Gandhi, R Preface x) but here the “task is to weigh and select, to decide what is significant and discern true and perhaps hidden meanings” (Gandhi, R xi). However, it is absolutely imperative to take into account before expounding and assessing its impact on the society, the literature and other fields.

Religion or morality:

By religion, Gandhi does not mean formal religion or customary religion but that religion which underlines all religions.

After a long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them; (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore, no thought of conversion is possible. (Bose 226-227)

Religion of Truth

Gandhi, being *sanatana* Hindu, time and again speaks of his religion not as Hinduism but something deeper, the religions of truth. "There is no religion higher than Truth and Righteousness" (Bose 223). The bare statement of this religion is stark in its simplicity, containing three essential propositions that God is truth, the only way to the full realization of truth is non-violence and non-violence is impossible without self-purification. "If we had attained the full vision of Truth, we would no longer be mere seekers, but have become one with God, for Truth is God" (Bose 225). As such it is a traditional concept and it is only rarely that truth appears in that vein. Mostly truth is linked with moral action and that is why he changes the formula 'God is Truth' to Truth is God'. "But search for Truth is search for God. Truth is God. God is, because Truth is" (Tendulkar III: 359). The essence of religion is morality and it is probably the strongest expression of his conviction. This is the deepest ground of Gandhi's personal religion.

Under this point he ranges his experiments in the control of palate, tongue, sex and possessiveness. “To attain perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion” (Narayan 1: 616). Gandhi’s ‘Religion of Truth is thus essentially an ethic and intensely practical and immediate. It drives man to ascetic self-discipline and propels him into action for the good of others.

He worships God as truth, love, ethics, morality, fearlessness and a source of light and life. “To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness; God is the source of light and life and yet he is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist.... He transcends speech and reason...” (Pyarelal I: 421).

Value of Prayer

Gandhi always claimed to be a man of prayer which was the main source of peace and he considered prayer indispensable for the soul.

The prayer has saved my life. Without it, I should have been lunatic long ago. I had my share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me in temporary despair. If I was able to get rid of that despair, it was because of prayer. It has not been a part of my life as truth has been... And as time went on my faith in God increased, and more irresistible became the yearning for prayer.

(Tendulkar III: 139)

Religion and Politics

For Gandhi politics and religion were inextricably interconnected. Religion must permeate political activity and conversely this very activity must be based upon sound ethical

values. His political philosophy is merely the application of moral truths to the facts of social life.

For me, politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words, a seeker after God and Truth. For me God and Truth are convertible terms, and if anyone told me that God was a God of untruth or a God of torture, I would decline to worship him. Therefore, in politics also we have to establish the kingdom of Heaven.

(Prabhu70)

Satyagraha; Passive Resistance, Non-Co-operation

In its origin, the term *Satyagraha* is a compound Sanskrit word formed by *satya* and *agraha*. *Satya* means truth and *agraha* means holding fast, firmness, adherence or insistence. The compound word *Satyagraha* means ‘clinging to truth’, hold fast to truth, insistence on truth or firm adherence to truth. “*Satyagraha* means literally ‘clinging to truth’, and as truth for Gandhi was God, *Satyagraha* in the general sense of the word means the way of life of one who holds steadfastly to God and dedicates his life to him” (Kumarappa Ed. Note iii). In *Satyagraha*, the opponent is not an enemy to be destroyed or defeated. He is a person who has to co-exist with the *Satyagrahi*. “The true *Satyagrahi* is, accordingly, a man of God” (Kumarappa Ed. Note iii). *Satyagrahi* has a special obligation to enter into reason and discussion with his opponent with a view to awaken a sense of justice and fairness in him. He has to continue his efforts until some agreed solution of the problem emerges. “Primarily it (*Satyagraha*) is a case of appealing to the reason and conscience of the opponent by inviting suffering of oneself. The motive is to convert the opponent and make him one’s willing ally and friend” (Kumarappa Ed. Note iii).

Gandhi explained the term *Satyagraha* from various view points. Once, distinguishing *Satyagraha* from passive resistance (the nearest English equivalent of *Satyagraha*), he pointed out that the former involves resistance but not passivity. “Passive resistance has been conceived and is regarded as weapon of the weak” (Kumarappa Ed. Note iii). *Satyagraha* is a weapon of a morally vigilant and the active. It involves resistance but not passivity and it is not the weapon of the weak, the coward, the unarmed and the helpless. “But the non-violence which thus overcomes evil is not the passive resistance of the weak. The non-violence of *Satyagrahi* is unflinching. It is non-violence of the brave.” (Kumarappa Ed. Note iv). Thus Gandhi conceived *Satyagraha* as a method only of the spiritually strong and not of the weak.

Civil Disobedience

Gandhi is akin to Thoreau and Tolstoy in adopting civil disobedience as an important weapon in his armoury of *Satyagraha*. Thoreau’s doctrine of civil disobedience, which Gandhi readily absorbed into his social ethics, is a doctrine of conscientious objection to state authority. “But Thoreau was not perhaps an out and out champion of non-violence.... It is a branch of *Satyagraha*.” (Kumarappa Ed. Note iv). *Satyagraha* in the political field

...assumes the form of civil disobedience. It is for this form of *Satyagraha* that Gandhi came to be most reputed. It means mass resistance on a non-violent basis against the Government when negotiations and constitutional methods have failed. It is called ‘civil’ because it is non-violent resistance by people who are ordinarily law-abiding citizens, also because the laws which they choose to disobey are not moral laws but only such as are harmful to the people. It is civil also in the sense that those who break the law are to observe the greatest courtesy

and gentleness in regard to those who enforce the law. They are even to seek not to embarrass the opponent if possible. (Kumarappa Ed. Note v)

For Gandhi non-cooperation is the universal remedy against all evil and non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. “*Satyagraha* may take the form of non-cooperation. When it does, it is not non-cooperation with the evil-doer but with his evil deed. This is an important distinction. The *Satyagraha* cooperates with the evil-doer in what is good, for he has no hatred for him. On the other hand he has nothing but friendship for him.” (Kumarappa Ed. Note iv). Non-cooperation in a non-violent manner implies that the non-cooperator is to submit willingly to the punishment imposed by law. For Gandhi, non-violent non-cooperation is the remedy against what he calls immoral laws but this is aimed ultimately at co-operation with the state. It never aims at anarchy. Ultimately, when simpler forms of non-violent non-cooperation fail, it takes the form of civil disobedience. Non-violent non-cooperation may take the form of *hartal* (cessation of business as a mark of protest), social ostracism, picketing, *hijrat* (voluntary exiles), economic boycott, fast and civil disobedience. But in all cases the idea behind is to withdraw co-operation and Gandhi qualifies the use of these methods in different situations to prevent them from taking violent forms. “For the required soul force the individual has to discipline himself in self-control, simplicity of life, suffering without fear or hatred, recognition of the unity of all living beings, and whole-hearted and disinterested service of one’s neighbours. The vows which Gandhiji elaborated for members of his *Satyagraha Ashram* at Sabarmati are of interest from this point of view. They were truth, non-violence, *brahmacharya*, fearlessness, control of the palate, non-possession, non-stealing, bread-labour, equality of religions, anti-untouchability, and *swadeshi*.

Truth, Ahimsa and Suffering

Gandhi's notion of truth includes a number of values constituting a system of individual and social ethics conducive to the right kind of social transformation and the development of individual freedom in the higher sense. He does not depart from the ensemble of truth-knowledge-bliss "*sat-chit- ananda*" (Narayan IV: 213) the archetypal concept of Hindu metaphysics. From this point of view truth is his starting point as well as the end that he calls God. Gandhi considers truth and ahimsa (the essence of social good) as "intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them." (Bose14). Gandhi considers ahimsa as a means to the attainments of truth. "They are like two sides of a coin... Nevertheless, ahimsa is the means, truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means we are bound to reach the end sooner or later" (Bose14). Gandhi thus lays stress on the purity of means, the purity of positive ahimsa, the conditioning and reinforcing factors of which are fearlessness, love and charity. The evil in society or within man himself has to be fought with same purity of means and the same weapons of love, fearlessness and suffering.

***Brahmacharya* or Chastity**

"I deal with truth first of all" (213)...and... "the path of truth is as narrow as it is straight. Even so is that of ahimsa" (216). ... "The third among our observances is *brahmacharya*" (Narayan IV: 219). The term *brahmacharya* can be expounded as: "Charya means course of conduct; *brahmacharya* conduct adapted to the search of Brahma i.e. truth. From this etymological meaning arises the special meaning, viz. control of all the senses. We must entirely forget the incomplete definition which restricts itself to the sexual aspect only" (Narayan IV: 223). Gandhi's political leadership is reinforced by his spiritual personality. His constant

reference to God and the 'inner voice', his daily prayers and his solemn vow of *brahmacharya* makes him a saint and the people revere him. Gandhi sees *brahmacharya* as a means of becoming close with God. "It is the way of life which leads to Brahma – God. It includes full control over the process of reproduction. The control must be in thought, word and deed" (Pyarelal I: 599).

For Gandhi the true service of the country demands the observance of this virtue and it cannot be cultivated by outward restraints. "As an external aid to *Brahmacharya*," however, "fasting is as necessary as selection and restriction in diet.... so fasting undertaken with a view to control the senses is, I have no doubt, very helpful" (Narayan 1:258). Gandhi establishes in his *Autobiography* that vegetarianism is the beginning of his deep commitment to *brahmacharya*; without total control of the palate, his success in *brahmacharya* would likely falter. On the issue of birth control by contraceptives he states, "The whole train of thought which underlies birth control is erroneous and dangerous" (Desai I: 253). Thus he is against the use of artificial means to control the size of the family. He recommends the method of self-control. The people who are already married should think of each other as brother and sister.

If the married couple can think of each other as brother and sister, they are freed for universal service. The very thought that all the women in the world are his sisters, mothers or daughters will at once ennoble a man and snap his chains. The husband and wife do not lose anything here, but only add to their resources and even to their family. Their love becomes free from the impurity of lust and so grows stronger. (Narayan IV: 221)

Varna-Ashram and Untouchability

Gandhi fully subscribes to the Hindu ideal of *Dharma*. Just as political life is regulated by political *Dharma*, even so the socio-economic life is regulated by *Varna -Ashram Dharma*.

Varna means predetermination of the choice of man's profession. The law of *varna* is that a man shall follow the profession of his ancestors for earning his livelihood. *Varna*, therefore, is in a way the law of heredity. Gandhi derives it from the Bhagwadgita. "This is absolutely clear from the definitions of the different *varnas* in the Bhagavadgita. A man falls from his *varna* when he abandons his hereditary profession" (Narayan V: 446). In following the law of *varna*, therefore, one has to follow the hereditary and traditional calling of one's forefathers. It is quite possible that in case of a certain individual the profession of his father may be quite opposed to his nature and inclination. From the social view point, if an individual is to work from a sense of duty, it may sometimes be best that he should engage himself in a profession other than of his father. Here it is clear that *Varna* is only a rough guide and is essentially voluntary in nature. Moreover, *Varna* is not caste, it is class. "Castes are innumerable and in their present condition they are drag upon Hinduism.... *Varna* stands on a different footing, and it means profession." (Narayan V: 446). The very present caste system in India is without doubt the very antithesis of *Varna Dharma*. The discrimination of status based on birth, which is implied in the caste system cannot be deduced from the law of *varna*. Gandhi regards "untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism" (Tendulkar II: 47). For Gandhi, "Untouchability means pollution by the touch of certain persons by reasons of their birth in a particular state or family.... In the guise of religion, it is always the way, and corrupts religion." (Narayan IV: 235). He thinks that treating a whole class of people as untouchables is a sin. "Untouchability is a soul-destroying sin. Caste is a social

evil...” (Narayan V: 444) Removal of untouchability, like all other observances, must be observed “by loving all life as our own selves.

The Role and State of Women

Gandhi espouses the women’s cause from the very beginning and he accords no distinction between men and women. “My own opinion is that, just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life and have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other’s active life” (Narayan VI: 480). He expresses his firm view that country’s “salvation depends on the sacrifice and enlightenment of her women” (Bose 239). So he put emphasis on the proper education of women. He reckons woman as an embodiment of sacrifice and suffering. “God has vouchsafed to women the power of non-violence more than to man. It is all the more effective because it is mute. Women are the natural messengers of the gospel of non-violence if only they will realise their high estate” (Pyarelal II: 103).

Gandhi wants woman to have the same liberty and opportunity for self-development as man and he considers woman as the best companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. He urges that equal rights should be given to women and they should be treated as companions and not bonded slaves. He preaches against the wrongs done to women in the name of religion, tradition and law. In the case of adult widow he discourages remarriage, otherwise he advises her to remarry. Gandhi stands firm against all the social evils related to women. He considered woman as equal partner and advised “woman must cease to consider herself the object of man’s lust” (Narayan VI: 487) He was against infant marriage, *purdah* system, dowry system and costly marriages. As far as chastity is concerned “it cannot be protected by the surrounding wall

of the *purdah*. It must grow from within...” (Bose 248). Gandhi considers woman “the care-taker in every sense of the term.... Without her care the race must become extinct” (Bose 239).

Basic Education

For Gandhi “Education is that which liberates.... Education here does not mean mere spiritual knowledge, nor does liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life” (Narayan VI: 503) He calls his scheme of education ‘basic’ because it stands for “the art of living”(Narayan VI: 504). Gandhi suggests an educational curriculum namely *Nai Talim* which states that knowledge and work are inseparable. “Craft, art, health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. *Nai Talim* is a beautified blend of all the four and covers the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death” (Narayan VI: 504).

He emphasises the moral as distinguished from the intellectual aim of education. “By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning” (Narayan VI: 507). Character building can only be done through the living touch of the teacher. “When it is remembered that the primary aim of all education is, or should be, the moulding of the character of pupils, a teacher who has a character to keep need not lose heart” (Narayan VI: 508).

Gandhi’s scheme of basic education covers the period from seven years of age to 14 years. In order to satisfy his ideal of education he considers handicrafts to be essential together with physical drill, drawing and music. Education in handicrafts teaches the dignity of labour and combines learning and doing. Gandhi favours the free and compulsory primary education

and wants to get universities established in villages. “I am a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory primary education in India. (Narayan VI: 509).

Gandhi never advocates English language as the medium of instruction at least not at the level of school. “English is today admitted by the world language. I would therefore accord it a place as a second, optional language, not in the school, but in the university course” (Narayan VI: 516). He favours the provincial languages as medium of instruction and wanted to change the English educational system. “The medium of instruction should be altered at once, and, at any cost, the provincial languages being given their rightful place” (Narayan VI: 525) He insists on education being imparted in the mother-tongue and feels that the prevailing system of education makes the students only literate and does not prepare them for life. “It is greatest tragedy of the existing system. The foreign medium has prevented the growth of our vernaculars.” (Narayan VI: 528).

Decentralization or Man and Machine

In Gandhi’s economics the moral consideration is supreme and moral growth for him consists not in the multiplication of material wants but in curtailing the dispensable desires and in developing maximum energy to the pursuit of spiritual values. “I must confess that I do not draw a sharp line or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful. Thus, the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral” (Prabhu 128). Gandhi emphasizes decentralization to minimize exploitation of man by man. He propounds his theory of decentralization both politically and economically. “The end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral growth. I use the adjective moral as synonymous with

spiritual. This end can be achieved under decentralization. Centralization as a system is inconsistent with a non-violent structure of society” (Bose 73).

Gandhi detests the modern industrialization with its profit motive. “I don’t believe that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country... High thinking is inconsistent with a complicated material life, based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship.” (Tendulkar VII: 224). He is not against the modernization but he is against the exploitation “of sister nations by sister nations” (Bose 64). He is against mass production because he is of the firm conviction “that the mania for mass production is responsible for the world crisis” (Bose 71). He is of firm belief that for the existence of non-violent society the replacement of large-scale industries by small scale industries is imperative. “I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace hand-labour by the introduction of power driver spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes” (Bose 66).

Gandhi also has strong fears against the introduction of labour-saving machines as it would tend to create unemployment or result in the production of luxurious goods.

What I object to, is the ‘craze’ for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour saving machinery. Men go on ‘saving labour’ till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation.... The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man.... This mad rush for wealth must cease.... The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and the honest humanitarian consideration, and not greed, the motive. (Bose 68)

Thus, limitation of wants to necessities and economic decentralization are the chief considerations behind the economic structure which Gandhi would like to see. The nearest approach to his ideal of decentralized society, Gandhi finds in the autonomous village communities of India, the political decentralization implies that the village communities be given full autonomy to manage their affairs and the control of central government over them should be minimised. The ideal society of Gandhi's conception will consist of more or less self-sufficing autonomous village communities. But the autonomy of the village does not mean isolation, they will form a sort of federation which will be based on voluntary co-operation and mutual help. The basis of federation will be not coercive but purely moral. The non-violent society will also have its corresponding pattern of social and economic structure based on the principles of decentralization and individual liberty.

Dignity of Labour: Bread Labour

The ideal of 'Bread labour' is largely borrowed by Gandhi from Tolstoy and Ruskin and he finds confirmation of the notion in the Gita and the Bible.

The divine law, that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands, was first stressed by a Russian writer named T.M. Bondarf. Tolstoy advertised it and gave it wider publicity. In my view, the same principle has been set forth in the third chapter of the Gita where we are told, that he who eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food. Sacrifice here can only mean Bread labour. (Narayan IV: 238)

It may appear "an unattainable ideal. But we need not, therefore, cease to strive for it" (Narayan VI: 332). In it Gandhi finds the solution of all miseries around us.

Gandhi discourages begging and he is against those “Sadavrata where free meals are given....; only the rule should be “No labour, no meal” (Narayan VI: 334-335). He was not in favour of encouraging begging but he was in favour giving work to the beggars. This, indeed, is a training in moral discipline. “You must teach the people to labour with their hands and realize the dignity of work” (Narayan VI: 330).

Hindu-Muslim Unity

“Intensely aware of great Hindu-Muslim, India-Empire and Muslim-British gulfs, Gandhi dreamt of bridging all three” (Gandhi, R 213). He always tried to unite Hindus and Muslims on their different issues for the sake of integrity and unity of India. For Gandhi the ancestors and God of Hindu and Muslims are the same so there is no reason of quarrelling.

Should we not remember that many Hindus and Mohamedans own the same ancestors and the same blood runs through their veins? Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of Mohamedan different from the God of the Hindu? Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause for quarrelling? (Narayan IV: 137)

On the issue of cow protection Gandhi said, “A man is just as useful as a cow no matter whether he be a Mahomedan or a Hindu. Am I, then, to fight with or kill a Mahomedan in order to save a cow? In doing so, I would become an enemy of the Mahomedan as well as the cow. Therefore, the only method I know of protecting the cow is that I should approach my Mahomedan brother and urge him for the sake of the country to join me in protecting her.” (Narayan IV: 138). On the question “...will the English ever allow the two bodies to join hands? Gandhi answered. ... we should be ashamed to take our quarrels to the English.... I do not

suggest that the Hindus and the Mahomedans will never fight. Two brothers living together often do so.... How shall a third party distribute justice amongst them?" (Narayan IV: 141-142). He suggests the Hindus and Muslims to decide all the issues on the just and legitimate basis and appeals both the communities to adopt *charkha* and pure *khaddar* which "can serve effective and visible symbol of the Hindu-Muslim Unity." (Narayan IV: 422).

It is true that Gandhi's task was facilitated by the work of a succession of social reformers but their influence was generally confined to the 'educated middle class. Gandhi alone could devise and apply a method of taking their message of the basic equality of men to all the strata of Hindu society. By contrast, Hindu-Muslim unity evaded Gandhi throughout his active life. In spite of his ceaseless effort to prevent it, the country had to accept partition as the price of freedom. After independence Gandhi had to die at the hands of a Hindu fanatic, though he alone among the top leaders of the time was unreconciled to the partition.

Non-Possession, Non-Stealing, Trusteeship

Gandhi's ideal of self-realization is also the ideal of love which also confirms the ideal of non-possession. "Love and exclusive possession can never go together. Theoretically when there is perfect love, there must be perfect non-possession. The body is our last possession. So a man can only exercise love and be completely dispossessed, if he is prepared to embrace death and renounce his body for the sake of human service" (Bose 17).

Gandhi emphasises the spirit behind the ideal of non-possession. Like Non-possession, non-stealing is another vow which Gandhi prescribes for the realisation of the ideal. The ideal of 'non-possession' is merely an extension of the ideal of 'Non-stealing' to include things not needed for the immediate present." Non-possession is allied to non-stealing. Anything not

originally stolen must nevertheless be classified stolen property, if one possesses it without needing it” (Bose 75).

Gandhi’s doctrine of Trusteeship applies with regard to accumulated wealth and earnings beyond one’s need. He acknowledges his debt to the Gita: “I understood the Gita teaching of non-possession to mean that those who desired salvation should act like the trustee who, though having control over great possessions, regards not an iota of them as his own” (Narayan VI:365). The doctrine of ‘Trusteeship’ by insisting that any superfluous wealth should be held in trust implies an ideal of economic equality. “If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one would be in want, and all would live in contentment.” (Bose 76). Gandhi is fully conscious of the differences in individual capacity. Some will have ability to earn more and others less. He is not against the intellectuals to earn more but the bulk of their greater earnings must be used for the good of the state. Gandhi, therefore, prefers private ownership to state control provided the private owners act as trustees voluntarily.

Swaraj

Swaraj means self-rule and has its source in ancient Hindu Philosophy. “The word *Swaraj*, says Gandhi, “is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which ‘independence’ of means.” (Y.I March 19, 1931). This is indeed an extension of the word’s application from the sphere of individual morality to that of the state. The character of *Swaraj* will evolve with the evolution of the individuals in terms of moral values. It cannot, therefore, be described in terms of any one form of society. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi defines *Swaraj*:

It is *Swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves. It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands. Do not consider this *Swaraj* to be like a dream. There is no idea of sitting

still. The *Swaraj* that I wish to picture is such that, after we have once realized it, we shall endeavour to the end of our life-time to persuade others to do likewise. But such *Swaraj* has to be experienced, by each one for himself. (Narayan IV: 155).

This concept of *Swaraj* has multiple meanings and cannot be understood with narrow outlook. “Gandhi’s *swaraj* also meant looking inward and not looking abroad. ... A man becomes ashamed of his property who attains *swaraj*. ... Gandhi’s philosophy of ‘non-possession’ and ‘non-acquisitiveness’ contemplates the same kind of ethics.” (Ganguly 48)

Swadeshi

The law of ‘*Swadeshi*’ has, for Gandhi, a wide application to all spheres of life—religious, political, social and economical. In the political sphere it is the basis of Gandhi’s nationalism. It is a principle of enlightened patriotism which restricts the performance of duties to our neighbours. Gandhi defines it as, “that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote” (Narayan VI: 336). In the domain of economics it demands the use of “only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting” (Narayan VI: 336). In its spiritual sense, “*Swadeshi* stand for the final emancipation of the soul from her earthly bondage” (Narayan VI: 256). Here Gandhi refers Gita: “It is best to die performing one’s own duty or *svadharma*: *paradharma* or another’s duty is fraught with danger. Interpreted in terms of one’s physical environment, this gives us the law of *Swadeshi*. What the Gita says with regard to *svadharma* equally applies to *Swadeshi*, for *Swadeshi* is *svadharma* applied to one’s immediate environment” (Narayan VI: 257).

The *Swadeshi* doctrine is a plea for the protection of home industries especially those which have the potentiality of growth. The true spirit of *Swadeshi* never means ill-will towards any other country. Gandhi is not in favour of rejecting foreign manufacturers, merely, because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited. For Gandhi a true *Swadeshi* will never harbour ill-will towards any foreigner; he will not be prompted by hatred towards anybody.

Communism Marxism

The ideological perspectives of Marx and Gandhi have been charged with values. "Marx wanted the proletariat to seize and smash the political superstructure of capitalism but to preserve and further develop its industrial and technological infrastructure." (Bandyopadhyaya 19).

Gandhi also adopts this value-oriented approach to social transformation.

Gandhi also geared his entire ideological thinking to the same ultimate values, although his values have deeper metaphysical moorings than those of Marxism-Leninism. His ultimate value goal is Truth, which empirically means justice. This synthetic concept of justice consists, in Gandhian scheme of values, of ahimsa or non-violence which to his mind is wider name for fraternity, *swaraj* or liberty, both individual and collective and *smata* or an inclusive equality. The task of social engineering, according to Gandhi, is the progressive instantiation of these values through the reconstruction of both individual and collective social life.

(Bandyopadhyaya 18)

As a socialist his faith in stateless society, his efforts to exterminate the division of society into the rich and the poor brings him close to a communist but his communism is different from the communism of Marx, Lenin and others. In his communism there is no place of violence.

On communism Gandhi said, “Bolshevism is the necessary result of modern materialistic civilization. Its insensate worship of matter has given rise to a school which has been brought up to look upon material advancement as the goal and which has lost all touch with the final things of life” (Narayan VI: 238). Gandhi is against all types of violence even to serve the noblest cause. “I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is..... But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me.” (Narayan VI: 238). Gandhi considered inequality an evil but he does not believe in eradicating this by violence. “What does Communism mean in the last analysis? It means a classless society – an ideal that is worth striving for. Only I part company with it when force is called to aid for achieving it.” (Narayan VI: 238)

Gandhi does not accept Marxian views:

Marx showed us that our ideologies, institutions, and ethical standards, literature, art, customs, even religion, are a product of our economic environment. I do not agree that our ideologies, ethical standards and values are altogether a product of our material environment without any absolute basis outside it. On the contrary as we are, so our environment becomes. (Narayan VI: 242)

Gandhi advises that machinery must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour.

But the Marxist wants to abolish the labouring hand altogether and substitute in its place the machine. He has no use for the hand. Dependence on manual labour, according to Marx, is the symbol and root cause of the destitution and slavery of the worker. It is the function of the machine to emancipate him from this state. I, on the other hand, hold that machine enslaves and only intelligent use of the hand will bring to the worker both freedom and happiness. (Narayan VI: 243)

On the issue of class conflict, Gandhi finds an appropriate solution in his concept of trusteeship. “Trusteeship is my answer to the issue of class-conflict” (Narayan VI: 244) From the Marxian point of view the task of the revolutionist is to unmask the hidden conflict and bring it to the surface as quickly as possible.

The Marxist says that to abolish war we have but to abolish the institution of private property. You have also taught that property is incompatible with the non-violent way of life. This is only partly true....To banish war we have to do more. We have to eradicate possessiveness and greed and lust and egotism from our own hearts. We have to carry war within ourselves to banish it from society. (NarayanVI: 245)

Creative writers responded to the emergence of Gandhi on the Indian socio-political scene in a wholesome manner ever since his arrival in India from South Africa. That vibrant relationship has continued to flourish through nearly a century now, though its scope and nature of depiction has undergone a sea-change. The chapter visualizes three phases in this long period of engagement, which are captioned as *The Halo, the Haze and the Fait accompli*. The first *Halo* phase delineates how author after author came under the influence of Gandhi’s ideas and upheld them as beacon lights on the path to country’s freedom. *Haze* represents ‘confusion characterized by lack of clarity’. Here it represents the writers’ ideological transition from affirmation to negation where writers of fiction question, problematize and brush aside the potential of Gandhi’s ideas in guiding the country’s destiny. *Fait accompli* signifies a natural corollary to the second stage denoting darkness or denigration or in the case of Gandhi it means negation of his ideology. This chapter deals with around two dozen novels apart from the select novels which have been dealt in other chapters in detail separately. The major reason for not taking them up

for detailed study is that they deal with the subject in a sketchy manner or are selective in their aspects. An assimilation of minor details of a narrow range is sought to be avoided to provide a clear propulsion to the study.

Halo

It is Gandhi's constructive ideas that the fate of mankind hinges upon today. If we feel desperate these days in the matter of our social problems, it is because we have not so far tried to give a practical shape to the ideas of one who in the manner of a scientist, carried on his experiments on truth. His insistence on truth permeated his whole life and philosophy. It is not surprising, therefore, that he called his autobiography *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* but he was not a system-builder in philosophy in the Western sense of the term. As a man, he was a noble specimen of humanity and led a saintly life, practicing and preaching truth and non-violence. His contributions on political, social, educational, religious and ethical issues commanded veneration and attention both at home and abroad. His stress was never on the intellectual approach to a problem but on character and piety. "In other words what has come to be known as Gandhian ideology is nothing but what is good and noble in life. It has therefore, achieved universality and is as relevant today as it was during Gandhi's life time." (Sharma, S Preface). He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take a deep breath, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes. Jawahar Lal Nehru compared Gandhi with the light. "The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many years and a thousand year. Later that light will still be seen in this country, and the world will see it as it will give solace to innumerable hearts" (Fischer 9). Devadas, Gandhi's son, felt the halo of divine light just before the death of

Gandhi. “So serene was the face and so mellow the halo of divine light that surrounded the body that it seemed almost sacrilegious to grieve....” (Fischer 4).

His life and his ideology have been like a nebula from which creative oeuvres have been emanating on a consistent basis, making a glittering milky way of their own. This goes to prove beyond doubt that Gandhi has continued to be the centre of the creative imagination during the past one century. In the early 20th century the creative writers of India, influenced both by modern Western theories of art and a vibrant freedom struggle, found a niche in Gandhi.

It was under the influence of Gandhian thought that writers in all Indian languages could carve out their identity as novelists. Prem Chand (Premashrama, 1921); Rangabhumi, 1925; and Godan 1936) and Jainendra Kumar (Tyagapatra, 1937) in Hindi, Ramanlal Vasantlal Desai (Gram Lakshmi, 1940) in Gujarati, Torashankar Bannerjee (Dhatri Debata, 1939; Ganadevata, 1940), Satinath Bhaduri (Jagari, 1946) in Bengali, and G.T. Madkholkar (Muktatma, 1933) in Marathi, are, among those, to name only a few in some of the Indian languages, who wrote these novels under the influence of Gandhi. Gandhi’s presence and the influence of his teachings and practice on thought, character and events is a basic assumption in these novels. (Jha 7)

Though Gandhi influenced Indian English Literature as a whole, he left a more potent and revealing impact on the Indian English fiction in the choice of themes and characters. In the growth of Indian novel in English Gandhian ideology acted as a catalytic agent and emphasized the perspective on the condition of man in Indian society that Gandhian thought provided to the novelists.

Gandhian ideology has greatly influenced Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Battacharya, Nayantara Sahgal, K.S. Venkataramani, Padmini' Sen Gupta, Shanta Remeshwar Rao and Anant Gopal Sheorey. There are other writers who have either been superficially influenced by Gandhian ideology or refer to it as it was fashionable to do so at the time of writing. Similarly, some novelists, dwelling on the themes of Freedom struggle, 'Quit India' movement and Partition, cannot help dealing with Gandhi and his ideology in order to give a touch of authenticity to their writings. Some of these writers are K. Nagarajan, D.F. Karaka, Manohar Malgonkar, Balachandra Rajan, Zeenuth Futehally, C.N. Zutshi, Venu Chitale, Kamala Markandaya, Anand Lall (Arthur S. Lall), Amir Ali. Attia Hosain, Khewaja Ahmad Abbas and Chaman Nahal. (Sharma, S 208)

The novelists and short-story writers of the period of freedom movement felt the spirit of those times in their own veins and depicted the events of the period in their writings. "The first novel to reflect an aspect of the freedom movement under the leadership of Gandhi is *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) by K.S. Venkataramani. It deals with Gandhian ideal of rural reconstruction as a step towards winning swaraj... this novel of rural India is unmistakably a novel depicting the 'back to the village' movement of Gandhian era"(Sharma, G 188-189).

Ramachandran (Ramu) the owner of a plot of agricultural land, fails in BA examination and returns from Madras to his native village Alavanti. He expresses his sorrows before his family servant Murugan who consoles him and advises him to give up city education and look after the ancestral land in the village. In the first flush of repentance, Ramu promises to follow Murugan's advice and decides to settle down at Alavanti. But he receives a letter from Kedari,

his friend, who exhorts him to go back to Madras for completing his B.A. Next we see Ramu at his village, a 'failed B.A. again but married and managing his paternal lands. Here Janaki, his wife and Meenakshi, his mother-in-law, are dissatisfied with his agricultural pursuits and force him to give-up the land. Flood aggravates the situation and he makes Murugan the lessee of his lands and takes up the post of a clerk to the collector. Meanwhile Murugan who had passed from the status of tiller to that of lessee under the evil influence of Thoppai, a rebellious town-brat, becomes a dacoit and is arrested by Ramachandran who by now has become the Police Chief on special duty. Ramachandran then, with the consent of the Government, reclaims the band of criminals, and turns them into useful citizens. With the help of these criminals he reclaims the barren land, builds a dam and starts a model community with inalienable three-acre holdings. After some time, Ramachandran is offered the collectorship of Tinnevely but he rejects this offer and the three-acre holding has brought him absolute contentment.

“It is thus seen how the author portrays here an ideal man who will build the India of Gandhi’s dream – a rural India where none is slaved for another. And labour was the kind which nourished body, mind and soul. It is in this sense that *Murugan the Tiller* is a novel with a nationalist theme” (Sharma ,G 192). *Murugan the Tiller* is a novel depicting primarily the Gandhian ideal of going ‘back to the village’ and, secondarily, emphasising the need for the traditional Indian way of living.

Venkataramani’s next novel, *Kandan, the Patriot* (1932) is on the other hand a novel depicting the political aspect of the national struggle of India of the same period. “Murugan is an exponent of economics, as Kandan is an exponent of Gandhian politics” (Iyengar 279). The plot of the novel is made up of mainly three episodes. Firstly, Chockalinga Mudaliar and the tillers of his lands; secondly Rangan and Rajeswari and third Sundaram and Sarasvati, with Kandan in the

background knitting them all into a simple, logical and harmonious whole. The Chockalingam episode reveals many evils existing in the present-day Indian villages where the owners of the land merely waste their time and money in council elections, utterly regardless of the welfare of the society. Through the Rangan-Rajeswari episode the author shows how much real service the cultured sons and daughters of India could render in her struggle for freedom. The Sundaram-Saraswati episode is the most vital of the three. Through this device of the 'collision' ignites the precious stuff in Sarasvati's nature and thus the author brings Sarasvati into contact with his hero, unites two great forces and makes the one derive inspiration from the other.

Kandan and Rangan who have given up their coveted and glamorous ICS jobs to fight for the freedom of the country were not quite rare among Indians during the British rule. Rajeshwari Bai's sacrifice at the altar of freedom is also one of the many examples of such sacrifice in the history of the freedom movement in India. The love story of Rangan and Rajeswari is convincingly linked with the story of participation in the freedom struggle. These two stories are again connected well with the story of the involvement of Akkur village in the national struggle. All the stories reach their climax in the meeting at Tranquebar where Kandan dies with an assurance from all present that they will not rest until freedom is won.

"The hero of his story, Kandan, of whom he is omniscient, he has drawn in all his beauty. Giving up a fine career in the Indian Civil Service he dedicates his life to his mother country. 'For disappointed love in the pregnant hour of change destroyed the self and changed into the higher love for all beings.' He is a saint. He has nothing but love for those who hate him. As his friend says of him: 'He is a man of deeds, deeds not on grooved lines making but deeper the ruts of social life but on lines of pioneering choice of his own. He is a rare soul and a common good for the whole world, like the pure monsoon cloud that rains everywhere for the mere impetuous

joy of it.’ In him his creator sees Mahatma Gandhi who is not merely ‘an individual but a cause, a movement, a revolution’. With his life ebbing fast he says to his fellow-workers: ‘But my life will not have been in vain if only you all carry out our plan, consecrating your life and love for the freedom of the country and the uplift of the down-trodden masses – foodless, homeless and hungry for ages’. Kandan has died a patriot-saint, a martyr to his country’s cause”

(Venkateswarlu 35-36).

In *Untouchable* (1935) with superb skill Mulk Raj Anand portrays the image of Gandhi as all knew him but more than the physical details is his charisma that the author has been able to capture. The novel gives an account of one particular day events in the life of Bakha, a sweeper boy, in the town of Bulashah. When Anand happened to come across a poignant story about a sweeper boy, Uka, by Mahatma Gandhi in ‘Young India’, he found similarity of theme and attitude and decided to meet Gandhi, and read to him some parts of his novel. Under Gandhi’s influence he decided to write only about the down-trodden whom he had known. “All his main characters, therefore, belong to the poor strata of life – Bakha, a sweeper-boy in *Untouchable*; Bikhu, a ‘chamar’ in *The Road*, Munoo, a domestic servant in *Coolie*, Gangu a labourer in *Two Leaves and A Bud*, Lal Singh, a peasant cum-soldier in *The Village, Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, Ananta, a ‘thathiar’ in *The Big Heart* and Krishna, a Head Clerk’s son in *Seven Summers, Morning Face* and ‘*Confessions of a Lover*” (Sharma, S 209). Anand’s sympathies are with the underdogs of society and he is against all types of exploitation. He does not believe in caste discrimination or class distinctions. Most of the victims of exploitation portrayed by him are based on people in real life.

Communal harmony and non-violence are the main aspects of Gandhian ideology which have been emphasized in *We Never Die* (1944) by D.F. Karaka. The marriage of Ram Chandra,

an ICS Officer and Ayesha, the Muslim village girl, is symbolic of the secular India of Gandhi's dreams. Ram Chandra justifies his marriage with Ayesha, saying that since both of them belong to different religions; it may prove to be a harbinger of communal unity in India.

In C.N. Zutshi's *Motherland*(1944) Mahatma Vikram is a great national leader and symbolizes Mahatma Gandhi. He establishes Swarajya Ashrama which is going to be the nerve centre of the struggle for Freedom. Shankar, a sensitive village youth, is the protagonist of the novel *Conflict* (1947) by Aamir Ali. After returning from a college in Bombay he organises the villagers to resist the foreign Government without resorting to violence. Venu Chitale's *In Transit* (1950) is a study of a Hindu, Chitpavan Brahmin, joint family and is set in the background of Gandhian age. The novel's protagonist, Abba, is a boy, of thirteen at the time of 'Mutiny'. The novel covers the life of the family when the entire social fabric of the country is undergoing a reforming change. Bhayya is strongly influenced by Gandhi and Abba trains him to follow the path of his choice. Lopmudra, the daughter of the house, sides with her husband, a staunch Gandhian. Bal Baban becomes a follower of Bhayya because that is what he has done since his young age. The novel also highlights the struggle at different levels. The opening of a school for girls causes an uproar in the family. The novel ends with the Civil Disobedience Movement in which the younger generation of Abba's family takes an active part. It also describes the non-cooperation movement, started by Gandhi in 1921.

The protagonist, Rukmani, in Kamala Markandaya's *Nector in a Sieve* (1954) is forced to leave the village and lead a life of misery in the town but finally justifying the Gandhian plea of the return to the village, she returns to her native village where she finds solace at last. Similarly the novel illustrates the economic principle of Gandhian ideology which does not forbid the use of machinery but requires it to be confined only to the unavoidable so that the people may not be

deprived of their means of livelihood. Kamala Markandaya in her novel *Some Inner Fury* (1955) depicts a sharp, suggestive and comprehensive picture of the Gandhian age. Premala is the most prominent epitome of Gandhian principles without even claiming to be doing so. “Although Venkataramani’s *Kandan the Patriot* is a picture – sharp and suggestive rather than complicated and comprehensive – of the Gandhian Age.... Kamala Markandaya’s *Some Inner Fury* achieves a similar feat with regard to a later phase of the Gandhian Age covered by the ‘Quit India’ movement of the early forties.” (Iyengar 282).

In Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) the political and nationalist movement during the 1930s which is inseparably associated with Gandhi makes its presence felt throughout the novel. Asad, a true follower of Gandhian ideology, is not at all affected by all the members of the same family who opt for different countries. He continues with his educational work among the poor and is even drawn into political work in Delhi. There is not much physical action, however, the political and nationalist movement has been described by the ideas and thoughts of many young characters.

Though in *Red Hibiscus* (1962) Padmini Sen Gupta has referred to various aspects of Gandhian ideology in a very casual manner, she attaches a great importance to the removal of untouchability. Rashmi, a sweeper woman, has full faith in Gandhi’s policy of non-violence and is against killing. She does not approve of the sacrifice of a goat to Kali. Like Gandhi she is against fatalism and superstitions and aims at eradicating them as they are a slur on the face of society. Not only Rashmi, even characters belonging to the higher caste voice concern for the acceptance of Gandhian values as the only answer to India’s problems. Kusum, is aghast at the blood-shed and the communal frenzy let loose as a sequel to the Partition. Santosh tries his best to improve the lot of the poor untouchables. He educates Sita’s son-in-law at his own expense so

that he can override the stigma of caste. Even Sita is very keen on joining the Non-Cooperation Movement. She seeks solace in Gandhian values when she is not able to adjust after her marriage to Santosh. She plans to be a *Satyagrahi* and wants to help Gandhi in his struggle for Hindu-Muslim Unity.

Haze

Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1950) is the story of an upper-class Muslim girl, Zohra whose emotional growth and development mirrors the development of the Indian national consciousness. Politics and Gandhian ideology are interwoven in the texture of the novel. Zohra falls in love with her husband's younger brother, Hamid who is very much the face of India. The two brothers disagree over the utility of Gandhian methods. Zohra considers Gandhian ideology as a new way of revolution which surely will lead to the regeneration of India.

In *The House at Adampur* (1956) Jai has a firm conviction in the Gandhian principle of non-violence and remains true to this part of ideology till the end of the novel. Lena, another ardent follower of non-violence, deplors violence considering it to be the last resort of morally depraved people. Munshi Ram, the rich young landlord who had originally joined the movement just to be in the good books of a powerful body of public opinion finds much deeper impulses at work and gives his own life in order to protect Lena. In spite of repeated references, the author has not been able to sustain the impact on various characters. Jai is the follower of Gandhian ideology of non-violence but cannot believe and far less practice Gandhian advocacy of *brahmacharya* and violates it without even a hint of remorse. Lena, another ardent follower of non-violence, gets married to an army officer and forgets about her involvement after the prison term. Geeta leads the most immoral life and is in the movement only in order to be the part of it. The novel ends with echoes of 'Quit India'.

In Balachandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* (1958) Kamala, the heroine, is a staunch believer in the policy of non-violence but her husband Krishnan, just back from England, is disillusioned and tells her that he is doubtful if India can attain freedom through non-violence. He is sickened to see the police raining 'lathis' on the non-violent procession. He is surprised at the emptiness of the words as non-violence is supposed to compel a man to his conscience and to purify the image of injustice.

Shanta Rameshwar Rao's *Children of God* (1972) pleads justice for the down-trodden. She is pained to realize that though Gandhi has initiated and led a tireless crusade against untouchability, things have remained almost the same. The novel begins with the heart-rending cries of Kittu's parents over his dead body. Kittu, the scavenger boy is done to death because he has dared to enter the temple. Lachi, his mother, laments that legislation is of no use since it is impossible to change the hearts of people. Ironically enough, long speeches are made over Kittu's dead body about brotherhood and dignity of man, about the constitution and against the existing government. Kittu's mother is intelligent enough to understand that all this is only an empty talk as nothing will change unless there is a change of heart. Lachi recollects some incidents of her young days when a Swami, Acharya Harishchandra, who was a true exponent of Gandhian ideology was called by fahter Pierre to come and work for the upliftment of the Harijans. Being a genuine follower of Gandhi, he regards these social evils to be worse than the foreign rule. Ironically, most of the untouchables are quite reconciled to their lot and fail to understand and appreciate all the fuss made on account of them. They are not prepared to enter the temples though Mahatma Gandhi had called out to the people to open the doors of the temples and to allow the Harijans to enter with everyone else to worship. The author has succeeded in making us aware that still a lot is left to be done if we want to have the *Ram Rajya*

of Gandhi's dreams. Empty words or legislation on paper will be of no avail unless something concrete is done.

Chaman Nahal in his Gandhi Quartet which comprises four novels –*The Crown and the Loin Cloth*, *The Salt of Life*, *The Triumph of the Tricolour* and *Azadi* has painted the real picture of Mahatma Gandhi. He depicts Gandhi's magnanimous personality so naturally and minutely that his novels appear to be true account of his real biography.

In *The Crown and the Loin Cloth* Sunil is the staunch follower of Gandhian ideology while Rakesh is against Gandhian principles. Rakesh supports violence and he believes that freedom can be achieved only through violence. There are other characters who believe in violence and belong to the revolutionary groups such as Rakesh, Hoshiar Singh, Govinda, Darbara Singh, Sen Gupta, Charulata, Joseph Daniel and Karmani.

In *The Salt of Life* Chaman Nahal delineates the agony of Gandhi's heart at the failure of his movement. The author expresses Gandhi's views on violence. He gives several examples of his indecisiveness about violence and non-violence. The novelist vividly describes Gandhi's views about the historical and remarkable significance of salt as the novel *The Salt of Life* reveals this significant aspect of 'the Salt-Agitation'. Nahal has referred Gandhi's views against untouchability, consumption of liquor, evil practice of *Sati*, caste system, dowry system and ignorance.

The third novel of the Gandhi Quartet, *The Triumph of the Tricolor* refers to the meeting of AICC in Bombay in which monumental resolution – 'Quit India' was passed. The novel begins with the 'Quit India' resolution and Gandhi remains a central figure as he plays pivotal role in the struggle for freedom. The author portrays both types of characters – pro and against the Gandhian ideology. Vikram, a product of Gandhi ashram since childhood, adopts Gandhian

ways of non-violence, truth and peace. On the other hand there is the violent struggle of the revolutionaries who discard Gandhi's ways and choose violent ways to challenge the exploitative and cruel British rule in India. Amit, the son of Raja Vishal Chand and Kusum follow the path of violent revolution and discard Gandhian ideology. Nahal portrays some more characters like Joseph David, Salma and Kashi Ram who act against the Gandhian principles and criticize him for his out dated and impractical ways. The novel ends with the most shocking incident when one youth hurled stone at Gandhi and hit him on the left cheek and another hit him badly on the chest.

Like *The Triumph of the Tricolour* Chaman Nahal has realistically described relentlessness and mercilessness in *Azadi* also. The author has depicted the incidents of mass rape, arson and the brutal killings of Hindus and Muslims after the partition of India. *Azadi* is "a sweeping, shattering saga of the colossal tragedy and disruption that accompanied the partition and independence in the Indian subcontinent" (Cover page). Against the atrocities and destruction Gandhi undertakes his fast and he gives up his fast only when the representatives of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims assure him to bring back normalcy and peace. The novel ends with the unfortunate assassination of the Mahatma.

The Gandhi Quartet is a realistic, plausible, picturesque, rational, touching and frank picturization of Gandhi's life and covers a period of about thirty three years – from his voyage from South Africa to the end of his life. Nahal has skillfully and meticulously interwoven all the significant episodes of Gandhiji's life with the main story of all the four novels of 'The Quartet' making it a marvelous piece of fictional world. It is a splendid example of blending fact with fiction. *The Quartet* presented a vivid, credible and enthralling picture of the father of the

nation and his key and pivotal role in the freedom struggle. The novelist has very sincerely tried to delve into Gandhi's past with unsparing and penetrating insight. 'The Quartet' deals in detail with all the aspirations, triumphs and failures of the Mahatma which he encountered with tremendous equanimity and unyielding courage. Nahal's explicit interest in the principles of Gandhi enabled him to portray all the important incidents of his life in 'The Quartet' and has interwoven them meticulously. (Sharma, A 204)

Dusk Before Dawn by Anant Gopal Sheorey was published in 1978. Dhananjay, the protagonist is a staunch follower of Gandhian values and tries to practise rather than preach them. He believes in the Gandhian teaching of having infinite patience and faith in human nature. He feels that freedom has to be earned by constant vigilance and effort and through ceaseless dedicated endeavour and preparedness to suffer for it. Like Gandhi he believes that truth, justice and fear of God must be the guiding principles.

Unfortunately, he is soon disillusioned because he finds that the members of Gandhi's own party are simply exploiting the magic of his name to serve their own selfish motives. The mass are only being tolerant because they have blind faith in Gandhi, the miracle man of India. But, the fact remains that by the end of his life Gandhi himself was a broken-hearted man because of the partition of the country and the communal frenzy let loose by partition. (Sharma, S 201)

The author feels disconsolate because the people like Thakur Randaman Singh who are corruption incarnate hold the reins and the President of the Party who belongs to the Gandhian school get relegated to the second position. "The author seems to be making a desperate bid to revive the faith in Gandhian values through Dhananjay" (Sharma S 203). Dhananjay says that he

is fighting for a system of life and those who are opposed to this come in for attack not as persons but as part of a system.

Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) is intended as an anatomy of ahimsa. In the novel, the author has tried to show how non-violence does not suit in all conditions. Gandhi's creed of ahimsa is discredited by the reality of violence. "There are two different ideologies in the beginning pro-Gandhian and anti-Gandhian. Gian Talwar represents the pro-Gandhian values, particularly that of non-violence. While characters like Debidayal, Sufi Usman alias Singh, Basu and Hafiz represent an anti-Gandhian belief" (Sharma, A 115). The novel opens with Gandhi's bonfire of British clothes and ends with the partition, violence and bloodshed that marked the sunrise of our freedom in 1947. "The opening chapter, 'A Ceremonial Purification' describes the ceremonial burning of foreign cloth. Gandhiji himself, the apostle of Truth and Non-violence, appears on the platform, though he doesn't speak, it being his day of silence.... In the last chapters of the novel, there is more burning but now it is Indian cities that are on fire, it is the Hindus and Muslims who are killing one another in tens of thousands" (Iyengar 432).

After first showing Gian Talwar with the Gandhi Crowd, the novelist puts him among terrorists like Debi Dayal, Shafi Usman and Basu who make fun of the creed of non-violence. It is their conviction that freedom has to be won by sacrifice and by giving blood and not by Gandhi's ahimsa. Violence and revenge characterise the novel as a whole. Prof. G.S. Amur has criticised the author's treatment of non-violence in the novel: "Through Gian, Malgonkar attempts to discredit the value of non-violence and truth as incompatible with the facts of life and this is where the mischief occurs. Debi-dayal has the making of a hero and he turns out to be an effective instrument of violence. Gian, weak and unheroic, can only be an ironic symbol of non-

violence. Thus, non-violence is discredited even before the novelistic exploration begins by its identification with weakness and cowardice... and makes it unreliable as a study of the ideology of non-violence..." (108-109).

Gian Talwar, however, asserts his faith in non-violence. It is proved, how wrong he is, in the episode depicting his family feud. "Ironically enough, a staunch believer of Gandhiji and his non-violent ways, Gian Talwar, becomes a murderer and kills his cousin, Vishnudutt, the murderer of his brother, Hari, at the end of the seventh chapter, 'Bullocks and Bangles', with the same axe. The conversion of Gian Talwar from a non-violent and disciplined soldier to a reckless fellow and a killer shows the novelist's bent of mind - his sympathies with the followers of violence" (Sharma, A 117). From now onwards whatever happens in the novel is somehow related to violence and revenge, and is a veritable repudiation of the creed of non-violence.

Nayantara Sahgal, in her third novel *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) depicts an India at a loss because of having lost its moorings in a retreat from Gandhian values. She feels that the malaise has affected not only the political sphere, but also personal life. Gyan Singh, the Chief Minister of the Punjab, is ruthless and does not bother about the fairness of the means as long as the end is achieved. He lacks sincerity of purpose and does not hesitate in resorting to violence.

Similarly in her novel *A situation in New Delhi* (1977) the Cabinet Ministers profess to be radicals but are far removed from the poor millions of their countrymen. They do not even understand Gandhian ideology and Gandhi seems to have been completely forgotten. Even the radicals have nothing in common with the poor and downtrodden for whose welfare Gandhi had worked incessantly

Fait Accompli

Dina Mehta's *And Some Take a Lover* (1992) is based on the Gandhi phenomenon but Gandhi does not appear as a character though his influence is felt throughout the novel. The author attempts to recall the significant historical incidents of the freedom struggle by using the historical events of the forties in her narrative. Sudhir is a college student and becomes Gandhi's follower after evaluating his principles. A determined Gandhian worker he loves Roshni but visualises that his marriage with her would be a burden on him. He marries a Harijan girl at the call of the Mahatma.

Roshni starts wearing Khadi to influence Sudhir and win his love though her family does not like either Gandhiji or his Khadi. In fact she starts wearing Khadi to win the love of Sudhir and not for the sake of the Mahatma. "One is reminded of Sriram of R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* who had done the same thing – had become Gandhi's follower not for his ideals but for the love of Bharathi" (Pandey 255). Lajwanti, another Gandhian follower, is killed in a lathi charge while picketing a toddy shop and Yakub, a staunch follower of Gandhi loses his family while his wife and children were killed by Hindus in Bihar. Roshni, the protagonist, is not really dedicated like Lajwanti to the cause of her country. "Roshni begins to doubt her own integrity and beliefs, and decides to give up Khadi as he had failed to live up to the ideals for which she is meant to exemplify" (Venkateswarlu 80). When she does not succeed in marrying Sudhir, she sees Gandhi as a despot.

If the first phase lionized Gandhi for his bold enunciations and innovative approach to socio-political matters and ethico-psychic issues facing humanity, the second phase sought to trivialize him by delineating his methods as being inherently flawed and being blind to the complex challenges of life. This widespread reductivism in the approach of the creative writers

was in consonance with the dominant mood of an India that saw itself on the upswing of material progress and mechanized modernization. The bright polar summer of high value now enters that phase of long polar night where Gandhi exudes nothing but a chilling darkness. Probably no other person in human history has suffered such a reversal of fortunes, such a sour curdling up of favours, such purblind vilification as Gandhi.