CONCLUSION

Nations do not often wholly absorb the greatness they give birth to. The capacity to judge a great man is generally marred by two factors by his being near to us and secondly by his being dear to us. Gandhiji has been both to the Indians. Therefore a correct evaluation of Gandhiji may pose problems to the unwary minds. The essential Gandhiji stands for eternal values like truth, love, non-violence and so on. Understanding Gandhiji to-day is understanding these qualities, a sort of rediscovery of these eternal values in the individual himself.

C.E.M. Joad writes, "Gandhi is a moral genius and his method belongs to the coming generation "1 Gandhiji has to be re-introduced to the present generation because the situation warrants it. Broadly speaking Gandhiji is relevant in all epochs of time. There can be no two opinions about it. His being the father of our independence is not of such importance as his making us God-conscious by identifying God with Truth, Love and Non-violence. This is the lesson we are losing sight of. This has to be brought home again to the present generation.

To-day we are facing the crisis not only of character and confidence, but also of leadership and idealism. So we shall have to resurrect Gandhiji. We need not

resurrect him as 'God'. Let us not add any more Gods to our already overcrowded pantheon of deities. We need the regeneration of all the finer qualities of the spirit that God stands for. It is not that another Gardhi should be born. Gandhism is the need of the hour; it is that every one should try to inculcate in himself the essential Gandhi of truth, love and Ahimsa. Gandhiji was no God but he was godlike. He was not a born Mahatma but grew into one. Therefore when he has to be resurrected, it is not the historical Gandhi but the mythical Gandhi - the Mahatma, who becomes relevant.

Gandhiji exercised a potent influence on literature and society, directly through his writings and also through his movements, which are the outcome of his revolutionary thoughts and practices. All this has been reflected in Indian English novels. The influence of Ganchian writings and his personality was so great on the Indian mind that every branch of Indian literature of that period is profoundly Ganchian in hue. Gandhism is no closed system of dogma, it does involve a conscious concern for means and it takes its stand on faith in God. For Gandhiji, national realisation includes ending of political subjection and economic degradation; removing social inequalities like untouchability, caste arrogance, occupational prejudices, the reform of education, emancipation of women and so on.
Gandhiji was a real Mahatma; for him there was no difference between private and public morality, ethics and politics. All these aspects of Gandhian life have been rightly represented by the Indian English novelists. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar writes,

"Such was Gandhi, the prophet, who expounded truth and defied violence, banished fear and unfurled the flag of Sarvodaya. Gandhi was a man speaking to man, he was more than an agitator or politician he was the liberator, the messiah, the great soul. If he was Mahatma, he was Bapu, everybody's friend and mentor. He had command over the hearts and minds of millennia and at his call millions responded." \(^2\)

Gandhiji's influence ruled supreme on the Indian mind over three decades. The Gandhian revolution was a strong blaze of the spirit. M.K. Naik writes,

"The entire period of near three decades of the Gandhian age was one of the far reaching changes, not only in political scene but in practically all areas of Indian life". \(^3\)

The Indian English novels of the 'Heroic Age' are influenced by the teachings and actions of Gandhiji. Many leading novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, K.S. Venkataraman, K.A. Abbas and others followed Gandhiji. Their novels depict the struggle for

\(^2\) Iyengar, Srinivasa. K.R. Indian Writing in English, p-271.
\(^3\) Naik, M.K. A History of Indian English Literature, p-116.
freedom led by the Mahatma. All these novelists might not have agreed with Gandhiji on all points, but all of them agree on one point that Gandhiji was a great soul, who had the power to liberate India. Therefore, before independence the fictional approach to Gandhiji has tended to be monolithic. That is, Gandhi and the Gandhian politics are the main concerns of the novel. The novelists have used the language which Gandhiji used and the characters behave as Gandhiji himself would have behaved. In a way, the novelists embarked on, as it were, a mission of spreading the gospel of Gandhiji within the country and without. Gandhian politics alone was the serious concern of the novelists and all other literary qualities of the novel were pushed into the background. R.K. Narayan aptly remarks,

"The subject matter of fiction became inescapably political....the mood comedy, the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, the crisis in the individual souls and its resolution and above all detached observation which constitutes the stuff of fiction were forced into the background." 4

During the struggle, Gandhiji developed his political theories which were based on the works of Ruskin, 4. Quoted by Nicholson, Kai, p - 126.
Tolstoy and others. They comprised of Ahimsa, Non-violence, Swadeshi, Self-reliance and Satyagraha. With the aid of these weapons Gandhiji embarked on the epic struggle. In the process of describing this unique battle that was fought with the weapons forged out of love and tolerance, the historical Gandhi has been mythicised and raised to the status of the Mahatma, the Great soul. Not all the novelists though have mythicized Gandhi, some like R.K. Narayan in Waiting for The Mahatma have described him as he really was in himself, from a detached artistic viewpoint.

What compelled these writers to mythicize Gandhiji as a Saviour-hero? Myth is a statement of primeval reality expressed through archetypes or universal images. In the deep down collective unconscious of man's psyche, these archetypes, which have the product of our racial heritage, dwell. Under the stress of time or creativity these archetypes float again to the individual unconscious, where they are given some shape - man, animal, stone, ring, tree and so on as the cultural context demands. At the time of a crisis, national or individual, these archetypes take the form of a saviour hero. Thus Gandhiji becomes a hero, who can save Indians from Political, moral and material disasters. Not only India but all countries have such myths. These myths are very essential because
they link a nation's present with its past, fill the vacuum created in the cultural life of a nation, give deep symbolic meaning to art and literature of a country and provide a sort of social and political insurance at the time of crises in national life.

Gandhiji clearly falls in the line of mankind's great saviours. He was a universal image of truth, love and non-violence - a living myth himself. C.F. Andrews writes,

"There is a ruler of India here ... Mahatma Gandhi, whose sway is greater than all imperial power ... The name of Mahatma will be taught by mothers to their little children as one of the greatest of the India's saints and saviours, for there is a spiritual palace which Mahatma Gandhi has built up out of an eternal fabric. Its foundations are deeply and truly laid in the kingdom of God". 5

Thus Mahatma Gandhi becomes a symbol, a myth, a tradition that is to be handed down from an older generation to subsequent generations.

The present thesis is an humble attempt at introducing Gandhiji to the younger generation, lest he be

relegated to oblivion. It has, perhaps, become our national habit to adore and then forget our leaders. In this distraught and distracted world we cannot afford to forget Gandhiji. We will have to call Gandhiji back not as a God but as an action philosopher, who preaches and also practices. He descends from the lineage of the Buddha and Shankara and ranks with them by spiritualising political and social processes. This mythical Gandhiji we must call back as a model before us. To emulate him need not be impossible. His ideas and ideals will lead us on the right path, provided we are ready to follow them with confidence and our hearts purged of malice. Gandhiji, the undaunted herald of love, truth and non-violence may not be with us, but the realm of values he has built up cannot crack. This realm we must inherit.

Gandhism is a pattern of life with man as its centre. It integrates the insight, technique and conclusions of Gandhiji. Y.G. Krishnamurti writes in Neo-Gandhism, "Gandhism builds a tidy innerworld of the mind. This mental cosmos will control and shape events. When a precise essence veins itself into the life of the masses, it develops a great moral mood. A mass charged with a noble passion can achieve the triumphs of mind and heart. It wakes up
from torpor and rewrites the meaning of existence." 6

Gandhiji is among the lineal descendents of the great philosophers of the world. The Buddha paints the world of sorrow, Shankaracharya a world which is an illusion, but Gandhiji's world is a world of action allied with devotion. Gandhi blossoms into the Mahatma when he realises the basic identity of all created life. As there is the common-wealth of the friendly nations of British power, so also there should be the 'Commonwealth of Gandhi' of all the Asian Countries. The Buddhist countries with the Buddhist philosophy as the basis and India with the Gandhian moral philosophy as the foundation, shall be the Third Force to neutralise the already existing power blocks with destructive weapons. This is the gift of Gandhiji to the world politics. Neo-Gandhism, with the aim of the Common-wealth of Gandhi, can be the Gandhian answer to the challenges in future

An attempt has been made here to place the historical Gandhi and the mythicized Gandhiji side by side to compare and contrast them. In the process of imaginative recreation the historical Gandhi has been mythicized and

7. Ibid. p- 110.
raised to the status of a messiah. The purpose of this study is to know how the historical Gandhi was mythicized and what purpose has this mythologisation served. This mythologised Gandhiji gives birth to some ideology which is called Gandhism.

Profuse literature has been produced in all the Indian languages on various aspects of Gandhian life. Indian English fiction is no exception. It has viewed Gandhiji from various viewpoints. Also, Gandhiji's presence in the novel has been generally woven into the artistic pattern of the work. It is in but a few novels that the emotional aura, radiating from the Mahatma, sometimes obscures the central issue of the novel. In some novels a distant view of the Mahatma is used as a device to fix the action of the novel in a particular context of history. On the whole, the contribution of the Indian English novelists in terms of evoking a Gandhian myth has been no mean achievement, although it could be said that much more yet to be done.