CHAPTER III

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K.G.Bhatnagar points out the responsibility of a creative artist, who, according to him, must create an awareness of the cultural identity of his country, “through artistic devices after a search for meaning in the current human experience as also the historical perspective of man’s predicament through the ages, his sense of belonging to a particular society”(ix).

In this manner, an assertion of the indispensable relation between an individual and the society is made by the writer.

Many post-modern novels deal with the predicament of the individual who has to struggle against opposing forces, which try to thwart his existence, but, who ultimately establishes the renewal of life on earth.

India is a country with a rich cultural heritage. While many civilizations and cultures have perished, Indian civilization and culture have survived because of their rock-life foundations. For a society endowed with a forceful and rich culture to survive, it is essential that it should adopt perennial principles which propagate affirmation of life and not death and destruction.

India had rested its faith on life-giving principles like truth, non-violence, temperance and spirituality. These are emphasised as the basic principles of individuals and the society. Since individuals make a society, it is
incumbent on their part to stick to them so that they would be able to rise above petty feelings of possessiveness and animosity, which are the root causes of all ills existing in society in the form of oppression of the weak, communalism, casteism and political fanaticism.

Chaman Nahal’s purpose of writing novels is similar to what R.K.Dhawan considers to be Mulk Raj Anand’s also, namely, “to change mankind and through mankind, society” (9).

A reflection of the same concern can be traced back to Matthew Arnold, who, in the words of C.D.Narasimhaiah,

“invoked literature to assume the office of religion and make literary criticism the means by which the transformation of the individual and the society (the salvation of England) had to be brought about” (21).

According to Mulk Raj Anand, a creative writer is “precisely the man who can encompass the whole of life” (21), and it is he, who “is uniquely fitted to aspire to be a whole man to attain as far as possible, a more balanced perspective of life” (24).

Chaman Nahal is an established writer of the seventies, and is a fictional writer, who, as K.V.Suryanaraya Murti puts it, “Vivisects ‘true forces’ and preaches transcendence into another dawn; he deals with history and Gandhian
Age, the Indians in America and the distortion of the Indian in the Western manners" (185) which aspects, in reality, are the major themes of his novels.

The fortunes of Chaman Nahal's characters are closely linked to the fortunes of the society to which they belong. Therefore, the events, whether they be social, political or religious, have direct bearings on the individuals, who, either as activists, or silent sufferers, or advisers participate in the events. Chaman Nahal's protagonists are propagators of life; therefore, they dedicate themselves for the furtherance and continuation of Life and Society. Even though the greater focus is on a few individuals and their families, it is through these characters that the essentials of a composite society which aims at the well-being and togetherness of the individuals and their families which constitute this society are established. The private life of an individual proves less important than the people's life at large, especially at a time when the peaceful life of an individual is disturbed by a social or a political event of a larger dimension causing innumerable hardships, which are unbearable. But still, the will to rise above 'individual consciousness' is so strong that even in the teeth of such cataclysmic horrors evoked by imperial authority, communal disharmony and political pressures, it grows into 'national consciousness', and in that state, asserts the truth that humanity still has not lost, to quote G.P. Sarma, "patience, piety of heart and courtesy" (240-41).
In this context, the potentiality of historical novels is recognized by creative writers because, as R.K. Dhawan rightly puts it, "it is in the historical novel only that the actual day-to-day problems of life can be encountered, examined, exposed, challenged and rectified" (3).

He further remarks:

As a matter of fact, historical sense and reality enter into the sphere of art imperceptibly; they are important factors in determining the ultimate value of a given piece of art. In a sense every novelist tries to enshrine a period in a book; in other words every novelist is a historical novelist. This historical reality, in terms of time and space, forms an integral part of a work of art and is transmuted in the process of giving it a creative expression; in the process it achieves wider dimensions of universality and at times a state of timelessness (4).

Chaman Nahal has also written a few novels which have reference to certain movements or events in history, like the Gandhian Movement, the British Rule, the National Struggle for Independence culminating in the partition of the Indian Sub-continent into India and Pakistan, and also the
emergence of New India. He, like Mulk Raj Anand, has a definite social purpose. Through his novels, he postulates his conviction that the present set up of society should be transformed, and a new social order introduced based on the ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi.

The relevance of Gandhism is very forcefully stressed by Man Mohan K. Bhatnagar. He says,

"Gandhian concept of social progress was one of ever expanding unbroken 'concentric' or 'oceanic circles'. The Gandhian ideology is inherently dynamic, Gandhi himself having 'grown from truth to truth'" (204).

Chaman Nahal himself considers Gandhi, "a symbol of moral and spiritual strength triumphing over physical odds" (42).

He again states, "In any case, given his physical handicaps, it was the immensity of Gandhi's ideology that I wanted to convey" (43).

Mulk Raj Anand, who, in spite of his great respect for Gandhiji, does not want the society of his vision to be based on the ideology of Gandhiji. Nahal, unlike Mulk Raj Anand, tries to ensure Gandhiji a prominent place in all his novels because to him Gandhiji "signified the power the meek could muster" (41). It was Gandhiji who showed the right direction "to live more honourably as human beings" (41).
Radhakrishnan states thus:

Men of intelligence, sensitiveness and enterprise
are convinced that there is something radically
wrong with the present arrangement and institution
in regard to politics, economics and industry and
that we must get rid of them if we are to save
humanity. (10)

What is said of Manohar Malgonkar as a creative artist can very well be applied to Chaman Nahal also, because to use Bhabani Bhattacharya’s term, “strong creative stirrings”(5) are found in the novels of Chaman Nahal also.

In his study of Manohar Malgonkar’s A Bend in the Ganges, M.K.Bhatnagar remarks:

What one gets from novels imbued with political consciousness is not the ‘cold truth’ of a political scientist but the ‘hot truth’ of an artist. Sensitive to the human reality, such novels present political happenings in a wider human frame work. So much are the endeavours of the protagonists to realize themselves inter twined with the chronicle of the nation bestirring itself that at times it seems impossible to say where the political chronicle ends and the fictional narrative begins.(5)
With the rise of Indian Nationalism, the voice of protest directed against the tyrannical British rule can be heard in the novels of K.A. Abbas, Manohar Malgonkar and Chaman Nahal. Their novels incorporate a few historical personages. Gandhiji appears as a character in their novels. Though written at a later period they portray the pre-independence scenario which witnessed both violent and non-violent movements. Nahal seems to correspond to the conviction of Radhakrishnan.

The facts of violence, oppression and hatred are indications, not of chaos and caprice, but of a moral order. When the fundamental law of nature, which is coherence, unity, respect for man and brotherhood is trampled upon, no other result can we expect than confusion, hatred and war. (19)

Trust in war and violence to end a problem leads only to annihilation. Leaders like Gandhiji believed in the redemption of mankind and the renewal of the society. They believed in life. According to them, there should be a change in the ideals cherished by men before they give social expression to them. Nahal believes in eternal values like truth, love and non-violence because these values help us discover a way of life, by which, people belonging to different groups, communities and races can live together amicably, without relying on destructive forces to settle their issues.
People of the whole world look forward to a peaceful existence which was the way of life preached by Gandhiji. Therefore, Gandhiji’s ideals of Satyagraha and non-violence are the best principles to be followed to ensure peaceful co-existence in the world at large and in a society in particular.

Nahal’s *Azadi* (1975) is an epoch making novel which narrates the story of Lala Kanshi Ram and his family, who become victims of the holocaust generated by the partition of India, into India and Pakistan. The novel, a magnum opus, provides a graphic picture on a broad canvas, of political animosity and violence, of mass passions when people were seized by communal frenzy.

The reason for choosing such a theme is explained by Nahal himself thus:

one of the themes that I came to be occupied with after the partition of India, was that of forced exile. I was born in Sialkot, and after 1947, we were driven away to India. Unasked for exile, the suffering and loneliness that such exile imposes on the persons involved is a class by itself. I suppose the Negroes in America, in their early days, are an apt illustration of this. So are the ten million Hindus and Muslims in India who were forced to flee their homes in 1947. I have always rejected the two nation theory; the creation of Pakistan
in no way solved the problems of the minorities. And till this 
day, I pine for the city in which I was born and raised. I see 
this as the typical yearning of all involuntary exiles. Hence I 
wrote Azadi as a hymn to one's land of birth, rather than a 
realistic novel of the partition. (40)

The novel, instead of providing factual information regarding he 
outcome of partition, projects, as quoted by Jagadev Singh, 
a different pattern of Hindu-Muslim relations in the pre­
partition period ...[and] on an epic scale, the changing patterns 
of communal relations from a stage of lull, through the 
purgatory of communal discord to the visionary state of 
rapprochement.(79)

Azadi has been conceived in three parts, namely, 'the Lull', 'the Storm' 
and 'the Aftermath', each part acquiring a symbolical significance.

The first part 'Lull' concerns itself with the pre-partition period. As in 
an epic, it begins with a crisis in the form of an announcement of the Cabinet 
Mission Plan on June 3, 1947, of the intention of the British to quit India after 
partitioning it. This announcement comes as a bolt from the blue to the 
communities of the Sikhs, the Muslims and the Hindus, who, hitherto, were 
only Punjabis, and spoke, to quote Mohan Jha, "a common tongue, wore
identical clothes and responded to the weather, to the heat and the first rains in an identical manner" (48).

The communal amity that had prevailed all these years, in spite of the discernible distance existing between the Hindus and the Muslims, suffers a setback. The Hindus and the Muslims become suspicious of one another, and they also become, according to Jagadev Singh, "conscious of their religions and ethnic roots, of their being Hindus or Muslims, of their belonging to the majority or minority communities" (118).

Though the story of partition has become an old world tale to the unaffected, it remains green in the memory of those like Nahal who had been directly affected by the traumatic shock of partition.

The pattern of life changes even though marks of separate identities are visible in the families sending their children to the schools pertaining to their religion. The Hindus send their children to the schools run by the Arya Samaj, and the Muslims get their children educated in the Islamic school. The amity between the two communities arises owing to their native and political affinities. Friendship exists between Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudri Barkat Ali because both came from the same village – Sambrhial and also because they share the political views of the Congress. In this context, it is worthwhile to note a different pattern of narration in Chaman Nahal’s Azadi (1975) compared to what one finds in the novel Train to Pakistan (1956). The
difference in the pattern of narration is brought out clearly by Jagdev Singh. According to him, "Azadi projects a discernible distance between the Hindus and the Muslims even during the period of communal amity"(73), whereas Train to Pakistan depicts, "complete harmony between the Sikhs and the Muslims because of their rural settings"(73).

The Second Part ‘Storm’ speaks about the discord that arises in the wake of the partition.

With the announcement of the partition, the differences, like a serpent which lurks beneath the apparent communal concord, suddenly spring up and send the current of shock waves to upset the peaceful existence of the families at Sialkot leaving them totally helpless.

They are now filled with concern about their safety. They think of means to defend themselves against the impending onslaughts of the fanatical Muslim mob. They find themselves uprooted lock, stock and barrel from a place which they had identified as their homeland. Lala Kanshi Ram, as the oldest among the groups to be disturbed, rises above individual interests to take up the role of a good Samaritan. Though crushed, he is not defeated. He clings on to the values of temperance, and non-violence. He does not believe in retaliatory measures. Passive resistance seems to be his forte. Without losing courage, he undertakes the arduous journey from Pakistan to free India.
A parallel reaction leaving aside religious differences can be seen when Chaudri Barkat Ali goes to the extent of exhorting his Muslim brethren not to harm the Hindu and Sikh families. He extends all help to Lala Kanshi Ram. This compassionate attitude of Barkat Ali augments the continuation of life on earth. An instance of such a sympathetic response can be seen in the reaction of the inhabitants of the village Jassar on Pakistan border.

[They] only stood and stared. Even anti-Hindu or anti-Sikh slogans were not shouted by them. Instead of attacking the convoy, some of the inhabitants of Jassar went inside their homes, and brought water for the thirsty. Some waved, and said 'Khuda hafiz'. Most only looked on. (320)

While referring to the impact of the partition on Arun, Lala Kanshi Ram's only son, S.C. Bhatia says,

"Arun, Lala Kanshi Ram's only son, seems to run a parallel course in his life; from personal love to family obligations and vaguely to national aspirations" (371).

He realises the value of "the continuity of life" (200), and the "urge for survival, for self-assertion" (200).

His conviction that life continues against calamities is powerfully expressed through the image of the river; "... he was not leaving that river
behind. He was going to carry it along with him to wherever he went. For it was a moveable river, the river of love" (323).

While journeying, Lala Kanshi Ram is pained beyond words to witness similar atrocities committed by the Hindus on the Muslims. He realizes that both the Hindus and the Muslims are guilty. In this predicament, the sufferings of people, owing to the partition, irrespective of whether they are Hindus or Muslims, become his own suffering. He tells his wife Prabha Rani,

"I have ceased to hate....We are all equally guilty" (338, 339).

He is like a colossus, towering above everyone, embodying lofty principles of love, compassion and non-violence and proving in an ironical manner that a society can survive only when these values are fostered. That is the greatest lesson that partition teaches everyone. The essential humaneness of man alone can ensure peaceful co-existence and the emergence of a composite society. The necessity of action without anticipation of any personal profit preached by Lord Krishna is recalled when the train crosses Kurushetra, the battle-field, which saw the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, where evil was vanquished and virtue rewarded. That life continues inspite of misery and death is symbolically represented by the birth of a female child in the train.

What Chaman Nahal planned to magnify in his trilogy, namely, the feminine principle, in a microcosmic, miniscule form, he introduces in his
Azadi through the birth of a female child. The necessity for concentrating on this principle is pointed out by Nahal himself:

The mother occupies a special position in the Indian consciousness. If men such as Sri Aurobindo or Ramakrishna venerated the mother, they were acknowledging an essential aspect of our myths. The woman as beloved is surely there, but to the Indian psyche, woman as mother, as protector is even more important. Sita or Savitri or Durga were essentially mothers of humanity.

Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) has a parallel mother figure in Ma Joad. She appears as the symbol of the universal mother, who with her compassion and moral strength makes us live, dare, hope and endure. The fight for life, the instinct of the living organism for survival can be found ingrained in her.

Chaman Nahal would have recalled an ancient Sanskrit verse which says,

"The teacher (acharya) is ten times more venerable than a sub-teacher (Upadhyaya), the father, a hundred times more than a teacher and the mother a thousand times more than the father".
The birth of the baby in the train, according to O.P. Mathur, symbolises, "life, love, compassion, hope" (91).

The third part 'Aftermath', according to D.K. Sharma, points out the emergence of "the protagonist's heroic endurance of the ordeal and his gradual awareness of the larger reality" (15).

The novel also points out the futility of hatred and violence, and offers positive direction to herald a future based on truth, compassion and understanding. This is what was advocated by the American President Clinton during his visit to India recently, viz., to end violence, and uphold restraint when he stated that Lines of Control across the world cannot be redrawn with blood. (The Hindu dated March 22nd, 2000).

The fact that people have to make their future with their own hands is symbolically represented by the whirring of Sunanda's machine.

As Radhakrishnan points out, "The witness of a few noble souls to a finer world is our hope for the future" (11).

Chaman Nahal pins his faith on Gandhiji's ideals of non-violence, temperance and spirituality because Gandhiji demonstrated in his own life that the human spirit, when lit by a divine fire, is stronger than the mightiest weapons. "Ahimsa" or non-violence does not admit running away from danger, but facing it, and it is through non-violence that one reaches truth. In Gandhiji's non-violence, there is no room for ill-will or anger against the
oppressor. It is the moral force which Jesus Christ possessed when he prayed to his Lord to forgive his crucifiers. Gandhiji did the same when he was assassinated by a religious fanatic. If a society bases its conviction on principles propagated by Gandhiji, it is sure to vouchsafe affirmation of life. It can foster human dignity, in which atmosphere, people can feel 'unrestricted' and 'untrammelled' (362).

Where love and creative action prosper, there hatred and violence remain powerless. Mohan Jha refers to this truth in the following words:

If this world contains such demonic creatures as Abdul Ghani, Imayat-Ullah Khan and Captain Rahmat Ullah Khan, it does also contain such enlightened beings as Bill Davidson, Chaudri Barkat Ali and the Hakim of Narowal who prays to Allah and weeps for the naked women being paraded in the local streets. The lines from Tagore, serving the motto of Azadi constitute a prayer for man’s commitment to reason and truth, for his redemption. (125)

Thus, Azadi is a monumental novel which envisages men’s emancipation from destructive forces and establishes its absolute fidelity to the truth of life.
Chaman Nahal’s purpose in writing *Azadi* is two-fold. It finds similarity with the purpose of Manohar Malgonkar in writing *A Bend in the Ganges* as analysed by Asnani. According to him, *Azadi* also shows the novelist to be a chronicler who introduces to the reader “the basic ingredients of the political scene” (58), and it also highlights the significance of Gandhiji’s ideals of Ahimsa or non-violence and truth and regards them as “a political expediency” and also “as a philosophy and a way of life” (58).

Chaman Nahal’s fifth novel, *The Crown and the Loincloth* (1981), is a part of a trilogy. The major theme of the novel is exploitation. Nahal himself remarks:

- the privileged exploiting the under-privileged...the Caste Hindus exploiting Harijans or the privileged Muslims exploiting the under-privileged Muslims or it could have a more universal range, the meek being exploited by the strong, the world over. (41)

This concept of exploitation ran parallel to what the Britishers were doing to the Indians. They were, in fact, undermining the Indians. The struggle for Independence, in a way, was to regain that lost honour, to live like a human being. The importance of Gandhiji at this juncture cannot be passed over. His main opposition against the British rule was they had occupied another’s land and had also exploited the people for nearly two hundred years. He wanted to
restore to them not only their country but also their dignity. Therefore the rise of Gandhiji into prominence signifies the rise of a staunch supporter of the meek and the poor. His ideology affirmed the triumph of the moral and the spiritual values over the physical and the material. Chaman Nahal wants to convey this ideology to the people as a symbol of affirmation of life.

The Crown and the Loincloth deals with the first phase of Gandhiji’s political life, namely, the non-co-operation movement of 1920-22. The novel begins with Gandhiji’s arrival in India from South Africa. Gandhiji’s experiences in Africa are recalled while he is on board “S.S. Arabia”, the ship that brought him to India.

Like his masterpiece Azadi, Nahal’s The Crown and the Loincloth also adopts a three part structure, namely, ‘Love’, ‘Perspective’ and ‘Affirmation’, each part represented symbolically.

The first part ‘Love’ recapitulates Gandhiji’s experiences in Africa, and examines the nature of each member of his family. While in Africa, he had won over many tough people to his side. His story of the Buddha, his practical precepts, had transferred Kallen Bach, a rich man settled in South Africa. The truth of the Buddha’s becoming a monk to live for others, and his own conviction that “a man, in order to be a man, must live for others”(21) have become practical realities in Gandhiji’s life.
The seeds of love, temperance, non-violence, and truth had been sown during his stay in Africa. His maxim, 'love for all, malice towards none' has been adopted by Gandhiji in his personal life and his forgiving Mir Alam, who was responsible for Gandhiji’s imprisonment in Africa, is a case in point.

The ‘Satyagrahi’ (non-violent resister) Valliamma, a staunch follower of Gandhian principles, through her sacrifice, highlights the influence of Gandhiji on women too. Her death represents the dawn of a new awakening for women’s liberation. More and more women coming forward to fight for their right explains this. A direct influence of Gandhiji is to be seen on Kasthuri Bai Gandhi, who was always by the side of Gandhiji to provide him with the necessary moral support. The greatest assistance that she had rendered Gandhiji was to help him maintain the vow of celibacy. In this, she proved one shade superior to him. As a result Gandhiji started treating her his equal.

Over the years, Gandhiji realized the value of self-denial because in self-denial lay the spiritual elevation. Here, Gandhiji saw the key to the strength of the meek and the humble. Self-denial is a quality of a ‘Satyagrahi’, and Gandhiji himself explains what ‘passive resistance’ is.

Passive resistance is aimed at a removal in a most approved manner of bad laws, customs or other evils and is designed to
be a complete and effective substitute for forcible methods....It
is an appeal to the heart of man....It is dwarfed by self. The
theory is that an adequate appeal to the heart never fails. (241)

And Gandhiji considers Jesus Christ as “the Prince of passive resistance”(241).

By adopting the principles of truth, temperance and non-violence,
Gandhiji could motivate pre-independence generation into creative action for
the truth of a new era, which could chant the verse in a spirit of freedom.

‘Loka Samastha Sukkino Bhavanthu (May the people of the whole
world live happily).

Love, at the emotional level, is the first prerogative which binds people
into one family, one community and one society.

Sunil, the protagonist of the novel The Crown and the Loincloth and
an ardent admirer of Gandhiji, comes to realize that love expresses itself
powerfully only in sacrifice. His contact with Gandhiji has also taught him
that politics was inseparable from personal morality and the pursuit of God was
the pursuit of Truth and Truth started at the individual level.

This emotional adherence to the Mahatma that we find in Sunil can be
compared with the intensity of devotion one finds in Moorthi, in Kanthapura.
(1967) Moorthi imagines Mahatma advising him thus:
there is but one force in life and that is truth and there is but
one love in life and that is the love of mankind and there is but
one God in life and that is the God of all. (33)

Gandhiji had also shown him the right direction, that is, to serve humanity because service rendered to humanity is service rendered to God. The description of a true patriot given by Radhakrishnan can be found suitable to Sunil.

Radhakrishnan (1947) says, “If we are true patriots, our attachment will not be local, racial or national but human. It will be a love of liberty for all, of independence, of peace and social happiness”(17).

This is in evidence when Sunil goes to protect the Prince of Wales and in turn gets shot at by the assassin. Love, in Sunil’s case, knows no national barrier and works for the furtherance of universal love which is a sure way of ensuring affirmation of Life on earth. As a foil to Sunil, Rakesh, his brother-in-law, is presented as a confirmed terrorist. Through his activities, Nahal asserts the victory of the forces of life over the forces of death.

In the second part “Perspective”, Nahal impresses upon the reader the pre-requisites of the right perspectives to arrive at Truth. Alongside the political movements of Gandhiji, parallel violent movements under the leadership of Tilak and Nethaji were also going on in the country. The people had to arrive at the truth that ‘non-violence’ of Gandhiji had an edge over
violence in every respect. To arrive at this truth, several 'perspectives' have to be analysed, and tested. Nahal, to serve this purpose, has introduced Celia Ashby, an American,

"who is herself hung upon the notion of perspectives" (47), and "to her... there was a Northern reality, an Eastern reality, a Southern reality and a Western reality"(178).

Arriving at the correct perspective is a difficult process, and involves stupendous effort on the part of the seeker. Misgivings regarding the leadership of Gandhiji had made many people withdraw from the Congress. Even Kusum, Sunil's wife, had her own doubts. But ultimately she realises that she has to join the Ashram of Gandhiji. That is a sign of affirmation of life. She decides to live continuing her services to the people and the country.

The third part 'Affirmation' culminates in the vision of a society which is free and where people enjoy peace and total freedom. In order to show that in the new order, Gandhiji's principles are to be adopted and propagated by his chief follower and the architect of Modern India, Jawaharlal Nehru, Nahal introduces Nehru only in the third part because Nehru is to wear the political leader's garb ornamented with the principles of Gandhiji in the Independent India.
In the novel, 'affirmation' is what Sunil wants of Kusum and that is what she shows when she undertakes the long journey with her son to the Ashram of Gandhiji. "Yet that was no personal affirmation on the part of Kusum. A sacrifice was demanded of her. A fresh declaration of faith. A declaration of faith in the face of negation" (408).

Kusum is ready to offer not only herself but also her son to the nation. Her affirmation begins in the Ashram. She tells herself, "My affirmation has begun, my new life has sprouted"(422).

She is like Rose of Sharon in Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) who displays the general concern of the people, when she breast-feeds a starving man. This affirms that 'life' is more important than 'family', and it indicates the emergence of the concept of society and humanism.

To sum up, in the words of R.K. Dhawan, the novel, "is a confrontation between seemingly unequal forces in between the mighty British Empire, 'the Crown' and the newly awakened India under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the flimsy 'loincloth' "(25).

The 'setting' of the British Empire and the 'rise' of new India is symbolically represented by the portrait of King George.V, moving into darkness, and the figure of the man in the 'loincloth' (Gandhiji) lit up by the rays of the morning sun.
According to O.P.Mathur, a study of the *Crown and the Loincloth* reveals,

the novelist’s comprehensive and tolerant visions of life, both
its contemporary and universal aspects, a deep love for and
understanding of his fellow-beings and a faith in life and
action so clearly expressed. (53)

**Into Another Dawn** (1977), Nahal’s third novel, deals with universal
love which shatters economic, social and national barriers and takes “the whole
world for family” (a line from *Panchathantra* prefixed to the novel *Into
Another Dawn*).

Ravi, the protagonist, is the son of a ‘high-caste’ Hindu priest, engaged
in “the family business of supervising the souls of the pilgrims”(24).

Psychologically, an alien in his own family, for no member of the
family, not even his father, showed any regret when he was “left by the
roadside”(27) because “he could never be a being”(27) in his own right, he
leaves India to find new pastures in America with the help of a foreign couple,
the Cogneys. Ravi, as the title of the novel suggests, has entered another dawn,
and from this point the story revolves round the fortunes of Ravi and Irene
between whom a passionate relationship ‘dawns’. Though outwardly there are
many differences between them, for instance, Ravi is a young inexperienced
Indian student, and Irene, an American and a married woman, their love knows
no bounds; class, colour and creed have no power over them. Ravi finds life’s fulfilment in the company of Irene.

His stay in America helps him to develop friendship with two other outcastes, Jerry, a Jew, and Dick, a Negro. Besides being ‘outcastes’ and ‘untouchables’ in an alien atmosphere, the three have another thing in common. All three go to Rider. But Nahal strikes a contrast between Ravi and his friends. The Indian sensibility in Ravi works in him even without his being conscious of its presence. His friends are still

“filled with regrets, acrimonies and unfulfilled yearnings” (71),

whereas Ravi has “savoured the ultimate” (71).

An accidental discovery of his sinking health and the pronouncement of the death sentence in the form of a killer disease lead him to ponder over the journey of the soul in search of another dawn and thereby affirm the continuity of eternal life. But the love he has for Irene makes him undertake the ultimate journey back to his country again without making her suffer by divulging the truth of his imminent death in a short period.

The novel, according to O.P.Mathur is

“a powerful allegory of the human soul, the sun, the ‘Ravi’ moving on from one dawn to another, from the East to the West, from this life to the next, ever radiating the warmth of love and ever ready to welcome the future” (92).
Ravi's experiences in life teach him the greatest truth that freedom belongs only to the living. He is the embodiment of universal brotherhood, and his life symbolises the East West encounter which has to be strengthened in order to effect a social transformation when the society will be thought of only in terms of the whole world being one, and therefore it will be called world-society. Chaman Nahal anticipates 'globalisation' which appears to be the cry of the hour.

Gandhiji's ideals may help in the establishment of a world family because he appears to be the voice of the world. That Gandhiji himself wanted a creation of such a world order is exemplified in his own words. He remarks:

The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence. It may seem a distant goal, an impractical Utopia. But it is not in the least unobtainable since it can be worked from here and how. An individual can adopt the way of life of the future – the non-violent way – without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can do it, cannot whole groups of individuals, whole nations? (230)

Cosmopolitanism is the key-note of Into Another Dawn, according to O.P. Mathur. The protagonist's willing acceptance of death with the three indelible impressions in his mind that of the Ganges, Irene and the black doctor reveals the necessity of universal brotherhood. He also states,
“I will die in the faith, they will replenish this land one day” (161).

Faith in invindicive courage, and unpretentious self-sacrifice in all actions irrespective of international differences for the survival of mankind and the society is what Chaman Nahal enforces through *Into Another Dawn*.

When questioned on the theory of one world, Gandhiji (1949) replied, I will not like to live in this world if it is not to be one. Certainly I should like to see this dream realised in my lifetime. If you work with fixed determination, there is no doubt that in our own generation we will certainly realize this dream. (241)

Ravi, the central character of *Into Another Dawn*, sees many similarities between America and India. “Both are caste-ridden, feudalistic strongholds in their own separate ways...” (108).

But, at the same time, by the bonds of love, the Whites, the Browns and the Blacks are united. It is such a united society that Chaman Nahal envisages. That is possible only when we rise above our narrow nationalism and generate a feeling of togetherness to make the world family a reality. This identity of being one with others as a human being is achieved by Ravi when he says, “I am not dark.... I am not white” (11).
Thus the Affirmation of Life Force forms the quintessence of Chaman Nahal's philosophy whereby, humanity is given the hope of the dawn of a new society based on the principle of one world, one society, one family, where the macrocosm is reduced into a microcosm namely, 'the world family'.

The concept of 'world family' posits people living united as one family but with their differences, not losing their identities in terms of race or religion but with the understanding that all are human beings at the first instance.

'Live, and let live' is to be the motto, the guiding principle of universal brotherhood.

Chaman Nahal goes one step further in pondering over the possibility of a classless society and visualises the feasability of such an order only with the help of a supernatural being disguised as a mortal. This idea takes the form of a fictional narrative with the title The English Queens. Though apparently a light-hearted satire on the Anglicised Indians, the novel also reveals the concern of the novelist about the cultural loss the country would face in the wake of the loss of linguistic identity.

"This loss of linguistic identity" according to O.P.Mathur,

"seems to have been broadened into the realization of a deeper cultural malaise the pre-dominance of the artificial, the unreal, the mechanical over the sincere and the natural" (95).
The Western influence is most profound in the artificial life style of the
elite society identified as belonging to six groups, namely, teachers and
students of English literature to which class Chaman Nahal himself belongs,
the commissioned officers' families in the army, navy and air force, the Anglo-
Indians, the Indians married to European, especially British wives, the
bureaucrats from the I.A.S., on the Judiciary and the newly rich, the merchant
community, who consider themselves upper caste people. The masses who are
under-privileged are treated worse than animals. They are prevented even
from having their residence anywhere near the 'earthly Paradise', where the
elitist group resides.

To prevent the danger of the society becoming extinct because of the
severity of relations between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', and also to set the
cultural values straight in order to establish a society where there is no class
difference or caste difference, Vishnu comes forward to take the avatar of a
mortal as Pradeep, and decides to have his residence in the 'basti' as the
representative of the poor and the underprivileged. It is also the cosmic plan
that love should blossom between Pradeep, "the man from the basti"(95), and
Rekha, "the petite daughter of Brigadier Chopra and Mrs. Chopra"(16).

The authenticity of feeling and action in a social context is perceived in
The English Queens (1979). It recalls the dream Mahatma Gandhi (1949) had
of an ideal state which would carry out the will of the people through non-violence and also

"by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred"(73).

In this ideal state, a new social environment would prevail where the people would work for social harmony based on humanitarianism. In Gandhiji, following his Master Leo Tolstoy, the 'typical' gets transmuted into the 'universal', while 'mankind' and not 'men' acquires priority.

Lukacs has a point to make: "where decay is the greatest, there the desire for regeneration is the strongest"(246).

Chaman Nahal also recalls the words of Lord Krishna in the Gita,

Yada Yada hi Dharmasya
Glaanir bhavathi bharata
Abhyuthanam Adharmasya
Tadutannam Srijamyaham,

(Wherever religion is in a state of decline and irreligion flourishes on earth, godhead manifests itself here for mankind's Salvation). (155)

As an incarnation and an 'avatar' of Lord Vishnu, Pradeep comes to cure the present situation. The Six English Queens "bitten by the English bug" (34) are, to quote O.P.Mathur,
embodiments not only of the Indians’ weakness of the English language, but also of their cultural confusion resulting in the loss of their national identity and their becoming sixth-rate carbon copies of the West. (93)

Stable, ethical and cultural moral values are to be reinstated. This appears to be the purpose of the Avatar.

The English Queens is Nahal’s satirical observation of contemporary India. Lakshmi Maksay makes the following observation regarding the characters:

[They] are a fine sample of the Westernised ‘bhadra lok’ (the high born), a small but influential elite in urban India. Though the sun has set on the British Raj, it is ironic that the values held by these people remain British and Imported. (168)

This group creates another caste for itself based on educational and economic status and maintains its superiority by “observing rules of ritual purity and diet” (168).

The confrontation between the ‘BIDE-A-WEE’ colony and the ‘basti lad’ is symbolically the conflict between the evil and the good, between ‘Adharma’ (vice) and ‘Dharma’ (virtuous), between the exploiter and the ‘exploited’. The introduction of the ‘Bharaat’ (the wedding procession) is to
culminate in the salvation of Bharat (India). Pradeep is Lord Chetna (consciousness), his divine mission being, "to awaken them [the Indians] from their slumber"(155).

He "restored all the collapsed human beings to their normal forms"(156), and initiated in them a new awareness through a display of a new tableaus.

But awakening into a total consciousness, requires time, feels the writer. The ideal to become a reality has to wait for the total transformation of humanity which only time can tell. This is symbolically shown by the falling of the charter from Lord Chetna's hands into the lap of Sumitra Pandey, the Chief Queen.

The note of affirmation struck in the statements of Steinbeck in his *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) can be drawn as a parallel to what Chaman Nahal conveys through his novels. Steinbeck views humanity as a continuing, struggling, evolving, phenomenon. He remarks:

This you may say of man – when theories change and crash, when schools, philosophies, when narrow, dark alleys of thought, national, religious, economic, grow and disintegrate, man reaches, stumbles forward, painfully, mistakenly sometimes. Having stepped forward, he may step back, but only half a step, never full step. (204)
In the same manner, Chaman Nahal’s novels also strike an optimistic note and expound a deep faith in the progress of not only individuals but also of the society, by upholding eternal values, like truth, non-violence and spirituality which affirm life on this earth.