Between the middle of the nineteenth and that of the twentieth centuries the world has seen a galaxy of great men who influenced their age in different ways. But none of them made greater impact on the thinking and actions of men than Mahatma Gandhi. His ideas and deeds permeated the entire human community. He was essentially a man who would be counted in the age to come with the Buddha and Christ. He was the greatest of the humanists that India presented to the world in modern times. Carl Heath, a great thinker, described him as “the type of the civilized and humanized man.”¹ He is the archetype of human history.

Mahatma Gandhi had expressed his views on politics, sociology, philosophy, and economics on various occasions. Being the prophet of a nonviolent revolution, the holy man of India, and a “half-naked fakir” as Churchill called him, left an indelible impact on the social, economic, and political forces of the day. He was a great revolutionary who, while fighting freedom of the country, was aware of the freedom of all the enslaved people

in different parts of the world. As an iconoclast, he shook the foundations of the mighty British Empire in India through such novel techniques as non-violent Satyagraha, fasting, hartals, non-cooperation and mass civil disobedience.

Gandhi was a man of peace and goodwill, who strove for the good of the entire mankind. He was a visionary of world peace; his only weapon was love for humanity, courage and conviction and faith in god. His advocacy of a revolution by consent, his emphasis on decentralization of power, his resolve to stick to truth and non-violence at all costs are unique in the history of mankind.

The Gandhian whirlwind blew across the country during 1920-1947. Under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi the established political notions were vanishing from the scene and in turn new ideas and methods appeared, not only in the political field but also in almost every walk of Indian life. His whole life was directed towards the welfare of mankind. He considered politics as worthless if it could not become an integral part of the life of human beings. For this reason he based politics on religious principles of truth and non-violence. In his opinion, politics could not be separated from religion since both meant the same ideal, that is, service of mankind.
Both the political leader and religious devotee must work for the good of humanity. It is said that in this way he spiritualized politics, for politics devoid of religion kills the soul. He was a politician turned religious.

Satyagraha was his powerful weapon with which he relentlessly fought until the objective was achieved. His non-conformity was born of a feeling of moral wrong. There is a touch of holiness in it. Thoreau’s idea of non-conformity to the evil of American slave trade and Tolstoy’s notion of resistance to Russian serfdom were also more or less similar to the Gandhian concept of resistance to a moral wrong. They paved the way for Gandhi in this matter. Liberalism and humanism shape, to a large extent, the Gandhian non-conformist theory.

Gandhi introduced ‘satyagraha’ a discipline with a rare combination of noble indignation and strong determination to achieve a goal peacefully. Self-denial and self-mortification are essential elements that make a true ‘satyagrahi.’ Application of soul force against an unjust political authority is the Gandhian way of civil resistance.

‘Ahimsa’ is one of the most significant Hindu disciplines for spiritual realization. The Gandhian ‘satyagraha’, which may be considered as another name for non-conformity, is only an application of this cardinal Hindu
discipline, namely 'ahimsa.' One who seriously practices 'ahimsa' is bound to command the whole world. Such a man has a few enemies to combat.

The greatness of Gandhi lies not in his heroic struggle for India's freedom, but in his ever striving for the soul-force and in his insistence on the creative power of the soul. Although Gandhi was mainly responsible for the mighty upheaval of an Indian who broke its old chains, his way of thinking and method of revolution were unique. Gandhi primarily based all his social and political doctrines on the religious and spiritual views which are essential to human life.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad has compared the life of Gandhi with the river Ganges which serves all who seek to make use of her. He opines, “if we want peace and happiness and live as human beings we must follow the path chalked out by Gandhiji for it lies our own good and that of the world.”

Gandhiji used all his energy for the uplift of humanity. He presented to the world all that is noblest in the spirit of man. He illumined human dignity by faith in the eternal significance of man's effort.

2. Ibid., p.131.
The unprecedented mass-awakening caused by the Gandhian whirlwind generated a national consciousness. His ideas on political, social, economic, cultural and spiritual issues - especially, his doctrines of soul-force, passive resistance, non-violence and purity of means, his insistence on women's freedom, condemnation of child marriage, the dowry system and enforced widowhood, his opposition to birth-control by artificial means and advocacy of his self-control and voluntary chastity, his criticism of the evil of drinking, his plea for free, compulsory and self-supporting education through the mother tongue, his rejection of the concept of the economic man and refusal to divorce economy from ethics, his recommendation of the establishment of small, well-knit rural communities, his preaching of sarvodaya, Swadeshi and Khadi spinning and his stress on the need of voluntary acceptance of the ideas of trusteeship by the capitalists - provided the Indian writers writing in English with a number of relevant themes. Using the Gandhian material, fiction flourished in Indian English.

The inevitable impact of the Gandhian movement on Indian English literature was the sudden flowering of realistic novels during the nineteen thirties. The nation-wide movement of Gandhi not only inspired Indian English novelists but also provided them with some of their prominent themes, such as the struggle for freedom, the East-West encounter, the
communal problem and the miserable condition of the untouchables, the landless poor, the marginalized, the economically exploited and the oppressed. Of course, some of these concepts are modelled on the thoughts of Christ, Tolstoy, Thoreau, Ruskin, and many other secularists. He preached and practised these concepts throughout his life.

In Indian writing in English Gandhi figures more as a force that brings about a moral change in the mass than as an ideal simply to be cherished. Gandhi's impact on Indo-English novel is a matter of considerable value. Fundamentally, Gandhi was a conservative and yet an uncompromising radical. When he saw injustice in society, he did not hesitate to fight against it. The impact of Gandhian thought strongly resulted bringing a change in socio-political life as well as Indian writing in English.

It is only when Gandhi appeared that Indian English fiction took a different and distinct turn. With his love for the lowliest and the lost, Gandhi played a catalytic role. He provided a new literary possibility. He inspired creativity on a broader scale. The emphasis shifted from the high to the low, from the learned to the illiterate, from the vociferous to the voiceless.

To conclude, Gandhian ideology is a non-violent political ideology. It is a combination of political and spiritual tenets. For Gandhi 'politics' itself
is an extension of spiritual activity. His ideology was inclusive of politics, spirituality, and ethics; because, he emphasized the emancipation of the women and the lower classes. Lastly, his ideology had an economic relevance also.

Under the influence of Gandhi, a good number of novels have been written. The Gandhian ideals of love, fearlessness, truth and non-violence found favour with the writers and they created heroes epitomizing these ideals. The programme of rural reconstruction, probation, upliftment of the depressed classes, advocacy of national education, Swadeshi, charaka, khaddar, respect for the national flag, find reflection in the novels. The Gandhian political movements were also described at length. The Indian novelists in English revealed a deep impact of Gandhian thought and movements. The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-32 considerably influenced the writers.

There are about a dozen Indian novels in English, in which Gandhi appears either as a character or as a persuasive influence on the social and political scene. The novels try to present the complex ideology of Gandhi from different perspectives: adulatory, ambivalent and ironical. The impress of Gandhism was strong on the novels of K.S.Vekataramani, K.Nagarajan,

But for the assessment of the Gandhian ideology in Indian English fiction, Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*, Mulk Raj Anand’s *The Sword and the Sickle*, R. K. Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Nayantara Sahgal’s *Rich Like Us*, Kamala Markandaya’s *Some Inner Fury* and Bhabani Bhattacharya’s *Shadow from Ladakh* are chosen.

**KANTHAPURA: Mythicising the Gandhian Ideology**

Raja Rao’s novel, *Kanthapura* (1938) depicts the national freedom struggle of the Gandhian era. It is a picture of the impact of the Gandhian ideology of non-violent non-cooperation of an obscure village in South India during 1930’s. The small community of Kanthapura is shaken by the whirlwind of the Gandhian revolution.

The novel shows how the Gandhian revolution shook this little village to its very roots, its first reaction of bored apathy to Gandhian gradually melting into acceptance leading finally to whole-hearted participation in which finally the village is destroyed but not defeated. Raja Rao demonstrates in this novel, how the new nationalistic fervour in rural India in the 1930’s is blended completely with the age-old deep-rooted
spiritual faith and thus revitalized the spiritual springs within and helped, rediscover Indian soul.

In fact, the Gandhian whirlwind that blew across the Indian subcontinent in the first half of the twentieth century is one of the reasons for the flowering of the political novel in India. M.K.Naik, a leading critic, sees this connection quite rightly:

"The Indian Freedom struggle was already more than a generation old, but with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi it was so thoroughly democratized that the freedom consciousness percolated for the first time to the very grassroots of society and revitalized it. It is possible to see a connection between this development and the rise of the Indian novel in English, for fiction, of all literary forms is most virtually concerned with social conditions and values."\(^3\)

Gandhian politics acts as a stimulus for Kanthapura. Obviously, it was impossible for a writer of Raja Rao's stature and inclinations, not to notice and respond to the Gandhian mystique, which was the guiding force of the period. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar rightly opines, "As a novelist and a short

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story writer, he is a child of the Gandhian age and reveals in his work a sensitive awareness of the forces let loose by the Gandhian revolution."

The story depicts all various aspects of the freedom struggle of the time which no novel till 1939 has depicted. It shows all the remarkable political events like Gandhi's *Dandi March* to inaugurate the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 with the launching of Satyagraha by the villagers as a response to this movement and their observance of non-cooperation by not paying taxes, formation of village Congress Committee loaded with constructive programmes, Gandhi's decision to attend the Second Round Table Conference and nationwide influence for political emancipation, etc. Besides, social programmes of Gandhi like the abolition of untouchability, propagandist demonstration against drinking, attention on spinning, Satyagraha and fast by Gandhi's followers and police atrocities on the followers of Gandhi are portrayed realistically in the novel. Here Gandhi is the driving force and is represented by the idealized character of Moorthy.

The novel is modelled on ancient *puranas*. It looks like a *Gandhi Purana* in which Moorthy represents the spirit of Gandhi, the Satyagrahi,

and the leader of the non-violent movement in Kanthapura. Gandhi does not himself appear in person in this novel, but his spirit pervades the whole narrative. Here, the political activities mostly related to Mahatma Gandhi are transcended and described in such a way that they become inseparable parts of Indian age-long myth and legend, history and religion. It microscopically concentrates and mystically interprets the Gandhian revolution of the 1930s. C.D. Narasimhaiah, in this connection, points out:

“But Kanthapura is no political novel any more than is Gandhi’s movement a mere political movement. It pictures vividly, truthfully and touchingly the story of the resurgence of India under Gandhi’s leadership; its religious character, its economic and social concerns, its political ideals…”

Kanthapura is a story narrated by Achakka, an insider to the political maelstrom. Being a committed participant in the Gandhian freedom movement, she keeps immense faith in the Gandhian ideology brought to the village through the visible image of Gandhi in the village, Moorthy. She narrates the story down her memory line, mixing myth with history, politics, tradition and legend. Raja Rao in his ‘Foreword’ to Kanthapura which is a

classic in itself suggests the distinct Indian attitudes and the image of Gandhi in the minds of the Indians:

“There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich stalapurana of its own. Some god or godlike hero passed by the village—Rama might have rested under this pipal tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself on one of his pilgrimages through the country, might have slept in this hut, the low one by the village gate.”

Raja Rao’s juxtaposition of Rama and Sita with the Mahatma is too meaningful to be missed. Raja Rao at once conveys, mythicizing nature of the Indian mind where the real and the unreal merge with each other. Raja Rao suggests an identification of the Gandhi’s life and political work with these mythical signs. Towards this end Raja Rao has made complicated and indigenous linguistic experiments, which fully indicate Raja Rao full understands of the nature of the Gandhian politics.

Kanthapura is the story of a tiny, sleepy, sylvan South Indian village. In the words of the narrator,

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"High on the Ghats is it, high up the steep mountains that face the cool Arabian seas, up the Malabar Coast is it, up Mangalore and Puttur and many a sugarcane." (P-7)

The village is fortified heavily against the outsiders with its cluster of hills and narrow, dusty, winding roads and against the entry of new ideas by its closed nature of social system. It is a village content with the rotation of seasons and agricultural routine, with coming of home of girls, marriages, deaths and child births, Jayanthi and Harikathas to revive their tedium. The village has a feudal political system and administration with Patels and Panchayat at the top.

Goddess Kenchamma, benign and bounteous, presides over their destines in lieu of their prayers and offerings. Kenchamma, the Goddess is presented as the ‘real sovereign’ providing villagers defense against external aggression, epidemics and providing their lands abundant rains. Achakka has a strong, immutable belief in Kenchamma, the Goddess.

The village has a typical pre-Gandhian social structure. The houses of Brahmins, potters, weavers and pariahs are as neatly as their caste lines are. The narrator Achakka, who knows almost every other thing in the village, doesn’t know the number of houses belonging to the pariahs in Kanthapura.
The novel faithfully represents the political history of the times. It shows how the entry of Gandhism into India is not a smooth affair. There is the initial apathy and even resistance to Gandhism on the part of the villagers. Gandhism seems to be 'city nonsense' and a Gandhi vagabondage. But typically in the Gandhian manner, the shrew Moorthy conveys to the Gandhian message to the villagers through a Harikatha, connecting Gandhi to the traditional Indian past, to the stories of Rama, Krishna, and Shiva.

The 'funny Harikathaman' Jayaramachar keeps the villagers rapt for hours together conveying the Gandhian ideology mixing myth with reality:

“Fight, say she, but harm no soul. Love all says he, Hindu, Mohomedan, Christian or Pariah, for all are equal before God. Don’t be attached to riches, says he, for riches create passions and passions create attachment and attachment hides the face of Truth. Truth you must you tell, he says for Truth is God and verily it is the only God I know. And he says too, spin everyday.... He is a saint, the Mahatma, a wise man and a soft man and a saint.” (P-18)

Thus, sugarcoating the Gandhian ideology with religion, spirituality and myth he indoctrinates the villagers into the Gandhian politics. Gandhian political tenets are described threadbare before innocent masses time and again in the novel. Once the people of the village are indoctrinate and
convinced of the righteousness of Gandhi in the Hindu tradition, there is an overwhelming support of Moorthy, the visible symbol of Gandhi in the village. There is of course, a strong initial resistance to Gandhi and Gandhism true to political history- from the conservative Hindu force represented by the triumvirate of Swamiji, Bhatta and Waterfall Venkamma. The 'no nonsense' Bhatta with his holy ashes on his face repeatedly tries to throw spanners in the path of Moorthy. But the Gandhian whirlwind sweeping across the village is so much overpowering that the resistance peters out in no time with Bhatta leaving for Kashi. Once that happens the entire village participates so overwhelmingly sacrificing everything for the cause of the Mahatma that at the end, there is neither man, nor mosquito in Kanthapura.

The novel has striking parallels with history. The description of a pre-Gandhian village and the resistance to the entry of Gandhian ideas are true to political history. Gandhian weapons of fastings, prayers and Satyagraha are vividly mentioned. The landmarks in the Gandhian struggle, the ‘Don’t Touch the Government Campaign’ (Civil Disobedience Movement) which is succeeded by the ‘no tax campaign’:
"The day after day revenue notices fell yellow into our hands and we said, 'Let them do what they will, we shall not pay our revenues.'" (P-148)

The 'Salt Satyagraha' of Gandhi, which shook the British Empire to its roots, is passed on mouth to mouth with an adoration that knows no bounds:

"Do you know, brothers and sisters, the Mahatma has left Sabarmati on a long pilgrimage, the last pilgrimage of his life, he says, 'with eighty of his followers, who all wear Khadi and do not drink and never tell a lie and they go with the Mahatma to the Dandi beach to manufacture salt.'" (P-123)

The other forms of passive resistance like toddy picketing are mentioned:

"We were a hundred and thirty-nine in all, and marched out to Boranna's toddy grove." (P-131)

There is the second 'Round Table Conference' and the reference to the Mahatma's attending it.

"They say the Mahatma will go to the red man's country and he will get us Swaraj, the Mahatma." (P-257)
The people living in the village called Kanthapura, very much like the masses of Gandhiji’s time, firmly believe that he can do no wrong, can be guilty of no miscalculation.

“They say that the Mahatma will go to the Red-man’s country, and he will get us Swaraj... And we shall be happy.” (P- 158)

The Indian struggle for freedom has been a complex socio-political movement. Gandhi, the presiding deity of the freedom movement, unleashed a programme which was ethical, moral, and political at the same time. Percival Spear says, “Gandhian mystique consisted of a union of original ideas, with a remarkable flair for tactics and an uncanny insight into the mass or peasant mind.”

These historical milestones occur in the novel with unerring accuracy. There is another important historical development recorded in the novel. That is, the Gandhian attempts for integrating the lower castes into the Hindu fold. Moorthy incorporates Pariah Rachanna in the village Congress Working Committee. Says Moorthy, “Come Rachanna, you have suffered much and you shall be a member.” (P-108)

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The novel is Gandhian in its thematic construct. The accent of the novel is on the political aspect of the freedom movement. The novel presents the story of transformation of the village under the stress of the political movement. The lives of the characters are totally affected by the Gandhian ideology. Even if the masses fail to grasp the full significance of the Gandhian ideology at times, Gandhi never really appears in the novel as a character, his political principles are sufficiently known. They know that they should be pure and non-violent at heart. They know the techniques of civil disobedience. They are conscious of the fact that they should be ready for great sacrifices. The lands are auctioned, houses are burnt, women are molested, but their resolve remains firm. The clouds of initial resistance are soon overcome and the people from the neglected sections—Ratna and Rachanna are allowed to become leaders.

Apart from these striking features of the Gandhian politics, there is another extraordinary feature: the creation of millions of leaders on the Gandhian model. Moorthy is the village Gandhi, who consciously tries to shape himself on the Gandhian model. Moorthy, with all his spiritual orientations “who had gone through life like a noble cow, quiet, generous, serene, deferent and Brahmin” (P-11), is a strong political character, and the instrument of the entire political struggle in Kanthapura.
The novel is very significant from another point of view: that of the study of the impact of the Gandhian politics on the masses from an insider’s view. The novel presents the Gandhian ideology as an overpowering, all enveloping presence. The commitment of the villagers of Kanthapura to the Gandhian thought is unflinching and unquestionable, despite the initial apathy and reluctance. They spin, participate in toddy picketing and refuse to pay taxes even when their lands are auctioned right in front of their eyes. Their women are harassed, abused, and exploited. Young men like Moorthy and Shankar forego their education and career prospects at the instance of the Gandhian movement. The acute differences in caste and creed felt at the beginning of the novel are totally relegated into the background merging together in the great melting of the Gandhian movement. When the heavy lathi charges ordered on them, Ratna, the Gandhian, consoles her fellow Satyagrahis: “You are a Satyagrahi, sister, be patient.”(P-156)

The novel presents Gandhian struggle as a deeper influence which transforms the villagers from the depths of their hearts. Gandhism believed that Satyagraha is no weapon of the cowards. Indeed, the little, nameless men and women of Kanthapura exemplify this great courage- a courage that co-exists with only a complete identification with the cause:
"The police lathi’s showered on us, and the procession throne fell and the Gods fell and the flowers fell and the candelabras fell and yet the gods were in the air, brother and not a lamentation rose." (P-170)

The novel portrays the villagers loosing almost everything. The untold miseries and sufferings of the people are symbolized in the person of Patel Range Gowda, the robust Patel of the past, and a veritable tiger in the village who is now “as lean as an areca nut tree.”(P-183) But there are no regrets. The relation of the villagers with Gandhi seems to transcend the explanations:

"You will say, we have lost this, you will say, we have lost that Kenchamma forgive us, but there is something that has entered our hearts, an abundance like the Himavathy on Gauris night, when lights came floating down the Ramapur and Maddur and Tippur, lights lit on the betel leaves and with flower and kumkum and song we let them go, and they will go down the Ghats to the morning sea, the lights on the betel leaves and the gather it by the sea, and he will bless us.”(P-182)

The novel presents this overpowering unexplainable hold of the Mahatma on the masses.

The puranic structure used in the novel suits the Gandhian narration immensely, making a Gandhi Purana. Apart from form and structure, the
style used by Raja Rao is also heavily Indianised. These kind of bold experiments in English are attempts of localizing strategies which gained a momentum due to the Gandhian influence. In brief, there is a heavy Indianization of English language which perfectly suits the nature of the story. The use of distinct form, structure and style are also reflective of the depths of Indian existence to which Gandhian influence has percolated. Raja Rao is able to grasp the Gandhian movement in its true essence and communicating in a style that is perfectly in agreement with the chosen theme. Srinivasa Iyengar is all adulation saying, "To read Kanthapura is to relive the Gandhian politics of civil disobedience." 8

It is may be right to consider Kanthapura as a veritable Grammar of the Gandhian Myth. It is the most comprehensive presentation of Gandhian ideology ever by an Indian novelist. The novel is able to evoke a very thorough vision of the Gandhian ideology. It is almost a real life presentation of Gandhi. The novel records the then contemporaneous political history. The ideas, characters, actions and the theme are so solidly grounded in the contemporary politics of Gandhian freedom struggle that the novel invites readers to read it as a political novel.

Thus, *Kanthapura* is the one novel wherein one gets a nearly full view of Gandhian politics. For Gandhi, politics was not only a social activity oriented towards power, but it was also deeply spiritual. This combination of the real and spiritual dimension of Gandhian ideology is presented in Kanthapura. The principles of Gandhism-commitment to truth, non-violence, simplicity in living, economic modesty (like the use of Khadi), and a strong and unflinching faith in God are presented with realistic details. Further, Kanthapura is a presentation of the Gandhian ideology seen through the eyes of a believer. There is a strong sense of commitment to Gandhian principles. It presents Gandhiji as the pride of the nation and gloats over the triumphant discovery of the Indian soul.

**THE SWORD AND THE SICKLE: Gandhism without Flesh and Blood**

If a large number of novels written during the Gandhian period are written from the point of view of *Kanthapura*, a few novels study the Gandhian impact from a different angle- the angle of ambivalence. One among them is Mulk Raj Anand’s *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942).

In this novel Gandhi appears as an apostle of non-violence. He is introduced only in one scene where a dialogue takes place between him and Lalu, the revolutionary dreaming of Marxist Utopia in India. Gandhi
explains the doctrine of non-violence to Lalu. Gandhi’s influence over the literate peasants and the downtrodden and their faith in Gandhi dominate the novel.

Anand had written most of his novels in the nineteen thirties, the seed time of modern India. It can be said to be a packed decade, packed with the Gandhian salt satyagraha movements of 1930, the 1932, the Three Round Table Conferences, the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, the Gandhian movements for Harijan uplift and Basic Education, etc. This struggle for freedom in India was so powerful that it had become an all-pervasive emotional experience for all Indians.

Anand’s novels are immensely influenced by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, who fought for the cause of the marginalized and the defenceless. He admits it freely and states that his life got a ‘U’ turn when he came in contact with the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. Being inspired by the ideas of Gandhiji, he began to wear homespun clothes and decided writing. Anand was so much influenced by Gandhiji that he could not miss staying in Sabarmati Ashram with him for three months and went through various sweet and sour experiences there.
The Sword and The Sickle is a highly fascinating novel in terms of the political content and Gandhian ideology. The setting here is the second decade of the twentieth century, which saw the star of Tilak set and the sun of Gandhi rise, ushering in a new and far more intense phase in the Indian freedom struggle. This was also the time when the winds of Communist ideology reached India. M.K.Naik says:

"Ostensibly, Anand’s purpose in the novel seems to be to show his peasant hero – Lal Singh coming into contact with these two ideologies. ... Anand, with his deep knowledge of (and even firsthand contact with the exponents of) both these ideologies, was admirably qualified to create a memorable political novel here."\(^9\)

In Anand’s Untouchable, Bakha hears Gandhi making a speech, but has no personal contact with him. On the contrary, in The Sword and the Sickle, Gandhi talks to Lalu of non-violence as a revolution to which love and Human understanding must be applied towards the adversity. Gandhi himself involved in the plot of the novel and his talk with Lalu Singh portrays Gandhi’s presence among the peasants of India.

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9. Op. cit., p.120.
In *The Sword and the Sickle*, the hero Lalu Singh, a revolutionary, has an interview with Gandhi, which is given a central place in the action. Returning to Lahore after the First World War from a German prison camp, Lalu Singh learns about the Kilafat wrongs and General Dyer's brutalities at Amritsar, about the people's patient sufferance and Gandhi Mahatma's inspiring words. Back in his village, he learns that his mother is no more and that his family property is gone. He feels that his dead mother, his broken home and his forfeited land are wrongs to be avenged. Maya, the girl he had loved before enlisting, is now a widow, and comes back to him, and they escape to live a life of their own. But Lalu cannot be content with love and hence he joins the revolutionary party with a view to converting the prison that was India into a free land like Roos (Russia), where there are no divisions of religion or property among people. Meeting with difficulties of all kinds, he approaches Gandhi for help, and the interview takes place at the Anand Bhavan, Allahabad:

"Lalu joined hands to the Mahatma. There was something in the stern silence of the great man's attitude which demanded reverence....The Mahatma smiled at Lalu, a Kind of brief, casual nod which set him at rest in the dry, formal atmosphere of these upper regions.... There was sincerity in the great man's diction....."
‘The first thing I can say to the peasants’, the Mahatma said, looking Lalu straight in the face, as if admonishing him, ‘is to cast out fear... the real relief is for them to be free from fear...’

This impressed Lalu. It was uncanny how the Mahatma had laid his finger on the first trait which was obvious in the peasant character, their terror-stricken abjectness...

‘If the waging of a struggle to redress the grievances of the peasants is violence... then I have committed violence’, Lalu confessed...

‘Not the airing of grievances of the ryots, but the invocation of revolution against the landlords, is violence’, said the Mahatma.”

When the peasant struggle against the evils of zamindari system which was supported by the Raj is launched, Lalu is arrested, and the novel concludes with Lalu Singh imprisoned, and his doleful thoughts about his Maya and their child.

The novel is very much the heroic-romantic type, where the hero suffers disillusionment having supported the wrong cause, and later realizes that nothing is lost when he realizes the truth. The two imprisonments are systematic of Lalu Singh’s stages in life; disillusion and anger for having served innocently an evil cause, and the realization of truth through ahimsa.

The prison sentence which concurs the acceptance of *ahimsa* for freedom is accepted as a sacrificial offering of the self for a better world in future.

*The Sword and The Sickle* begins with the return of Lal Singh, the Protagonist, to India from Vilayat. He has been out of the country fighting in the I World War and then as a prisoner of war. The novel is set in the 1920’s. Lal Singh returns to India to awaken himself to the horrible condition the country is in. Everywhere, he finds confusion, poverty, hopelessness and despair of the masses. He learns that:

“In Vilayat depression did not mean what it meant in India – starvation, robbery, death. From the putrid peasants who have lain about in Manabad, from the swarms of children who whimpered and howled, as they begged or played antics for a pice, from the women who reviled each other, from the look of things on the way, and from the talk in the carriages and in the village, he could feel the pressure of an insidious puss in the boil of pain and misery...and what was extraordinary, things were not being taken as they were the immutable decree of Fate, which no man could alter! Why, here were desperate people, forming clubs and bands of the bereft! The water was flowing uphill instead of down.” (P-49)

His happiness at the freedom from prison soon withers. He notices that the country had become a kind of ‘ant heap’.
His revelations are both personal and political. On the personal level, he finds that his mother is dead and his property gone. On the political level, he finds the utter despair, particularly, among of the masses. But there is a ray of hope in the strange restlessness and a new spirit pervading the atmosphere, with 'fearful expectations'. Lalu notices the emergence of political consciousness in the masses of India. He listens to their conversations on the train and buses which are distinctly political. They talk "about Gandhi and Russia....... And, what more, newspapers rustled in the hands of Babus about the future constitution" (P-28).

On his return he had hoped for a sympathetic treatment from the sarkar, a rise to the rank of Havildar and a piece of land. But all his expectations are belied. The words of Barkat Ullah, the seditionist, about the sarkar, which he hadn't taken seriously so far, seem to be right, for Lai Singh.

Lal Singh gets into politics partially out of his own inclination for a 'revolution' and partially out of the force of circumstances. He joins the group of his friends who are planning and plotting revolution, which includes Gughī, Harnam Singh, and Santokh Singh. He meets Prof. Verma and is impressed by him and gradually becomes one of the leaders of the
peasant movement. He enters into the active politics accidently. He addresses a meeting of the peasants, invigorates them and in turn gets charged himself.

Prof. Verma persuades him to join the movement on behalf of Count Rampal Singh. Lalu wittingly agrees for the proposal of Prof. Verma to go with him to Allahabad and Oudh and work there with the peasants, both for his love of the revolution and for his lady love, Maya, with whom he elopes. He joins the team of revolutionaries led by Kanwar Rampal Sing. He participates in rallies, talking to and organising the peasants. They fork the Kisan Sabhas and a Kisan Nagar. They motivate the peasants for a 'revolution of the masses'. At times doubts persist, in the mind of Lal Singh about the revolution, but on the whole Lal Singh is committed to his cause, though in his own way.

In his pursuit of his cause he meets Gandhi, to seek his support, but is totally disappointed to find Gandhi an aloof figure, seemingly not bothered about the cause of the peasants. Lal Singh feels that when the entire country is worried about the fate of the peasants, Gandhi is worried about saving the cattle. Lal Singh is also not impressed by the Congress party symbolized through the character of Shrijut Ladli Prasad Tiwari. Lal Singh meets Nehru
who impresses him. But Nehru simply doesn't seem to have time for the likes of Lal Singh. But Lal Singh and his comrades, the Count, Prof. Verma and others persist with their work among the peasants, despite harassment by the English authorities. Lalu's devotion to the work is near complete, despite the pulls exhorted by Maya towards the other side. Consequently, Lalu is happy that some change seems to have been wrought:

"But no, though the revolution hadn't lengthened their legs, or broadened their chests, or straightened their torsos, it had certainly made their faces glow with beaming smiles, where there seemed to be long vacancies" (P-321).

The novel concludes with the arrest of Lal Singh, and with the news that a baby is born to Lal Singh. As Premila Paul, a critic of Anand feels,

"the birth of the premature baby symbolizes the outcome of an ill planned revolution and its half-baked ideas. But the bright sunshine mad the faith that the child is alive and kicking gives a sure promise of hope"\(^{11}\)

Lalu, a dynamic personality was not to be tied down by any extenuating circumstances. When he was free from war, he gets engaged in political action and also reaps the consequences. He passes through the quagmire of political and personal rivalries, the clash of ideologies, pull of

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selfish greed and pull of idealism and the need for sacrifice. All these form the ingredients of *The Sword and the Sickle*.

*The Sword and Sickle* is a 'political fiction' in every sense of the term. The novel is set in the second decade of the 20th century, in the post WWI situation. The novel has a massive sweep in that it covers national and international politics in its scope. The novel begins, with the tumultuous background of the post-war confusion, discontentment, and despair. It also has the background of the Gandhian movement. Gandhi appears in person, talking to Lal Singh and organising get-to-gathers for the removal of untouchability. The presence of this leader in the novel adds to the already thick political milieu.

"Gandhi comes out as an egoist unmindful of the turbulence around him. Lalu feels like smiling of the "excessive solemnity in the Mahatma tone" (P-199).

C.D. Narasimhaiah views, "Gandhi is a satirically sketched character in the novel should be withdrawn, because of its severely limited vision of Gandhi."12

The novel portrays the Mahatma as the one pouring out his thoughts to his scribe, from the sublime to the ridiculous, and from the puerile to the profound, without raising his voice in the least. Gandhi is shown to be doing significant political work, but not in the way Lal Singh would have wished him to do:

"I have a very full programme, the Mahatma said directly. But if they observe the rules I have laid down, then their emancipation will surely come........ At the moment I am here to take part in the feast tonight when our untouchable brothers will dine with caste Hindus...... Ask the peasantry to come to that meal" (P.204).

Anand contrasts Gandhian ideology with Marxist ideology. Anand has unconscious preferences to Marxist ideology. Gandhi, Gandhians, and the congress, are therefore shown in a satirical light. The ‘revolutionary group’ consisting of count Ramphal Singh, Prof. Verma, Lal Singh and others is totally upset with the bourgeois methods of Gandhi and the congress leaders. Gandhian ideology looks like merely helping the ‘Evil Sarkar’. The Gandhian movement is thought to be a city based movement unmindful of the lowest strata of society.
"The peasants in the villages had heard of Mahatma Gandhi and of the strange new movement of non-cooperation he had started. Some of them had, indeed taken part in it, but it was nevertheless a movement of the cities in which the lawyers, shopkeepers and other professional people predominated" (P-150).

The Sword and the Sickle concludes Lalu’s quest for self-actualization and self-realization on a note that is not rigidly ideological.

T.M.J. Indira Mohan observes,

"When Lalu becomes back to his country, he finds its furrowed face unrecognizable. Lalu reconciles himself to his fate. He’s imprisoned for his rebellion and from the jail he gives his countrymen the message of love, non-violence, and togetherness. His despair is the result of the constant awareness of a split in his consciousness."^{13}

Lalu’s attitude to Gandhi shows his despair because he does not share the superhuman qualities prescribed by Gandhi for the salvation of mankind. All the lofty notions of Gandhi like suffering; soul-force, self-perfection and sublimation, passive resistance, are alien to the exuberant and turbulent self of Lalu. Terrorism is as disgusting to Lalu as self-righteousness. T.M.J. Indira Mohan views,

"What gives Lalu real joy is love and understanding which is more important and more effective than any political or religious dogmas. He knows that only Maya could give him the pulsing warmth in a world vitiated by caution, fear and resentment."

Anand possessed a Gandhian spirit in this sense. His humanism places his characters at the center of all things. He has granted complete freedom to his characters to grow and exercise their creative choices. They are free to love, to work, to grow and raise their heads against poverty, corruption, fascism, tyranny, and exploitation. Anand emphasizes upon the need to integrate human values, human rights, human psychology, and scientific methods. Anand’s humanism has been derived from the humanistic values in Gautam Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, Marx, Lenin, Ram Mohan Roy, Nehru, etc.

This novel, The Sword and the Sickle is significant for the representation of the Gandhian ideology from another point of view. In this novel, unlike in Kanthapura, Gandhian ideology does not come in for a blind appreciation, but the ideology is held out for an ambivalent point of view. The central character, Lal Singh is deeply divided between Gandhism and

Marxism. No doubt, he has a high reverence for Gandhian ideology and for its mass appeal. But at the same time, he has moments of doubt and ambivalence. He seems to be weighing the merits of both these ideologies one against another. The novel therefore, a sketch of both these ideologies. Gandhism and Marxism draw almost equal attention of the protagonist, Lal Singh, hence, neither of the ideologies is treated on a full scale. The novel is only a comparative assessment of the ideologies. From the point of view of the presentation of the Gandhian ideology the novel presents an ambivalent attitude that is, the novel is divided in its overall ideological representation of Gandhi.

Thus, *The Sword and the Sickle* presents Lalu’s meeting with Gandhi who impresses Lalu with his speech and advice of casting out in the freedom struggle the novel can come to the ambit of political novel. This brief evaluation of Anand’s *Sword and the Sickle* is a humble effort to show that Mahatma Gandhi’s powerful impact on the socio-political scene of the 1930s; particularly on the Indo-Anglican literature. Along with a new doctrine and directive ascribed to characterization, Gandhiji also imparted a new way of giving expression to the people’s demands and claims, a new strength and inspiration to unarmed masses.
WAITING FOR THE MAHATMA: Gandhian Ideology Falls Short

A titan among Indian English novelists, R.K.Narayan casts a long shadow on Indian political fiction in English. His novel, Waiting for the Mahatma (1956) is the only novel that can be called a political novel. It apparently portrays not only Gandhi's influences but also his appearances. For instance, his visit to Malgudi, his last prayer on 30 January 1948, the fatal day he was killed.

Here in this novel Gandhi himself addresses political meetings in Malgudi. Indian people's activities following Gandhi's declaration of Quit India Movement; Gandhi's journey to Noakhali in the wake of partition and consequent suffering due to communal riots; his ashram life and his assassination are depicted here.

In a way, it is an afterthought on the Gandhian struggle. It depicts the freedom struggle against the background of Gandhi's role in it. In this novel Gandhi's role is more frequent and functional. The Gandhian ideals like truthfulness, non-violence, spinning, Khaddar, Swaraj, etc. have successfully been portrayed in this novel.

The novel begins with the visit of the Mahatma to Malgudi and ends with his assassination at a prayer meeting in Delhi. The theme of love and
marriage of Sriram and Bharati is embedded in the political matrix of India’s struggle for freedom. The first meeting of Sriram with Bharati takes place while she is collecting contributions for the Mahatma’s first visit to Malgudi. His fascination for Bharati brings him in contact with the Mahatma who permits him to join the freedom movement as a volunteer and become a soldier of his non-violent army.

Set in the forties, it deals with the theme of the Gandhian impact on the protagonist, Sriram, who is an apolitical being to begin with, but who gradually gets caught in the politics of the times. Here, the action strays out of Malgudi. The two central characters, Bharati and Sriram are ‘existentially engaged in politics’. Sriram, a typical weak-willed character, and Bharati, a Congress volunteer devote themselves to national movement.

The novel is, in a sense, a short biography of Sriram, covering his years of adolescence and youth, until he gets married. When the novel begins Sriram is an effeminate, sensitive, feminine youth of twenty. His excessive nervous force gives him certain recklessness. Having lost both his parents, he is tended by his grandmother.

Sriram is educated to the extent that he is able to read numbers with difficulty, and write. He reads the numbers in Fund Office, and writes ‘Quit
India' on the walls. But very little of it has gone into his head. Sriram’s character is a classic irony on education – the education which fails to impart any socio-political awareness or responsible in an individual.

Narayan has concentrated on the character portrayal of Sriram in the first few pages, which is very significant. It provides a sort of setting to the novel. Narayan is looking at the contemporary politics through the eyes of Sriram. As Minaxi Mukherjee rightly points out, “Sriram is the central consciousness and holds the ‘point of view’ to the events presented in the novel.”

It is interesting to note that Sriram is not aware of the Gandhian movement, nor are the shopkeeper Kanni, grandmother or the Fund Office Manager at this stage in the novel. Kanni, the shopkeeper, hangs the portrait of a hypothetical British Queen in his shop, not the portrait of Gandhi, which could easily have been the trend of the times.

So, Sriram symbolizes ‘every man’ or a ‘political common man’ who remains an outsider to the flow of great events in history. He is among all those who remained unreached even by the Gandhian movement in India till it affects their personal lives. For him everything is seen only in relation to

the personal events of life. In this sense he is a contrast to the character of ‘Moorthy’ in *Kanthapura*.

Sriram drifts into politics. Chasing the girl, Bharati, who has something to do with Mahatma Gandhi, he gets caught in the politics of the times rather accidentally. He participates in the political rally hesitantly. Bharati, his political ‘guru’ draws him into the fold of the freedom struggle. She arranges his meeting with Gandhi. Due to the pulls exerted by her, Sriram leaves his Granny and joins the Gandhian movement and starts imagining that he is a freedom fighter: “His teacher whispered into his ear, ‘Whatever happens, don’t let down our country.’ ‘No sir, never, I promise,’ Sriram replied.”

He tours several villages, as a Gandhian volunteer, learns to spin, ’40 count’, by the courtesy of Bharati. Though he cannot understand the political significance of Gandhian ideology he undertakes to do any work assigned to him. He performs Gandhian acts, under the spell of Bharati. He burns his foreign clothes. He feels happy at this turn in his life.

“He felt he had seen and reached a new plane of existence. He sat down and wrote to the Mahatma, ‘Burnt my old clothes today, spun 40 count, Bharati is satisfied.’

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Mahatmaji immediately wrote back to him: ‘Very pleased. Keep it up. God bless you’.” (P-99)

Sriram does picketing in front of the Biscuit shop, against foreign Biscuits. “I am not questioning your price, but I want you to understand that you should not be selling foreign stuff. You should not sell English biscuits.”(P-117) He participates in ‘Quit India Movement’, in his own way. He was assigned the task of painting ‘Quit India’ on walls:

“Sriram dipped the brush in paint and fashioned carefully, ‘Quit India’ on the wall. He wished that he didn’t have to write the letter ‘Q’ which consumed a lot of black point. It was no use wasting all the available paint on a single letter. He wondered, if, for economy’s sake he could manage without drawing its tail,... he began to write a modified ‘Q’ ... So that it read, until one scrutinized it closely, it red ‘Quit India.” (P-103)

However, once Bharati and Gandhi are out of sight, Sriram’s line of action changes completely. He once again drifts – this time into the company of Jagdish, ‘a national worker’, performing terrorist activities. He derails trains, puts fire to government offices and distributes pamphlets with explosive messages. The police publish his photograph and announce a reward for anyone giving information about him. It is no surprise that Sriram
once again shows the same commitment which characterizes his 'Gandhian' actions. Sriram is caught and jailed with ordinary criminals.

The pendulum of Sriram’s life swings back to Gandhism, after his release from the prison. He meets Gandhi and confesses to him, all the terrorist operations in which he was actively engaged. He also confesses to Gandhi, “Bharati went away to jail and there was no one who could tell me what to do; no one who could show me the right way” (P-251). The novel ends with the union of Sriram with Bharati.

The mighty freedom movement launched by the Mahatma has made its impact on the remote town of Malgudi in South India and large crowds gather on the banks of the Sarayu to listen to his first speech. The reverberating choral chant of *Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram* disturbs the placid waters of the river. The Mahatma addresses the huge gathering in Hindi as a matter of principle, and not in English, the language of the rulers. He excuses himself for his inability to speak in ‘sweet’ Tamil, the language of the audience. The Mahatma enunciates his triple doctrine of truth, non-violence and *Satyagraha* as a weapon against the British rule in India, and tells the people that the practice of non-violence needs faith and constant watchfulness for its natural acceptance by the people:
"We, the citizens of this country, are all soldiers of a non-violent army, but even such an army has to practise a few things daily in order to keep itself in proper condition....We have a system of our own to follow: that's Ram Dhun; spinning on the charkha and the practice of absolute Truth and Non-violence." (P-28)

Absolute truth is the foundation of the Mahatma’s mission in life, which he himself calls his experiment with truth. Bharati, the most devoted disciple of the Mahatma, tells Sriram: “None except absolute truth-speakers are allowed to come into Mahatma’s camp. People who come here must take an oath of absolute truth before going into Mahatma’s presence.” (P-55)

The Mahatma attaches equal importance to spinning and Khadi in his struggle against the British rule. He says to Sriram: “Spinning a certain length is my most important work; even my prayer comes only after that. I’d very much like you to take a vow to wear only cloth made out of your own hands each day.”(P-67)

Moreover, the Mahatma does not force any one to become his disciple unless he is himself willing and ready to adopt his principles. No one should volunteer to join the freedom movement unless his conscience permits him to do so. He asks Sriram to take the permission of his grandmother before
joining him: “You have a grandmother, I hear, but no parents..... You must look after your granny too; she must have devoted herself to bringing you up” (Pp.69-70). It is thus that the Mahatma makes politics an outgrown of religion. He is not fighting against the British; he is fighting for humanity.

Though the Mahatma’s non-violent movement is the main stream of the political struggle, there are people who do not subscribe to his doctrine. Gorpad’s brother becomes a terrorist and shoots down many English officers before he goes underground. Gorpad himself is a terrorist at heart and wants to do away with many more English-men, but the Mahatma does not let him be violent even in thought. Sriram and Bharati spread the message of ‘Quit India’ in and around Malgudi. Sriram goes out to remote places to paint the slogan of ‘Quit India’ on the walls of far-flung villages. Bharati does her humble bit for the mission in her own way.

Mahatma Gandhi gives a call for disobedience and his followers fill the jails of the country. The message comes to both Bharati and Sriram. While Bharati obeys the call implicitly, Sriram backs out and meets a terrorist, Jagdish, who involves him in subversive activities. Under the hypnotic spell of the ruthless and bear-like Jagdish, he operates a concealed wireless set of giving and receiving messages. He indulges in spreading
disaffection among Indian soldiers in the army, blowing up bridges and derailing trains. As a result, he is arrested and sent to jail where he is treated like a common criminal. He is let off by the government of Independent India long after the mass release of political prisoners.

The novel also touches upon the last phase of Mahatma Gandhi’s life. Communal riots break out and the country is partitioned before India attains freedom. Communal violence erupts and takes a heavy toll. Millions of people are uprooted from their homes and hearths and are rendered refugees to be settled by the government. The trail of bitterness left behind saddens Mahatma Gandhi and his anguish knows no bound. He risks his life in visiting Noakhali, a boiling cauldron of communal frenzy. His healing touch has its effect and he returns safe to Delhi, where his would-be assassin is waiting for him.

All the characters in the novel are engaged in political activities leading to the country’s Independence. Though Mahatma Gandhi really appears in the novel only twice, once in the beginning and again at the end, his rampant presence is felt throughout the narrative. It is he who guides and controls the destiny of the protagonists. Sriram has no political aspiration or ambition. It is simply his infatuation for Bharati that brings him in the
Mahatma’s political fold. Bharati, on the other hand, does not do a thing without the specific approval and sanction of the Mahatma. As a true devotee, she has dedicated her whole life to the mission. Love and marriage are secondary or even inconsequential in her life. If Sriram can’t face the Mahatma, she will have nothing to do with him even though she deeply loves him. She waits for the Mahatma, for his approval of their marriage. The Mahatma knows that she really loves Sriram and, like a loving father, feels it his duty to bless her marriage to Sriram.

The political situation in the country remains the dominant theme of the novel, and love is only a part of it. Sriram’s return to order and sanity after a long spell of violent and disruptive activities demonstrates the order-disorder-order pattern of the novel. R.M. Verma opines, “There is an obvious parallelism between Sriram’s life and the political situation in the country which witnesses a lull after the storm – after the country is partitioned and Gandhi Falls a martyr to the assassin’s bullets.”

The theme of the novel, Waiting for the Mahatma, is different from that of Mr. Sampath or The Financial Expert. Though the perspective of this novel is political, it does not remain so throughout. The novel was generally

praised in America for its portrait of Mahatma Gandhi. They found it better than several biographical writings on him: Charles Wagner observes,

"Here you will find not only an engrossing story but a portrait of Gandhi so rich and real no biography we have seen can touch it. It is the story of a disciple, his loves and fears, his serene inanity. But above all, the residue of understanding and truth with respect to India and Gandhi lend substance here of highest caliber."

There is enough to count in this novel as political. The novel deals with a political problem. Politics is assimilated into fiction with a political atmosphere, and not so much a novel of political ideas of Gandhi. It is easily a model of a successful political novel, for it deals with a crucial phase of Indian history from 1941 to January 30, 1948, when we lost the Mahatma to an assassin in Delhi. Sometimes the Mahatma appears in the novel in person, but more often we see him mirrored in events or, as it were, analysed in the life of his disciples. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar rightly observes:

"Other novelists whether writing in English or in the regional languages, have likewise exploited the magic of Gandhi's name and presence, but seldom is the Gandhian role subsumed in the fiction as a whole. Gandhi is too big to be given a minor part; on the other hand, he is sure to turn the novel into a biography if he is

given a major or the central part. The best thing for the contemporary novelist would be to keep Gandhi in the background but make his influence felt indirectly.”

Like Kanthapura this novels deals with a phase in the political history of the country, i.e. freedom movement of the late thirties and forties. Gandhi is a living presence in the Waiting for the Mahatma. He is a realistically sketched character, shorn of the spiritual and metaphysical aura. Gandhi is seen as a leader of a mass movement. Although he occupies very few pages in the novel, when he appears, he does so with historical authenticity. Gandhi’s visit to Malgudi is used to sketch a true portrayal of him. His notion of non-violence and Swaraj are altogether different and has a universal significance.

“Before you aspire o drive the British from this country, you must drive every vestige of violence from your system. Remember that it is not going to be a fight with sticks and knives or guns but only with love. Until you are sure you have an overpowering love at heart for your enemy, don’t think of driving him out.”(P-77)

Though the Mahatma is seen through the eyes of the ‘non believers’ the portrait that appears in the novel is more or less just and fair to history.

Mahatma in the novel distributes oranges to the children in the Chairman's house and stays in a hut. The act of spinning and his attempts to unite Hindus and Muslims are all evocative of history.

Narayan's characters are literary incarnations of the Gandhian ideal. They are people in quest of truth. They embody the greatest virtues of the Hindu way of life at the level of the man in the street; exactly where Gandhi wanted them to be. To quote Michel Pousse: "Malgudi is far too large to be one of Indian 700,000 villages but Narayan proves that Gandhism is a humanism that can be practiced anywhere provided the heart be willing."^20

Thus, Narayan has penetrated the heart of Gandhi's teaching in Waiting for Mahatma. Gandhi's ideals like truthfulness, non-violence, satyagraha, spinning, etc. are effectively presented in this novel. The Gandhian ideology comes in for an ironical appraisal in this novel. The novel represents Gandhian ideology from a very different perspective- the perspective of irony. That is why, the ideological presentation is sketchy, also the use of Sriram as a point of view brings ironical dimension to the representation of Gandhian ideology. Because, Sriram is not a character who

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can understand and appreciate Gandhi. He is no intellectual equipment to understand Gandhi nor any moral commitment. Therefore, Gandhian ideology in the novel is reduced to a few bare details. Also, the character of Sriram brings an ironical point of view to the representation of Gandhian ideology.

In this sense, Waiting for Mahatma is very different in its portraiture of the Gandhian ideology both from Kanthapura and The Sword and the Sickle. The other three novels, Some Inner Fury, Shadow from Ladakh and Rich Like Us present Gandhian ideology from different perspective. These novels are chosen for the minor treatment of Gandhian ideology.

Kamala Markandaya’s novel, Some Inner Fury (1955) is also chosen for the assessment of Gandhian ideology. The Gandhian values like tolerance, the spirit of sacrifice, and selfless love have been portrayed effectively by the novelist. In her novels, one can see the East-West code of clash and the inter-cultural tension which have been described vividly.

Some Inner Fury is a semi-autobiographical. It deals with the violent aspect of the professed non-violent movement of 1942. In this novel, she has dramatized the East-West Conflict in a tragic manner laying stress on the
themes of love and death. It weaves the web of love amidst the political turmoil of Indian Independence Struggle. It is essentially a love story of Mira and Richard who come from the ruled and the ruling classes respectively. The young woman's personal crisis is set against the larger historical background of the freedom struggle and thus her love is wrecked on the rocks of Indian nationalism when that enters a violent stage during the World War II.

*Some Inner Fury* reveals Markandaya's deep preoccupation with the changing Indian social and political scene. She excels in recording the inner workings of the minds of her characters, their personal confusion and social confrontation. They encounter with an alien political power, the anti colonial or anti-imperialist and unfold the delicate process of their being.

The novel is set against the backdrop of India's freedom struggle and highlighting the theme of East-West. While some Western educated Indians side with the British, there came a strong counter force from the nationalists. Between these two opposing forces is placed the story of love and death, awakening and sacrifice.

*Some Inner Fury* concisely presents the Gandhian ideals - Khadi, civil disobedience, Swadeshi, love, etc. without presenting the Mahatma as a
character. The novel presents the later phase of the Gandhian Age covered by the ‘Quit India’ movement of the early forties. It recalls Gandhi’s preference of travelling in the third class railway compartment during the freedom struggle.

“She (Roshan) had been campaigning for some months to try and get third-class travel conditions improved. Each week she wrote an article describing some intolerable journey or other; of spending a whole day on a slow train on a blistering day with no provision for water; of travelling on the footboards, because there was no room anywhere else, or jammed in with a hundred people in a carriage meant for half that number.”

The novel dramatizes the story of Mirabai (a Western educated young woman), her anglicized brother, her British friend and lover Richard, on the one hand, and the Indian nationalists - Govind, Premala, and Roshan Merchant on the other. Mira loves Richard intensely; at the same time she has the spirit to reject him for her country.

As the events go, Kitsamy belongs to a well to do Brahmin family. From Oxford he brings home with him an English friend, Richard. Mira and Richard become friendly. Kit is thoroughly anglicized and his wife Premala, a quiet, simple Indian girl remains a misfit in Kit’s social circle.

Mira visits Madras when Kit is posted there where she meets Roshan Merchant, the nationalist, journalist whose work interests her.

"Roshan did not reply at once, she seemed to be studying her fingernails; then at last she said, equally slowly, 'Everybody is interested in freedom...only, we do not all agree on the means to the end, as I think you know too,' He nodded: 'Differences of opinion are not bars to service,' he said to her. 'We need people who can organize, and lead... not everyone has the gift. We need people who are not afraid of prison."

(P-94)

She and Premala go to a village with Roshan to see a school coming up. Here, the course of life changes for both: Premala, who gets involved whole-heartedly in social service, and Mira, who meets Richard after three years. Their friendship is renewed and an exciting world of love opens up before them.

Mira's cousin Govind is fully wrapped up in the freedom movement and takes to violent activities.

"Under Govind’s tutelage she began-and kept up, which was more than many people did-a boycott of British goods... thereafter wearing, not without some distaste, the prescribed rough homespun." (P-133)
During a violent incident, the nationalists blow off the school building in the village; Premala is caught within and is charred to death. Kits rushes to the spot but is killed by a flying knife. Hickey’s false testimony implicates Govind in the murder. Mira realizes that truth means nothing even in the court of law as against the words of the Englishman. Disillusioned and angry, she decides to join the nationalists leaving Richard behind. Her patriotism wins over her personal sentiments.

*Some Inner Fury* presents a cross-section of Indian society. It has three facets- a personal story, a wider conflict, and a social background. It has as background the westernized upper class with its conflict of loyalists: Mira falls in love with an Englishman, her brother Kitsamy upholds the authority of the British Raj, and her brother Govind seeks to overthrow the Raj through terrorist activities. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar analyses the character Premala who has inculcated a true Gandhian spirit in this way:

"Of all the characters in *Some Inner Fury*, Premala is the sweetest, even the most heroic, whose mother sadness is as potent as her mother love or mother might, whose silence is stronger than all rhetoric, and whose seeming capacity for resignation is the true measure of her measureless strength.... She is symbolic of
the Mother - Mother India who is compassion and sufferance, who must indeed suffer all hurts and survive all disasters.\textsuperscript{22}

Thus, the novel presents how the Gandhian principle of non-violence takes a violent turn during the freedom struggle and the protagonist, Mira becomes the victim of the anti-imperialistic attitudes movement.

Bhabani Bhattacharya’s novel, \textit{Shadow from Ladakh} (1966) portrays a conflict between two political ideologies - Gandhism and Nehruism and how such conflict of ideologies can be solved. It is evident that Bhattacharya aims at a social regeneration in India by synthesizing Gandhism and Nehruism; spinning wheel and spindle.

The Chinese invasion of 1962 forms the setting of this novel. The novel is not against the menacing background of the Chinese aggression. The shadow of the military encounter with the unexpected enemy at Ladakh is cast everywhere. Here in this novel the Gandhian ideals – non-violence, spinning, simplicity, fasting, etc. are effectively portrayed by the novelist.

The Gandhian ideal is represented by Satyajit Sen. Really, Satyajit, trained in Gandhi’s Sevagram, is presented a victor in his resistance of steel

\textsuperscript{22} Op. cit., p.440.
town annexing Gandhigram. The triumph is brought by Satyajit through Gandhian non-violence, Satyagraha and fast unto death.

In this novel Bhattacharya shows that the Gandhian economics and ethics are true everywhere and at any time. He also hopes that even China can find salvation through the younger generation. To justify his view he portrays Satyajit’s character. Satyajit is a Gandhian character acting as the founder of Gandhigram where life is founded on discipline and self-restraint, similar to that of Gandhi’s Sevagram. He controls the life of the village where Gandhian economics and ethics are worked out. With the supply of needs by the cottage-based industry, besides food, the village is self-sufficient. Land is owned by the Co-operative Society and food is distributed to each family according to its needs.

Every home has a spinning wheel. The basic scheme of craft centered teaching advocated by Gandhi is followed by the village in the sphere of education. The village sets new set of values-equality, fraternity and non-violence in thought and action.

"The village with its two hundred mud houses, seeking to build a set of values..... Limitless non-violence, as much in thought as in action.....The Gandhian village
was not its mud alone. It was spirit. The spirit of man striving to transcend the physical."  

Non-violence, and brotherhood the major teachings of Gandhi, are propounded in the novel by Satyajit through his plan to form a Shanti Sena to Ladakh. He is believes in the Gandhian principle of giving up hatred for victory in the moral struggle.

Satyajit brings Suruchi and Sumita under the growing influence of his ideal known as Satyajitism. Satyajit has to resist against Bhashkar's aggression on Gandhigram. In spite of his failure in the former peace mission to Ladakh he wins a glorious success in the latter mission. This is really the victory of Satyajitism and non-violence.

In his village Satyajit continues the work of spiritual reconstruction by making the people renounce all. He dedicated his life to service and he uses the Gandhian instrument of “fast unto death” for protection of Gandhigram. By attaching little importance to material possession he cares for inner satisfaction. He discarded caste-system.

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He is a man of stiff nature who would not move an inch even when the Government offers a compromise. So at last even the factory workers and even his opponent Bhashkar become one with him. The fast he undertakes is a challenge to the flesh. He is the very soul of Gandhigram and the whole village follows his path.

Thus, the novel shows the value and power of winning the hearts of opponents by the Gandhian non-violent agitations and demonstrations. It reflects the new urges, the new spirit of India in the midst of struggles and crisis through the victory of Satyajit in his hunger strike against the government. The novel presents the image of sincerity, honesty, integrity and consciousness of national interest in the character of Bhashkar. It portrays Gandhigram as a microcosm of India. The benevolence and kindness which are inherent qualities of the Indian race are shown through Bhashkar's loving treatment of the five little Chinese girls. There are references to the novelist's adoration and appreciation of the Gandhian spiritualism and social ethics.

In Nayantara Sahgal's novel, Rich Like Us (1985) Gandhiji's ideals like non-violence, civil disobedience, satyagraha, fasting spirituality, etc. have been portrayed. Sahgal's novels generally capture the essence of the
new political creed in the context of the passing of Gandhism; and the disappearance of the ideological impulsions in the present political scene. As Jasbir Jain views, “Gandhi and Gandhian ideas are a consistent concern with her even as she subjects them to a close scrutiny and at times mockery and ridicule.”

She is a child of Gandhi’s India and her childhood home was steeped in Gandhian thought. For Gandhi the most important concern was the individual, not power, not merely freedom, but the more valuable freedom of the individual enabling him to be human. There is a great deal of admiration for the strength and dignity of the Gandhian process in her novels.

Rich Like Us focuses on the travesties of the Emergency, the days of the Sati, the freedom struggle and its values, Gandhiji’s emancipatory effort, the Second World War, the Partition and the communal frenzy, and the deteriorating landscape of the mind in the post-Independence situation. There are repeated references to Mahatma Gandhi and his assertions to serve the masses. The novelist takes the reader to the scenario of nostalgic pre-partition days and describes the magnetic, transforming influence of Gandhi

on the masses. She has special regard for patriots like Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. She vividly recalls the matchless patriotism, selflessness and sacrifices of freedom fighters before partition and contrasts them with greed, selfishness and shamelessness of contemporary politicians.

Rich Like Us is set against the background of the political emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975, then Prime Minister of India. Nayantara Sahgal works through two alternative narratives of women of two different generations, race and situations. Rose, the second wife of a businessman, dislocated from Punjab on account of the partition and now lying paralysed, and Sonali, a civil servant, educated abroad and brought up in Gandhian India, child of Kashmiri mother and a Maharastrian father.

Sonali is the first casualty of the Emergency as she refuses to finalize a shady deal despite political pressure. Influenced by her strong and uncompromising father, she grew up believing that the democracy of Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru should never be allowed to die. Posted out, depressed and shocked, she falls ill and turns to the memory of her father, who has recently died, for moral and emotional support. As she goes through his papers, she unearths his diary with an account of his grandmother committing *sati*, and newspaper cutting reaching even further back to the
public debate on the issue. For generations women have suffered and Sonali and Rose both are oppressed in their own way.

Rose’s stepson, Dev is busy withdrawing huge sums from his father’s bank by forging his signatures. Another character is Ravi Kachru, Sonali’s colleague and friend who is with the power wielders. In the end Rose is killed and a crippled beggar is the only witness to this heinous crime.

The action of this novel dates back to the period of India’s National Emergency during 1974-75 when the Parliament and Constitution were in state of suspended animation. As Dev, one of the principal characters says early in the novel:

“This emergency is just what we needed. The trouble makers are in jail. An opposition is something we never needed.... Strikes are banned. It’s going to be very good for business.”

Ram L. Surya, his English wife, Rose, his Indian wife Mona, Sonali, the IAS Officer – the narrator, Dev, Ram’s son by Mona, Ravi Kachru, are the principal characters while the Prime Minister and her staff loom large in the background since the declaration of Emergency on 26th June 1975. Sonali, IAS, Joint Secretary in the Union Ministry of Industry in New Delhi,

gets demoted and transferred to U.P. because of her honest adherence to the government’s declared Industrial Policy in rejecting a Multinational Company’s application for a licence to produce ‘a fizzy drink called Happyola’. Sonali is replaced by her former class fellow and present colleague Ravi Kachru. Resigning her post, she was cowed down by a hypocritical government. After severing her connection with official past, Sonali feels ‘much more human’ in touch with Rose.

Mrs. Sahgal adopts the technique of shifting the point of view to the extent of investing the story with a dimension of history; and her knowledge of European and Indian history helps her in elucidating and illustrating the current events in the light of historical wisdom. Thus, Rose’s understanding of Ram’s dislike of the British impresses when she learns that “Indian had to crawl on their bellies if they wanted to pass a White person on that particular stretch of road” in 1919 in Amritsar.

Nevertheless, for her, one of the uses of history is to emphasize or highlight the degree of moral decline that among the once respected and effective Gandhians. The courage that Gandhi had at one time instilled in them seems to have evaporated into thin air during the period of the Emergency declared by Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1975. For example, the
Minister who clears the project of Dev claims that he was a humble follower of Gandhi:

"The Mahatma had inspired him to shed his profession, the law, and the luxuries of life, to follow, a humble disciple, in his footsteps. A humble follower of Gandhi was what he still remained though the journey had taken him and the country from Mahatma to Madam." (Pp. 48-49)

There is a great deal of admiration for the strength and dignity of the Gandhian process and realization of the heavy price the people incur by bypassing it. There is also the awareness that the political method rides roughshod over it and the average man is ill-equipped to understand the Gandhian strategies. The reference of B.G. Hornium joining Gandhiji's civil disobedience movement and Miraben's picking up the spinning wheel are depicted in the novel in a very effective way:

"He (Hornium) joined the civil disobedience marchers in the streets of Bombay, and the English admiral's daughter, now Miraben, who had given up an admiral's daughter's life for an ashram and a spinning wheel." (P-143)

Gandhiji's words "My life is a message" (p. 122), "Do or die" (p. 180), "We must look at the world with calm eyes, though the eyes of the world may be bloodshot" (p. 129), and his concern for mankind are quoted by the
novelist. His idea of ‘ahimsa’ and his concern for the humanity are also portrayed in the novel.

"Wasn’t it time after all these centuries to produce a thought of our own and wasn’t that what Gandhi had done, pack off an empire with an antique idea instead of an atom bomb? And half naked in his middle-class-middle caste skin he’d taken human rights a hundred years ahead in two decades without a glimmer of class war." (Pp.124-125)

Gandhian ideology seeks the maturity to the level of self-transcendence. There is no place in it for any sense of personal ego. But all along the novel, it is highlighted that there is erosion in these values and a rapid taking over of all moral space by ideas of development, with the result that the task of nation-building is neglected. Jasbir Jain rightly points out: "The pattern of governance in free India begins to duplicate colonial power structures." 26

Like in her previous novels, Mrs. Sahgal successfully dovetails the private and the public issues in this novel, too. Besides Sonali, another person to suffer injustice and even death, during the Emergency is Rose, Ram’s English wife, since she has been earlier humiliated and robbed of even a decent living allowance by Dev who keeps drawing money from the

joint account of Ram and Rose by forging the signature of his paralysed father. Sonali’s efforts to help Rose prove ultimately futile. She does, however, cultivate a few friendships, one of which comes to her rescue in the darkness at noon of the National Emergency; Marcella Carlyle asks Sonali to write about the history of Moghal miniatures and art for Brian’s project. Gandhi’s non-violence and insistence on truth provide an ironic backdrop to the sordid and painful developments during the period of Emergency.

In her treatment of violence Mrs. Sahgal comes closer to Gandhiji who also thinks that ultimate values are often ends and means to one another. Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya opines,

“For her also, non-violence, freedom and equality are bound together in a reciprocal end-means relationship. Without non-violence, she affirms, there can be neither freedom nor equality, without freedom there can be neither equality nor non-violence and without equality there can neither be non-violence nor freedom.”

Thus, Rich Like Us offers a critical biography of the country and records changes in the political culture and scenario right from the idealism

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and the hybridity present in India of the freedom struggle through the dictatorial stance of Indira Gandhi, the shift in the goals of the national leadership and the loyalties of the bureaucratic culture. It also takes up the issue of human character and colonialism in the context of ‘sati’. As a piece of socio-political fiction it is worth reading. Sahgal’s creative talent sparkles in this novel. In fact, it is one of the best novels Sahgal has so far written. Sahgal restates the Gandhian dilemma in Rich Like Us.

The study of these select novels shows that Mahatma Gandhi came into the limelight not only on the pages of history and social sciences but also in literature. He gave to the world a new doctrine – a new way of giving expression to people’s demands and claims; a new strength and inspiration to unarmed masses. He spiritualized politics by his strict adherence to the doctrine of truth and non-violence. His powerful impact on the socio-political scene of the 1930s, particularly on the Indian English fiction is immense. Most of the masterpieces of Indian English novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao wouldn’t have been able to see the light of the day, if Gandhi hadn’t exercised his influences on these authors.

Thus, there is a comprehensive and painstaking attempt to represent Gandhian ideology in Indian English fiction. As has been noted above, the
presentation of Gandhian ideology has been done from multiplicities of points of view. There is a full scale presentation and discussion of the ideology in a number of novels. From the points of view of treatment of the ideology some important things need to be mentioned here. First, the complexity of Gandhian ideology is evoked in the novels like Kanthapura and Rich Like Us. These novels present the ideology synthesizing the characteristic Gandhian features: the spiritual and the real. Many other novels, as discussed earlier, try to make a critical assessment of the ideology and its relevance to India. For instance, The Sword and the Sickle, Waiting for Mahatma, Shadow from Ladakh and Some Inner Fury are not only representation of Gandhian ideology but also critical assessment of the same. The critical tone keeps sharpening up as the Gandhian era fades. In the partition novels and the later novels, the critical tone becomes sharper. However, in Nayantara Sahgal’s Rich Like Us there is a return to the adoration.

One may ask what was it in Gandhian ideas that had left so abiding an impression on Indian English novelists. Gandhian ideology lent their novels a frame of reference. It linked them to the soil. It took them to the roots of Indian culture. It created in them a social awareness and helped them look at man as a social animal, an individual with his responses and reactions. It
sent them searching for a national identity. It enabled them to share their intellectual journey through modern Western ideas back to the reinterpretation and renewal of the life of Indian traditions. Thus, Gandhi helped not only to recharge the political life of India but also to reorient Indian literary values.

Each of these writers adopted Gandhi according to his own intellectual inclinations and artistic compulsions. Yet there was a common threat of thought. The freedom struggle of an Indian under the indomitable stewardship of Gandhi gave these novelists a common platform. It was an exciting emotional experience, a Renaissance of nationalist feeling, a new experience of seeing this lone man moulding and manipulating the destiny of India, making history. It revived their interest in the cultural heritage of India they had lost touch with the Western education. It gave them their themes. It gave them their thoughts. It turned them into political novels.

A significant aspect of the Gandhian ideology is the myopic view; because no novel is able to portray Gandhian ideology in its complexities fully. Each novel sees only a particular dimension of Gandhi. In the process, Indian English Fiction is curiously deficient in its presentation of the Gandhian ideology.