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Gandhi and Sardar: The Ironman of India **– Problems in the Representation of** **History in Historical Epics**

*This essay aims to compare and contrast two films that deal with India's struggle for Independence – Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (1982) and *Sardar: The Ironman of India* (1993, directed by Ketan Mehta). Both of these films were inspired by the remarkable leaders in Indian history who led India to its independence in 1947, Mohandas K. Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. This essay will go on to explore as to whether *Gandhi* fulfills various cultural associations necessary in representing the history of a different nation and culture, considering its director and scriptwriter are British, their point-of-view would have been that of an outsider or observer. On the other hand, *Sardar* which was directed by an Indian director who had personal insight into the beliefs and cultural practices of the Indian people presents a more cultural and textured scenario. Whilst examining problems in the representation of history in these two historical epics, this essay also concludes by indicating that the two films not just draw attention to the contribution to the lives and contributions of the two national leaders, but also question the impacts that these leaders had on the nation's history.*

Introduction

Two films that deal with India's struggle for Independence would be Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* directed in 1982 and *Sardar: the Ironman of India* (1993) directed by Indian director, Ketan Mehta. Both of these films were inspired by the remarkable leaders in Indian history who led India to its Independence in 1947, Mohandas K. Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. The uniqueness of the two films is not only contrived by the fact that they were directed by two very different directors of

very different backgrounds but was also due to the fact that both films dealt with a significant and crucial period in Indian history; its Independence and its Partition. Attenborough's *Gandhi* is regarded as a major film about India and was a prestigious production that took twenty years in the making. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, Attenborough began discussions on the making of *Gandhi* in 1963 with the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru but the film only came full circle in 1983 with the support of the Indian government. The script was worked out by John Briley whose credits include *Invasion Quartet* (1961), *Postman's Knock* (1962), and *Children of the Damned* in 1963 making *Gandhi* a significant Indian historical epic when it was released. Many were in agreement including Geoffrey C. Ward when he wrote, "...*Gandhi* has many virtues: It is beautifully shot and handsomely mounted..."¹ allowing it to win eight Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay and Best Actor for Ben Kingsley who played the Mahatma. In addition, Vankin and Whalen (2005) believe that, "Attenborough is indeed faithful to the historical record of Mohandas K. Gandhi's achievements and his revolutionary (in several senses) adherence to nonviolence, which he saw as both a moral imperative and a powerful political weapon."² The film was an international joint co-production between American, British and Indian companies namely; Columbia Pictures in association with Goldcrest Films and International Film Investors and the National Film Development Corporation of India and Indo-British Films. However, though the film was made with great dedication and seriousness it was a film that was funded to fit the commercial framework of cinema and therefore, represented an international perspective of *Gandhi* rather than the painting of an Indian picture of him. One needs to take into account that this film was about an Indian subject and an Indian hero, by which chance the related director and scriptwriter were non-Indians. Therefore, though the film may have been carefully made and structured it lacked the lustre and texture of Indian cultural association towards its retelling. The filmmakers failed to draw upon the subtle representation of Indian traditions to emphasize the importance and significance of various events that signify great importance to the Indian people. As an example, there is only one instance of an awkward reference to cultural practice when *Gandhi* demonstrates with his wife the exchange of their marriage vows.

For the purpose of developing a broader range of discussion I will be bringing in another film as comparison and contrast to *Gandhi*, that of

Ketan Mehta's *Sardar: the Ironman of India*. This Indian produced epic biography is about another Indian leader of the Independence movement, Vallabhbhai Patel, which in a different way covers similar major events as *Gandhi* with regards to the coming of India's Independence. According to Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen, *Sardar* was inspired by Attenborough's *Gandhi* that was made ten years prior, but *Sardar* took on a 'more government-produced authoritative manner towards India's freedom struggle.'³ The screenplay for the film was written by Vijay Tendulkar known for works such as *Ardh Satya* (1983) and *Aakrosh* (1981), while the producer was H.M. Patel who was associated with the Foundation for Films on India's War of Independence and Pan Music & Magazines Ltd. Interestingly, the word 'war' is used in replacement of 'struggle' as it is commonly referred. This reveals a totally different attitude towards Independence as compared to *Gandhi*, though it must be stressed that the beliefs of the producers may not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the filmmaker. Respectively, *Sardar* won a number of national awards such as the Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration and for Best Editing. The attention *Sardar* received in turn caused the production of numerous television programmes during India's 50th year of Independence that were wholly supported by the Indian Congress Party who were the ruling party at the time. However, though the Congress Party initially supported the funding of Hindu films especially the Ramayana epics on Indian television, it also led to the rise in support of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu based right-wing Opposition party which in turn encouraged Hindu fundamentalists to support them. But then *Sardar* was supported by the ruling Congress Party as the film represented the Congress Party and its leaders and it was considered a supportive political role. It represented the political history of India in a way that established the importance of the Congress party in the coming of Independence. Even though there were disagreements between individual members as to how certain events should be represented and how decisions should have been prioritized, nevertheless, it was made by a director who was creative and influenced by a Brechtian style of storytelling. As to which the film momentarily includes a number of Brechtian elements during the initial stages of the film but is later overwhelmed by the historical content of the epic as a nationalist project.

There are several reasons that make these two films unique in their own right. Firstly, the mere fact that *Gandhi* was directed by a British/Western director and its screenplay was written by a British scriptwriter

indicates the possibility that the film would not be able to fulfill various cultural associations necessary in representing the history of a different nation and culture. Though Attenborough had overwhelming respect for Gandhi, his point of view would have been that of an outsider or observer. However, the detailed reference of the screenplay was honourable towards the events that transpired in Gandhi's life with specific relation to the Satyagraha movement shaped by Gandhi's personal beliefs and ideologies. On the other hand, *Sardar* which was directed by an Indian director who had personal insight into the beliefs and cultural practices of the Indian people presents a more cultural and textured scenario. Secondly, though both films select a similar time frame in the recollection of history – events leading up to Independence – the approach taken in presenting the significance of each hero varies and their main contribution to the nation is represented directly. Though both films do not cover the exact historical events, there overlap at a crucial point in history leading up to Independence and Partitioning making the contrasting roles of the two main protagonists' crucial in the achievement of the nation's goal. Third, the continuous paradox within the films that reveal themselves provides an insight into the struggles of each leader as new conflicts arose. For example, the role and function of the Satyagraha movement that emphasized non-violence was constantly put to the test for Gandhi and Patel, Gandhi ended up stopping the movement due to out of control violence that erupted and Patel who was rendered speechless as to actions that needed to be taken to overcome riots in the city. Fourth, Ben Kingsley's portrayal of Gandhi and Paresh Rawal as Sardar Patel were convincing portrayals of the heroes they played reenacting their strengths and quirks throughout the film. This made Gandhi take on a more nostalgic and patriotic account of history whereby *Gandhi* was more reflective and nostalgic as compared to *Sardar* that has a more patriotic and aggressive in tone. The combination of all these factors reflect the selective time period of both films in relating major significant events that effectively relate the story of Gandhi and Patel.

***Gandhi* (1983)**

Attenborough's *Gandhi* covers a screen time of 183 minutes that represents fifty five years of Gandhi's involvement in politics, beginning from 1893 to 1948. This time frame can be divided into three significant periods: 1893 – 1915, depicting Gandhi's life in South Africa and the

Table 1: General Overview of *Gandhi and Sardar*

<p style="text-align: center;">Gandhi</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“... all through history the way of truth and love has always won...”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sardar</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“...strength, honour and truth...”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gandhi’s influence on the masses. ● Gandhi’s ability to mobilize the masses. ● The effectiveness of the Satyagraha movement. ● The paradox between the non-violent movement and the violent outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sardar’s forceful and assertive nature. ● Mass respect towards Sardar’s strengths. ● Sardar’s ability to unite the Princely states. ● The paradox of Sardar’s forceful nature and the non-violent movement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The believability of Gandhi’s portrayal by Ben Kingsley. ● The portrayal of the power of the masses over the British. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The firmness presented in being able to keep the nation united. ● Unrelenting faith in defending the villagers and the nation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A nostalgic feeling for the loss of a great and influential leader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A more patriotic representation of Sardar Patel’s struggles.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The portrayal that non-violence could gain the attention of the British and the International community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unifying more than 550 princely states and territories would have taken great spirit and will.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A cause and effect trace of history develops the narrative along the same plotline. ● Suspense and surprise is not present as the story unfolds in a linear manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initial Brechtian setup that leads into a conventional or classic narrative of cause and effect. ● Sardar also follows a linear course as there are no surprising elements in the story.

early beginnings of the satyagraha movement. 1915 – 1942 signified Gandhi’s return to India and his association into politics and the Congress Party. This later led to the execution of the Satyagraha movement first towards *swaraj* or self-rule and later to Independence. Leading up to Independence and finally 1942 – 1948, representing the years leading up to Independence, the Partition of Pakistan and finally Gandhi’s assassination. However, what needs to be noted is that the film did not begin with Gandhi’s childhood in Gujarat, nor does it recollect his study of law in London, nor his unsuccessful career as a barrister in India, but it begins in 1948 with Gandhi at the age of 79 walking slowly in his gardens heading for prayers. This was during a time when Gandhi faced

numerous conflicts in the political struggle of New India after Independence for whom he had personally initiated and the personal humiliation and personal ill treatment he was being subjected to when his ideals did not materialize. Tragically, within the first five minutes of the film Gandhi is shot by a Hindu extremist and dies. The film begins with the tragic death of Gandhi, the end of a hero whom we have not began to know and international coverage of his funeral procession along King's Way in India. Divided into the three periods of Gandhi's historical experiments (as he would term them) the film then takes us back to the first phase of Gandhi's life that span from 1893 to 1915, where we see a younger version of Gandhi sitting idealistically on a train in South Africa. Smart in his suite and with book in hand we realize that this is an educated, accomplished and successful young man. However, things change drastically for young Mr. Gandhi when he is thrown off the train due to racial discrimination by the White South Africans. This experience marks the turning point of the first half of the film and of Gandhi's early years in South Africa whereby after this humiliation he is determined to fight the injustice. Gandhi decides that Indians should no longer be treated as third class citizens and opposes policies implemented by General Smuts. Thus the formation and formulation of Gandhi's Satyagraha movement, non-violent non-cooperation, took root as resistance to British rule and treatment of Indians in South Africa. The film transpires as Gandhi peacefully fights for equal rights and better treatment from the British. As a result Gandhi ends up in jail, leading up to his meeting with General Smuts who finally acknowledges Gandhi's demand for a better way of life for South African Indians.

The second half of the film continues with Gandhi's return to India in 1915 where he is received and grabbed by the Congress leaders, who force him into the position of helping them (the Congress Party), and notably India, in gaining Independence from the British based on his experiences in South Africa. This was a massive task for someone who had been away from India for more than twenty years and did not know enough of India to help India. This causes Gandhi to go on a quest to find the true India, a discovery that shocks and saddens him as the level of poverty and exploitation of the villagers is widespread. Gandhi pledges himself to helping the villagers and improving the lives of the people of India, especially from the grass roots. Through Satyagraha, Gandhi aimed at restructuring society and its economy to a way of life that was self-dependent, of swaraj, self-rule and freedom. Examples of Gandhi's early efforts was with the setting up of ashrams, or communities, that was

void of caste and improving the life style of the Untouchables or as he termed them, Harijans. Contrastingly, the Untouchables never thought of Gandhi as their savior. However, as the film unfolds more complex issues of politics and oppression by the British are revealed by the implementation of various tax laws on the villagers, causing Gandhi's opposition in Champaran and his first court appearance. This is the period during which Gandhi and his Satyagraha movement is marked by a number of very important and significant events in India's surge for Independence. One of the incidents that bring the attention of the British and the International community is the Amritsar massacre in 1917 where hundreds of villagers were murdered during a peaceful gathering. Next came the Chauri Chaura massacre when a peaceful group of marchers were assaulted by police that had them retaliating by burning down the police station. It was because of this incident that caused Gandhi to temporarily stop his non-violent movement. The cause being that non-violence seemed to be more violent in retaliation. The 1930 Salt March was also another significant attempt by Gandhi to cut off, if not reducing British hold on Indian economy. In between Gandhi's satyagraha demonstrations was his involvement with the Congress Party who constantly sought his advice in matters relating to the British. His closest confidantes would be Patel and Nehru, whom would become his successor and the first Prime Minister of India. Based on this fact, the Congress Party saw it to their benefit to appropriate Gandhi's Satyagraha. Gandhi never considered it as appropriation but the embracing of a new way of life and he was in full support of it. He was in full support of India gaining Independence and if Satyagraha should be the movement that enables India or the Congress Party to achieve this goal, then it should fully be utilized. The British were stumped with Gandhi's non-violent tactics and had no idea of how to handle the situation and the only way they knew how to react was by violent suppression of the masses. This was what caused the Amritsar massacre in 1917 when General Dyer opened fire on a peaceful gathering of villagers in the market square. The death toll was in the hundreds with thousands injured. This massacre was a significant turning point in the British's relationship and treatment with India and Indians. The international community condemned the killings and the call for self-rule and Independence by the Indian people grew stronger.

The third half of the film spans from 1942 to 1947 the final years of Gandhi's life leading up to India's Independence. During this period, the relationship between Gandhi, leaders of the Congress Party and Jinnah

were strained as they tried to come to an agreement on the issues of Independence and distribution of power. Jinnah was determined for a separate Pakistan, an idea that Gandhi had opposed to all along as he wanted a united India, of the nation and of the people. Unfortunately, as riots and violence break out across the country between Hindus and Muslims the Congress leaders take the upper hand and agree to Partition ignoring Gandhi's views and wishes. As Independence was celebrated on 14 August 1948, Gandhi withdrew from the centre of politics but when riots broke out following independence he reacted by suppressing the violence through his fast. However, due to Gandhi's support towards the Muslims he encountered the wrath of the Hindu extremists and finally on January 30, 1948 he was shot at point blank range.

Gandhi is explicit about the issue of representing Gandhi in the film where within the first minute a prologue of the filmmakers clearly declare that, "No man's life can be encompassed in one telling... least of all Gandhi's, whose passage through life was so entwined with his nation's struggle for freedom. There is no way to give each event its allotted weight, to recount the deeds and sacrifices of all the great men and women to whom he and India owe such immense debts. What can be done is to be faithful in spirit to the record of his journey, and to try to find one's way to the heart of the man..."⁴ Even before the film begins the filmmakers acknowledge that there could have been various ways of how the film could have been told and presented about Gandhi. However, this confession is not one of inadequacy but more of a feeling that other possibilities are possible when dealing with the large essence that is history, one spanning fifty five years of Gandhi's life. The film is mainly structured around presenting an exposition on the evolution of Gandhi's Satyagraha movement as a political stratagem. This was due to the fact that satyagraha was central to Gandhi and the Independence movement. A term that meant *non-violent, non-cooperation* that was a combination of two Sanskrit words, *satya* meaning truth and *agraha* meaning taking, seizing, or holding, the implication being that 'holding to the truth'.⁵ It emphasizes on the use of non-violent, non-cooperative action to gain desired needs, in terms of these events it deals directly with India's desire for Independence.

One problem with the historical epic is that issues of differentiating between the fiction, storytelling element, and the factual elements tend to blend together as one is dependent on the other. Gandhi as the protagonist in the film takes on two roles, one of the characters in the story and the other of illustrating the factual realities associated with

Gandhi the person. As a classical approach, Gandhi's psychology is defined by his actions as he confronts his various experiences or 'experiments'. Initially, Gandhi begins as a young man full of idealism of the world as he perceives the world to be equal and just. This sense of idealism is quickly dashed as he is thrown off a train in South Africa in 1893 due to racial discriminations. This experience instills within Gandhi a desire for justice, a need to fight for his rights as he sees the injustice in which the immigrants, especially the Indians, are subjected to. His purpose now is to fight for equal rights, not just for himself but for the other Indian immigrants of South Africa. Gandhi takes up the fight for injustice as his cause, with his immediate goal of equal rights his goal. However, this is not as easy as it may sound. In which effect, Gandhi is subjected to various conflicts and obstacles in getting his voice heard. The first consequence of his defiance is the beatings that he encounters by the South African police as he tries to initiate a campaign of non-violence by burning the travel passes that are compulsory for all Indian immigrants. As Gandhi takes up the fight against the British government of South Africa, he begins to initiate a non-violent non-cooperative movement and lifestyle known as Satyagraha. The satyagraha movement will come to encompass the sum of the film as it traces Gandhi's satyagraha movement from South Africa to India and the use of satyagraha in fighting for swaraj, self-rule and later for Independence. The film is solely dependent on Gandhi and his movement and does not waver out of that framework. The unifying theme about Gandhi is the fact that the conflicts and obstacles that he faces inspires him to react in a satyagrahi manner and this in turn unites the film from beginning to end. Though the film begins with Gandhi's death it functions more as a tool of isolating and identifying the importance of the Mahatma. As Gandhi's understanding of Satyagraha takes shape and grows we see him setting up an ashram or community for those seeking refuge. Here, Gandhi believes in the equality for all and expresses the importance to American reporter, Chris Walker, as Gandhi shows him around. Gandhi's intention of bringing in an American/International reporter is due to the need to bring international awareness and recognition to the plight of the Indian immigrants to the international community.

The film moves on to Gandhi's arrival in India after twenty years away. He awkwardly stands amongst hundreds of supporters who have heard of his success in South Africa. When asked to give a speech, all Gandhi can say is a hesitant, 'Thank you' much to the surprise of the

awaiting Congress leaders who have come to greet him. Gandhi is swept away by the Congress leaders, later to be referred to as appropriated by post-colonial theorist Partha Chatterjee, not only into the country but into the stream of politics. Gandhi's initial intention in the film was to set up his own law firm, but this is dashed when Professor Gokhale forces him to take on the plight of Indian and its people. Unquestioningly, Gandhi agrees and he is off on a quest to know the true India. But true India shocks and saddens Gandhi and forces Gandhi to pledge himself to fighting for the rights of the villagers and the poor. Gandhi took it upon himself to fight for the grassroots of the nation. The first example of Gandhi's pledge takes him to the village of Champaran where the villagers are starving of famine because of British land taxes. Gandhi proposes a way of stopping British hold on the economy of the villagers and tries a new method of self-reliance and self-dependency, the spinning of *khadi*. Early scenes of Gandhi and his *khadi* making attempts are quite humorous as it is traditionally not a man's job. But the need to break free from oppression is to be self-reliant on all levels of society, and that was what Gandhi proposed; that everyone spun *khadi* for their own personal use. Due to Gandhi's success at drawing attention to the Champaran campaign, the Congress leaders decided to invite Gandhi into the Congress Party and during his first public speech declared the call for self-rule from the British.

The plot line of the film is based along two structures; one of Gandhi's satyagraha movement and the other, of the journey to Independence by the Congress Party. This plotline is further broken up according to the time periods used within the film. And it soon leads to the establishment of satyagraha as a national movement by the Congress Party and where in turn it is appropriated into the struggle for Independence, tracing a similar line to its historical realities. The ultimate goal in the end for Gandhi is for swaraj from the British and freedom its true sense. But the film does not reveal more than the events that take place in history. It does not reveal the establishment of swaraj in any of the villagers or its influence on the life style of the grassroots. It does not reveal the unity that once existed before the riots that take place and the cause of it all becoming unclear. Each scene that embodies Gandhi demonstrates the setting up of an event or incident that instigates a later reaction or response. The scenes are very matter-of-fact and deals directly with the histories involved as the time and place revealed in the film are central to Gandhi's movements. This causes the film to lack emotion and compassion from the audience though we see the

Table 2: Cause and Effect in Gandhi based on Satyagraha

Event/Incident	Gandhi/Satyagraha Response
(1893) Gandhi being thrown off the train in South Africa due to racial discrimination	A peaceful protest of the burning of passes in response to new Immigration laws.
Gandhi and Charlie's verbal abuse as they walk the streets of South Africa	To be brave and stand up against abuse. A small victory.
On setting equal rights for all with no regards to caste	The setting up of his ashram, or community where all men/women are treated equal.
Gandhi's first mass gathering to contest General Smuts's new Immigration laws.	A peaceful gathering establishing the unity of the Hindus and Muslims of South Africa.
Demonstration at the mines demanding better working conditions.	A peaceful march that stops the mine owner from taking action.
Gandhi is imprisoned.	Gandhi meets General Smuts and they are a peaceful and calm discussion requesting for the better rights.
Gandhi returns to India and sees the level of poverty throughout.	Inspires to fight for the rights of the villagers and the poor.
Gandhi visits Champaran where the villagers are affected by the new higher tax implementation though they have no cotton to sell.	Gandhi is arrested and goes off peacefully where in the end he is released.
Violence has broken out across India after Gandhi is jailed.	The British release him to stop the violence through non-violence.
The 'Quit India' movement	Gandhi preaches to a mass crowd on the need for Independence and unity among the Hindus and the Muslims.
The burning of English cloth.	As a means of setting up a self-sufficient nation and a self-sufficient industry.
Chauri Chaura marchers.	Gandhi calls off non-violence movement and fasts till death for the violence to stop, he succeeds.
(1930) Salt March, Gandhi proposes to stop British hold on Indian economy.	Gandhi succeeds by drawing international attention to the plight of the Indian people.
The beatings at Dharasana Salt Works	Non-violence prevails.
Riots and violence break out across the country as Independence looms closer and Partition is unavoidable.	Gandhi fasts to stop the riots and succeeds.

events unfold to us it is just becomes additional information. The instances that give us insight into Gandhi's personality such as his relationship with his wife and family and into his personal emotions and dilemmas are few. It is soon established that Gandhi's ultimate goal is freedom, but not just freedom from the British but freedom from all dominance of life's attachments, Gandhi's scenes of marches and fast demonstrate the willingness to sacrifice for a bigger cause and to inflict or affect human consciousness or guilt to their own acts of selfishness. Thought subtle in its representation, that was what *Gandhi* (and Gandhi) tried to show, the true meaning of satyagraha. The film moves along and continuous with the unfolding of this technique and not emphasis is given to any deeper context of Gandhi's life or culture. There are only three instances there is personal insight into Gandhi's life that is not related to the satyagraha movement, the first, when we see his children after he is beaten in South Africa, the second, during his angry outburst to Kasturbai who refuses to wash the latrine, and finally during Gandhi and Kasturbai's reenactment of their marriage vows for Walker. But these reenactments were never the purpose of this film, and its central theme remained that of Gandhi's satyagraha movement. Therefore, this made the ending and the closure of Gandhi and his life both a success and a failure, happy yet sad. The success of his ultimate goal and dream of freedom and Independence was marred by the Partition of Pakistan. An effect that Gandhi knew would not bode well for the future. As the resolution of the film unfolds it ends with Gandhi's ashes being poured into the river, assuming it of the Ganges. There seems to be a sense of irony at play here, a similarity in Gandhi's significance and the mystical belief of Hinduism towards the Ganges River.

As described in the above table, the scene sequences unfold according to the initiated events and movement. Beside beautiful cinematography, the shots do not vary much and is maintained at wide angles, long shots and medium close ups of Gandhi and his compatriots.

Comprehensibly, the unfolding of historical events in *Gandhi* is the unfolding of the film's thematics. With the main thematics based on the Satyagraha movement, the film tracks the events as each event occurs. The thematics relate the manner in which Gandhi was able to influence, inspire and mobilize the mass of India into forcing the British to give Independence. It should also be acknowledged the due to Gandhi's success at mobilizing the people, he created the largest political democracy in the world.⁶ The films are interesting because though

they both depict the struggle for Independence and cover the same period of historical events, they reveal the different functions and effects that the two main characters; Gandhi and Patel had on India's gain of Independence. Gandhi is presented in a manner that is easy to follow as it puts Gandhi and his Satyagraha movement in a cause effect manner. Though the film begins with Gandhi's assassination, and takes us into flashback we recognize that something tragic has occurred to an important person. Though as of yet, the audience is unable to identify who and why. So why does the film solely concentrate on the satyagraha movement? This could go back to the whole notion of putting history onto film, the large expanse of Gandhi's political career ranged for more than fifty five years till his death. The complexity of representing every single detail on film would be too much for a historical epic or an audience to take in in once sitting. Therefore, Gandhi's major contribution to India and society was identified, that being the satyagraha movement and his contribution towards India's Independence. Compressing history is a daunting task and as the filmmakers of Gandhi declare from the very beginning 'No man's life can be encompassed in one telling.' As a film Ghandi accomplished what it set out to do; to introduce a significant figure in Indian history, who for a while managed to unite the masses to one goal – Independence and freedom.

In conclusion, Attenborough's Gandhi achieved its intended purpose to reflect 'the spirit of the man,' in other words to present to the audience the essence of Gandhi's beliefs and ideologies in his satyagraha movement as well as its ability to mobilize the masses. There is no political stance in the film except a direct exposition of historical events related to Gandhi's satyagraha. The structure that is used was classical and direct in its exposition with non-glaring techniques to move the story forward. One element that it lacked was the use of orchestral score rather than classical Indian music within the film, though there was use of the sitar. Most of the shots used were medium close-ups as well as long shots of scenic backgrounds. The opening of the film was typical in establishing the character in his setting. After which the scenes are broken up into closer views of action and reaction, while setting, lighting, music, composition and camera movement enhance the process of goal formulation, struggle and decision. One interesting shot was when Gandhi is thrown/beaten while in South Africa, Ben Kingsley demonstrates the same type of stance. The lighting throughout the film is consistent in using key lights with shots ranging from knees-up framing and medium close-ups; the angle is consistently straight on, at should or chin level. Long shots are

Table 3: Segmentation of Gandhi & Sardar

Segmentation/ Time frame	Gandhi	Sardar
Segment 1/Setup 1893 – 1915	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gandhi and the formation and implementation of Satyagraha in South Africa 	Setup: Present Flashback 1: 1945 Flashback 2: 1915
Segment 2 1915 – 1930s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The believability of Gandhi's portrayal by Ben Kingsley • The portrayal of the power of the masses over the British 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patel joins Gandhi • Bardoli campaign, opposition of land taxes
Segment 3 1930s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt March • (1932) Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Round Table Conference, London • (1933) Arrests 	There are no references to the 1930s
Segment 4 1942 – 1947	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quit India Movement • Opposing Partition • Mountbatten, Nehru & Congress Party • Communal riots (Calcutta/Noakhali) • Independence & Partition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simla Conference • Mountbatten, the Cabinet Mission and negotiations towards Independence & the Partition of Pakistan • Patel and his movement to unite the Princely states • Independence & Partition • Communal riots
Segment 5/Closure 1948/1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1948) Gandhi's assassination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1950) Patel dies of a stroke

used specifically for scenic shots and of mass gatherings and crowds. Classical continuity editing without any abrupt jump cuts or fast cuts.

Sardar: The Ironman of India (1993)

On the other hand, Ketan Mehta's *Sardar* opening scene begins with present day India amidst the sounds of a bustling and busy city. As the film takes us to the streets of India where it opens on images of poverty that is still rampant in the country and simultaneously a woman is being beaten in the middle of the street. An elderly man who comes upon this

aggravation tries to intervene but is then upon by others and in the end fighting breaks out. As the fights heighten, the police arrive in force and the people are beaten into submission or repression. The elderly man slips away on a *fat-fat* (a three-wheeled auto rickshaw) and disembarks with the drivers final words lingering, "Sometimes slavery was better than this freedom." How could a man from an Independent nation pass that type of judgment? What has occurred in society to bring about that type of conclusion? The elderly man enters an office that is laid with computers and modern technology; however the news on television is announcing that more riots have broken out across the city. This subtly indicates that nothing in India has changed since Independence and fighting and violence still continue on a daily basis. The elderly man (known as the scriptwriter) is disillusioned by the current situation and is disheartened to continue with the project but as the producers try to console him, a box of old photographs fall around them reflection the images of past leaders Gandhi, Patel, Nehru, and Bose as they litter the floor. This nostalgic moment indicates that the story must be told in honour of the 'fallen' heroes of the past, they need to be remembered. The technique employed by Ketan Mehta is very Brechtian in style as it presents current social qualms in a detachment manner, through the use of improvised scenes and dialogue coming from the television (as an external source). It also employs the element of fictional telling of historical figures that constitute the principle of Brecht's historicisation; where the story is told from a contemporary point of view before it focuses on historical stories with parallel themes. But the central element of *Sardar* will soon lead to the focus being on a single protagonist, that of Vallabhbhai Patel. The implementation of two flashbacks, first of Patel being released from Poona jail in 1945, and the second to 1915, to Patel's early beginnings in politics and his involvement with Gandhi. The purpose for the use of double flashback is first to single out and focuses on the main character of the film, and the second to trace the beginnings of the protagonist's story.

Sardar can also be divided into three major time periods in Patel's history: the first ranging from 1917 – 1928, explaining how Patel came to be known as the Ironman of India, followed by 1945 – 1947, during which time Patel was actively involved in the negotiations and discussions for the Independence of India, and finally from 1947 – 1950 that saw his contribution in bringing together a united India before his death in 1950. The first half of the film reveals that Patel's involvement in politics and

Gandhi did not begin until 1917 after he had heard Gandhi speak regarding self-rule and freedom. This caused to resign from his successful municipal job and law practice and take on the massive task of assisting Gandhi in his satyagraha movement. The years after 1917 were turbulent years as British landlords began to increase land taxes on the villagers and Patel was constantly challenged with having to resolve these disputes. The first being the dispute regarding land taxes for the district of Kiara, which is not revealed in detail in the film. However, the satyagraha movement in Bardoli in 1928 was the event that instigated Patel firmly as the Sardar of India. The British landlords had decided to increase the land taxes and the villagers could not pay. As defiance, the villagers would hide in their homes and wait for the landlords to leave so that they would not have to pay taxes. In retaliation, the landlords employed mercenaries to pillage the villagers' homes and confiscate their belongings. The resistance of the Bardoli villagers leads to Patel driving through the burning of crops as conflicts between the villagers and the landlords grew. But still they remained firm against the demands of the landlords until in the end the British landlords were forced to invite Patel and the villagers to negotiate terms. Patel's acknowledgement of his achievement was when he commented, "Sir, you settle the farmers rights, we will settle your honour." The tactics that Patel took was of non-violence and it was an effective strategy against the British land lords. Patel's firmness in defying the British in Bardoli gave him the name – Sardar.

The second half of the film begins nineteen and a half minutes after the credits at the Simla Conference in 1945. Early negotiations for Independence have begun but conflict between leaders of the Congress Party and Jinnah of the Muslim League disallows any form of agreement, causing the conference to be declared a failure. During this period, Gandhi has a private meeting with the Congress leaders and informs them that he has already discussed issues of Partition with Jinnah and in order to keep the nation united he would like Jinnah to be made the first Prime Minister of India. However, the Congress leaders are reluctant and refuse to give in to Jinnah's demands, especially Patel whose hostility towards Jinnah is evident. During the next meeting, the Viceroy proposes two plans of action: one, for a united India where power is divided and shared, the second, the formation of two nations. Both plans are rejected on the basis that the new nations would be too weak and the country would be divided. Thus, no results are achieved. The sequencing of events that take place during this period is in chronological order based on the various

negotiations and discussions that take place during the conferences and meetings that take place. Patel's assertive and firm mannerism during this period further enhanced his reputation of being a person who stood to his principles – strength, honour and truth.

Table 4: Sequence of Negotiations Represented in
Sardar: the Ironman of India

Year	Negotiation	Outcome
1945	Simla Conference; proposal of two plan action, a) a single Union, b) two separate states	Failed due to disagreement on Partition status.
1946	Cabinet Mission's proposal, still stressed on the idea of two separate nations, the concept of Groupings Interim Government, preparation for the transfer of power. May & June proposals for considerations, the proposal for the transfer of power and the two-nation plan The Cabinet Mission, the Congress Party disagrees and Jinnah is left in the lurch	Could be considered as long as there was a single nation. Congress consents to the June proposals of a separate nation. Gandhi still does not agree, but Congress goes ahead. Independence is in the wind.
1947	The Calcutta Killings/Riots in response to the Two-nation plan as British to leave by June 1948, Mountbatten sworn in as last Viceroy Negotiations and discussions unfold The plan for Independence is finalized and Partition is confirmed Partition and Independence declared for 15 August 1947. Mass migration causes riots and violence to break out across the country and borders Patel leads the delegation to unite the Princely states	Congress finally consents to a separate Pakistan to stop killings Mountbatten forcing Jinnah to comply. Patel relentless in denying Pakistan any benefits. Military forces are brought in. Patel succeeds in uniting more than 550 states into a united India.

As the third half of the film unfolds, it reveals the dependency of Mountbatten as the last Viceroy and the Congress Party on Patel's strength to unite the nation. Mountbatten forms the States Department and requires Patel to unite the nation forty five days before Independence. During this period, Patel negotiations, demands and convinces more than five hundred and fifty princely states to form a united India. It is not a feat that is easily accomplished within forty five days, but takes Patel a further two years to accomplish. Within this time we also see the deteriorating friendship between Patel and Nehru as their ideologies and beliefs contradict one another. It is only with Gandhi's death in 1948 that in the end unites these two friends. Patel sense of loyalty to the nation and to the people sometimes led him through contradicting actions. But he was firm in his decision as he fought and struggled for the people. The final half of the film reveals Patel's deteriorating health as he continues to unite the princely states. His final accomplishment would be the unification of Kashmir before he died of a stroke in 1950.

Sardar too is very direct in its exposition of the life of Patel. It takes on a heavy dependency on revealing Patel's role towards Independence as it takes into account his policies and ideologies as the forceful implementer of these Gandhi's policies, as well as that of the Congress Party. However, the portrayal of Patel's contradictory response to non-violence is at times humorous though conflicting to the true nature of a satyagrahi (one who practices satyagraha). The initial stages of *Sardar* begins with a more Brechtian technique of storytelling where Ketan Mehta uses various elements to introduce present day social issues such as violence, poverty and women's' right. Dana B. Polan states that this kind of realism defines itself not immediately as relation of one social process to a text which would represent them, but as a relation of one social text (ideology; a society's representations of itself; its mythologies) to another text which quotes the first, and, so, alters it.⁷ However, by setting up the film in this way he is declaring the fact that even after fifty years of Independence nothing in India has changed. The incident when a box full of old photographs of past leaders falls around the producers (cum actors) and the scriptwriter reflects a nostalgic view of fallen leaders. An event that may signify more than what the film intends to discuss, have all the past leaders of Independence fallen from grace? Is there a need to remember them and their contributions? This is when the film begins its turning point leading to one of the leaders of the Independence movement, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as he is released

from Poona Jail in 1945. The film takes us to 1945 prior with the intention of introducing us to the protagonist of the film. By singling Patel from the many Congress leaders of the time, the film takes its focus. As Patel joins Gandhi who is in prayer, Patel's observation stance from behind Gandhi also establishes the fact that Patel does not stand parallel to Gandhi, but is always a step behind. His function is viewed more as Gandhi's protector and firm supporter more prominent than all the others, including Nehru. However, as the film takes us into the first half of the film it takes us back to the early beginnings of Patel's involvement in politics and the days prior to his joining Gandhi's Satyagraha movement. The year 1917 marks the monumental change in Patel's life when after a successful career as a municipal council and a barrister he hears Gandhi speak and is entranced by Gandhi's course for freedom and independence. Patel turns in his Western dress for that of the khadi and volunteers to assist Gandhi as the first Satyagrahi.

Throughout the film Ketan Mehta uses various archival footage and newspaper clippings also create a tableau effect that is consistent with Brecht's storytelling techniques. The narrative is not 'cut up' per se but segmented according to the importance or the significance of the events that take place. It takes on a slight documentary like effect when the reality of the situation is demonstrated based on the recollection of actual events. However, as the film unfolds Ketan Mehta's opening Brechtian style fades out with the detailed descriptions of history. This is a complexity that tends to befall most historical films as the burden of representing factual events overwhelm the telling of the story. The knowledge of Sardar as the Iron man of India is only stressed at the beginning of the story and loses its momentum as the story flows. But then, Sardar takes on an interesting approach of representing various contradicting paradoxes within the unfolding of Patel's history. Most of these contradicting affects appear in the dialogues that Patel exchanges while being a believer of Satyagraha. As a satyagraha, non-violence is a way of life, in both attitude and practice but Patel's approach in the implementation of various policies and actions take on contradicting influences. As D.V. Tahmankar states, "Patel was one of the principal makers of new India."⁸

Therefore, though Ketan Mehta's *Sardar* may have initially begun as a critique of social realism it soon became overwhelmed with the large essence of retelling history that final dominates the rest of the film. However, Mehta is effective in his storytelling as the film not only introduces the audience to the hero of history and the film but also questions

Table 5: Contradicting Scenes and Dialogue in *Sardar*

Scene	Dialogue	Exposition
(33) Patel is stopped on the road as he heads to the office. He has a shot road-side discussion with the Viceroy who is in the car.	"Politics, they are to make the impossible, possible."	This scene indicates that anything is possible in the name of politics (may it be right or wrong).
(34) Patel is discussing the May 16 proposals with Maulana Azad and Nehru. Nehru rejects the proposal claiming that the Congress Party should stick to their main principles.	"Mere principles are not enough in politics." "Recognize the need of the hour."	This further indicates that principles do not play an important role when discussing politics."
(40) Patel and a few members of the Congress Party laugh at Jinnah's humiliation during the Cabinet Mission negotiations as Jinnah is tricked into accepting the conditions.	"This is what politics is all about."	The mere sense of trickery in politics is considered a norm, but is it not scrupulous.
(41) Patel receives a phone call reporting that riots in Bombay are spreading. He tells the caller to "do what is necessary."	The caller replies, "What about non-violence?" Patel puts down the phone.	The conflicting dilemma that Patel faces in enforcing the law and keeping to his principles.
(56) The Indian Congress Party Conference and Patel criticize the behaviour of the Muslims. He declares that he will respond accordingly.	"A sword for a sword it shall be."	The fact that Patel is willing to use force in order to achieve peace is in itself contradictory.
(72) Nehru expresses his despair over Partitioning.	"What's right and what's wrong, time will tell."	The actions that Patel take are conflicting in itself as he faces the personal dilemma of principles and the need to act.
(77) Congress leaders confirm Partitioning	"Sometimes under duress, one has to make decisions which are bitter and painful."	
(135) Patel declines the involvement of outsiders (UN) in deciding for India.	"No price is too heavy to protect one's self respect."	Patel's willingness to do anything for his people and country.

the role and influence of the satyagraha movement on Patel's life. Could Patel be considered a true believer of satyagraha? Though his principles were based on the philosophies of strength, trust and truth his implementation techniques of non-violence is in doubt. Though the film initially sets up the story with two flashbacks, the flashbacks function more as a specifying tool rather than that of technique. It focuses on the protagonist and tells the story from his point of view. The narrative is structured in a linear manner though jumping across a number of time frames; the 1930s of Patel's life are not identified. Patel's role was more of that represented behind Gandhi where he would set up and prepare the crowds and the villagers to listen to Gandhi speak. As Gandhi claimed of Patel in D. V. Tahmankar (1970), "The task of dealing with the princes was truly formidable, but I am convinced that Sardar was the only man who could have coped with it."⁹ Actual locations would have been used to emphasize the reality of the events taking place. It was during this period that most of the Congress leaders were in and out of jail.

Partha Chatterjee and the New India

The two major films discussed have presented a lengthy account of India's long struggling journey towards Independence, a discussion that has presented the recollection and representation of unfolding events in Indian history. Therefore, how does our knowledge of history contribute to our understanding of New India? The next half of this chapter will investigate the claims presented by renowned post-colonial Indian theorist, Partha Chatterjee and his critical observations towards the formation of New India. Chatterjee is the key author of several books on post-colonial history such as, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton UP, 1993) and *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Zed Books, 1986) to name a few. Chatterjee reflects Gandhi's role in the Independence movement and the influence and ideologies of the Satyagraha movement. This will then lead to a discussion on his criticism towards Nehru and the Congress Party as to their policies and ideologies that were of contradiction to Gandhi's in their haste to form a New India. Generally, Chatterjee believes that Gandhi's ideologies for an Independent India were not practical; however the implementation of Nehru and the Congress Party's socialist ideologies did not improve the nation socially or economically. But before I go into detail about Chatterjee's claims

allow me to present an overall picture of the situation in New India. The period after India's Independence in 1947 took on a totally different political, social and economical approach, one that greatly differed from that of the prior movement. The *Satyagraha* movement of non-violence, non-cooperation prior to Independence was inspired by Gandhi in his struggle for the demand of *swaraj* or self-rule from the colonizing British. It focused on the development and self-rule of all levels of Indian society, with emphasis on the agricultural development of village based industries. However, the turn after Independence proceeded down a more socialist movement presented by Nehru and the ruling leadership due to socialist influence that was coming in from communist based countries such as China and Russia.¹⁰ The socialist movement presented by the Congress Party emphasized on the progress and modernity of the nation through industrial development. They wanted to create a new state ideology as they were of the opinion that, "social justice for all cannot be provided within the old framework because it is antiquated, decadent and incapable of dynamism,"¹¹ thus rejecting Gandhi and his ideologies altogether. Therefore, under this new state leadership, it was believed that through industrialization, a life of the state could be achieved, with equality for all, its ultimate goal. Unfortunately, as Partha Chatterjee states, '... the task is more difficult than what the founding fathers of socialism had visualized.'¹²

According to Ajit Mozoomdar the years between the 1900 to the 1950s revealed a population that existed in conditions of extreme poverty; malnutrition and illiteracy. The emergence of Gandhi and *Satyagraha* in the early 1915s slowly brought about agricultural change among the villages and the peasantry. Through *Satyagraha* and *Swaraj*, self-rule, Gandhi managed to establish and lay down the foundation for self-sufficient communities through the making of *khadi*, the spinning of clothe for personal use. But the implementation of industrialization policies moved away from the needs of the people and ended up focusing on industrial progress and modernity. Though the last fifty years after Independence has seen a slight improvement in these areas, it has not managed to eradicate this situation, and due to the implementation of industrialization policies by the leadership of the state, there has been a decline in social growth throughout India, mainly effecting those from the villages and of the peasantry.¹³ The leadership of the state believes that India need to move forward in terms of progress and modernity through industrialization and the creation of massive infrastructures were implemented. Though the Congress Party put forward a National Planning

Committee who structured a two stage, five year development plan, it was unable to maintain its intended objectives.¹⁴ The stages would have been from the years 1951 to 1956 and the development of agriculture, and 1956 to 1961 with an emphasis on industrialization. However, with commitment to create an enlarged industrial base, heavy industry such as iron and steel were given priority and preference. With the state controlling the public sector of industrialization and infrastructure, the private sector of small traders and agriculture were being neglected. Funds that were supposed to raise agricultural output were diverted to soon to be inefficient 'white elephants'.¹⁵ What could have caused this social and economic change? Why were the implemented Satyagraha and Swaraj movements not carried on? Why was emphasis on industrialization prioritized before the needs of the people?

As well renowned post-colonial theorist, Partha Chatterjee points out this can be viewed from two perspectives; one, Gandhi's idealism and what he had hoped to achieve, and two, the New India that took form under Nehru's wing. Chatterjee believes that Gandhi's Satyagraha movement was an idealistic approach towards rebuilding a new India. It had faith while he was alive, but the idealism was lost after his death. Chatterjee believes that Gandhi's Satyagraha was appropriated by the Congress Party to gain Independence, but the bigger picture would be the fact that Gandhi's goals was for the reformation of society and not merely for independence. He wanted true freedom for Indians, Hindus and Muslims alike and for India. However, Gandhi's utopian idealism was also refuted by the Congress party when as events moved closer to the granting of Independence his ideals were rejected as being unsuitable. Chatterjee further questions Nehru's role in the formation of India as Gandhi's successor, where he tried to keep up the ideals but were more influenced by Socialist thought from Marxist and the practices of China. Thus in the end neglecting the original focus of Gandhi's movement that focused on the Indian grass roots and leaving them behind.

As a leading Indian political philosopher who criticizes Western theories of Third World nationalism,¹⁶ Chatterjee observes India's journey pre- and post- Independence, he identifies how India managed to effect and displaces the modernist thinking laid down by the British while under the influence of Gandhi's Satyagraha movement, but finally succumbing to the very same power after Independence under the new leadership of the state. The transformation of Indian nationalism by the ruling classes into a state ideology took into account the life of the nation and moving it in the direction of 'universal modernization', contrary to its earlier beliefs

of creating a self-sustaining and Independent India. But the failure of the ruling government has raised much criticism as to the policies implemented and what could have been. Based on his observations of India's pre-Independence movement through Gandhi and Nehru's post-Independence policies, Chatterjee contemplates the social and economic failure of breaking Indian society out of poverty and hardship. He questions as to the possibilities of implementing Gandhian swaraj to Nehru's industrial development policies and its effects to the people of India.

Gandhi's pre-Independence movement of Satyagraha immobilized the nation of 350 million Indians to unite and demand Independence from the British. His power was in his ability to mobilize the masse in the movement towards that goal. However, once the goal was achieved the leadership of the state believed that his ideologies were no longer suitable for the New India. They had used Gandhi and Satyagraha to access the rural and the poor who formed the majority of India and who because of their faith in Gandhi strived for the Independence of India. However, once the ultimate goal had been achieved, it was time for the bourgeois to regain control. To gain Independence Gandhi and the Congress Party formed a unified outlook for the masses. However, as Independence grew closer, the differences towards issues of social reform, economic development and nationalism took a different turn altogether. The Congress Party believed that it was impossible and not practical in terms of political governance to achieve Gandhi's utopia of self-govern. With this perspective for India's future, India ended up falling into the same trap of the colonial mould. They felt that they needed to fulfill the expectation of 'others' in order to be accepted at a more global level. This was where Gandhi believed that India should not conform to the mould set out by the West or any other civilization, but to be confident in setting up its own. The fact that the Congress Party paved the way to this conformity influenced the way in which Indian conducted its economic and social development programmes.

Chatterjee believes that Nehru's socialist influences drove him to the focus on industrial development as a means of achieving social equality among all. However, Nehru did not take into consideration the vast mass of the Indian public when implementing his industrial programme, as infrastructures grew, funds for rural development grew less and this caused poverty to set in across India. In addition, Nehru's class position did influence on his outlook of relating to the masses that comprised mostly of the peasantry. Being of bourgeois upper middle-class India he felt guilty when looking upon the poor and his sense of guilt and

responsibility was what drove him to push for a fast paced industrial programme, one that India could not perform in an equal or balanced manner. It was clear that the failure of the implemented post-Independence policies lacked clear implementation guidelines and discipline. Its objectives should have prioritized the people of India in order to create life of the state. The life of the state is the people of India and not merely development of the economy, progress or modernity. The ambition of the leadership of the state of needing and desiring to compete with foreign countries that were 'thought' to be progressive was the downfall all the National Plan. In the end, the people were abandoned, poverty was never overcome as there was no means of overcoming it and its effects can still be felt till today.

Though the younger Gandhi was influenced by the Western practice of culture and social conduct, through his search and 'experiments' of religion, he returned to his roots and his reference to the Gita as an the ultimate way of life. He believed in sharing his revelation with the people of India who was willing to listen and embrace the true concept of Satyagraha. Therefore, the concept of Satyagraha cannot be termed as an act of 'turning the other cheek', but an act non-violent action. Gandhi believed in taking the people of India out of the mental constrictions of British rule, and demand that they form they own India, without any form of dependency or attachment to the former. As demand for Independence grew, Gandhi and the Congress Party were brought in for negotiations with the British. Throughout this time, the Congress Party had always looked to Gandhi for guidance in the policies of the people and the State, but as time grew closer to Independence their perceptions and opinions changed. The main reason being that from the outset, though the Congress Party supported Gandhi and Satyagraha as suitable for the gaining of Independence, they did not consider it suitable to form the ideology of the state. Gandhi and Satyagraha were used as tools of gaining Independence, but would be given consideration for the formation of governance. Nehru as Prime Minister and the Congress Party regarded Gandhi as lacking in clarity with regards to the political objectives of the national movement.¹⁷ The leadership of the state also considered Gandhi's goal of Utopia was 'impossible of achievement' and not practical form of politics. How could a movement that was powerful enough to mobilize a whole nation is discarded based on a handful of leaders who had a difference of opinion? This can only be answered through the practice of democracy that came about after Independence, when elections gave

the Congress Party the power to speak on behalf of the people, according to the policies that they saw fit.

The fact that different ideologies and different priorities come into play would be the main reason for this turn in movement post-Independence. As the founding father of Satyagraha, Gandhi believed in living the life of a true individual, through all aspects of conduct; political, economical and social. This was contrary to the ideologies of the Congress Party who only saw Satyagraha as a movement to achieve Independence. This difference in belief could not have forged a new India without a great amount of compromise, but as both parties were strong believers

Table 6: Differences between Gandhi and Nehru in Terms of State Policies

Gandhi	Nehru and the Congress Party
1 The Muslim League should be acknowledge and allowed their request for separate electoral seats.	The leadership did not agree in allowing the Muslim League to become a coalition of the National Congress Party.
2 Gandhi did not agree with the Partition taking place.	The leadership and the Congress Party finally give in to Partition.
3 Gandhi believes in establishing a strong foundation of grass roots through agricultural development; farmers, villagers and peasantry, who made up the mass of the Indian public.	The leadership believes that in order to achieve progress and modernity, industrialization must take place.
4 Gandhi operates on the basis of religious elements.	The leadership believes that a practical, socialist movement is necessary.
5 Gandhi uses words to mobilize the masses; he has the ability to reach their hearts.	The leadership lacks the ability to relate to the people, there is no bond.
6 Gandhi believes in self-rule, <i>swaraj</i> , of even the smallest body of governance such as villages and districts.	The leadership believes that there needs to be a central governing body.
7 Gandhi believes that true satyagraha is a long term achievable goal.	The leadership does not believe in dreams that are unattainable and unpractical in the real world.
8 Gandhi reacts based on instinct.	The leadership reacts based on 'inner voice'.

of their cause, neither was willing to accept the other half way. Though Gandhi inspired Satyagraha and through it mobilized the nation towards Independence, Nehru and leadership of the state were only inspired by the movement and its goal of achieving Independence. It was restricted to the gaining of *swaraj*, self-rule, from the British. They needed to 'mobilize the masses in the movement towards the goal'¹⁸ and they used Gandhi and Satyagraha to gain it.

Therefore, though the Congress Party denied Gandhi and Satyagraha as a post-Independent movement, Satyagraha can be considered as the foundation myth of the nation due to the fact that its implementation and efforts were successful in gaining India's Independence. Due to the strength of the movement and its ability to mobilize the people of India in a unified belief, it was essence of Indian Independence, without which Independence may not have been attainable. The people's voices need to be heard, and it was heard in a non-violent manner. The greatness of Gandhi and Satyagraha was that it managed to force the British into acknowledging the needs of the people of India and their desire for self-rule. However, it was believed that to develop it further would be for the ultimate objective of achieving Gandhi's utopia of truth, one that was considered to be 'impossible of achievement'. Gandhi's relationship with the Congress Party deteriorated due to the differences in goals. This was when Gandhi believed that his opinions no longer mattered and that he was no longer important and his opinions and advice no longer mattered. This was when he decided on withdrawing from any form of decision making on behalf of the Congress Party. Though the Congress Party as a whole would not listen, Gandhi remained close to Nehru and Patel who constantly came to him for advice. However, Nehru faced difficulties in implementing new government policies, his views were in contrast to Patel's and they were in constant disagreement over policy matters.

The British acknowledged and to a certain extent feared Gandhi and his influence on the masses. At the same time, they also held Gandhi to the highest regard. This is evident in the correspondence between Linlithgow to Amery, "... But his influence is so great and he carries so much weight in the country that he may well by himself is able to turn the scale that would otherwise be doubtful..." To Louis Fischer he wrote, "Make no mistake about it. The old man is the biggest thing in India... His influence is very great."¹⁹ And according to Chatterjee, Gandhi's most crucial theoretical foundation to Gandhi's entire strategy of winning *swaraj* for India was his disregard for the dependency on

industrialism.²⁰ The critique of ‘modern civilization’ also puts forward Gandhi’s criticism with regards to the Indian bourgeois society. Gandhi criticizes all elements of:

- its continually expanding and prosperous economic life, based on individual property,
- the social division of labour and the impersonal laws of the market, described with clinical precision and complete moral approbation by Mandeville and Smith;
- its political institutions based on a dual notion of sovereignty in which the people in theory rule themselves, but are only allowed to do so through the medium of their representatives whose actions have to be ratified only once in so many years;
- its spirit of innovation, adventure and scientific progress;
- Its rationalization of philosophy and ethics, and secularization of art and education.²¹

Gandhi objects to an entire structure of politics and government in which each individual is assumed to have his own individual interest, individuals are expected to come together into parties and alliances in terms of these self-interests, these combinations of interests are then supposed to exert pressure on each other by mobilizing public opinion and manipulating the levers of governmental machinery, and legislative enactments are then expected to emerge as choices made on behalf of the whole society.²² Gandhi’s continued criticism towards the abrogation, to officially end a law, of moral responsibility involved in the duality of sovereignty and the mediation of complex legal-political institutions which distance the rulers of society from those they are supposed to represent.²³ “History therefore, does not record the Truth. Truth lies outside history; it is universal, unchanging. Truth has no history of its own.”²⁴

Unavoidable History I: Nehru and Post-independence

With the appointment of Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister of India, he was under pressure to move the nation forward and to carry it out of poverty. This meant that all policies held and practiced before Independence under Gandhi were to be set aside and considered as being irrelevant and unsuitable for the new India. It was noted that Nehru was becoming *distressed* as to what he believed was a *lack of clarity [on Gandhi’s part] with regard to the political objectives of the*

*national movement.*²⁵ This was due to the fact that the performance of the Indian industry after the Second World War had shown 'the enormous capacity of India to advance with rapidity on all fronts'. With this perception in mind that if progress could be achieved under these 'discouraging conditions, and under a foreign government which disapproved of industrial growth in India, it was obvious that planned development under a free national government would completely change the face of India within a few years'.²⁶ Therefore, Nehru and the ruling Congress Party planned a three step structure of action; the first being in planning a way of determining a new state ideology which was initially the economic policies of the provincial Congress ministers. However, this changed to consider the overall framework of the national state. Secondly, was the constitution of a body of experts and its activity as one of the technical evaluation of alternative policies and the determination of choices on 'scientific' grounds? Third, the appeal to a 'committee of experts', who believed that industrialization was needed for a modern and prosperous India, much to the contradictory beliefs of Gandhi who opposed industrialization. As Gandhi was claimed that, 'It was industrialization itself... rather than the inability to industrialize, that was the root cause of Indian poverty.'²⁷ But Nehru was firm in his establishment for industrialization policies for India claiming that 'large-scale industry ought to be promoted as long as it did not "come into conflict with the cottage industries." He believed that through a strong and stable economy equality for all could be achieved. Taking up the socialist movement of economic and industrial development, it focused on industrial and infrastructural development as a means of creating and dealing with social development in order to acquire an equal society. Based on the advice of the Planning Commission set up in 1938, the new ruling government intended to take up 'a comprehensive scheme for gradually socializing our [the] entire agricultural and industrial system in the sphere of both production and appropriation.'²⁸ However, with emphasis and funds heavily invested in economic and industrial development, the leadership did not address the public or the community, especially the majority of the community that consisted of the peasantry; the villagers and the farmers who under Gandhi's satyagraha managed to survive on an independent economy. When the state pushed the development of large industries, there was minimal address for rural development, as progress and demand for infrastructures rose, more focus was placed on solving developmental problems such as debts and maintenance, rather than focus on rural development. The cooperation between the state and the rural

communities collapsed. This caused the expansion of poverty to escalate throughout India with the deteriorating business of these self-independent private businesses. The ruling leadership had ignored and neglected the development of the public, namely the peasantry.

The failure in Nehru and the states conception of social change, development and progress was due to the fact that the new state ideology had a different set of priorities that focused on progress and modernity. This was very much in contrast to Gandhi's vision on the development of the public at the grass roots, namely the peasantry who had the option to grow and become better. Gandhi's satyagraha believed in laying a strong and firm foundation for the grass roots in order to achieve self-rule and progress, without having to conform to the perception of others. Because of this, Gandhi was able to access the masses, the grass roots by teaching them to return to the basic fundamental of Indian society that depended largely on agriculture. Nehru believed that social justice for all could not be provided within the old framework because it was archaic, ancient, making it necessary to create a new framework in order to progress and move towards modernity. This was totally at odds with Gandhi's beliefs that modernity and industrialization were considered as evil. Gandhi believed in provide the core majority of the people with the creation of personal and social wealth from the bottom up in which once the grass roots or the core essentials of society, namely the family unit was stable, then the goal of a strong and united nation would be possible. However, Nehru believed otherwise in which he believed in the strengthening of India's industrial revolution in order to attract and strengthen the social roots, or grass roots of the nation. Therefore, it is perceived that though Nehru's intentions were noble, it was too large a goal to achieve for a nation still fragile from the struggle for Independence and the birth of a New India. The need for the new government to be established in order to stand above groups and classes in society, take an overall view of the matter and, in accordance... plan and direct the economic processes in order to create enough social wealth to ensure welfare and justice for all. For a nation that has centuries of history and class division, it seems an impossible goal to achieve.

In addition, Nehru's lack of insight and conception of social development did not extend to the grass roots, to the peasantry due to the fact that he could not relate to them, he did not understand. This was due to Nehru's personal background of being from the bourgeois, which forced him to acknowledge them as part of Indian society. However, he was ashamed of his 'easy-going and comfortable life' while he 'ignored

the vast multitude of semi-naked sons and daughters of India, sorrow at the degradation and overwhelming poverty of India.²⁹ Gandhi had forced the leadership of the state to think of the peasants in human terms and bridge the gap between the bourgeois and the peasantry. Unfortunately, this sense of guilt and responsibility was insufficient in improving the agricultural economy through the implementation of his industrialization policies, causing the peasantry to decline to further poverty and hardship. Nehru's belief that India had to conform to global change and expectations was probably an outcome that Gandhi would have wanted to avoid. Gandhi would have wanted India to become its own great power of the world, with its own self-identity and self-confidence, but as mentioned before it would have been impossible to accomplish.

One cannot be overly critical of Nehru's role in the unfolding of events post Independence. Placed in a position in which he had to accommodate so many points of views, opinions and advice he had to make the final decision he thought was best, with each and every own consequence. As later revealed in Chatterjee's collection of articles in *A Possible India* (in *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*), Professor Gopal's biography on Nehru reflected "problematic or contradictory aspects of Nehru's personality... Yet the contradictions in Nehru's personality are so fundamental and glaring that one cannot but ask: What kept the man going? Why didn't he chuck it all up? His disillusionment with what the Congress had become was acute."³⁰

Unavoidable History II: A Separate Pakistan

However, though key issues of Gandhi and Nehru's campaigns have been discussed from Chatterjee's point of view, there is no denying one crucial historical event that transpired changing Indian history forever. According to D.C. Jha, Jinnah was willing to join the government on a condition that he was given 50 per cent of the seats for the Muslim League and British Government conceded Pakistan.³¹ Mahatma Gandhi considered division of India by the British a disaster. Jinnah's hand in partition was obvious. What was, however, not so obvious to the public eye was the part that the Congress leaders and the Viceroy had played in this great tragedy.³² Gandhi had remained uncompromising till the last in his opposition to the partition of India in any shape or form by the British. With his characteristic foresight he had warned the nation about the disaster and ruin the country would have to face, and the bitterness

and animosity that partition would leave behind in its trail, if they allowed the British to divide India on communal lines before handing over the power. He had repeatedly advised the British to do the right with India and leave India even to chaos. The curtain on the drama leading to partition of India had been rolled up by the Congress when abandoning its age-long stand against division of the country, on communal or religious lines, it demanded a few weeks before the arrival of the last Viceroy in March 1947, partition of the Punjab into Hindu and Muslim majority areas without consulting Gandhi. Pyarelal, Gandhi's secretary, lamented in his biography of the Mahatma that "such a thing would have been inconceivable" earlier and that the Congress leadership had never failed to consult Gandhi before taking any vital decision in the past. Only a few weeks earlier Nehru had written to Gandhi that "we are drifting every where and sometimes I doubt if we are drifting in the right direction." Gandhi realized that the Congress was now prepared to barter the unity of the country on its own terms as against the terms of Jinnah. This made Determined to wage a final fight to prevent the country from the unmitigated disaster of division. Upon Mountbatten's arrival, Gandhi presented a proposal to stop Partition:

1. Jinnah to be given the option of forming a Cabinet.
2. The selection of the Cabinet to be left entirely to Jinnah.
3. If Jinnah accepted this offer, the Congress would guarantee to cooperate freely and sincerely so long as all measures that Jinnah's Cabinet bring forward were in the interests of the Indian people as a whole.
4. The sole referee of what was or was not in the interest of India as a whole would be Lord Mountbatten in his personal capacity.
5. Jinnah must stipulate on behalf of the Muslim League or any other parties represented in the Cabinet formed by him that so far as he or they were concerned, they would do their utmost to preserve peace throughout India.
6. There shall be no National Guards or any other form of private army.
7. Within the above framework Jinnah will be perfectly free to present for acceptance a scheme of Pakistan even before transfer of power, provided however that he was successful in his appeal to reason and not to the force of arms, which he adjures for all time for this purpose. Thus there will be no compulsion in this matter over a Province or a part thereof.

8. In the Assembly the Congress has a decisive majority. But the Congress shall never use that majority against the League policy simply because of its identification with the League but will give its hearty support to every measure brought forwarded by the League Government, provided that it is in the interest of the whole of India. Whether it is in such interest or not shall be decided by Lord Mountbatten as a man and not in his representative capacity.
9. If Jinnah rejects this offer, the same offer to be made with due alterations of details, to the Congress.

It would be during this transition period between Gandhi's pre-Independence satyagraha and the declaration of Independence, when certain events of history will change India forever. During the 'Quit India' movement led by the Congress party, resignations by the ministers caused numerous administrative problems for the British. This gave them the excuse and the opportunity to 'regain the political initiative' by transferring power to groups who were more accommodating than the Congress Party, making them turn to the Muslim League. The idea for a separate Muslim state emerged in the 1930s through the writings of poet Muhammad Iqbal, who expressed that India's Muslim community deserved 'some kind of autonomous political entity'. The name 'Pakistan' was coined by a group of Cambridge students in 1933 to include the name of provinces such as Punjab, the Afghan region, Sind and Baluchistan, to mean the 'land of the pure'.³³ Upon hearing 'rumours' of Jinnah and a separate Pakistan, Gandhi intervened and met up with Jinnah in September 1944 to discuss Jinnah's plans for Pakistan. However, the meeting failed to reach a clear direction or agreements. Contrary to what had been considered as an idea of a separate Pakistan, even until 1946 no one (including Gandhi, Nehru and the Congress party), Jinnah, the provincial Muslim leaders, nor the British, envisaged, much less desired the partition that ultimately took place.³⁴ Jinnah had considered the use of 'Pakistan' as a 'bargaining card' to gain a post-war settlement. However, when negotiations for India's future were reopened in June 1945 after the Second World War, during the Simla Conference, Jinnah finally pushed his demand for Pakistan, after the Congress Party rejection his request of the Muslim League to be brought in as coalition component, with separate electorates and a reservation of seats on the Congress Party.

As the demand for a separate Pakistan became more vocal, in order to maintain a united India, Gandhi proposed to the Congress Party that

Jinnah be made the first Prime Minister of New India, much to the shock and disagreement of the National Congress party. This was because members of the Congress Party believed that the Party should be kept purely 'Hindu', with this new racial tag in play, the early conflicts between the Hindus and the Muslims had been wedged. In a provocative speech on 10 July 1946, Nehru repudiated the notion of compulsory grouping of provinces; the key to Jinnah's Pakistan, with this speech Nehru effectively destroyed any hope for a united India.³⁵ This caused Jinnah to take 'direct action' that precipitated the horror riots and massacres that tarnished the coming of Independence. The death toll ran in the thousands as violence between the Hindus and the Muslims broke out across the country such as in Bihar and the Bengal district of Noakhali. The violence only ceased when Gandhi himself arrived in Noakhali and committed himself to his fast-to-death should the violence continue. By the time Lord Mountbatten arrived in February 1947, the idea for a united India was out of the question. The speeding up of Independence on the 15 August 1947 and the separation of Pakistan was inevitable as the British washed their hands of a currently, turbulent and disruptive India, one they no longer could no longer control.

Could Partition have been avoided? The concluding answer could only have been 'yes'. If the Congress Party had been willing to consider and compromise with Jinnah and the Muslim League, the events that had transpired would have never occurred. The main dominating factor here would have been 'fear', the Congress Party feared losing control to the Muslim League who was supported by the British. Fear that the Muslim League would turn India into a Muslim state, as history was told. But was the unwillingness to open up self-preserved boundaries that led to the Partition. Gandhi's offer to instate Jinnah as the first Prime Minister of India was an action not out of fear, but out of acknowledgement of consensus for an equal. He was willing to accept Jinnah and the Muslim League as an equal to the majority led Hindu Congress Party. Unfortunately, no one had Gandhi's foresight.

Conclusion

The organizing and presentation of large sums of history is totally and utterly complex. Even with the specification of dealing with a specific range of Indian history is complex due to the intricacies of the events and the people that transpire. It would like to give credit that the use of

history in the biographical epics of *Gandhi* and *Sardar* have been handled well with focus given directly to the intended thematics very early in the telling. *Gandhi* focuses on the unfolding events of his Satyagraha movement, while *Sardar* reveals Patel's establishment as the Ironman of India. The function of the two films is not just to draw attention to the contribution to the lives and contributions of these two national leaders, but also to question the effects that these leaders had on the nation's history. *Gandhi*'s greatest contribution would have been the mobilization of the masses, leading them into a democracy within a socialist framework. Whereas, Patel's significance was in the creation of a united nation.

Notes

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- ² Vankin, J., & Whalen, J. (2005). *Gandhi* (1982). In *Based on a true story*. Chicago: Capello Books, p. 378.
- ³ Rajadhyaksha, A., & Willemen, P. (2002). *Encyclopedia of Indian cinema*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 515.
- ⁴ *Gandhi* [Film] (1983). Richard Attenborough (Director & Producer). USA: Columbia Pictures, Goldcrest Films, International Film Investors, National Film Development Corporation of India and Indo-British Films.
- ⁵ Hardiman, D. (2003). *Satyagraha. Gandhi in his time and ours*. India: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., p. 51.
- ⁶ Rajni Desai (15 February 2008) Interview – Gandhi and his Influence.
- ⁷ Polan, D. B. (1985). Foundations. In *The political language of film and the avant-garde*. Michigan: UMI Research Press, p. 5.
- ⁸ Tahmankar, D. V. (1970). The attlee age: Partition and independence. In *Sardar Patel*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., p. 214.

- ⁹ Tahmankar, D. V. (1970). Sardar's finest hour. In *Sardar Patel*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., p. 237.
- ¹⁰ Rajni Desai, (15 February 2008), Interview – Gandhi and Independence.
- ¹¹ Chatterjee, P. (1986). The moment of arrival. In *Nationalist thought and the colonial world – A derivative discourse*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 133.
- ¹² Chatterjee, P. (1986). The cunning of reason. In *Nationalist thought and the colonial world – A derivative discourse*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 170.
- ¹³ Mozoomdar, A. (1994). The rise and decline of developmental planning in India. In T. J. Byres (Ed.), *The state and development planning in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 73-108.
- ¹⁴ Chatterjee, P. (1994). Development, planning and the Indian state. In T. J. Byres (Ed.). *The state and development planning in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 51-72.
- ¹⁵ Metcalf, B. D., & Metcalf, T. R. (2006). Congress Raj: Democracy and development, 1950-1989. *A concise history of modern India*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 246.
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thought and the colonial world: A derivative discourse? (Zed Books, 1986). Retrieved 23 November, 2007, from http://www.asiasource.org/news/special_reports/chatterjee.cfm

- ¹⁷ Chatterjee, P. (1986). The moment of arrival: Nehru and the passive revolution. In *Nationalist thought and the colonial world – A derivative discourse*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 131.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 131.
- ¹⁹ Jha, D. C. (2004). Quit India: The unlaunched battle. In *Mahatma Gandhi: The congress and partition of India*. New Delhi: India Research Press, p. 30.
- ²⁰ Chatterjee, P. The moment of manouevre. In *Nationalist thought and the colonial world – A derivative discourse*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 87.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, p. 90.
- ²² *Ibid*, p. 90.
- ²³ *Ibid*, p. 91.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 94.
- ²⁵ Chatterjee, P. (1993). The national state – Planning for planning. In *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial studies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 201.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 146.
- ²⁷ Chatterjee, P. (1993). The national state – Planning for planning. In *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial studies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 201.
- ²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 200.
- ²⁹ Chatterjee, P. (1986). The moment of arrival: Nehru and the passive revolution. In *Nationalist thought and the colonial world – A*

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- ³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 208.
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