

**Feminine Sensibility and Socio-Political Concerns in
Select Novels of Nayantara Sahgal**

**Karpagam, N
(12PEN005)**

**Thesis submitted to
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education
for Women, Coimbatore – 641 043**

**In partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in English**

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CHAPTER I

Chapter I

Introduction

Indian Writing in English

Indian writing in English refers to the works by Indian writers, who write in the English language, and whose native language could be one of the many languages in India. The Indian language is one of the greatest gifts of the British to the Indian subcontinent. Indian English literature is also associated with the works of Indian diasporic writers such as V. S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Agha Shahid Ali, Rohinton Mistry and Salman Rushdie, who are born in India. Also it's referred as Indo-Anglian literature. It comes under the broader realm of post-colonial literature and from previously colonized countries such as India, New Zealand, Canada and Sri Lanka, etc.

Indian writing in English has a relatively short but highly charged history. It is relatively a recent phenomena, as far as literature goes. It is only one and a half centuries old. In its early stages, Indian writing is influenced by the western art form of the novel. However, most early Indian writing in English is non-fictional works, such as biographies and political essays. This began to change in the late 1800s, when famous Indian writers who wrote mostly in their mother tongue, began to try their hand at writing in English.

Raja Rao is an Indian philosopher and writer, and authored to *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope* which are Indian in terms of its storytelling qualities.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote and began translating his works from Bengali to English in the early 1900s. Dhan Gopal Mukerji is the first Indian author to win a literary award in the United States. Nirad C. Chaudhuri is a writer of non-fiction. He is best known for his

The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, where he relates his life experiences and influences. P. Lal is a poet, translator, publisher and essayist, founded a press in the 1950s for Indian English writing and named it as “Writers Workshop”.

R. K. Narayan is a writer, who continued to write till his death. Narayan created the fictitious town of Malgudi, where he sets his novels. Narayan, Mulkraj Anand and Raja Rao’s writings are different from the other Indian authors, because these novelists established and fortified the Indian English Fiction with their ample works and unique literary style.

Among the later writers, the most notable is Salman Rushdie, born in India, and presently living in United Kingdom. His famous work is *Midnight’s Children*, which won a Booker prize in 1981, Booker of Booker’s in 1992, and Best of the Bookers in 2008. He used a mixture of languages. Bharati Mukherjee is an author of *Jasmine* (1989), has spent much of her career exploring issues involving immigration and identity with a particular focus upon the United States and Canada.

Vikram Seth is an author of *A Suitable Boy* (1994). He uses clear English and more realistic themes. Other writers include Shashi Tharoor, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Arundhati Roy, Chitra Banerjee Divakarunai, Raj Kamal Jha, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Kirchner, Khushwant Singh, Amit Chaudhuri, Amitav Ghosh, Vikash Swarup, Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Nagarkar, C. R. Krishnan and so on.

The inwardness of the struggle for freedom is also found in new ways in writers of the post-independence period. The partition of India in 1947 is such a momentous event as it is a spells disaster for millions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs who live in complete harmony with one another.

Many Indian writers focus on the holocaust that followed the Independence like Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, B. Rajan's *The Dark Dancer*, Balwant Singh Anand's *Cruel Interlude*, Malgonkar's *A Bend in The Ganges*, Raj Gill's *The Rape*, Chaman Naghal's *Azadi* and Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* faithfully record the reign of violence. These novelists have exploited partition thematically in their works.

The last sixty years of Indian writing in English has registered a very good creative activity. The Indian English writer's creative focus shifted from the portrayal of the socio-political work to the exploration of individual's interior world and its existential dilemmas. Mostly Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and Nayantara Sahgal's works are riches to the Indian English Fiction. These writer's works are like a well for the future development of this literary genre.

The post-Independence Indian English literature established many novelists like, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, S. Menon Marath, Balachandra Rajan, Sudhindra Nath Ghose, G.V. Desani, Arun Joshi, Chaman Nahal, Upamanyu Chatterjee, and women novelists like Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Vimala Raina, Shakuntala Shirnagesh, Bharati Mukherjee, Kamala Das, Shashi Deshpande, Githa Hariharan, Dina Mehta, Namita Gokhale, and Neelima Sinha.

During the post-Independence period the novelists has taken up different social, political, economic, religious and cultural issues for discussion, which are pre-dominant in that period. Their themes have been derived from Gandhi's philosophical ideas, Independence struggle, partition, violence, women, love, sex, marriage, east-west encounter, alienation, crisis for identity to exploitation, terrorism, materialism and

corporate world. A large number of Indian English novels written in the post-Independence period have the treatment of various political issues.

Nayantara's work is different from the works of most of her contemporaries in Indian English fiction in several ways. She portrays the influence of political issues in most of her novels. She treats the East-West theme like Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya. Kamala Markandaya records in *Some Inner Fury* (1955), the reverberations of an Indian girl's psycho depths in the arms of a longing Englishman, while Raja Rao in *The Serpent and the Rope* maintains India's identity under the cultural domination of the West.

Other writers who made their theme of forum as politics are Khushwant Singh, Bhabani Bhattacharya, R. K. Narayan, Manohar Malgonkar, B. Rajan, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, and Attia Hosain. Khushwant Singh's *A Train to Pakistan* (1956) is an excellent treatment of Independence. It describes the ghastly tragedy of partition without losing perspective and faith in the divinity of man. Bhabani Bhattacharya's novel *Shadow from Ladakh* (1966), and R. K. Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), analyse the political and social process and the loss of Gandhian values during the Sino-Indian hostilities of 1962.

Manohar Malgonkar in *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), is concerned with revolution and the opportunistic nature of revolutionaries. B. Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* (1959), shows the East-West confrontation in terms of protagonist's quest for identity. Ruth Praver Jhabvala mainly focuses in all her novels on the East-West encounter. In her novel *Esmond In India* (1958), she shows a lot of interest in Indian philosophy. Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), shows her personal struggle against the

family authority and perhaps paradoxically, a nostalgia for the lost world of her childhood.

All these political issues in most of the post-Independent writer's works, depict the range of impact and evolution of political world reflected in the society. Nayantara Sahgal is one among such authors who tries to show the face of politics and government to the world through her novels. Amar Nath Prasad in the book *Indian Women Novelists in English* quotes Indira Gandhi who says

Woman must be a bride and a synthesizer. She shouldn't allow herself to be swept off her feet by superficial trends nor yet be chained to the familiar. She must ensure the continuity which strengthens roots and simultaneously engineer change and growth to keep society dynamic, abreast of knowledge, sensitive to fast-moving events. The solution lies neither in fighting for equal position nor denying it, neither in retreat into the home nor escape from it. (1)

From time immemorial, Indian women, the embodiment of love and affection, hope and patience, have been showing their worth in each and every discipline of knowledge. Gargi and Ansuia in scriptures, Sita and Rani Durgavati, Rajia Begum and Noorjahan in history and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Mahasweta Devi and many more in fictions have left their indelible imprint on the pages of history; an imprint which is suffused with such a powerful and beautiful colour which can't be erased and darkened by time.

The history of Indian women novelists in English begins with Toru Dutt. Both her novels *Bianca* and *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d' Arvers* deal with the autobiographical

projections of the novelist. Cornelia Sorabji, is the other great figure in the realm of novels. She is mainly famous for her three important works – *Love and Life behind the Purdah* (1901), *Sun-Babies in the Child Life of India* (1904) and *Between the Twilight* (1908). She reveals in her novels the various moods and vestures going in under the ‘Purdah’; the ecstasy, tragedy, comedy and many more things, which are unnoticed even by a feminist philosopher. After the Second World War, the history of Indian women novelists get a new track, a new vision. In this period, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala are unquestionably the most outstanding personalities in the field of social and artistic novels.

Nayantara Sahgal is one of the noted Indian English fiction writers today. She is one of the best socio-political novelists of the day. She is one of the first female Indian writers in English to receive recognition for her work *Rich like Us* (1985). She is a member of the Nehru Gandhi family, the second daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru’s Sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, who is a Indian freedom fighter.

Sahgal’s fiction deals with India’s elite responding to the crisis engendered by political change. Naval Kishore Singh in the book *The Great Indian Women Novelists in English Literature* writes that,

Nayantara Sahgal is the most conventional case of committed writing among the three selected Indian Novels, but her realist and chronologically linear novel is not the least interesting to read, when compared with the baroque creations by Arundhati Roy and Gita Hariharan.

The fact that Sahgal was a niece of Jawaharlal Nehru had an influence on her interest in politics and on her firm commitment to socialist ideal for India. That, she is a brilliant writer is a lucky coincidence for someone who was in a privileged position to look at political developments in post-Independence India. (163)

Nayantara Sahgal has written nine novels and many uncollected stories and two autobiographical books. Her novels include *A Time to be Happy* (1958), *This Time of Morning* (1966), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), *The Day in Shadow* (1971), *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977), *Rich Like Us* (1985), *Plans for Departure* (1985), *Mistaken Identity* (1988), and *Lessor Breeds* (2003).

Sahgal's short story collections are, *The Promising Young Woman* (1959), *The Golden Afternoon* (1959), *The Trials of Siru* (1967), *The Girl in the Bookshop* (1973), *Martand* (1974), *Crucify Me* (1979), *Earthy Love* (1993), *The Freedom Movement in India* (1970), *Sunlight Surround You* (1970), *A Voice for Freedom* (1977), *Indira Gandhi's Emergence and Style* (1978), *Indira Gandhi: Her Road to Power* (1983), *Relationship* (1994), and *Point of View: Extracts from a Correspondence* (1997). Her autobiographies include *Prison and Chocolate* (1954) and *From Fear Set Free* (1963).

Her first novel *A Time to Be Happy* concerns Indian politics and humanistic values of Indian tradition. In this novel, the rural upliftment programme is much a matter of political importance due to the change of government in New Delhi. This novel has its references to congress activities and the events of 1942. The protagonist of the novel Sanad who is married to Kusum coincides with the advent of India's Independence in 1947. It also marks a total historical change, which in its turn affects the pattern of

relationships. The events that are suggested are the abolition of the zamindaris, the imminent exit of the British. The British doubt about the self-reliance and self-respect growing among Indian through these programmes. The structure and pattern of the novel seem to be loose as there is no correspondence between action and characterization. In this novel the lack of communication is the result of Maya's emotional isolation in marriage.

In the prescient novel *This Time of Morning*, politics plays a major role at every place. It deals with what happens in the corridors of power, in the drawing rooms of the political figures. Some of the characters in the novel are so beautifully and symbolically portrayed that they are equated with the contemporary political personalities. The portrait of Kalyan Singh has the resemblance to V. K. Krishna Menon.

Storm in Chandigarh demonstrates Nayantara Sahgal's keen understanding of individual relationships and her remarkable ability to tell stories that continue to enthrall readers over the years. This novel reflects the novelist's concern with the country India, which is deviating from the Gandhian values. The retreat is reflective through the change in the characters of the protagonists. In this novel the writer portrays the aftermath of the division of Punjab into two states – Punjab and Haryana. This novel basically deals with the problem of political tension and violence.

In her fourth novel, *The Day in Shadow* the heroine is an educated divorcee struggling in India's male-dominated society. The novel is richly inspired by the political movement of the society. Though the main theme is politics, yet the problem of divorce and disintegration in marriage plays a nub in this novel. This novel satirizes on the political corruption and social hypocrisy.

Sahgal's novel, *A Situation in New Delhi* depicts the aftermath of the greatest popular Prime Minister Shivraj, who dominates the political and national scene for a full decade. He is the one who sacrificed his aristocratic family comforts for the freedom of India. The novel is very much based on facts. It is a novel of political dislocation on the level of the novelist's own life. The novel figures out the student's unrest, Naxalite movement and the aftermath of Nehru's death. The novel deals with the problems of alienation and frustration of the younger generation of Indians on the context of politics in New Delhi. It is indeed a representation of the situation in the whole of India.

Rich like Us has won the Sinclair prize (Britain) in 1985 and the Sahitya Academy Award in 1986. It is a daring novel about the emergency period (1975-77), a controversial moment in Indian politics, during which Mrs. Indira Gandhi, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru is the Prime Minister then. This novel is a historical and political novel, set in New Delhi during the chaotic time between 1932 and the mid 1970s. It follows the lives of two female protagonists, Rose and Sonali, and their fight to live in a time of political upheaval and social re-organization.

Plan for Departure is the winner of 1987 Commonwealth writer's prize. This novel is a historical novel based on the socio-political events of India during the late 19th and 20th centuries. The main theme is based on the transition commencing late Victorian period to the Edwardian and Georgian periods of British Indian mystery. The novel also gives an account of non-violent movements in India against British rule. This novel is a combination of love story and mystery.

Mistaken Identity is a comedy in conformity with the traditions of Indian Folk and the Arabian Nights. This story is full of mystery and gentle humour. The novel gives us a

vivid picture of the stay of love and obsession that brilliantly summons up the turmoil of India in the twilight years of empire. The novel also represents the historical perspectives to show the Hindu-Muslim unity in all the countries.

Lesser Breeds is about Nurullah an English teacher, who comes to the city of Akbarabad. He lives with the family of bhai (Nikhil), his widowed mother (Ammaji) and daughter Shaan aged six. He is responsible for Shaan's education. Initially Ammaji and later Shaan involve in nationalistic activities. Both Ammaji and Shaan represent a large number of women who are involved in the mainstream of national movement and politics. Shaan stands for the country's first parliamentary election and emerges victorious. Women are marshaled as a force for the national movement. The nationalist leaders deliberately cultivated linkages with women to demonstrate mass support for their position. From all walks of life women join the movement.

Nayantara Sahgal is a writer with national consciousness. She along with her other counterparts like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Santha Rama Rau has emerged as one of the most significant voices in the realm of Indian English fiction. She has been active on the literary scene both as a creative writer and a political columnist. She has the unique distinction of being the political novelist on the Indian English literary scene. Her work has a strong realistic base and reflects not only her personal values but also the changing the values of a society exposed for both freedom and power. She has the honours of being the first Indian woman novelist writing in English dealing with political themes.

In all her novels, her writing mostly focuses on the women's sexual freedom and self-realization, and on the latest political corruption and down with the reflection of

Indian contemporary society. She primarily deals with feminism in most of her novels. Almost in all her novels, Sahgal has gone deep into the female psyche. Feminism demands an activity, and not passivity, which analyses our sense of the female presence in the world.

A feminist fiction is a work where language and imagery are employed to impart a new vision of reality; reality perceived from a woman's authentic mode of seeing, feeling and measuring her existence without subscribing to the male cultural codes. Feminism seems to involve at two groups of claims, one normative and the other descriptive. In Normative, men and women are entitled to equal rights and respect. Descriptive relates to women who are currently disadvantaged with respect to rights and respect when compared to men. Her novels truthfully mirror the contemporary Indian political theme. Her novels portray the contemporary incidents and political realities saturated artistically and objectively. Pramod Kumar Singh in the book *Major Indo-English Novelists and Novels* states:

Nayantara Sahgal's major concerns, . . . in her novels are with the freedom of Indian, traditional socio-cultural values and people's attitude towards the politics and personal relationships. Her fiction concern can . . . be divided into themes likes tradition versus modernity. She is aware that food is not less important than freedom in a poor and under developing country like India. . . . Traditional values are an important preservation for Indian populace. (121)

Sahgal's novel deals with a varied branch of themes, which exists in this modern world. In almost every novel, Nayantara has a central woman character, who gradually

moves towards an awareness of her emotional needs. Dhara H. Joshi, in the article “Fictional World of Nayantara Sahgal: A Thematic Study” writes “She has shown an admirable understanding of the problems and the predicaments of the women and exploited their skill in projecting convincingly the agonized mind of the prosecuted women” (2).

The political consciousness, which dominates her literary creations, is real and inseparable from herself and her surroundings. So she considers her novels to be political in content. Her fictional world is occupied with political leaders, business tycoons, foreign advisers, upper class people, journalists, and highly qualified persons like ambassadors, ministers, vice- chancellor’s and professors. Besides, political themes are often combined with the theme of man-woman relationship, their marital problems, their temperamental incompatibility, and the problems arising out of their ego or submissiveness, and finally the problem of the place of woman in society. The use of political genre is one of the main aspects of her novels.

Nayantara also deals with East-West theme in her novels, like Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya, but her approach is conspicuous with difference. She neither allows any confrontation between the sets of culture nor values the judgement of it. The foreign protagonists accept Indian cultural values and social situations ungrudgingly. The novelist handles the political situations of India with minimum fictional changes. Her interest, however, is not limited to any particular political event of a historical fact or the life of a politician or even on a certain trend. Her fictional imagination envelops pre and post-independent political events of India. In most of her novels, Sahgal suggests that marriage is not just a sexual relationship; it means companionship on equal terms. She

pleads for the basic honesty in human relationships, whether it is between man and woman or the ruler and the ruled. In her novels, Sahgal's characters suffer from the torment of broken marriages. Loneliness, suffering and frustrations in marriage cause disintegration and make women rebellious. Most of her couples seem to be happy and content but they often experience loneliness and feel silence in marriage.

Man-woman relationship is the central theme of the novelist in all her works. The characters of Nayantara Sahgal, like those of Anita Desai, Nargis Dalal, Kamala Das and Sashi Brata, reflect the change in facets of man-woman relationship in India. Most of Nayantara Sahgal's women characters belong to the affluent upper class Indian society. She pens down that the women characters are no longer the subdued sex. Sunita Rai in the article "Man-Woman Relationship in Nayantara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh*" states that "The women characters of Mrs. Sahgal are no longer . . . "a figure of humility, neck bend, eyes downcast"" (175). In their conjugal relationship and their relationship outside marriage the heroines of her novels are solitary individuals striving for self-assertion. She has stressed the need to achieve a living relationship between man and woman through love and human interaction, because she is one of the best novelists who accepts the worthiness, the dignity of men and the potency of love, to heal and redeem.

All the major characters in her novels are drawn towards the vortex of politics. She portrays how both the individual and the society exploit a woman even during the modern times. She also portrays the sensibility of women – how a woman looks out at herself and her problems. In all her novels, Sahgal reveals her protagonists fighting valiantly against repressive political forces, inspired by their action-oriented creed. Sahgal's women refuse to be an acquiescent, suffering and sacrificing a lot. They are

women who are conscious of their emotional needs and hence cry for a change of order that starves them for individual fulfillment.

Sahgal has shown her male characters mostly as narrow-minded, ruthless, careless husbands who make their sensitive wives experience acute sense of loneliness, emptiness, and boredom in life. Their conflict springs mainly from absence of communication resulting in estrangement of individuals. Sahgal tells that a clear meaningful and outspoken communication would easily solve unmitigated friendship, and estranged marriages disrupted by hypocrisy, sham living and superficial behaviour. Society has become a kind of cave in which people are in total ignorance about what is happening to each other. However, exceptionally enough, her male characters equally suffer in a wrong marriage due to loneliness or lack of communication. They do not undergo the same kind of agony because man is not dependent in the same way as his wife is on him, but an illegal relationship with a woman gives him a lot of torture.

Sahgal's novel *Storm in Chandigarh*, presents a scathing protest against the denial of freedom and individuality to women. Saroj, the female protagonist symbolizes modern woman who wants to establish a new order with changed standards where she can be her true self. To her, pre-marital act of sex has nothing to do with the pollution of flesh, promiscuity or immorality. But Inder's attitude towards Saroj has always been an act of disgust, contempt and revulsion. He always abuses her and sometimes even brutally beats her, because of that one deed which she carried out before marriage. On the other hand, in spite of all this torture and torment, Saroj has never let her inner strength, her pride and her self-esteem get completely obliterated.

The novel centres on the theme of forced linguistic bifurcation of Punjab, twenty years after its first post-independence communalistic partition. The forced linguistic bifurcation of the communally truncated Punjab into two states – Punjab and Haryana with Chandigarh as their common capital, rouses passion equal to the other greater partition at the time of independence.

The female characters in *Storm in Chandigarh* wriggle out the strait-Jacket of virtuous stereotypes and emerge as individuals. The novel is a study of certain similarities and contrasts of virtuous characters. It portrays the young hearts broken up by compulsions of matrimony and call of new found love.

In *The Day in Shadow*, she shows how a woman can be criminally exploited ‘without creating a ripple’. This novel delineates the emotional and economic strains of divorce on the female protagonists, Simrit. Even as a divorcee, she asserts her individuality. In the sight against the outworn traditions, she chooses to start a new life. So, this novel presents how the problems force a woman to struggle for their self-identity and their emancipation from the traditional bondage of the patriarchal society.

Nayantara Sahgal is one of the best socio-political novelists and top ranking women novelist of the post-Independent Indian fiction writers. In all her novels, politics is one of the central element. Her novel always has an undertone of a political ideology and the history of political orientation established, in India. Her work has a strong realistic base and reflects not only her personal values but also the changing values of a society exposed for the first time to both freedom and power. The struggle is not between the old and the new but between dedication and power. Nayantara stresses the need for morality in political life based on her beliefs through Gandhian ideologies.

Saroj, a victim of patriarchal values, considers her marriage with her husband Inder as an emotional wasteland. On the domestic front, violence merges in the shape of the male dominance in the marital relationship of Saroj and Inder. She very much wants her husband, Inder to recognize her individuality, but Inder who belongs to the 'He-man School' treats her merely as a wife, a possession, but not a person. Woman in Indian society is supposed to be virtuous, chaste, passive and devoted to her husband. The act of sex before her marriage, subjects Saroj to constant torture by her husband. Crisis starts in their life when Saroj innocently reveals to her husband, her past intimacy with her college mate. Saroj, a woman with a spine, shapes her own destiny with her assertiveness and self-confidence. Besides Inder and Saroj, the novelist presents the relationships of three other young couples – Jit and Mara, Vishal and Leela, and Gouri and Nikhil only to show that they are not happy at all.

The Day in Shadow is a sequel to *Storm in Chandigarh*; it begins from the point where *Storm in Chandigarh* ends. It is the story of Som and Simrit. Simrit is an independent woman who can make choices. She marries Som, solely attracted by his colour, life and action disregarding the opposition from her parents and the dislike of her friends. Disappointed at Som's attempts to restrict her individuality and the humiliating treatment meted out to her, Simrit resolves to dissolve her seventeen-year-old marriage. Even as a divorcee, she asserts her individuality. In the sight against the outworn traditions, she chooses to start a new life with Raj, a liberal thinker. She demonstrates that individual freedom is so precious that it should not be compromised or allowed to be suppressed. For her, emotional involvement is far more important than the sexual relationship. The novelist portrays Simrit's deathly struggle that accompanies the

attempts of an Indian woman to liberate herself from the moral and social pressures that combine with the economic dependence.

Sahgal presents an image of how women characters in *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow* undergo the pressure of stress and torture which are heavier on their mental part rather on their physical fitness. The agonies, which each and every individual woman experiences in this society is well portrayed by Nayantara Sahgal. This agony pushes them to a state of loneliness, frustration and even to a state of delirium. So Sahgal asserts that in a patriarchal society, equality is an impossible commodity because all the superior and the positive qualities associated with women are considered to be inferior.

Marriage is a social institution, which plays an important role in shaping the life of a human being but it turns out to be a vanishing search for communication because of mutual infidelity. She talks of the subtle and inhuman form of exploitation, a sort of beating where blood and bruises don't show. The lack of sympathy and understanding in man-woman relationship leads to the failure of the marital bond and ultimate divorce. The Novels *The Day in Shadow* and *Storm in Chandigarh* bring out Nayantara Sahgal as a writer with feminist concerns seeking independent existence of women.

Chapter I entitled "Introduction" elicits the aspects and qualities of Indian Writing in English, Post-Independence, the life of Nayantara Sahgal, her major themes in her works and the features of female characteristics in her novels. In the novels, *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow*, the author portrays the feministic issues, its characteristics and its impact on the socio-political system. She also gives a vivid picture of how our India politics has a role to play in the lives of a common man.

Chapter II entitled “Mental Trauma of Female Protagonists” elicits the female protagonist Simrit, who has a pre-marital relationship and when this comes to the knowledge of her husband after her marriage, he pushes her to the corner of a darker world. The abuses, which she faces make her to walk out of the traditional marriage life. More than the physical pain, she is mentally harassed by her husband, Inder. This chapter also gives a vivid picture of how the female characters undergo frustration and agony in the hands of their husband. In the beginning, the female protagonists in both the novels undergo traumatic experiences in the hands of their husband. But towards the end, they rebel and revolt against their clutches, in order to achieve their freedom and identity. Their search for identity is shackled by their marriage. So they fetter from the clutches of their marriage life in order to become Independent individuals.

Chapter III entitled “From Subjugation to Emancipation” Sahgal in the novel, *The Day in Shadow* gives an authentic picture of high-profile politicians and bureaucrats, wrapped up in their cocktail parties, worried more about themselves than about the problems that the country face. The novel deals with the struggle of a young, beautiful and daring Indian woman trapped under the burden of a brutal divorce settlement and the agony and unhappiness she experiences in the hands of cruel and unjust male-dominated society of India.

Chapter IV entitled “Conclusion” deals with the comparison of Nayantara Sahgal’s novels, *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow*. In both the novels, the sufferings of women before and after marriage are clearly portrayed. She beautifully represents how the women characters reveal the trauma, insecurity and agency that lie beneath the gloss and glitter of modern life. The women in her novels however liberated,

educated, assertive and confident, they do not totally move out of the clutches of their married life.

The present study deals with Nayantara Sahgal's novels, which exhibit her interest in the preservation of the rights of women. The personal agonies and traumas are reflected in her novels; disharmony and dissolution of marriage become one of the major themes in her works. She brings out the evils of hypocrisy, pretence and snobbery existing at the human level. Women in the past have been relegated to a very subordinate position. She sees women as victims of conventional Indian society engaged in their quest for identity.

CHAPTER II

Chapter II

Mental Trauma of Female Protagonists

The *Storm in Chandigarh* is one of the political novels, which deals with the partition of East Punjab on linguistic lines just when the state has recovered from the trauma of the 1947 partition. Besides the political background, which is very well projected, there is also a human background, which has not received adequate treatment.

The 'storm' in the novel works on two planes – one, the political, following the bifurcation of Punjab into Punjab and Haryana, with Chandigarh as the common capital; two, the emotional crises in the marital relations of the various characters. Vishal Dubey, the I.C.S. man sent out as an Liaison Officer between the Centre and the two State Governments, is involved in both politics and marital affair. Every Sahgal's novel contains long passages of reflection or discussion on the socio-political and philosophical traditions.

The political turmoil over Chandigarh provides the backdrop against which the novel's action at the individual level is set, thus intertwining the social and political worlds, which make an impact on the individual consciousness. The linguistic bifurcation of the truncated, post-partition Punjab in the early sixties where Chandigarh remains with the centre, though it has become the capital for both the newly emerged States of Hindi-speaking Haryana and the Punjab-speaking Punjab. The partition leads to an intensification of their quarrels over boundaries, water and electricity and makes them indulge in violence that rocks the newly constructed nation.

The 'storm' in the lives of three married couples, Inder and Saroj, Jit and Mara and Vishal Dubey and Leela are portrayed against the political backdrop of storm or

confrontation between the newly formed states of Punjab and Haryana on the issue of Chandigarh (the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana) and Bakhra Nangal territory.

The novel opens with a warning by the Home Minister of India as “violence lies very close to the surface of Punjab” (1). The conflict and clash between two political rival colleagues, Chief Minister Gyan Singh of Punjab and Harpal Singh of Haryana, brings the city to the verge of chaos where the violence lies very close to the surface and people are faced with a violence of attitudes when Gyan Singh announced a strike in the whole region for the selfish purpose of demonstrating his political strength. He is only concerned with his personal gains and does not even hesitate to use violence as a means for achieving his selfish ends, while Harpal Singh acts as a political counterfoil to Gyan Singh as he believes in the Gandhian ideology of non-violence. He has always given priority to the interest of people against his self-interest.

The Union Home Minister assigns the task of effecting a reapproachment between the two warring states to Vishal Dubey. Vishal, the protagonist, an intelligent officer has to tackle and pacify the problem at human level. He has to deal with these two Chief Ministers who are symbols of two political forces and who are diametrically opposite in their approaches and ideologies. Gyan Singh threatens the city with a strike to show off his power tactics. Harpal Singh protests against the partition of the states in the name of religion and language and believes that the people who want separation have to carry out their butchery and resolutely carve it up again ostensibly in the name of the Punjabi language. He nostalgically remembers and compares the contemporary post-Independence days of 1947. Harpal Singh is more liberal in outlook and is primarily interested in the integrity and unity of the nation. The conflict between Gyan and Harpal

is not merely a battle of personal discord; it is a battle of philosophies and ideologies. During that time Vishal Dubey had sexual relationship with Gauri, who is the wife of a rich industrialist Bengali businessman, Nikhil Roy.

Finally, however the death of the Home Minister in centre abates 'storm'. Harpal is shot and hurt by the mob and Gyan Singh calls off the strike as a token of respect for the death of the patriot. The 'storm' on the political plane thus abates temporarily. Dubey feels an intense personal grief. To him the funeral of the old Minister who is the last surviving figure of the Gandhian era symbolizes “. . . more than a state funeral. It would mark the end of an era unknown as Gandhian. In politics that had meant freedom from fear, the head held high, the indomitable will in the emaciated body of India . . . If all of that had been worth anything . . . It will have been disbursed over this country, down deep into our blood” (217).

Vishal's marriage is a failure. He as a widower derives satisfaction not only of his profession but also because of the intimacy between him and Gauri, a Bengali business man's wife, who finds security in arranged marriage. Unfortunately she does not find much satisfaction in her married life with Nikhil. So she longs to establish her relationship with Dubey not merely for sex but for love and affection. Whenever her husband is out of town, she spends her nights with Vishal. Vishal also develops a deeper attachment to Saroj, wife of Inder.

Vishal's own marriage with Leela has turned out to be a vanishing search for communication. They are bound in a lifelong marriage and continue the adventure of being man and woman without any confession. He is possessed by a deep sense of guilt for living with her without love. Sahgal writes that,

She was dedicated to the cult of conformity, to observing forms that his most intense pleas had not been able to penetrate . . . The whole mindless mess going on down the ages with never a shaft of new light on it. Men and women contorted into moulds, battered into sameness, the divine spiritual spark guttered out . . . Somewhere under the sun there must be another way to live, with relentless honesty, where the only cruelty would be pretence. (194)

Dubey goes to Chandigarh from Delhi to solve the political impasse but unwillingly involves himself in the private lives of the estranged husbands and wives especially those of Saroj and Inder. Saroj, the female protagonist is married to Inder, who runs the textile mills of Saroj's cousin Nikhil Ray's in Chandigarh. There is no emotional communication between Saroj and Inder on the fact that they have been married for the last four years and have two children. The bonding is more of fear rather than of love for her husband. She represents the new woman who is trying to retain her individuality and breathe freely in the suffocating atmosphere of passionless and emotionally unfulfilling marriages. Iftikhar Hussain Lone in the article "Nayantara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh: A Feminist Study*" comments that "The New Woman is determined not merely to live, but to live in self-respect, thus implicitly demanding a re-alignment of the parameters on which marriage functions. Marriage without emotional involvement, sex without passion, and love without respect are anathema to her as she manoeuvres her way through the changing times" (54). Saroj emerges as a victim of male tyranny and chauvinism.

Saroj has a physical relationship with a person before marriage in her college days, but she does not consider it as a sin and she accepts it as a part of her life. After her

marriage she has been faithful to Inder to the fullest degree. She is a person who values mutual trust, consideration, honesty, communication and absence of pretense in a relationship. Iftikhar Hussain Lone in the article “Nayantara Sahgal’s *Storm in Chandigarh: A Feminist Study*” writes that Saroj “Hailing from a liberal family, believing in openness and trust as the hallmark of relationships. Saroj had naively presumed that her husband shared those values, not realizing that he was the product of an atmosphere where male dominance is the most formidable of cults” (54). She is thoroughly truthful to Inder and her honesty in marital relationship to him is with the intention of looking forward to a clean break from the past. But this confession actually dooms her marriage. Inder is maddened by Saroj’s pre-marital sex, as he is a man of the traditional patriarchal attitude of the society. He keeps on torturing her mentally and physically ever since her confession.

When Inder comes to know that Saroj is pregnant for the third time, he feels irritated and rebukes her as if she is alone responsible for the pregnancy. Saroj who wants to forget all her past is not able to do so because of her husband. He doesn’t allow her to forget it. He always kindles her emotions with pricking words and abuses. She learns the value of freedom from Dubey during their walks together. Saroj needs no sexual pleasures rather she needs a sense of fulfillment, a longing for love, sharing and surrendering herself into the palms of a trusted person. She feels much relieved and freshened from the smouldering suffocation of the four walls of her house when she goes out with Vishal for a walk and she begs to Vishal saying: “. . . let’s walk a bit first,’ ‘I’ve been in the house all day and it’s such a relief to be out’” (75). Saroj shares all her emotional cravings to Vishal, a man who is already married. His wife Leela dies six years

back due to an abortion. Leela is never able to reach the inner core of his personality. She marries Dubey because he is a successful civil servant with a promising future. The mismatch between the two is evident from the fact that Leela is used to the life of social parties, hypocrisy, adultery and pretense while Vishal wanted a person with whom he can “talk to when the day’s work was done the friend with whom one could give the whole of oneself” (61).

Vishal’s loveless and faithless wife is not able to fulfill his needs of companionship and understanding. According to him, marital relationship is based on emotional communication, honesty, complete acceptance of other person’s weaknesses and lack of pretenses. Lack of realization of such relationships with their respective spouses is the root for all the unhappiness and illegal relations.

Saroj and Inder present a picture of typical Indian traditional family in which womanhood is captured in the possessive spirit of the husband. Their relationship is purely mechanical and superficial without any feeling of affection and tenderness. Inder thinks that women are inherently weak. Inder strongly believes that “A thousand years from now a woman will still want and need a master, the man who will own and command her and that’s the man she’ll respect” (92). His treatment of his wife and children is extremely indecent. He treats them as if they are non-living objects.

His misconception of Saroj being impure, has never let him experience a sense of emotional involvement with her while making love to her. Inder has an affair with Mara, wife of Jit and his brief affair with Mara fills him with a sense of harmony. Mara runs a school for small children to fill her emotional lack. Her marriage with sweet tempered and considerate Jit has its share of estrangements and misgivings, but Mara’s problem is

not physical but psychological. So the search for communication makes Mara come towards Inder. Mara and Jit, live a life which is lifeless. Her psychological pain never allows her to come closer to Jit both emotionally and sexually. Mara is capable of responding to Inder's needs which highlights her inability to respond to Jit's much simpler needs. Mara's lack of interest makes Jit feel that all his affection and care are wasted.

For the first time, Inder realizes that love does not just mean sex rather it means involvement. Inder is left alone as Saroj decides to go to Delhi for her confinement and with the view of spending the rest of her life with Vishal. Shyam M. Asnani and Ramesh Chadha in the article "Female Quest for Identity in Nayantara Sahgal's Novels" believe Saroj has realized that

Mere living together under the same roof, only the accumulation of a life time's living habits, without any real bond of intimacies, in spite of sex and children, the human substance between them dwindling, is nothing but the mockery of marriage. True living lies in understanding each other, in mutual respect and trust, honesty and freedom, without a thought of dominance. (64)

So Inder himself is responsible for his loneliness, because it is his own flexible self which prevents him from establishing an enduring relationship with Saroj and Mara.

Mara and Jit stand in sharp contrast to Saroj and Inder. Mara is a westernized woman with "an air of independence and forthrightness about her" (50). She is not one of those who believe in total subjugation to family who go on producing children till adequate number of boys are eating the leftovers on the table, remaining all their life, a

mere shadow hovering about the kitchen or puja room. Jit is always in a state of readiness to dance to her tune. In spite of all his sincere efforts, Mara fails to have emotional satisfaction with Jit. She is torn between marriage and passion.

It was something; he decided to do with the chemistry of their two characters, an insoluble difference, nothing that could be sorted out, even with patience. In fact patience seemed to be wrong ingredient for it. She needed at times to be pried loose from her attitudes, shaken into yielding, but he lacked the coarser grain of behavior that could have accomplished it. (94)

The search for communication makes Mara come towards Inder. The privacy of her thoughts is ruptured with the arrival of Inder who has developed a peculiar intimacy with her. Mara is not content with the gentleness of her husband but desires all that the world can offer her - “the softness of Jit and the hardness of Inder” (47). In her relationship with Inder, Mara stimulates his mind and involves him in ways no woman ever has. She does not surrender her individuality and offers a challenge to Inder’s domination.

Mara needs a man who speaks, counter argues, debates, and fights on various issues. Her world of communication is satisfied by Inder. The vacuumness of her mind is filled with the tender thoughts of Inder. Jit helps Mara to come out of her emotional jungle by talking to her of an unhappy experience of his own. In the end Mara realizes the need for ‘the oxygen of understanding’ and come out of their caves and communicate with each other and settle down to lead a meaningful married life. The realization makes them to be reconciled and remain true to each other.

Vishal Dubey's marriage is also a vanishing search for communication. Vishal who wants to build a relationship on truth finds it a difficult task. In his relationship with Leela, he feels a great deal of unhappiness. Despite Leela's extra-marital affair with Hari, she insists on maintaining the fakeness of a stable marriage with Vishal. She has always lived a life of pretence and hypocrisy. Vishal undergoes a torture of living together intimately yet remains strangers to each other.

After Leela's death, Vishal gets attracted to Gauri's natural and luxuriously feminine generosity. Dubey's relationship with Gauri is based on sex and the urgency of a momentary need. She makes no emotional demands on him. His affair with her begins in the disturbed year after Leela's death. Gauri feels secure in her marriage. She feels satisfied with her successful industrialist husband, Nikhil Ray. She has no pretensions about her virtuosity; she calls herself a –“social butterfly with positively no interest in life beyond my own comforts and pleasures” (146). So in these ways Sahgal is deeply concerned with unhappy marriages and the loneliness of living. Through the portrayal of the married life of Leela, Gauri, Saroj and Mara, the authoress holds a mirror to the society that subjects its women to worst type of inhuman exploitation.

There is very little distinction between love and freedom. Freedom is knowing and understanding and respecting things quite other than oneself. Love is a function of freedom – once one is free to know, understand and respect things other than oneself, one can love that otherness. Love is an unselfish desire to fuse oneself with the person loved. Love grows out of sex and transcends it without however abolishing it in the process. Sahgal has emphasized the need of understanding the individual existence of others through the exercise of love and freedom.

The exercise of love and freedom is well exemplified in the relationship between Vishal and Saroj. Loving another woman other than one's own wife is by and large an impossible situation, but it is a situation most satisfying to Vishal – “He wondered what there was in this impossible situation to be happy about- a woman, not his, for whose well-being he was racked. But he knew his joy was for the fact that he had come home, and that a lifetime's longing could now be concentrated on loving Saroj” (201).

Vishal Dubey's critical analysis of women's position in India seems to echo the novelist's own vehement dislike for traditional image of woman as a figure of humility, neck bent, eyes downcast, living flesh consigned to oblivion. The novelist ridicules the Indian tradition where women belong to their men by contract or blood. Their sphere is sexual and their job, a procreation. They are dependent, and not individuals.

Inder loves Saroj but looks at her as a slave and his possession. His conversation with Mara reveals his thinking:

‘She belongs to me’

‘Belongs to you? So do your shoes’.

‘Even my shoes are special to me, because they are mine’ . . .

‘They are special because they fit’

‘If they did not, you would throw them away . . . ’. (124)

He tries to entangle Mara in the coils of his imperious and impatient sex; while at the same time brutally prosecutes Saroj for her pre-marital error. The novelist thus shows that even in this century, men, like Inder, continue to believe in two codes, one for man and another for woman.

Inder belongs to the 'He-man school' and believes in male-pre-dominance. So there is no question of any freedom or self-expression or growth for his wife. He loves Saroj but loves as if she is his slave. They have lived, loved even processed and raised children, but there has been no real understanding between them. She is all the time afraid of being misunderstood just of being oneself and being punished for it. In the labour of living together, there has never been any intimacy or no solid ground between them.

Vishal and Jit both sail on the same boat. Vishal is cuckold by his wife and it is the same in case of Jit. But the line of cuckold is different in each case depending on their wife's emotional needs. Mara creates an intimacy with Inder, whereas Leela is a picture of modernized, and civilized woman. She needs a man in the name of a husband to show off her social status. But she is not ready to satisfy and fulfill the needs of her husband. Her socio-economic class forces her to choose Vishal as her husband and not because of intense love.

Saroj remarks, "I am alone even when Inder is here" (203) speaks volumes of the extent of her distress. The extent of her frustration, agony and loneliness makes her to fall in love with Vishal Dubey. She is surrounded not by living souls but by non-living materials. A human being is being invigorated with the expressions of love, desire, affection, attachment, trust, friendship and so on. All these things are denied for Saroj. Her mental agony makes her to move out of the tradition, which is to be followed.

Dubey meets Saroj and Inder in Chandigarh and realizes that though they have lived together with children for several years, there is in reality, no communication or understanding between them. Inder, her husband can never think of her as a person with

ideas, feelings and emotions, and therefore, cannot understand her needs which are deeply involved in things happening around her. He is a businessman and can think of her only in business like terms. To him:

A wife was one half of an enterprise, the complaint business partner who presided over house and children and furthered her husband's career. Saroj had no interest in any of it, and not because she was gifted with any accomplishment that took her time. It was her pre-occupation with herself that unnerved him. That, and the curious concentration of her spirit upon whatever came her way. (46)

This attitude of Inder, projects him as a typical Indian man, who regards his wife as a means to be used for furthering his career, a possession and to look after the home and children. This approved norm is provided by the wife's passive acceptance of the whole situation. Inder, similarly, allows no identity to Saroj except when he bestows on her as a wife, mother and a complaint business partner. Saroj cannot succumb to this situation because she believes in equality and involvement, and is symbolic of the New Woman who wants to do things for her own satisfaction.

Saroj is intensely a real person, wanting to take active part in everything around her, but Hinduism preaches her endurance rather than action. Suffering and self-denial are things, which are considered almost sacred by the Hindus. Inder has never forgotten her innocent pre-marital affair and also never allows her to forget it. She feels that she is responsible for the failure of their marriage and tries to do everything within her capacity to make it successful. She makes conscious efforts not to do things, which would annoy Inder and her talk is based on the safe topics which will not temper Inder into a rage.

These moments are tense and tiring for her and the pressure on her mind is revealed only when she frankly tells Dubey: “Half the time one is afraid – you know- saying the wrong thing or of being misunderstood- just for being oneself and being punished for it so one spends such a lot of time acting, or at least hiding, and that’s very tiring” (79).

Saroj is her natural self with Dubey. She need not keep up pretences or appearances with him, and feels relaxed and happy in his company. Here, there is a feeling of equality; Vishal values her as she naturally is. However, he understands her delicate sentiments and tells her: “That’s how I like knowing you, in an ordinary way. The high spots come and go. They aren’t most of life” (110). He discovers the real Saroj to him: “. . . she looked the eternal woman as she sat, serene and pregnant in the firelight . . . It was such a contrast from the masked faces of most women . . . Enigmas did not fascinate him. Too often they were empty containers. Much that went wrong between men and women, between people, lay in hat they withheld from one another” (79).

Dubey’s idea of a successful marriage is based on truth, communication and acceptance. He feels that there should be no tight-ripped secrets between husband and wife. With this outlook, the understanding he shows to Saroj’s emotional needs brings about a radical change in her personality. She accepts his proposal of going to Delhi for her confinement, even though it means defying Inder. Saroj leaves domesticity and timidness far behind and emerges out of her chrysalis with a new found confidence. Dubey has resurrected her personality and at no cost he is going to let it collapse again. He tells Saroj “It has taken a million years of evolution for a person and his cherished individuality to matter and no terror must be allowed to destroy that, . . .” (205). To him a person’s individuality is more important than hundreds of social norms. He continues in

the same vein and explains to her: “Freedom is just an isolated political achievement for us. It hasn’t become a habit or a way of life. We are still bound by meaningless doctrines and we show no mercy on those who don’t conform” (204). Freedom means a way of life of doing things one believes it to be right, even if they are against the accepted social values. Sahgal’s works gives a clear image that she is not against society or social laws, but only against those things which have kept Indian women subordinated to their male counterparts for centuries. She wants her women to regain their identity as individuals and shows great respect for a person as she naturally is. She advocates truth, honesty and acceptance in spite of failings and weaknesses of human beings, especially in marriage.

Mara is dissatisfied because she wants the best of both the worlds – the hardness of Inder and the softness of Jit. She experiences a sense of fulfillment and happiness, for a brief period of her affair with Inder. The relationship is one-sided and Inder too, for the first time, experiences the magic of love. He discovers that love does not mean just sexual, but it really means involvement. The change fills him with a new insight. He reveals this to Mara and tells her: “Do you know the strangest thing about you, Tamara? Talking to you and kissing you are all the same. It all blends. I don’t know where one leaves off and the other beings . . . suddenly all the difference between loving and not loving had become apparent to him. He was in no hurry to possess her. He wanted to keep the softly glowing intimacy between them alive” (157).

This new found joy is short lived for both. The relationship comes to an end when Mara realizes that in spite of her best efforts to understand Inder, some part of him remains unknown to her. The rigidity in him reminds her of iron bands binding broken wooden crates during one of their transfers. Though the crates has burst open spilling

their contents, the iron bands remain secure and firm in their places. With this discovery, she withdraws, and for the first time accepts help and support from Jit. Both realize that there is no other way but to follow Dubey's advice and Jit reveals to Mara the secret he has withheld for so long. Thus, communication and truth break the unseen barriers, which exist between them all these years. Now Jit is not guilt conscious anymore and tells Mara: "There's been a silence between us on so many matters. Not that we've planned it that way, it has just been taken for granted as the way a couple should behave. No intimacies, except in bed. Strange isn't it? And yet most people accept marriage in those dried out one dimensional terms almost like strangers" (211).

Inder is projected from two viewpoints. Towards Saroj, his attitude is of total indifference. He views sex with her as a mere performance of an act, with no emotional involvement whatsoever. He feels: "sex with her (Saroj) came easily and satisfactorily to him. It was an act with a beginning and an end, a need never to be put into words, neatly enacted and dispensed with in darkness. There were no traces of it to account for in the morning" (53). With Mara, as seen earlier, Inder is joyous and calm having made a new discovery of his new world of joy, but again there is something which withdraws and keeps him back, which destroys this relationship too. Inder has no one to blame, but his own indomitable self for his unhappiness. On the other hand, both Saroj and Mara are able to look forward to a brighter and better future because of changed outlooks. So, this kind of a situation is becoming more and more realistic in cosmopolitan cities.

Dubey's affair with Gauri has begun mindlessly in the disturbed year after Leela's death. The calm composure, which Gauri symbolizes, and her world of exquisite calculation with no sign of strain is soothing to his restless mind. He wonders why sex

has entered their relationship-her affection and friendship are all that he needed. But she makes no emotional demands on him. She is happy with her husband, and giving came easily to her, the overflow of a generous spirit. Wife of a successful industrialist, she laughingly calls herself a social butterfly-everything about her was lovely and languid and opulent. Saroj and her world are just the opposite of Gauri's.

To Saroj pre-marital sex is a mere youthful experiment which indulges in more of curiosity and fondness for her male friend than because of any deep and abiding love. But she does not suffer from any moral qualms nor does she resort to hypocritical excuses for her victimization because, for her, this relationship is not a crime. But Inder wants to offer her a chance for absolution and says in a self-righteous tone, "It was not your fault after all. You were very young. You were led astray". She wanted to cry each time, "I don't want forgiveness. I've committed no crime" (85).

Jit differs from Inder in his role as a husband. Jit is very fond and proud of Mara, and of the school that she runs for little children. Much of Mara's upbringing has been in foreign countries, and her self-assertion and independence at first, irritates and later attracts, Inder. Mara is fond of Jit, but there is some restraint in their relationship mainly due to Mara's general discontent with everything. The breaking-up of her brief affair with Inder upsets her greatly, but this episode ends well for Mara and Jit. He takes this opportunity to reach out to her by talking to her of an unhappy experience of his own before he met her, an experience which makes him realize that he is the kind of a person who lives by reason. He feels that Mara is of the same type: "You'll never be happy in an emotional jungle- If that is where you are now, then let me help you to find your way out, my love" (211).

Inder sees nothing wrong in succumbing to the attractions of the glamorous Mara, a married woman. He enters a passionate, a short-lived relationship, with her, who “stimulated his mind and involved him in ways no woman ever had” (159). Simultaneously he regards Saroj’s friendship with Vishal as an unforgivable betrayal of marital fidelity. It is an attitude of duplicity, which never strikes him as such, for fidelity and purity are qualities of a patriarchal society which habitually imposed on the virginity of women and not of men.

In brief, the wives represent love, charity, compassion, kindness, altruism, and a preference for the emotional over the material, while husbands are selfish, cruel, violent, possessive, and materialistic. This contrast is very old as to be seen in religious terms. The values that the women embody are essentially the core of the ethical and moral code of most religions. At heart women are religious and traditional. They believe that non-violence and compassion and sharing will solve the problems of the world. Men are greedy, materialistic, and violent and therefore represent the unpalatable underbelly of capitalism and modernity. The values of the women protagonists are thus essentially conservative. As Saroj says that their courage is “not throwing things away, but holding on . . . and never giving up” (77). This tradition of cultivating virtue is basically idealistic and humanistic. It refuses to accord primacy to the moral.

Nayantara Sahgal chooses to render artistically the confrontation between the stormy Chief Minister of Punjab, Gyan Singh and the altruistic Chief Minister of Haryana, Harpal Singh. Gyan threatens to demonstrate the strength of his demand by launching a crippling strike at Bhakra that covers both the regions which is a kind of

blackmail. Vishal Dubey who has the “gift for tackling a problem at the human level” (4) is entrusted with the work of saving the already boiling situation from exploding.

The choice of the newly built capital Chandigarh as the locale for the novel is quite significant as it symbolizes an emerging new order in the post- independence India. Designed by Le Corbusier, with its stark architecture, it also signifies an alien world that disturbs the thoughts of Vishal Dubey on his arrival at the city: “This was architecture transplanted, not conceived here, and he wondered how successful it was or for that matter how successful democracy was superimposed on illiterate masses, exploding millions of them” (191).

A specimen who represents such a wrong breed of humanity is Gyan Singh who is very clear about his goals in life and has no scruples. When he presents his case for a Punjabi-speaking state, he mingles the issues of religion and language and carries the day, while Harpal, whose viewpoint is far more secular and humanistic, is unable to make any impact. The fact, that power and not conviction has become the motivating force for politicians makes Harpal unhappy. He values the human factor above everything while Gyan refuses to acknowledge the difference between the human and non-human factors. He runs out to be a manipulator whose way of functioning is equally simple: “One who would come to immediate grips with a situation and manipulate it to suit himself . . . Not . . . an unscrupulous man, for that would imply he saw scruples and ignored them. Gyan trod a path that involved no inner struggle” (64).

The stormy activity in which Chandigarh is caught up politically at the very opening of the novel is reflected at the personal level, in the turbulent marital life of Saroj and Inder, Mara and Jit. In fact, the political issue in question is symptomatic of a

socially pervasive violence of attitude that appears more seductively in the marriages.

Vishal Dubey, a passive spectator in the beginning is caught unaware in the 'storms' on both the planes because of his sense of involvement. He is instrumental in controlling the raging storms at both the levels.

As Vishal goes to the scene of violence, what he encounters is not a mount up tension but a state of paralysis; nobody makes an attempt to quell the violence. People are inert and different, waiting for the violence to spread and engulf them. The government's policy of wait and watch is suggestive of passivity and inaction. While ideologically oriented people like Harpal sit paralyzed, active but aggressive and unscrupulous people like Gyan degrade the Satyagrahas and mass movements to the level of political blackmailing. Since passive good can never successfully destroy active evil Vishal manages to convince Harpal to take a stand against inaction and initiates him into action which put an end to the strike but not before Harpal is shot dead by Gyan's supporters. The Home Minister, a relic of the Gandhian past in modern Indian history dies, thus marking the final retreat from Gandhian ideals in the contemporary political situation.

At the individual level it is Vishal who motivates Saroj, the victim of male tyranny, to come out of the state of inaction and paralysis. He says that life is bigger than any system: "Life could remould or break the system that lacked righteousness and reason. It was life's precious obligation to rebel, and humanity's right to be free, to choose from the best light it could see, not necessarily the long-accepted light" (173).

Saroj is like Harpal in her passive acceptance, in her changing moments of response and communication just to save her marriage and in her adoptions of withdrawal tactics. Both Saroj and Harpal are representatives of that majority of the people who are

instrumental in letting violence spread and engulf them and the society at the personal and societal levels. Nayantara Sahgal by way of offering a remedy to this paralysis at the personal and societal levels makes both Saroj and Harpal act at the right moment. Saroj walks out of the home that has ceased to be a home at the end of the novel while Harpal takes an active stand to quell the strike launched by Gyan Singh. But the society for whose sake Harpal's life is sacrificed remains unmoved by the sacrifice as ever.

A comparison between the early women novelists and the later women novelist of the post-independence era show a definite continuity in trend and approach. In both the periods, women characters are shown to be searching for identity and for self-awareness. In the earlier novels, women rebel against major social issues like child marriage, denial of education to girls, and atrocities suffered by a woman in her husband's house. In contemporary novels, there is more depth and complexity in the choice and treatment of women. As the modern society is complex, women's aspect of behaviour and life are possessed with the complex nature. In modern novels, women rebel against the traditional feminine roles. They have challenged the accepted ideals of marriage and maternity, and have chosen to work for a living instead. They refuse to conform to the image of effeminate, docile, silent and long suffering woman, a picture invented and nurtured through a male oriented culture. The women of contemporary fiction are revolutionary in nature and the emphasis is on creating a totally new character type.

In the broadest possible sense, the contribution of women to literature could make a significant difference to the judgments and practices of the whole society. Over the ages in the male-dominated world, women are kept out of the cultural traditions, which

ultimately resulted in open rebellion by the women writers. Despite changing socio-political scenario world over, justice to women's writing has not been done.

Women's writing must transcend masculine models and feminist protest and demands the scenarios of compromise. It should also cease to be merely a propagandist literature seeking liberation movement and equal rights. It should create a purposeful awakening and reinvigorate mythologies of female culture in an appropriate genre. The preconceived concept of women as a symbol of sex needs to be redefined in terms of socio-psychological framework.

On the ideological plane, feminism raises fundamental questions about women's writing, reading and gender bias. It is an operating force behind the interdisciplinary tool for social and cultural analysis and as a political practice. Thus feminism has transformed the perceptions of life and literature. T. M. J. Indira Mohan reiterates the words of Bell Hooks in the article "Feminism Today: A Perspective" who opines that "Feminism emerges as a concept that can encompass both on ideology and movement for socio-political change based on a critical analysis of male privilege and women's subordination within any given society" (187).

Vishal Dubey is a feminist in the real sense of the term. Iftikhar Hussain Lone in the article "Nayantara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh*: A Feminist Study" quotes Toril Moi who in his essay says "that men can be feminists and, it is the sole privilege of woman to be a feminist" (58). Most of Dubey's ideas in the novel show his deep concern about the emancipation of women in present times. Dubey ". . . thought of his own country women as the subdued sex, creatures not yet emerged from the chrysalis, for whom the adventure of self-expression had not even begun . . . there had long been a figure of humility, neck

bent, eyes downcast, living flesh consigned to oblivion . . . Their sphere was sexual and their job procreation” (171). He wants people to think that the world consists of human beings rather than men and women in a watertight compartments. He has always treated his wife as his equal and has wanted her to give him her natural self but unfortunately she always maintained her fiction and proves to be an adulterous lady. With Saroj also, he wants to have a relationship in which there is no pretence but frank communication. He loves Saroj not because she is a woman in the physical sense of the term but because he likes the beautiful human being in her.

Vishal Dubey shows the way to Saroj to opt for a life without pretence. He is an advocate of the freedom of human spirit in all respects. The novel affirms the endless possibilities in human life both at political as well as at an inter-personal level.

Nayantara’s primary and serious concern is the confrontation of human spirit in a changing cultural milieu. Digging deeper in to the socio-political scene, one can see her characters struggling to find their roots.

Woman in the past has been relegated to a very subordinate position. But in this novel, Saroj, a woman with a spine shapes her own destiny with her assertiveness and self-confidence. Saroj does not transform her inner struggle into a political struggle. A victim of patriarchal values, she considers her marriage with her husband Inder an emotional waste land. She, who belongs to the sphere of intense sharpened sensibility and a bright girl with a college degree, has more or less petered out since she married Inder.

Mara’s husband Jit is like Saroj in his passive acceptance, even after finding the truth of her illegal relationship with Inder. Saroj learns that endurance is not a virtue. She has to reach out to create with Vishal a relationship which Inder has refused. But for Jit, it

is patience and enduring love that restores his marriage. While there is no resolution to the social and political question of what traits are necessary in leadership, there is a very clear statement that in personal relations people must be willing to gamble on honesty and trust.

Vishal in the end, who helps her realize that whatever has happened in the past, she is an honourable woman, and that Inder must stop his old brutal game of suspicion, torture, denying her self-expression and making her wilt and sulk. The ultimate assertion of her individuality is shown when she revolts against her husband's inhuman behaviour and plans a flight.

Jit and Inder are designed to be a foil to each other. Both are young industrialists and both have had the traumatic experience of the partition in their youth, their parents lost, emotions uprooted, a whole past destroyed and with it a substantial inheritance, and both are watching with concern the further bifurcation of the state. But Jit is more liberal and practical and has a larger perspective on life and things. There are frequent misgivings, estrangements, and silence between him and Mara on so many matters, but then compromise follows so readily from Jit. He knows that there are two kinds of people in the world, those who live by reason and those who don't, and he knows he belongs to the first kind. So does Mara who has been brought up in foreign countries. Ironically, it is a conversation with Vishal that inspires Jit to reach out to Mara. The predicament of the man-woman relationship facing disaster is conveyed symbolically through the cave theory of Vishal which stands for hypocrisy, darkness, ignorance and breach of communication. Vishal's plea for frank and friendly talk draws the rational young couple (Jit and Mara) closer together. But the future for Inder and Saroj is bleak. The way Inder

traps Mara into the coils of his imperious sex, while at the same time, he brutally tortures Saroj for her pre-marital error, reinforces the author's appalling exclamation that even in the twentieth century people like Inder believe in two codes of conduct – one for men and the other for women.

Nayantara Sahgal gives a clear idea of how the conflict between two individuals has created a howling destructiveness in the entire city. Her political background which is inherent in her blood makes her to choose issues daringly which involves everyday happenings and disorders. The socio-economic status of Indian politics has not improved, rather, it deteriorates day by day. She is able to foretell what may happen in Indian politics. So politics is same all through the ages, it never changes as like men do.

The main theme of the novel is violence, not necessarily an obvious physical violence, but an invisible and the more subtle form of violence, the infliction of one person on another. Saroj's pre-marital relationship becomes the cause of failure of their marriage. Saroj has become a victim of the male-tyranny.

The primary theme of the novel is motherhood. Motherhood is a complete ideology, and the ultimate value of the narrative. It is a simple, untarnished, feminine state remaining unblemished and untouched by any external pressures. Vishal takes Saroj, the archetypal mother, to Delhi to protect her motherhood. In her novel motherhood is an unchallenged preoccupation.

However, Sahgal does not imply that wives should not help their husbands in their work or careers. She says that both husband and wife should be aware of each other's individuality and respect each other's views. Marriage provides the basis for understanding these needs consciously, and gives opportunities to be actively involved in

them. This sense of involvement and active participation is a recurrent theme in most of her novels.

Both Saroj and Mara search for their identity, but their plane of search is contradictory to each other. Saroj, a woman who confesses her past to her husband never feels guilty of her actions. She surrenders herself in the palms of Inder. She expects a zone of comfort, love, trust and happy relationship with her husband but all these things are denied for Saroj. Her search is a search for platonic relationship. She is used as a material for procreation and to fulfill the sexual pleasures of her husband. The lewd behaviour of her husband creates a unhealthy environment between Inder and Saroj. On the other hand, Mara's search is concerned with internal psyche. Her loneliness and frustration depressed her entire married life. Even though she is filled with all sorts of pleasures, she feels a sense of clumsy strangeness. She expects a man who understands her emotions and feelings.

CHAPTER III

Chapter III

From Subjugation to Emancipation

The novel refers to the violence which happens after India's independence. It picks up the lives of the people of Delhi, who are engaged in politics, business, and intellectual pursuits. These people include bureaucrats, freelance journalists and liberal thinkers. The crises that arise at this time of history are both personal as well as national. At the personal level, the crisis revolves around the married life of a freelance writer, Simrit, which finally leads to a divorce. At the political level, it manifests itself due to the changing foreign policy. The opening paragraph itself is used by the author to give us an integral view of the social and political scene in New Delhi. The very first sentence underlines the glow and glitter of the background as

The huge mirrors of the Zodiac Room at the Inter-continental, festooned in carved gilt, reflected every one of consequence in the Ministry of Petroleum, and a lot of other officials besides. And their wives. And some of their daughters-the supple, flat-stomached young, with their saris tied low showing their navels, their hair swinging long and loose, or piled high in glossy architecture. (1)

Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow* is a personal novel, because the autobiographical element comes to surface in this novel. Sahgal has a personal experience of painful divorce and she realizes that as a divorcee, an Indian woman has no social a legal status. The 'draconian terms' of the divorce, which her heroine, Simrit is saddled with for life, underline the theme of the novel. It is a bold decision on her part to walk out of an incompatible marriage, but ironically she finds herself nailed down to an enormous tax

payment. The struggle of a woman like Simrit who is trying to establish her own identity, apart from her husband and family is unacceptable to society.

The main theme of the novel is the continued exploitation of a woman by her husband. The continued tendency of exploitations for a woman by man provokes her to revolt against the social system and reconstitute it on her terms. Thus, *The Day in Shadow* marks the emergence of a new type of a woman who can present her own terms, through which compatible and dignified family life is possible.

Man-woman relationship whether within or outside marriage, needs to be liberated from conventional approaches in order to achieve a satisfying and fulfilling one. Marriage is neither a system of slavery nor an escape route. It is not even a contract, for it is wrong to approach it in that spirit. It is partnership based on respect and consideration, requiring involvement from both. Though, the major theme of the novel is politics, yet the problem of divorce and disintegration among marriage in a typical Indian setting is a dominating stream line of the novel. Divorce does not imply that marriage has failed as a social institution or that it has outlived its utility. On the other hand it clearly demonstrates the need for reciprocal relationships in marriage. This relationship has been subjected to an unusual strain in a number of ways. Partly the break-up of the joint family system itself is responsible for the increase in friction between a husband and wife.

The Day in Shadow explores the male psychology of possession and control and how women are subjugated and never allow to fetter from the clutches of their married life. Through the female characters, Sahgal interrogates the social restrictions and gender roles laid down upon women by the forces of patriarchal society. The novel delineates the

emotional and economic strains of divorce on the female protagonist. This novel portrays the agonized experience of a divorced middle-aged woman, Simrit.

The heroine Simrit Raman, a writer, is a divorcee (like Sahgal herself), and the novel shows the prejudice she faces in a male-dominated Indian society. Simrit is an independent educated woman, who makes a choice. Solely attracted by Som's colour, life and action disregarding the opposition from her parents and the dislike of her friends, she marries Som, who is a rich industrialist. Both lived a happy life during the first few years of their marriage but it starts crackling, when Som does not give importance to her even in the ordinary decisions of everyday life. Simrit thinks that in India "woman for use had been the rule for too long" (38). She also realizes the fact that "Hindu woman traditionally has no rights apart from what her father or husband choose to bestow on her" (168). Som likes a hearty meal and a healthy sexual life. Material wealth and a sensual wife are the targets, Som is ceaselessly aiming at. He needs a wife not as an individual thinker rather like a bull which shakes its head for its master's questions without any reciprocation.

On the surface, the marriage between Som and Simrit seemed to be a successful happy marriage. But later, it turns out to be a marriage ". . . that had created a game of its own, in which intensity, depth and devotion were never brought into play at all. Nor was the partnership" (4). This lack of partnership, frank and fearless communication and understanding creates a rift between the couple, culminating divorce.

In fact the novel opens with Simrit, for whom the aftermath of a broken marriage is a plethora of hurt feeling. She suffers the emotional and fictional after-effects of the divorce and its 'Consent Terms'. She is never allowed to have the freedom of expression,

or the choice to be herself. And she, too, hates talking about things that mattered so deeply to her, particularly when it falls into a vacuum.

What she wants from Som, her husband, is a partnership to just hold hands and live like loving friends so that out of that “non-insistence that preying–upon each other something sweet may down” (96). Simrit’s hypersensitive disposition resents the seduction of individuality by the outward gleam of the products of the material world. She does not want any place in a world of violence and greed but craves for a world whose texture is kindly. But for insensitive, un-understanding Som, the talk about friendship between a married couple or between any male-female, is a high blown stuff beyond him. For him, only the intimacy of bed and yielding to the compelling urgency of his physical need is all that matters. Gradually, Simrit discovers that she will no longer be able to follow the goals Som has set for himself. The fountain of love was drying, however hard she tries to retain it by trying her level best to make compromises till the end.

The ultimatum of Som is that “you’d better decide what you want to do. Get on with a normal life or finish this farce once and for all” (97). She knows very well that Som has already settled the matter in his mind. She stands pinned to the ground in dark “as if she had been pitched into an indifferent outer nothingness cut off from light and sound” (98). The divorce is obtained by consent, with both the parties signing the ‘Consent Terms’. Simrit is stunned and shocked by the behaviour of her husband.

Som, however never tries to understand the reasons for his sensitive, intelligent wife’s unhappiness, who needs not pleasure but a word of sharing-a good talk, about books, events, ideas, people or anything else which is shared by her husband. Som and

his friend would talk endlessly “to each other in Punjabi in her presence, ignoring her. But Som would squeeze and stroke her arm, rest his hand warmly, heavily on her thigh keep her physically in the room, mentally out” (27). Both the friends doesn't give any importance or even a glance to her during their discussion, and this gives her immense mental torture who always wants to be a part of them. For an educated and sensitive woman like Simrit, her husband's indifference is extremely inhuman, particularly when she whole-heartedly desires deeper relationship. She ultimately decides to put an end to her unhappy marriage. But divorce, when it comes, is not at all easy for Simrit. Through Simrit, Sahgal expounds various aspects of divorce and its implications for a lonely woman. Dr. Kanupriya in the article “Violence and Loneliness in Nayantara Sahgal's Major Novels” quotes the words of Sahgal, “In this book I tried to figure out something that has happened to me-the shattering experience of divorce. I wanted to show how even in a free country like ours, where women are equal citizens; a woman can be criminally exploited without creating a cripple” (63-64).

In spite of the material comforts and delivering children, she is compelled by an inner necessity to seek divorce. At the time of divorce, she leaves all the wealth to Som but takes only the children with her. Som, however, does not let her go all that easily. Simrit is basically tough and strong, with the toughness of undivided integrity. She has understood and recognized the implications of divorce and as a woman of action, she knows what she has to do at the stage of crisis. No other woman, who doesn't have this integral innate strength within her, could have walked out bag and baggage, from the whole past and that too, with her children. It requires a special kind of courage and temperament to this act.

After divorce, she does her best to bring up her children. When her son, Brij grows up, Som, the father tempts him with luxurious goods, viz. a record player, a car, etc., and promises to send him abroad too. He succeeds in his strategy and gets the custody of the boy. Instead of becoming a support to his mother, the grown up son prefers to live with his father to enjoy a more comfortable and luxurious life. In a patriarchal society, a woman doesn't have any rights on her children, and it's a man who can claim all the rights of his children since they come under a man's family reign.

A divorced woman is stigmatized forever and she is curiously watched by others as if divorce is a disease that left pock marks. The mere habit of living with someone for many years makes it difficult for Simrit to accept the idea of living alone, all by herself. The frightening dreams that she has, gives us an idea of her inner disintegration where pain follows her like a shadow never leaving her even for a moment. Sahgal gives a vivid picture of Simrit's pathetic condition as

She was clinging to a balustrade at the very top of the building, within reach of the sky, when her fingers were wrenched loose, one by one, and she was hurled to the pavement below. The queer thing was that no one took any notice of her fall. Cars and people kept going by. A deafening scream, her own, went on and on . . . she picked herself up in panic and was relieved to find she did not fall apart. She held. She took a deep breath . . . My skin is whole, not even a break or a split in it anywhere. It's the inside that has gone to pieces, and I'll just have to go along very carefully from now on . . . The pain, a leper-like thing, detached itself from her and

walked beside her to the end of the pavement, the end of the road and beyond. (50-51)

Outraged at the brutal implications of the 'Consent Terms' Simrit feels very diminished and humiliated. The huge amounts of tax, which she has to pay from her meagre income is highly impossible for her. And she feels she is an "over-loaded donkey . . . with its back breaking, and no one doing anything about it, not because they can't see it, but because it's a donkey and loads are for donkeys" (56). A woman is just a beast of burden. In the renewed anguish, while talking to Som's lawyer, she sees her life with Som as no different from her present one. Sahgal narrates Simrit's agonized condition as "Maybe she had always been an animal, only a nice, obedient, domestic one, sitting on a cushion, doing as she was told. And in return she had been fed and sheltered" (57). The agony that a woman feels after divorce in Indian society springs directly from the private world of the author, in whose own life divorce is still a recent happening.

Simrit looks like a liberated woman who has the courage to break a long relationship which has become meaningless with no sense of companionship or partnership between the husband and wife. But she opts for a divorce only when she finds another man waiting for her. The situation in fact is rather a fantasy. She steps out of the sheltered world of Som not to live a life on her own and in her own way but to step into the shadow of another man. She really does not have to struggle alone for survival, neither at the economic level nor at the emotional one.

Som transfers shares worth six lakhs rupees to her and they are to be inherited mainly by their son Brij when he comes of age. Until then, Simrit has to pay heavy tax on the corpus while she is not entitled to the income it may generate. Her several pleas to

relieve her of the tax burden, go unheeded not only by Som but even by the society at large, except by Raj. Raj Garg, a middle-aged second-generation Christian convert and a sitting M.P., is closely involved in Simrit's problems.

Simrit faces the challenge with the help of Raj, who inspires her to start her crusade against the 'Consent Terms' of the divorce document, which intended to extract even the last drop of blood like Shylock. Raj call the 'Consent Terms', "a slow butchery for as long as you live. Even a life sentence ends after fourteen years, yours is till you die" (40). Sahgal says that, "He could have forgiven her if she had been a weaker being, unsure, dependent and even deceiving" (53).

Simrit detests the hypocrisy, the pretension of society and country at large, and comments that, "I hate this century except for the freedom it's brought for countries and people, especially for women. But it is barbaric otherwise, full of rotten elastic standards and the worship of money; I hate the whole mess of human affairs" (34). Sometimes Simrit feels guilty of leaving Som, and violating some traditions, though ". . . He insisted on it. But I (Simrit) left him in spirit before. I feel I've offended against something-old and-ordained" (137). Her guilt is like many other women folk who consider divorce as a sin and a stigma on themselves, though they may not be responsible for it.

Simrit's struggle is not a struggle of one woman. It is a deadly fight that accompanies the attempts of the whole women tribe at large, who tries to free herself from the moral, social and economic pressures to curb her identity and make her a dependent cripple. Friends like Raj and Ram Krishan help Simrit to come out of the morass of her innocent guilt and remind her value of the refusal to bend the knee and bow

the head. Both Raj and Ram Krishan help her to take a stand against the injustice of the, 'Consent Terms' and not to yield to a sense of helplessness and victimization.

Ram Krishan tells Simrit that, retribution catches up with people who do not face a problem. Simrit and Raj seem to find happiness in each other's love. So they decide to get married. This is a choice of a mature intelligent woman who knows her way and direction. Raj views the infliction of the tax burden on her as an act of butchery and goes out to help her, but does not succeed. Simrit realizes the importance of taking a stand and ultimately purges her guilt and rushes to Raj to declare to him, "D' you know why I came? It was to tell you, I'd got rid of my guilt. It was gone without a trace and in its place there was a strong positive feeling. It feelings had smells, this one was a clean, carbolic disinfectant smell" (208).

Some feminist sentiments expressed by Raj, merely reinforce the patriarchal myth of man's superiority over women. Raj says about Simrit as "First it had been her husband. Next it would be her children. Woman for use had been the rule too long" (38). He seems to respect her independence and her individuality. A woman doesn't need a man for identity or status. In his conscious generosity he can go a step further: "It was not a question of Simrit for himself-at least not until he had some sign from her. It was Simrit for herself he wanted, Simrit to forsake her shadows, and begin to live" (167). However, the patriarchal attitudes are so deeply ingrained in him that they have become a natural part of his personality. He constantly maintains a stance of superiority towards Simrit. Anything that Simrit says or does is inferior, faulty and unimpressive.

For instance, if Simrit quotes something from Aurobindo he is not impressed by it. His infuriating assumption is that, Simrit never lived her life happily and she lives not

for herself but for her family and surrounding. He almost bullies Simrit with his intellectual superiority. Language, which can be an arena of struggle for two unequal forces, becomes merely an instrument of patriarchal oppression, never giving space to feminist resistance to oppression. Simrit on her part accepts her inferiority. She is apologetic about not knowing enough even about a thing like petroleum. Both knowledge and language become instruments of intellectual terrorism in the hands of Raj. Simrit was first attracted to Raj by his talk only and she continues to honour every statement of his, however superficial or biased it may be, as great or simply invaluable. For all his claims of concern for Simrit, one wonders whether a person like Raj can understand or share her agony and tensions.

In this novel, Sahgal has tried to make the story of a particular woman by bringing in the discussions on Hinduism and Christianity and by giving occasional glimpses on the contemporary political scene, yet the novel really does not go beyond the limited personal world of Simrit's problems, with the huge tax as a rather gross symbol of man's cruelty to woman. The accounts of the parliament and the petroleum ministry do not get integrated into the main narrative while the discussions on Hinduism and Christianity, apart from being naïve, get coloured by the uneven positions taken by Raj and Simrit.

Simrit's search for selfhood, apart from her failed marriages is a significant one. She tries to overcome her crisis in her own specific ways. Simrit is a good writer and she is engrossed in the individual creation. She finds a proper choice in the character of Raj whose entry into her life changes her course by turning it towards self-realization at last. Her self-discovery may be summed up through poetic lines of Jayanta Mahapatra. A. A. Khan in the article "Reconstructing Indian Female Identity in Nayantara Sahgal's *The*

Day in Shadow and Anita Desai's *Voices in the City*" quotes the words of Jayanta Mahapatra.

“There is a dawn which travels alone,
without the effort of creation, without puzzle,
it stands simply, framed in the door while in the air:
an Indian woman, piled up to her silences,
waiting for what the world will only let her do.” (89)

All Nayantara Sahgal's women are generally emancipated and intelligent women, whose central concern is the quest for individual freedom and urge for enduring comradeship. In her novels she never gives description about women alone, but she also emphasizes the role of men in today's world and how men are strong supporters and fighters for the cause of liberty of women and men like Raj tries to push and pull the passive women into action. Simrit is the symbol of culture, tradition and a patient enduring passivity.

Simrit's concept of freedom cannot be mistaken for mere political or economic independence. It is a way of doing things one believes it to be right and thus assert one's individuality. Simrit is disappointed when she realizes that there is no place for free communication of ideas, friendship and partnership in the world of Som, dominated by overcoming ambition and money. The denial of freedom leads her to a state of suffocation. Som's growing obsession with power and wealth, his opinion of Simrit as an object, fit only for physical pleasure naturally lead to a gradual estrangement between them.

The lack of communication between Som and Simrit is the basic root cause for all the mishappenings in their married life. The denial of due respect to Simrit by Som makes her to move away from the clutches of her marriage life. She is a woman of independent thinking, but her independency is suppressed and oppressed by Som in the name of a husband. He never values her individuality rather he considers her as an object of pleasure and a silent passive woman. Som represents a typical patriarchal society of Indian tradition. He is a perfect example of how a man should be in this male dominated society.

Simrit finds herself shut out of Som's world. Her usefulness to him has never extended to the areas of his mind. Unable to withstand his spiraling mania for affluence, she longs to isolate herself from his world of commerce. All her attempts to change him go awry. Som becomes furious at her protests and ask her either to be a docile wife or to finish off the whole farce of their marital relationship. Simrit plumps, though reluctantly, for the second alternative. She is prepared to forsake him and all the riches and comforts rather than to lead an abject life of a sex-satisfying companion. To live with self-respect is her primary prerogative and for that, she risks the unknown future with courage and confidence. She demonstrates that individual freedom is so precious that it should not be compromised or allowed to be suppressed. It's a common knowledge how difficult it is for an Indian woman to walk out of her husband's life.

She dissolves her long marriage only when she understands that her attempts at safeguarding it prove to be futile. She proposes to Som to be friends without dissolving their marriage. He repudiates it with contempt. After discarding her former role as an intellectual and a prolific writer, Simrit thinks that she has a different and responsible role

to play as a divorcee, feeling uprooted and abandoned in the society. Her problems are encompassing physical, emotional and economic spheres.

A woman, who is used to the luxuries of life with a tastefully furnished accommodation, suddenly finds herself to have to go without a telephone, a ration card or even basic needs. She is not even sure of affording a flat for herself, since its rent is too expensive for her. In spite of all these problems, the courage with which she tries to adjust herself to the aftermath of the divorce is admirable. Simrit possesses extraordinary will-power. As a single parent of her children, even in the most trying situations, she does not lose courage. She continues to be assertive and if the situation demands, even becomes aggressive. Her husband, too, is aware of her strength, Sahgal says that “Som could have forgiven her if she had been a weaker being, unsure, dependent, and even deceiving. But, that beneath her docility she was none of these things was unpardonable” (53).

Moolchand, Som’s company lawyer, at a meeting to clarify the ‘Consent Terms’ to Simrit is astonished and surprised by her complete control over herself. Her determination and will power make Moolchand to wonder in awe. The novelist writes “Moolchand might have reacted better if she had broken down and wept, pleaded her plight, not displayed this control and competence. She was something outside his experience, a woman who exercised her mind” (59).

Simrit withstands the emotional trauma of her son’s inclination towards her husband’s commercial world with considerable equanimity. Raj too is full of admiration for her strength of mind. His understanding about Simrit is that: “She was basically tough, with the toughness of undivided integrity. And she was in his view exceptional for

a woman . . . No one who did not could have moved bag and baggage from a whole past- with all those children. The prospect was intimidating” (38).

The most glorious instance of her self-confidence and crisis management is seen when she rejects with contempt Som’s offer to receive the income that accrues of the shares on the condition of remaining unmarried. However, in spite of all her courage and strength, Simrit remains passive. She is being trapped into the world of burden which is worsen than the death itself. She is trapped under the burden of the brutal divorce settlement cleverly drawn by Som to save his taxation which is worsen than a life sentence. Her fault is to expect fair play in the deal and to sign it innocently and unsuspectingly. On the other hand, it shows the essential callousness of Som, an image of the inhumanity of the patriarchal society. Simrit cannot believe that her husband could be so revengeful and do this butchery to her.

Simrit’s acceptance of Raj is based on his endearing qualities of tenderness, honesty and equality which she has vainly searched for in Som. Raj’s rich warm concern appeals to her and “he always did what he said he would do, the only stable element in the emotional debris of her new world” (16). He helps her to regain her emotional and intellectual equilibrium. Raj is a mature person, takes personal interest in her and loves her. The fact that she is a middle-aged woman with several children does not deter him. He has a great respect for her. His interest in her mainly springs from his passion for crusading against the oppression of any kind.

Raj-Simrit relationship begins with the mind and not with the body. They seek fulfillment not as possessions but as individuals. Listening to Raj, Simrit feels that she is lifted out and soothed. He develops interest in her because he is opposed to the

oppression of the female and because he considers the divorce settlement as unjust.

Simrit always asserts herself before Raj and he also accepts it. Raj takes her to his Guru Ram Krishan. Ram Krishan advises her to forget the 'Consent Terms' and encourages her to live a life on her own with individuality and freedom. Meanwhile Raj tries to bring a reconciliation between Som and Simrit. Som is urged upon to reconsider the terms of settlement but it ends in vain. Ram Krishan perceives the fatal combination of love and friendship in their relationship. He knows that physical love alone cannot sustain a relationship unless it is added with a mild taste of friendship. Only friendship can last long and he sincerely believes that Raj and Simrit "would enjoy even a distance between them" (182).

Simrit's search for fulfillment leads her to sexual involvement with Raj. To the great surprise of Simrit, her children gravitate to the side of their father. The children detest living with their mother in misery and trouble. They go to live with their father. But Simrit decides to stay with Raj. Simrit is aware that in marrying Raj, there is every possibility that her physical as well as psychological needs are met without losing her dignity and sense of equality and that she can live a truer life without any pretence.

The personal world of Raj and Simrit, which is grounded in sympathy, understanding, human communication and friendship, rather than bestial sensuality and cruel insensitivity, it seem to be the world that Nayantara not only wishes to depict but also prescribes as the only sane and sensible alternative to the machinistic world of power, atrocities and greed. In the process of emancipation, it has become necessary for Simrit to get rid of her fears and inhibitions. She has to overcome the social opinion and orthodoxy on the one hand and personal hesitation and reluctance on the other. She

continues to think, despite divorce, that her connection with Som is continued through her children and hence is besieged by feelings of guilt at her association with Raj. When Simrit meets Som to discuss the 'Consent Terms', Som's meanness comes before her in full proportions and perhaps this is the reason of her sudden feeling of being liberated from guilty feeling.

Raj too has been very hesitant and uncertain in his feelings towards Simrit before he becomes aware of his love for her. Simrit and her problems occupy his mind all the time. He ponders over the extent and depth of his attachment for her. When the sign comes from Simrit herself, there is nothing for Raj to hold back his love for her.

Their relationship is not the one, where Raj is domineering and dictating. There are several instances to show that there is perfect equality and, as a matter of fact, it is Simrit who takes decisions and imposes it on him. Simrit turns down Raj's proposal to have dinner in a hotel and Raj accepts it with defeat. Another time, Raj's proposal to have coffee at a restaurant is negative, instead she suggests to go to her house. Raj concedes, "All right, let's go. With you I face a dead end at every turn, unlike Som who must have ridden roughshod and triumphant. Did he?" (157). Apart from these matters of lighter vein, even in serious issues, in spite of her good opinion in his intellect, Simrit does not blindly listen to Raj. He is against her meeting with Moolchand, Som's company lawyer. But Simrit decides and hence goes ahead.

Even Raj recognizes her independent spirit and understands that her new life has nothing to do with him or any man. She could be that rarity, a woman with a profession, an independent person living her own life. She does not need a man for identity or status. Simrit's futile cry for equality in her relationship with Som now materializes in her

relationship with Raj. Not legislation but understanding, love and respect can bring equality in a relationship and the fact that both of them have these qualities in abundance. She builds up a world on the foundations of justice, equality and humanity along with Raj, who gives her an equal opportunity for all.

Simrit has visited Raj after Som's ultimatum, but has not disclosed anything, even to Raj's question, "Is there anything I can do? She shook her head quickly, recovering herself and got up" (107). It is very obvious that she has not even discussed her divorce issue with Raj. He has not seen the 'Consent Terms' till and even after the divorce. Simrit even tells Raj that she has known him during the trying period with Som, she might not have thought of divorce at all. It shows that Raj's involvement in her divorce is a remote possibility.

Simrit and Som's relationship is marked by lack of tenderness and warmth, communication and compatibility. Simrit is hurt and humiliated at his condescending attitude. The reason for her silent suffering for seventeen long years is mainly because of her upbringing in a patriarchal society where male superiority is taken for granted. Her anxiety and restlessness are evident right from the beginning. The divorce which she needs from Som is an indication of her protest against being victimized by him. By accepting Raj, it should not be considered that Simrit continues to be a victim in the male-dominated society. Raj is in total contrast with Som in being sensitive, warmth and tender. He treats her as an equal and she is perfectly at ease in Raj's company.

Nayantara Sahgal's Simrit survives, though not entirely on her own terms, in an imperfect world where no one, not even man, can live entirely on his or her own terms. Women can be proud of their womanhood without developing antipathy towards men. It

is necessity for them to play a supporting role as when fathers, brothers and husbands reach out to the women folk. Such an inter-sex scenario will create a harmonious social environment. So, Sahgal's feminism is to make woman have freedom of choice and to live a life of her own. Simrit precisely exercises this freedom of choice in choosing Som earlier and Raj later. Raj appears to be superior to Simrit in intellect and therefore domineering in nature. But Simrit with her independent spirit will never bow down before a male authority. Hence Nayantara Sahgal wants to bring home the essential truth that no man-woman relationship can exist on the principle of perfect equality. It is for a woman to have freedom and independence to lead an honourable and dignified life.

Raj Edwin Garg is a crusader against what is effete and moribund in the Hindu tradition. His father has been a convert to Christianity, and this has supplied Raj with a distance and an objectivity to scrutinize the vast morass of Hindu thought, institutions and temperament. A tireless talker and an energetic MP, Raj has a great respect for Simrit, a kind of affection which prevents him from hurting her. Raj is interested in Simrit's case because he has a passion for crusading against oppression of any kind. She has been the victim of Som's inhuman attitude, his impossible terms laid down cruelly when he divorces her, because she did not respond to him in bed - "When a woman freezes up every time her husband touches her it's time to call it a day" (98). Mr. Moolchand who has drawn the 'Consent Terms' is highly disapproving of an Indian wife divorcing and seeking to lead an independent existence. Even Mr. Shah, a friend of Raj and his father, is full of approval for the wise way in which Som had disposed of the wealth.

According to Raj, “Divorce is not a part of their tradition . . . Arrangements made to last during a marriage do not, after all, provide for the possibility of divorce” (146). Raj’s passionate involvement in the case makes him to see the ‘Consent Terms’ as an outgrowth of Som’s personality, and to him the Corpus itself looked like the mirror of a whole culture.

The facts that Raj is a Christian, and that Raj’s father and Ram Krishan have been intimate friends and furiously debate the values earlier, bring in the additional perspective for Hinduism; a chance to examine it in a more close manner. The endless debate continues in Ram Krishan’s mind, and he sees the polarity between the two great systems of thought as

The Christian believes a good God could not have created evil, so evil is entirely separate from the good, unaccounted for and inexplicable. But for the Hindu, God is the universe itself. Man, he says, mistakenly regards certain things as evil because of his incomplete knowledge of the whole universe. Actually from the viewpoint of the whole, God’s view point, all things are good.

“The Christian... has a desire for improvement, for reform, and great faith in human will and effort. He does not compromise with evil. He cannot consider it part of the good. His god may not be all-powerful, but he is all-good”.

“The Hindu... accepts evil along with good. Evil is not his own personal pain or sorrow but the working out of a larger plan of which he is only a

small and insignificant part...His attitude can be summed up: however much I suffer, my suffering is as nothing in the eyes of God” (199-201).

If only these two fabulous streams of inheritance could be united, there would be hope for decent living, for there is no real conflict between the two – the one works for the good and the other for a more complete view of the universe. From this viewpoint, the marriage between Raj and Simrit is not a mere coup de grace, so much as a symbolic attempt to validate Hinduism and resolving the polarities between the two systems.

Raj stands as a protagonist for the life of passion, of action and of independence of thought, while Simrit is a typical victim of Indian cultural system. In the portrayal of the relationships between the pairs, a strong plea for positive living is seen. In this sense, Nayantara Sahgal's characters emerge as symbols. They possess a strong symbolic dimension.

The problems in this novel are the problems of a country where it is unable to come out of the morass of a colonial experience. Political and social events are completely divorced from moral considerations. Gandhi and his name are merely useful words for keeping up appearances and for evoking an emotional response. Hinduism is as abstract and vague as ever, unable to provide any basis for social action. It is riddled by inner contradictions, its caste system, its social gradings, its passivity and now in the year of Gandhi's centenary (1969), the communal violence rocks our country. Problems have just begun with dislocations, with shortages, with the inability to define goals, and with the vagueness of the value structure which is rotten.

Sahgal is upbeat in terms of visualizing the socio-political vision. The novel testifies to the fact that her novels are extensive blueprints for the resurgence of India. In

this novel, the socio-political problems that pose a threat to a developing economy is highlighted through Som. The ambience of the upper middle class life in the country is clearly unveiled and the treatment of variegated aspects of human life in such a political and social milieu makes her present a whole perspective on man.

The novel constructed in such a way that it revolves around people who are involved in politics. The befitting locale employed in this novel is of course New Delhi with its cosmopolitan culture and being the hub of Indian politics. Not only is it the state capital but also the touchstone for whatever happens in India. It can become the heart of crisis.

Sahgal's primordial predilection being politics, many instances regarding the partition of India, the way partition affects the people who are breathing nascent independent air, are clearly presented in her novels. In this novel, Raj Garg is presented as the second generation converted Christian, a Member of the Parliament to be in the same predicament. Sumer Singh is the glamour boy who once planned to enter the tinsel world of films but accidentally turns out to be a politician – first, a Member of the Parliament, and then he manages to become a junior Minister in the Nehru cabinet and the way he becomes a rising star in the political firmament is a mystery. But having a photogenic profile does not seem to be an enough qualification for the difficult decision making activity that waited in his ministry.

In this novel, there juxtaposes two different worlds. N. Pratheeba and G. Baskaran in the journal "Mapping the Socio-Political Vision in Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*" quotes Jasbir Jain: "One is the novel of Sumer Singh's approach which is representative of the Government's stance, the other is that of Raj Garg, a continuation

of the values projected by the old Petroleum Minister. Their two worlds are contrasted” (25). There is an abysmal difference in the political stand of Raj Garg and Sumer Singh. Raj Garg is a man of vision and analyses each problem in such a logical manner, hence it becomes easy to arrive at a solution. On the other hand, Sumer Singh is more concerned with his personal ego. He wants to attain instant fame and popularity among the masses of his country. He is not bothered about the ultimate good of the country. In this context, one has to accept this political reality prevailing in India. Practically speaking, it is people like Sumer Singh, who sine and emblazon their political career and gradually become powerful in politics. They are the new brand of politicians who become so common in later years.

Raj’s love affair with Shaila has come to a sudden end as soon as her parents decides in favour of an another boy as her husband. Love between the two young people has been so cheapened that it has lost all the significance it previously has for the lovers. But it is true of a woman who has easily accepted the forces of society or her family to renounce what she has cherished. In this way she has allowed herself to be dominated by men and society. Shaila forgets Raj as if she has never known him in her life. His contesting for a seat in Parliament is obviously a diversion to fight for the society. Most of his reserves has been used up in the formidable fight against tradition. Similarly Sumer Singh has physical relationship with Pixie and so many other girls. He never realizes that a man, who is in power, should undergo any other ill failings, even in his personal life. It is a typical character of an Indian cultural society which is paradoxical to other foreign nations.

The older generation of leaders like Sardar Sahib needs to be blamed for they have failed to give a direction to people. They have taken honesty and integrity, the two main virtues needed for the moulding of citizens. Proper training for the youngsters has been neglected by generations of politicians, perhaps because they are overwhelmed with the task of construction.

Sahgal feels that, it is critical to identify, incubate and empower a team of budding politicians in the country. Those leaders should have made an effort to create second generation leaders who would have been in a position to lead the countrymen. Politics is more about seeing the future than about maintaining continuity. Able politicians envision and create self-sustaining systems which survive even after they are gone. But the leaders of the older generations fail to live up to the expectations of the people.

Sahgal feels that the mantra of the politicians should to be the power of vision, clarity of purpose, passion to develop the nation and the ability to carry the country as a cohesive unit. But the present generations of political leaders has deviated very much from the path of righteousness and have landed themselves in a quagmire. They are totally different from the illustrious leaders of the pre-independence era. And this could well be the reason for Sumer Singh behaving as a dictator, so far as his political approach is concerned. Sumer Singh ignores the advice of the senior Minister Sardar Sahib and throws the country's policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence to the winds. According to Sumer Singh, a man's (who is an epitome of contemporary politics prevailing in the country) popularity in politics depends on backing, on the cheer from

the large crowd. He knows that he is going to be the target for an attack by a howling group of destructive people and he has no intention of risking his political life.

The country is plunging into an abyss of violence and lawlessness. Sahgal pleads that the sovereignty of India must be reinforced at any cost. She insists that Indians must stick to the policy of non-alignment. And this is the best policy which will steer India safely in the pre-Gorbachev era. It is really a vindication of her talent as an esteemed political novelist, that she can anticipate the forthcoming changes in the Indian political scenario and visualizes the trends that would emerge. N. Pratheeba and G. Baskaran in the journal "Mapping the Socio-Political Vision in Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*" quotes Sahgal:

The Day in Shadow had had an accompanying background to Simrit divorce settlement, the growing Soviet influence on our sub-continent and definite Indian tilt in that direction. I finished writing the book in February 1971. The Indo-Soviet treaty, a landmark of its kind embodying the tilt was not signed until August that year. (27)

Sahgal seems to follow the adage, 'nothing ventured and nothing gained'. This means that one will never be able to achieve anything if one does not make an effort. Politicians must become more venturesome in this era of Independence, that shows a variety of socio-political influences. Sahgal can foresee, how the policy makers at the Centre will tilt the delicate balance and create a situation in which terrorism will grow. Sardar Sahib, a senior politician (who has worked for India's independence) says that, "Neither Russian nor American, Jammu is too near our border. It is a security risk. Both

these countries have heavily armed Pakistan and are continuing too. The Canadian affair is the best general one” (125).

When, the Soviet wins the majority vote, Raj watches the results flashed by. He thinks with a somber detachment that it is the pitfall of democracy. He assumes that it is the victory of numbers; the majority in the house does not always do the right thing. Raj knows that banking on current successes cannot ensure a brilliant future for the country. Political character like Raj is helpless and when the ruling party offers him a diplomatic life in abroad in order to vacate his constituency for another men, he humbly declines the offer. For, he feels that he has a job to do in the present political situation.

Sahgal being the scion of one of India’s political first families, views Gandhian ideology as a mature balance between modernity and tradition. As a staunch believer in Gandhian values, she praises the universality and timelessness of these principles. He is a man of vision and integrity. Raj feels that, only at rare times the dry stuff of history can be made into a living legend when intimate and personal affairs get mixed up with the public opinions and ideas. Raj feels that unless Gandhian values are popularly practiced, they will lose their hold. He thinks that it is essential to re-evaluate them in order to understand why their hold on the countrymen has weakened. He observes that the Gandhi image sit farcically on the ruling party, for no one could yet capture and hold the masses without it.

Sahgal has a focused vision that can be seen beneath the surface of Indian politics. She has a deep concern for the fast fading impact of Gandhism in this socio-political life. According to Sahgal, the society’s adherence to philosophy will definitely balance the age old wisdom and our newly gained freedom. Raj believes that though people have

freed themselves from the shackles of colonialism, they have not yet discovered the cultural identity of their own. He feels that there are pro-Russians and pro-Americans and a dwindling group who want everything right from education to defense equipment from the hands of the Britain. Sahgal says that Indians are yet to discover their identity and the political class emerging in our country. They should work towards creating that identity for themselves.

Towards the end of the novel, Simrit proves to be a real feminist. In spite of her trouble, she possesses toughness and firm determination. She becomes aware of her own existence, identity and human rights and hence solves her identity crisis in a reasonable and quite justifiable way. Simrit is able to break free of the patriarchal enclosures and come to terms with herself. Her decision to re-marry is not a sign of continuing subjugation but of social and sexual emancipation that leads to freedom and living self-hood.

CHAPTER IV

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Nayantara Sahgal is one of the successful feminist writer in English. Sahgal shows, how women suffer in their marriage life and in the final stage they reciprocate against their traumas which lead them to a line of divorce. She depicts her women deciding to prefer for divorce rather than live a stifling life of injustice and agony. She represents that through divorce they will be free from the sufferings and agonies of an unhappy or unjust relationship but it does not solve their problems and women have to struggle and suffer on various levels like economic, emotional and psychological. Women who are frustrated either because of the marital disharmony or loneliness in their life are shown to indulge in social or religious activities. Sahgal is deeply concerned with unhappy marriages and the loneliness of living. For example, the characters in *Storm in Chandigarh* like, Vishal-Leela, Inder-Saroj, and Jit-Mara undergo a traumatic experience in their personal life both before and after marriage.

The theme of the novel is violence, not necessarily an obvious physical violence, but an invisible and the more subtle form of internal violence and conflict. Saroj's pre-marital relationship becomes the cause of failure of her marriage. Saroj who has been brought up in the liberal atmosphere of freedom, expects equality in marriage. She is greatly surprised by her husband's violent reactions to a pre-marital affair she has in her college days. Inder is obsessed and could not forgive this act of Saroj and constantly exploits her sense of innocence. Saroj longs for friendship, tenderness and frankness from Inder, but her jealous, unreasonable husband never bothers to understand her needs. She decides to walk out of her rotten, conventional bond, to live a life of her own. It is

ironical that Inder himself carries an extra-marital affair with Mara. Saroj becomes a victim of the male tyranny. Saroj's quest for communication and sharing naturally lead her towards Vishal, whom she finds more understanding and considerate. Saroj also learns the value of freedom from Vishal Dubey during their lonely walks: "Life, Dubey told her, was bigger than any system. Life could remould or break the system that lacked righteousness and reason. It was life's precious obligation to rebel, and humanity's right to be free, to choose from the best light it could see, not necessarily the long-accepted light" (173).

Sahgal's novel *Storm in Chandigarh* in particular drive home the need for moral values in politics and the need for meaningful action and an understanding of the self and its relation to society thus fulfilling the requirements of a novel. N. Rama Devi in the article "From Apathy to Liberation: A Study of Nayantara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh*" quotes Joan Rockwell:

Fiction is not only a representation of social reality, but also a necessary functional part of social control, and also paradoxically an important element in social change. It plays a large part in the... conduct of politics and in general gives symbols and modes of life...in those less easily defined but basic areas such as norms, values, and personal and interpersonal behavior. (70)

Sahgal's novels depict her as a writer with feminist concern seeking independent existence of women. She sees women as victims of conventional Indian society engaged in their quest for identity. Sahgal tries to portray the sensibility of women, how a woman

looks out at herself and her problems. She feels that woman should try to understand and realize herself as a human being and not just as an appendage to male life.

Simrit feels suffocated in the enclosing world of Som who cannot tolerate her individuality and therefore deliberately plans the 'Consent Terms' to cripple her financially. Freedom from marriage is not the end of her suffering. Simrit refuses physical intimacy with her husband when she feels that there is no emotional involvement. This hurts Som's ego and expedites their separation. Simrit's efforts to fight with the unsympathetic world, against the laws which sees no reason and against the insensitive desertion by her children, powerfully portray the struggle of a woman against her hostile environment. However, she has a strength of mind to overcome the two struggling worlds of depression and dejection. She finds a kindred soul in Raj with whom she realizes her aspiration with which she can live a truer and fuller life without any pretense.

Sahgal's women cope up with the rival pulls of tradition and modernity in their search for identity, independence, fulfillment, and love. In her novels, one such big theme is tradition and modernity. This theme seems to hold a lot of explanatory power because of the peculiar social formation prevalent in India. Her dominant theme is the definition of the virtuous woman. Right from the beginning, Sahgal's women try to formulate a new definition for the virtues. The virtuous woman, according to tradition, is ideally a kind of sati, one's life which ends in self-immolation. She is there to suffer, to stay, and to endure all the problems that comes in her way and Sahgal's women, right from the start of her novels, have walked out of the traditional virtuosity. Makarand Paranjape in the journal

“The Crisis of Contemporary India and Nayantara Sahgal’s Fiction” quotes the words of Sahgal:

In every novel the heroine has moved one step further away from the stereotype of the virtuous woman into a new definition of virtue . . . What does these two women (Saroj and Simrit) walking out have to do with their virtue? The meaning of sati is a virtuous woman. And this is synonymous with self-immolation—a tradition arising out of the concept that woman is her husband’s property and has no other life. Tradition virtue lies in staying put, suffering. The new woman does the opposite. No more sati, she is determined to live, and to live in self-respect. Her virtue is courage, which is a willingness to risk the unknown and to face the consequences. (293)

These words echo, almost exactly, in the words of Saroj to Vishal in *Storm in Chandigarh*. When Vishal asks her, “And have you no ambition?” she replies “I want to be a virtuous woman” (203). All these quotations emphasize Sahgal’s commitment to change. She places the woman at the heart of the tradition-modernity issues. It is clear that as far as the status of women is concerned, Sahgal is completely against what she perceives to be tradition.

Sahgal mostly expresses her dissatisfaction in the political streamline of destruction. The new and the modern is often corrupt, ruthless and selfish. The old and the traditional is always the Gandhian, the humanistic and the compassionate, which the modern displaces. Sahgal sees tradition as a medium for the enslavement of women. Her women rebel against such traditions, which would force them to suffer silently, without

redress. Instead, her women walk out, substituting courage for self-sacrifice, thereby redefining the notion of the virtuous woman.

Sahgal sees tradition in a two different dimensional ways. In its broader sense, tradition refers to Hinduism, with a set of beliefs and practices which determine the mental makeup of most Indians. Tradition, in this sense, is responsible for social mores and particularly how women, behave within the family and in a marriage. However, in Sahgal's world, politics is an area in which Indians have a positive tradition. This tradition, which Sahgal emphasizes, is the combined legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. There is in it the Gandhian emphasis on truth, non-violence, satyagraha, social justice, prayer, poverty and simplicity, and the Nehruvian emphasis on socialism, democracy, and progress. In addition, there is a third realm, on which the question of tradition and modernity has a bearing. This has to do with the values and life choices of the main characters, especially as they are revealed in intimate relationships. It is necessary to examine how these three kinds of tradition are depicted in Sahgal's novels. Some of Sahgal's ideas of her own brand synthesis between tradition and modernity.

Hinduism is one of the important themes in her novels. Sahgal's heroines, Saroj and Simrit both suffer from the brunt of the negative aspects of Hinduism. Saroj and Simrit are clear victims of patriarchal oppression. In both their marriages there is a clash of values leading to incompatibility. Sahgal focus on the values involved and it is to note how in both these marriages the women are not only considered subservient by their husbands, but the final break comes because of the violation of the unstated rule of obedience which the husbands think that their wives must follow. In both the marriages

women is little more than chattel or property. Inder's fixation on Saroj's one time sexual experience during her student days becomes an insurmountable barrier in their relationship. Though educated, he thinks of her unconsciously as a fallen woman, soiled or secondhand goods. His wife battering too, comes from the same possessive instinct. Lalli, Som's friend in *The Day in Shadow*, has killed his wife for being unfaithful. Som also kills his wife, Simrit not physically but financially, through a very unfair divorce settlement.

Therefore, all these women are oppressed by tradition. The patriarchal version of Hinduism tolerates the oppression of women by men. In both the novels, women are treated badly by tradition. Inder and Som, both dominate their women and seem to win, at least materially. But surely, these men are very unhappy. In fact, they ultimately end up as losers. Their marriages end in a break up, and worst of all their lives are completely devoid of love. Sahgal argues that such men are also victims of patriarchal Hinduism. They have internalized the violence of the patriarchy and in turn they have directed it towards their wives. They have been handed down with expectations about the roles of husband and wife which are incompatible with contemporary reality. In brief, tradition has turned them into oppressors. Their tragedy is that they are incapable of introspection or change and at the end they are abandoned by their spouses.

In contrast to Inder and Som, Vishal and Raj, are liberal, compassionate, and seek more or less equal relationship with women. What distinguishes them, is the fact, that they do not aspire to dominate over females. These men, however, are almost always critical of tradition and its impact on human beings. They embody another kind of

tradition. Usually they are Gandhians. Often they allow the beleaguered woman to escape from the tyranny to which she is subjected to.

The effect of tradition on Sahgal's women is, by and large, inimical. Women who are quite placid, passive, and conformist are forced by circumstances to rebel. Their oppression is so great that they have no choice. In Sahgal's novels, divorce becomes a powerful symbol of revolt against tradition. The assertion of freedom by women, indicates their refusal to accept the patriarchal gender relations. Sahgal's heroines are not influenced by conventional notions of purity or contamination. This is best revealed in Saroj's comment about herself to Vishal: "I've always loved myself . . . I've been able to say I mattered, that I was whole and clean. But today, for the first time, someone else has said it. It's like seeing a rainbow" (174). In this passage, Sahgal redefines virtue. It lies not necessarily in sexual purity, but in the kind of values one has for oneself.

Saroj and Simrit, in choosing personal happiness over suffering, affirm certain modern, post-Renaissance notions about self-fulfillment. They value the individual over the collective. They value their personal fulfillment over the social obligation. Moreover, their actions assume a certain idea of individuality, which is denied by the tradition. They seek freedom to act, to change, to combine, and to create options not available to them within a conventional marriage. Tradition would appear to force men and women to stick to their given roles, discharging well-defined duties. In opposing their assigned roles, women are choosing modernity over tradition. As Vishal tells Saroj that, "It has taken a million years of evolution for a person and his cherished individuality to matter . . . and no terror must be allowed to destroy that" (205). For Saroj, life with Inder is not only a loss of identity, but, by extension, a kind of living death.

Sahgal's women reject tradition because it implies in accepting the abuses and injustices within marriage. In contrary, divorce, separation, and seeking fulfillment outside marriage imply modernity, which Sahgal's women opt for their personal welfare and life. These women, who walk out of their marriages, obviously require the support system which only a modern civil society can provide. They also need to attain financial independence. This means that they must not face unfair discrimination in the job market. A whole society's acceptance of constitutional safeguards is assumed in this act of divorce. However, the problems of working women in the society are not directly addressed in Sahgal's novels. Sahgal is against the traditional inherent in the default mode of Hinduism. She questions patriarchal norms, endorsing a humanistic modernity in place of the oppressions of tradition. She clearly sees virtue not in self-immolation but in rebellion.

Woman is a victim of tradition. Simrit is not an individual; she is a culture, a tradition, and a patient enduring passivity. Saroj and Simrit, represent the traditional epic character 'Sita' in 'Ramayana', in which Sita undergoes a silent, long-lasting suffering. Even Sita hasn't remained passive forever. She even rebels against the oppression, when it becomes unbearable. Moreover, if Simrit is a representation of tradition or culture, then her rebellion means, that tradition must change and it must rebel against its evil actions and deeds. In other words, tradition itself must provide the impetus for change by negating those of its aspects which are inimical to its survival.

Hence, though Saroj and Simrit are oppressed by tradition, it is tradition which gives them the strength to rebel. At any rate, it gives them the inner resources to survive, to reach out to modernity, to seek help from the other side. In fact, women in Sahgal's

novels are always emotionally and spiritually stronger than their husbands. Simrit, for instance, walks out in spite of having an unspecified number of children and being saddled with a crippling financial contract. It seems that, this inner strength is very akin to the traditional notion of a woman.

Inder and Som are selfish. They enforce their women, in fulfilling their physical, emotional and material pleasures. Women in Sahgal's novel are both biologically and emotionally affected. They long to share themselves with others. They are not totally self-centered, rather, they are more sensitive to their people's needs. As mothers and housewives, they always attuned to the needs of their children and husbands. Saroj and Simrit, when pregnant, have an almost ecstatic fascination with the new life growing in them. They are life-affirming and loving and the women are not as materialistic as like their men. They value comfort and prosperity but not emotional and spiritual fulfillment. What happens to Simrit is illustrative. As Som gets richer and richer, he is also becoming more beastly, corrupt, and uncaring. He is noticeably dehumanized. Som's wealth comes from making weapons of mass destruction; the violence which he seems to abet in the outside world also destroys his own family life. Simrit nearly goes mad in such an atmosphere of material greed and inhumanity.

It can be argued that love is no more traditional rather it is considered as a courage in modern terms. True, but the kind of love that Sahgal seems to describe is what the religious tradition of the world emphasize. In brief, women represent love, charity, compassion, kindness, altruism, and a preference for the emotional over the material, while the husbands are selfish, cruel, violent, possessive, and materialistic. The contrast is so old as to be seen in religious terms. The values that the women embody are

essentially, the core of the ethical and the moral code of most religions. At heart, women are religious and traditional. That is, they believe that non-violence, compassion and sharing will solve the problems of the world. On the other hand, men are greedy, materialistic, and violent and therefore represent the unpalatable underbelly of capitalism and modernity.

Nayantara Sahgal depicts in her novels an Indian woman's struggle for survival in the present day world and her quest for individual freedom and self-identity. With a profound understanding of feminine sensibility, she explores and voices the mute miseries of millions of married women through her works of fiction.

Sahgal in her novels presents, the emergence of a new woman, who is no longer a sex object and a glamour girl, fed on fake dreams of perpetual youth, lulled into passive role that requires no individuality, but someone who can claim to be a man's equal and an honoured partner. Different types of couples are presented in her novels who lived behind a façade apparently basking in hypocritical terms of endearment and gestures of love in marriage. Several married women in her fictional world undergo moments of excruciating mental torture within themselves. In both her novels, Sahgal gradually deals with the problems of women, who are not satisfied with their marital relationships. In her novels, the women characters such as Saroj and Simrit are more progressive and rebellious.

The novels *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow*, present, very authentically and specifically the sad plight of women in the male-dominated society. The female protagonists of these novels experience conflict, frustration, long drawn period of stress and bitterness in the prison house of loveless marriage. The novels also

show how the protagonists mature through their bitter experiences and eventually find a stable identity of their own.

Inder loves Saroj only in the capacity of an obedient slave, a possession or a commodity. He can never think of her as a person with ideas, feelings and emotions. What Inder, as a business man, expects from his wife is a complaint partner, who presided over home and children and furthered her husband's career. Inder is unable to view any other kind of relationship other than this with Saroj. Beulah Ranjitsingh in the article "Sahgal's Female Protagonists: *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow*" quotes the words of M. L. Malhotra: "Belong as he does to the he-man school and born and brought up as he is in an atmosphere, where male-dominance is a formidable cult, there is no question of any freedom or self-expression or growth for Saroj, nor of any mutual co-partnership between them" (88-89).

Saroj willingly accepts her role as a wife to Inder and gives her best to compromise and strengthen her relationship with Inder, but all her efforts end in vain. She has been living in the house entirely on Inder's terms and so she finds no happiness or satisfaction in her conjugal relationship. She has to strive hard to build a working relationship with her husband, who bars her entry into his world. She does not feel free to express her thoughts and she is all the time afraid of saying the wrong thing or of being misunderstood. She feels alienated and expresses it with deep anguish and distress. She boldly puts up with Inder's idiosyncrasies for the sake of her two children. She finds it very difficult to keep on living with her husband under the same roof with no real bond between them. She is punished just because she confesses her inner emotions and feelings to Inder.

In course of time, the gulf gradually becomes wider and wider in their relationship as he has no time for emotional involvement and shows a lot of indifference towards her. According to Inder, taking his wife on a walk in the pleasant evenings is a “a meaningless expenditure of time, when a restlessness took hold of him to get back to whatever work he had to do” (45). Saroj who longs for the oxygen of understanding, fulfills it with Vishal Dubey a friend of her who has come as a liaison officer to Chandigarh to settle the political problem between the Chief Ministers of Punjab and Haryana and develops a cordial relationship with them. Being attracted by Saroj’s childlike innocence, Dubey draws himself emotionally closer to her.

Going on long walks with Dubey, Saroj feels relieved and freshened from the suffocation of the four walls of her home. Saroj who has been so long in dire, needs someone to talk and she finds a comfort zone in the hands of Dubey. The frequent visits of Dubey to their house and Saroj going on long walks with him enrage the envious and suspicious husband, Inder. He objects to her act. Inder gets irritated about Saroj’s absence from home and snubs her.

During their long walks in the jungle, Dubey instills in Saroj, the value of emancipation and the courage to defy Inder. So Saroj turns a deaf ear to all her husband’s frantic admonitions. In the end, she emerges with a new found courage and plans to go with her children to New Delhi for her confinement at the suggestion of Dubey. By moving out of Inder’s house, she moves out of the virtuous stereotype which consigns a woman to perpetual humiliation and denies her self-expression. Beulah Ranjitsingh in the article “Sahgal’s Female Protagonists: *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow*” quotes the comments of Lakshmi Sinha on Saroj’s act of leaving Inder as: “Saroj leaves

domesticity and timidity far behind and emerges out of her chrysalis with a new found confidence. Dubey has resurrected her personality and at no cost is he going to let it collapse again” (90). Saroj leaves Inder apparently to start a life, afresh with Dubey who understands her delicate sentiments and emotional needs.

If Saroj’s marriage fails due to the lack of understanding and communion, Simrit in the novel *The Day in Shadow* fails to build up a satisfactory marital relationship with her husband, Som because of her own temperamental disparity with him. Som and Simrit, both get well with each other during the first few years of their marriage. But soon he fails to comprehend the sensibilities of Simrit. He treats her not as a person but as a possession. Sahgal regards Som as a typical chauvinistic representative of ruthless, self-centered anglicized business tycoons, belonging to the “He-man school” (144), whose male-dominance is the most formidable cult. In the earlier novel Saroj actively contemplates divorce whereas in *The Day in Shadow*, Simrit actually divorces her husband at the risk of facing misery, economic constraints, depressive bouts of loneliness and a score of other existential problems.

Just like Saroj, Simrit also finds herself utterly shut out of the world of her husband who never discusses about business with her or in her presence. Ironically, Simrit realizes that verbal communication is the missing link in her relationship with Som and tries in vain to engage him in some meaningful dialogue or other. Som pays no heed to Simrit’s words even in making ordinary decisions of everyday life. Simrit cannot purchase or even change chair covers and curtains without Som’s permission. Instead, Som treats her merely as a sex object. But for her, emotional involvement is far more important than sexual relationship. Som’s finalization of a new deal of armament

depresses Simrit further. While Simrit feels sad thinking of the disaster connected with the armament he has entered into, he revels on the prospect of his prosperity. For Som self-advancement is the only goal in life. It is the clash of ideals that leads to their separation. Simrit finds herself unable to respond to her husband's physical needs and remains separate, excluded and rebellious. Som who feels insulted at Simrit's physical withdrawal, reacts wildly and walks out of her life. Greatly upset, Simrit is left with no other option than divorce. Eventually, Simrit rebels against her bond of marriage in order to yearn for a free communication of ideas with her husband, beyond the glandular sensation of sex. On obtaining her divorce, she settles down to a life with her children in her newly rented flat in the Defence Colony. The desperate Simrit doesn't grumble about her responsibility of looking after her children in this situation.

For Simrit divorce does not bring freedom but confrontation with all it's orthodoxy in this man-centred society. Som imposes cruel divorce terms on Simrit in revenge. Even after divorce, Som in order to save his own income tax, thrusts cruel 'Consent Terms' on Simrit, according to which, she has to pay a huge tax of six lakhs rupees which is presently in her name and which will have to be passed on to her son Brij, when he attains the age of twenty- five. Simrit's efforts to get rid of these unfair, unjudicious terms, fail. The huge tax makes her utterly devastated and overwhelmed. She feels reduced almost to the level of a beast of burden.

Simrit feels utterly lost and bewildered at the brutal divorce settlement inflicted upon her. She feels uprooted and abandoned as divorce is considered as scandalous and stigmatic in the Indian society which refuses to recognize a woman's identity apart from that of her husband. Being a free-lance journalist and writer, she feels relatively at home

only in intellectual circles and parties, such as those constituted by journalists just like herself. Struggling to build a new life for herself and her children, she encounters Raj Garg, a brilliant rising Member of the Parliament. Eventually, she seeks Raj's help to get out of the legal morass created by her divorce settlement. Raj who understands and shares her agony instills in her some positive thinking to face the world with renewed confidence in herself.

These two novels are very authentic in dealing with the theme of women's suppression and revolt in the socio-political set up in modern India as the protagonists struggle for freedom is derived directly from the novelist's personal experience. The female protagonist Saroj's bitter experience of failing a prey to the suspicion and anger of her husband, Inder springs out from Sahgal's own personal experience. The novelist brings out vividly the bitter struggle for survival of Saroj with the suspicious husband Inder. Mrs. Sahgal presents through the protagonist Simrit, the existential problems of women in a male-dominated society in a realistic manner. The autobiographical elements are more predominant in these two novels.

In the novels both Saroj and Simrit respectively try their best to be good wives as long as their marriages last and never take the conventional family structure lightly. It is the circumstances which forces them to quit their respective households. Both of them stand for the emerging women of India who refuse to remain silent and submissive like conventional marriage. Breaking the shackles of helpless marriage, they prefer to live a life with their lovers who can provide them understanding, love and warmth of companionship and help them to start a life afresh. Beulah Ranjitsingh in the article "Sahgal's Female Protagonists: *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow*" quotes the

words of Neena Arora: “Sahgal’s women depend on some help to escape oppression and exploitation which in their cases is usually provided by a man- a friend or a father—who often helps them to come out of the miserable relationship or give them moral strength to smash the taboos and assert their identity to live a meaningful life” (94).

Nayantara Sahgal is not opposed to marriage as a social institution but stresses the greater need for loyalty and mutual understanding in any lasting man-woman relationship. Alienation, resulting from lack of communication and mutual infidelity, forms the *Storm in Chandigarh* whereas in *The Day in Shadow*, lack of understanding and inability to strike a sympathetic chord in marital relationship ultimately lead to divorce. The female protagonists of both the novels are striving hard for constructive and meaningful relationship with their men demanding mutual understanding and involvement. Having failed in their attempts, as liberated women they flee from their bitter survival to better survival. Beulah Ranjitsingh in the article “Sahgal’s Female Protagonists: *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow*” quotes the words of Jasbir Jain: ‘Nayantara Sahgal’s women as she herself acknowledges, are “strivers and aspirers towards freedom, towards goodness, towards a compassionate world”’ (95).

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