CHAPTER II

Political Themes

We have seen how literature in general and fiction in particular has been umbilically related with the socio-political conditions of the time wherein it is written. Literature has now been accepted as a perfectly legitimate forum for raising the socio-political issues. In Indian fiction written in English, the political motif has been especially prominent from the beginning. M.K. Naik has perceptively analyzed the intimate connection between the growth of the freedom movement and the rise of the Indian novel in English: "for fiction of all literacy forms is most vitally concerned with social conditions and values. With an increase in nationalist activities in India during the twenties, thirties and forties, there was a corresponding rise in Indian writer's pre-occupation with politics, political issues and polemics". The birth of Indian novel in English was thus, intimately related to the evolution of the nationalist history in India. As such the political motif was not only prominent but inherent in its very genesis. The early Indian-English novels had a dominant political motif. A Journal of Forty - Eight Hours of the Year 1945 by Kylash Chander Dutt in 1835, The Republic of Orissa (1845) by Sochee Chander Dutt, both are concerned with the political theme: Indian aspiration for freedom from Britain. This obvious preoccupation with political concerns continued in other 19th century novels viz., Lal Behari Day’s Gavid Smanta (1874), S.C. Dutt’s The Young Zamindar (1885) and Shankar: A Tale of Indian Mutiny (1885). Shankar is remarkable for its objective and authentic handling of the 1857 uprising as it creates the milieu in all its essential political details in the background. The Prince of Destiny (1909) by S.K. Ghose and Hindupore (1909) by S.M. Mitra, look at contemporaneous concerns from a different perspective. However it is not before the 1920s that the Indian-English novel, prominently political in content, makes a "diffident appearance" and gets "established in the next two decades, "Some fifty years later", William Walsh observes "it is clear that this was a form peculiarly suited to the Indian sensibility, and one to which Indian writers have made a distinct and significant contribution". Gandhi’s emergence in the 1920s revolutionized not only politics but also aesthetics of fiction in India.
Indian-English fiction of the 1920s, 1930s and also early 1940s was evidently inspired and influenced by Gandhian political ideology. Murugan the Tiller (1927) and Kandan the Patriot by S.K. Venkataramani are "novels full of Gandhian politics, exploring and applauding the ideals of Satyagraha and overtly calling on the Indians to work for freedom and regeneration as a nation." One might trace the beginning of modern political nove' in English in India in these works. In the works of Mulk Raj Anand, especially, Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), The Village (1939) Across the Black water (1940) and the Sword and the Sickle (1942), one could also identify a parallel progressive movement in Indian literature. Anand assimilated Marxist ideology to Gandhian idealism. Significantly the ideals of political freedom, social justice and national dignity are perceptible in all novelists of the era, whether inspired by Gandhi or by Marx. Anand's Untouchable is rightly credited with heralding revolutionary consciousness and political maturity in the Indian-English novel. Although novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya in A Shadow from Ladakh and K.A. Abbas in Inquilab, in the footsteps of Mulk Raj Anand, were attempting critical appreciation of the Gandhian epoch, the majority of the novelists persisted with idealized re-enactment of the nationalist struggle, more or less eulogizing Gandhi. Novelists like Nayantara Sahgal (A Time to be Happy, 1958), K.M. Markandaya, (Some inner Fury, 1957), K. Nagarajan (Chronicles of Kedaram, 1961). R.K. Narayan (Waiting for Mahatma, 1955), B. Rajan (The Dark Dancer 1959), and Chaman Nahal (The Crown and the Loincloth, 1982) went back to the twenties, thirties and forties eulogizing Gandhi.

Raja Rao's Kanthapura is an unforgettable depiction of the impact of the Gandhian ideology on an obscure village in South India during the 1930's. This novel remarkably successful in capturing the whole gamut of the complex phenomenon that Gandhi was Moorthy "our Gandhi" (p.106) in the novel captures, as C.D. Narsimhaitah very perceptively points out, the three matrices of Gandhism - the sociological, the political and the religious. "Being a singular fusion of poetry and politics" to use K.R.S. Iyengor's expression, Kanthapura could well be described as "the foremost Gandhian classic". No historical chronicle can rival Raja Rao's authenticity and power of presentation of the new national political consciousness roused by Gandhi and lead by Nehru. However, Kanthapura does not so much expound a political ideology as it shows its cataclysmic impact on the rural mind. Mulk Raj Anand's The Sword and The Sickle captures the waning of Tilak's influence and the development of Gandhi's mass appeal and the introduction of the communist ideology in India in the 1920's. R.K. Narayan's Waiting For Mahatma presents the Gandhian struggle in the forties, through an average Indian's perception. It has a vigorous but subtly ironical treatment of the impact of Gandhism on some Indian's. Mulk Raj Anand rejects the metaphysical overtones and
portrays the nationalist urge in terms of the materialist struggle of the oppressed against
the oppressors, elaborated subsequently by Abbas, and Bhattacharya. Anand’s protest
novels are pioneering endeavours at portrayal of political consciousness. Bhattacharya
(In So Many Hungers) B. Rajan (Dark Dancer) Chaman Nahal (Azadi), particularly raise
several pertinent questions in relation to Gandhian politics in the forties.

All the novels by Nayantara Sahgal deal explicitly with political themes in varying
degrees of analytical precision. In her eight novels, Sahgal selects and reconstructs the
events relating to a period of nearly one hundred years of Modern Indian History -
from 1885 to 1985. Her first and last two novels, namely, A Time to be Happy (1958)
Plans For Departure (1986), and Mistaken Identity (1988) are set in the first half of
the 20th century whereas the remaining five, namely, This Time of Morning (1965),
Storm in Chandigarh (1969), The Day in Shadow (1971), A Situation in New Delhi
(1977) and Rich Like Us (1985) deal with the events and developments in the second
half of the 20th century. Her concern is with values and with analysing what has gone
into making of a country. To this task she applies herself, bringing in little known facts,
ferreting of past, filling up the gaps, interpreting happening and what has led to them
reconstructing in fact, a whole country with its complexities of men and views. Sahgal
depicts the tumultuous period of the Indian Freedom Struggle when Tilak was the helm
of affairs in Plans. She records the rise of Gandhism, in Identity and Happy. The
post-Independence political scene, as Sahgal sees it, is marked chiefly by two forces:
The Gandhian and the non-Gandhian, the democratic and the dictatorial; the self
abnegating and the self-seeking, the sacrificing and the greedy, the non-violent though
we may find shades of grey here and there. Men belonging to these two contrary
ideologies "were not men of different political opinions supporting the same system.
They belonged to different lines of thinking and the future of Asia would depend on
which line won" (Shadow, p.155). In each of her novels, there are characters who firmly
believe in and fight for the ideals and values of Gandhian politics, championing
democratic freedom; self-abnegating and dedicated service for the welfare of the nation.
Madhav Rao in Plans, Bhaiji in Identity, Sohan Bhai and Narrator in Happy, Kailas,
Parkash, The Governor in Morning, The old Home Minister, Vishal Dubey, and Harpal
Singh in Storm, Sardar Sahib, Ram Kishan and Raj Garg in Shadow, Usman and Devi
in Situation, Keshav, Sonali and Lalaji in Rich, effectively convey the values and ideals
Sahgal holds in high esteem. Sahgal’s novels, thus do not appear as dry political tracts.
She succeeds remarkably in portraying the political events, currents, concepts,
personalities in eminently human idiom. Her novels are commendable for their
authentic depiction and perceptive analysis of the political reality.
Nayantara Sahgal has now been widely acclaimed as one of the leading Indian-English novelists as well as a well known political columnist. Her creative work as well as journalistic writings are imbued with a common cause i.e. to explore, to probe, to depict to analyze and to comment on the Indian political and social scene. Nayantara Sahgal has an enviable asset of first hand acquaintance with men and matters in the political sphere. When Sahgal took to writing novels the political content naturally became a very significant aspect of her novels. Nayantara Sahgal considers her novels to be political in content and intention and in her view ‘each of the novel more of less reflects the political era we were passing through’.

Nayantara Sahgal has long been accepted and appreciated as one of the major political novelist. To Shyam Asnani goes the credit of recognising her as a political novelist. As a novelist her contribution to Indian-English fiction lies in writing novels that unrolls faithfully the contemporary Indian political scene. Shyam Asnani comments on Sahgal’s Contribution:

Unlike ideological novels, her works are endowed with greater artistic objectivity. Politics can be called her "primordial predilection", the central point of what ever she writes. That is why almost all the major characters of her novels are drawn irresistibly to and deeply involved in the vortex of politics. Against this backdrop, she analyses and interprets various political events with an intelligent and perceptive mind and reads the individual responses of the characters to these events with the usual sensitivity of a nature artist.

Jasbir Jain, too appreciates Sahgal’s achievement, as she comments:

Her main contribution thematically has been her deep involvement and concern with politics. She has developed the scope of the political novel, widening its area of content and adding a new dimension to it. Politics, in her novels is not the concern only of politicians, but in an all pervasive influence, affecting life at all levels. What Nayantara Sahgal sets out to do in novel after novel has not been attempted by any other Indian-English novelist. Her interest is not limited to a single political event, or an historical fact or the life of a politician or even one predominant trend. It goes beyond this to envelop the totality of politics.

Nayantara Sahgal’s concern does not reveal itself through political satire of futuristic anti-utopias as is the case with some of the Western writers, instead it is concerned with the reality of the contemporary situation and is a continuation from the point where Disrelie left the political novel. The political theme manifests in her novels in many ways: in selection of characters who move in a political setting, in a description and projection of political events. Her novels offer a direct treatment of political
process, inclusive of political antecedents and traditions, institutions, practices and formation of change. She critically analyzes the Indian political culture: attitudes towards the political system and the role of the 'self' in the system. She probes deeply fundamental concerns such as the scope of politics, the relationship of ends and means, the standards or criteria for evaluation of political action and values that are salient for political action. She chronicles the pre-independent as well as independent India's political scene.

Sahgal captures authentically and vividly the year 1914 - the turbulent period of the pre-Independence India, when the freedom struggle gained momentum under Tilak's leadership in Plans. It chronicles the percolation of the freedom movement to the grass roots of the Indian society and even to remote hill stations. In this novel, Sahgal portrays and analyses the Imperial Rule from various angles and dimensions. She highlights the various shades of opinion and reactions - of the Indians, of the Britishers and of the objective outsiders such as Danes. Like Frosters A Passage to India and Orwell's Burmese Days, Sahgal's Plans For Departure is about the divided conscience both of the Indians and the British. The division of conscience and of opinion is there on every plane, at every level - amongst the British there are staunch Imperialist such as Pryor and at the same time liberal and humanitarian Englishmen such as the District Magistrate Henry Brewster who are disgusted by the injustice and exploitation perpetuated by the Imperial Rule. Amongst the Indians too there are division - there are patriotic Indians like Tilak, Madhav Rao who are zealously fighting against the Imperial Rule, on the other hand for Westernized, educated elites like Sir Nitin, Indian's only hope for progress is the Imperial Rule.

Standing outside, both the Imperial and the native circle, are the people of neutral countries like Denmark. Anna, the chief protagonist is perfectly matched by her enviable understanding of the history. Because of Anna's "Danish unimportance" (p.127) she displays a potential for understanding and taking an objective view of pride and prejudice of both Oriental and the Occidental. Thus her vision is one of a sympathetic and yet an objective narrator. Sahgal portrays graphically mainly through her the various dimensions of the political reality at that particular juncture. When the atmosphere was surcharged with intense heat due to trial and imprisonment of Tilak and the execution of Khudhiram by the British government.

Though Tilak is never presently directly in the novel yet his tremendous influence over the common Indians is subtly and deftly evoked. All the exploited and humiliated Indian such as Madhavrao identify with Tilak's passionate yearning for self respect and freedom. The common men respond passionately to Tilak's clarion call for self
government and complete freedom. Madhav Rao informs Anna about the tremendous response, Tilak's call for boycott and non assistance, is drawing, Tilak's magazine and books are banned, yet even Madhav Rao, in as remote a hill station as Himmapur, manages to get the latest issues and publication. Despite heavy censorship, He has full details about Tilak's trials, speeches and imprisonment. Tilak's imprisonment and release after six years unites the Indians. Tilak arouses Indians from their psychological slumber as he reinterprets Geeta and writes a book Geeta Rahasya. He exhorts people to fight the injustice as their sacred duty (p.122). He declares "caves out of time" as he strongly condemns the insipid interpretation of the religion which encourages people to pass off into "selfish and private bliss" (p.123). Clearing the psychological webs and complacency bred by fatalistic stance, Tilak wishes religion to be rather the source of spiritual and moral strength crucially needed for the freedom movement. Tilak's ideas and interpretations are widely accepted and wield considerable influence. Himmapur too joins the whole country in the rousing welcome accorded to the great patriotic leader on his release after six years. Nayantara Sahgal gives a vivid and detailed description of the public meeting capturing the mood of the aroused public successfully. Anna, too is invited by Madhavrao and she understands the mood of the electrified crowd. Anna finds the meeting "prophetic" forecasting stupendous changes. Though she never meets Tilak's directly yet she sharply observes and appreciates the charismatic personality of the man igniting the patriotic sentiments of the people even in such far flanged areas as Himmapur. Authentic quotations from Tilak's speeches enhance the impact of the novel as a political chronicle of the period. Sahgal supplements Tilak's portrayal with a vivid description of Tilak's influence in Europe and particularly among the labour leaders. Appreciating the tremendous contribution of Tilak, towards the Freedom, Struggle, in 1961, Jason, Anna's grand son-in-law later records that "nothing would have turned out as it did after wards if these particular things hadn't happened before" (p.144).

The novelist authentically records the presence of such anglicized Indian as Sir Nitin Basu at the same time. Though a very intelligent man, the eminent scientist is complacently indifferent to the strong wave of patriotism sweeping the country. He firmly believes in the "slow majestic forces of progress under the grand glorious British" (p.14). Such English educated men proclaim that they are "loyal to backbone" and they "thoroughly appreciate the education" that has been given to them. Tilak for such people as Sir Basu, is merely one of "the chief trouble maker". Intellectuals like Sir Basu believe in the British promise of enfranchisement and autonomy. However the dreams of this
"ideal and intoxicated relationship" are shattered soon. Provoked by the ghastly tragedy of the Jalianwala Bag, even the hitherto indifferent Sir Basu feels forced to protest and he renounces his Knighthood.

Through the character of Henry Brewster, Nayantara Sahgal presents a very perceptive analysis of the sensitive and compassionate among the British bureaucrat, who could not bring themselves to the exploitation and victimization perpetuated by the Imperialistic reign. Henry was profoundly disturbed by the execution of Khudhiram, which he had to supervise. Naked exploitation of and discrimination against the natives arouse tremendous sympathy in Henry. Unlike the common British officers he cannot identify with the Imperial forces which appear to him just "Looters". He would rather stand with

The another England, one that does not preside over executions on soil where it has no right to be in the first place. (p.128)

Pryor, Henry's chief and the representative of the common anti-Indian civil servant wishes to rule India with "iron hand". He even advises Henry "to put his flawed reasoning behind him" (Plans p.71).

Nayantara Sahgal not only relates an authentic and vivid account of the pre-Independence India, but also captures the subtle political manoeuvres and intrigues behind the scene that ultimately led to the World War I. This is accomplished through the letters of Anna's fiance Nicolas, a diplomat at the British embassy. His cool, analytical letters inform Anna about "negotiations that were failing because secret treaties and rivalries cancelled open appeals" (p.153). Anna voices the agony and confusion of the common man, as she questions:

Why do countries have to be power and why do powers have to be great ? And what have Emperor's follies to do with me ? (p.129)

However Henry consoles her that there still are a large number of people who value and cherish human life and values, instead of the hollow and disastrously inhuman games of politics and power. Henry firmly believes that "there is such tremendous future awaiting for people like us" (p.129). Anna has a prophetic vision of future, one that would come into being as soon as enough people want it : "At sometime not far ahead, countries must shrink into Danish unimportance and languages be understood by inspired instinct. The woes of the great powers left her unmoved". (p.164)

The sociol-political facet of the novel is supplemented with a well integrated account of the two significant incidents of early twentieth century: the exploitation of the indigo plantation in India and the Feminist movement in London. Marlowe Craft,
the American Missionary in Himmapur, has an interesting history of taking up cudgels for the brutally exploited indigo plantation workers. Sahgal gives a vivid and authentic account of the indigo estate held by the Britishers (p.41).

In *Mistaken Identity*, Nayantara Sahgal’s latest novel, the political motif has been accorded significant attention. *Identity* captures the tumultuous period of 1930s and 1940s when Gandhi’s movement created an unprecedented awakening and patriotism among the Indians. In this novel, Sahgal depicts the effect of the political turmoil on the common man as well as the complacent royalty. The socio-political chronicle is well-adapted and well-integrated with the narration, as Gandhism and Communism is presented through the grass-root level workers and local leaders. The novel invokes the politically surcharged atmosphere of the freedom struggle through the jail experience of Bhushan Singh, jailed through mistaken identity. The cell-mates of Bhushan Singh are an old Gandhian Bhaiji, two young Congress workers, four elderly comrades and a young student revolutionary. Through this set of prisoners Sahgal reflects the national mood of defiance and revolutionary yearning for freedom. The novel captures graphically the turmoil of the freedom struggle as it depicts Gandhi’s salt march, death of Jatin Das, execution of Bhagat Singh and others, mass arrests.

Sahgal highlights the difference of opinion between the communists and the Gandhian Bhaiji. They are diametrically opposed in their political ideology and can not see eye to eye. The communists ridicule the fuss about violence considering the grotesque violence of imperialism across the centuries. (p.34) They are firm that ‘Nothing will be allowed to sabotage the economic struggle of the workers’ (34). Bhaiji, believes firmly in the Gandhian struggle through non-violence and non-cooperation. They are sharply divided over the leadership of Gandhi. For the communist Gandhi is "a machiavellian Utopian" (p.69) who stabbed his party in the back by calling off the last civil disobedience agitation just because it turned violent. Bhaiji has tremendous respect for Gandhi’s non-violent struggle. He cannot tolerate any adverse comment on Gandhi. Most of all they clash over what free India will be like. The India of Bhaiji’s dreams is a country of vegetarian capitalists and rural handicrafts and no machines except a few such as sewing machines. The emphasis will be on cottage industry. Moreover Independence will be the dawn of an era washed clean of drink and lust (p.69). Communists resist vehemently and insists that India is going to be forged out of steel, concrete and electricity with heavy industrialization. Commrade Yusuf tries to explain to Bhaiji with concrete examples that the future depends on machines. But Bhaiji obstinately refuses to budge from his anti-machine stance.
Bhaiji, in the novel represents the multifaceted congress movement for the all-encompassing emancipation of human beings—political, social, economic, spiritual. Bhaiji’s campaign for Swadeshi and prohibition his presentation of truth as more precious than mere expediency, his impassioned pleading for brahimbarya his all-embracing love for people even for such as the prostitutes whom society shuns (p.160), the extraordinarily courageous and daunting spirit he carried in his frail, worn-out frame are all suggestive of Gandhi. However the portray of Bhaiji is marked by a healthy skepticism and gentle mockery of some of Gandhi’s "puritanical twaddle" (p.72), his idea of sexual abstinence presented as his exposition of reproductive fluid (p.70). Sahgal graphically portrays the victimization of the prisoners, highlighting the gross violation of their human rights. Bhushan Singh discerns

We’re pigs in a pen. We’re blur. We’re what a crowd looks like, anybody no body. Sen’s removal has depleted us. Bhaiji’s illness has crippled us, and the bullets that killed the boys we hardly knew have riddled our vocal chords so that we haven’t got one complete sentence to say to any more. (p.115)

The slow process of judiciary takes three years to try their cases.

Though Bhaiji and the commrades differ sharply in their political ideals yet they condemn Imperialism unanimously and vociferously. They, all enthusiastically unite in their struggle for the freedom of India. Bhaiji is accused of fanning revolt in the country side. Bhaiji is enraged and questions the English:

Who is fanning, You or me? You are raising revenue. You are seizing buffaloes. You are forfeiting land and auctioning it. Will you take this land to England answer me? We are telling the dumb millions, remain on your land, sow your crops, tie up your buffalo, we will see who takes it. (p.128)

Commrade Dey, too, exposes the ugly reality of the Imperial Rule:

That capitalists have a weird sense of proportion. Hours can be spent in their courts of law attacking and defending a man who purloined a penknife. But sail out and loot a country, bash up the population and make a scavengers feast of their remains, and you The English police officer who struck Lajpat Rai in course of his duty has been shot dead by an assassin, and the public has reacted with joyful excitement. The assassin and his colleagues are now in Lahore jail and the public has made heroes of them. (p.130)

In the Court Commrades read "the tome" they have prepared together. Commrade Iyer reads:
We do not accept the charge against us. We wish to rephrase it as follows: The accused are pledged to deprive British financial capital of its sovereign right to exploit the Indian masses." (p.162)

His cadences grip Bhushan's jaded attention. Commrade Iyer upbraids "the government for hiding its intention behind the drama of national and international conspiracy. When the real issue is the pack animal we call the Indian working man. For asserting the rights of these, he and his commrades are facing trial for 'conspiracy' (p.163). The commrades declare a prophetic vision of future:

Humanity is on its way to it. No terror can halt the caravans. On the appointed day-it is written-they shall arrive, enter the gates and be reborn, a truly human race no longer motivated by great of grab, to live as equals, in peace for ever. (p.163)

However the judge is least affected by the commrade's "prophecy". Commrade desperately accuses the judge of violating the human rights of Indians:

We've been deprived of right every Englishman enjoys. Illegal imprisonment. Our third year of it. Don't hunt for evidence to accuse us. We accuse You! of illegal occupation. Of conditions in this country. Of murder. Too many corpses lie between us and the British government. Most recently, there in Lahore, one (Bhaiji) this morning in our barrack, last year a boy (Sen)... (p.164)

Bhushan Singh envies Iyer his fighting spirit and confesses that he just doesn't have it (p.164). The trial moves on for two years, commrades zealously argue that:

In this ominous empire the thirst for freedom is a crime, so let there be more crime, if that's what they call it. A country under foreign bayonets is perpetually at war with the government. (p.157)

In the court, Pillai condemns Bhagat Singh's execution as "a dastardly execution, a most gruesome piece of imperial justice, a cowardly act of white terror" (p.161).

Bhushan Singh, too, significantly protests "as loudly as the others" (p.161). Bhushan Singh, by now has come to identify himself completely with his cell-mates. He too catches up their zealous enthusiasm for the freedom struggle. Finally in December 1931, the judge delivers the judgement, pronouncing them all guilty (p.171). In the high courts, they do get justice and they all are acquitted. Freedom, from the jail leaves the commrades and the Bhaiji's followers - the twins, bubbling with resolve rather than being discouraged. Commrade Yusuf plans to setup Profullo Sen center for the young all over India. In Bhushan's province Vijayagarh even his father is willing to offer all help. Bhushan Singh can no longer remain indifferent and helps comrade Yusuf's movement.
The novel brilliantly depicts the turmoil in the country at the pochmaking juncture of the immediate pre-Independence era. The novelist for the first time attempts to portray the grass-root level of the political struggle. After depicting the elites in the political area in so many of her novel, in this novel Sahgal takes up for a brilliant and authentic portrayal of the obscure workers and followers - Gandhian and the communist - who languished in jail for years. In this novel, she delineates the freedom struggle from a common man's point of view supplemented with the point of view of another very significant section of the Indian society - the prince of the small Indian provinces. She no doubt succeeds to present authentically and powerfully the electrifying effect of the passionate wave of nationalism, significant political events on the common Indians. She captures the Indian freedom struggle at its intense point as the portrays the political prisoners in the prisons.

A Time to be Happy (1958) evokes realistically and vividly the immediate pre-and post-Independence era. The novel gives a graphic account of the turbulent period when the nationalistic fervor was at its peak and a wave of Gandhism swept the country. Rather than presenting dull rhetoric about the Gandhian thought, the novel presents a gallery of characters, who feel on their pulse the charismatic influence of the Gandhian ideas and values. A large number of persons, rich heirs, college students, professionals and even many women, find their values, goals, ideals and norms and way of life transformed under the Gandhian influence.

The narrator, heir of a wealthy textile mill owner, responds to Gandhi's "clarion calls", motivated by "the contrast between poverty and plenty" (p.8). She records the origin of one of the greatest political movements.

The movement far from being a purely political one was a great social organisation, too a channel where by even the least political minded could help to alleviate the awe-inspiring distress of poor of our land. (p.8).

Though the narrator never meets Gandhi face to face, yet Gandhian ideas and deeply influence and mould his ideas. He surrenders his rightful claim to his inheritance of cloth mill to join Gandhi's movement with a crusader's zeal and devotes himself completely and sincerely to implement the directives of Gandhi's Congress. He takes up zealously social service in the far flunged and poverty ridden villages. Imprisoned in the Lucknow jail along with a large number of political prisoners, he meets Sohan Bhai, a staunch Gandhian.
Sohan Bhai, can be studied as a typical Gandhian follower, portrayed realistically and vividly. Having lost his wife, children and home in the terrible earthquake of Patna, Sohan Bhai, a wealthy lawyer turns to social service, an "unconventional balm", under the impact of Gandhi. Kunti Behen is another committed Gandhian worker. Though zealously committed and sincerely devoted to the Congress party, her portrayal is touched by masterly humorous and satirical strokes. Kunti Behen is a widow, whose marriage was not consummated as her husband was a close follower of Mahatma ji's. Her Gandhism is revealed through her unconcern for her appearance, her refraining from combing her hair or cleaning her nails and her "nothing but contempt for women who attended to their toilette while rural India cried out for assistance (p.60).

The novel, captures graphically the passionate response of the young Indian students to Gandhi's clarion call for the freedom-struggle. Students respond to the Gandhism movement "with a throbbing awareness". Disciplined by Gandhi's directive of non-violent Satyagrah, they participate zealously and regularly in the non-violent procession. Sahdev crystallizes best this new found political awareness. Happy explores brilliantly another significant section of the Indian society - the Indians, bred and educated thoroughly under the British influence. The Harish anglophile bureaucrat represents the anglicised though alienated bureaucracy. His own wife, Maya, cannot remain unmoved by the pull of nationalism.

Happy traces the process of growth of a rich "nearly-British" executive Sanad from slavish ways to nationalism. Disgusted with apathetic indifference of the Britisher's to the country's grave problems, he is profoundly disturbed by the blind imitation of the Western culture. Sanad's self-respect is grievously hurt as he bears the burnt of racial discrimination. However he takes bold a stand and manages to secure his right.

The novelist captures authentically and vividly the mood of the people in 1942, when Gandhi ji was arrested by the Britishers. An urchin throws mud on an Englishman, a "symbol of the British majesty and authority". However he does not run away, and when the policeman collars him and takes him to the police-station for a severe beating; he "neither whimpers, nor cries", but lets himself be led away in "sullen silence" (p.113). The novel continues chronicling the state of nation even when the story reaches the post Independence phase. While social activists like the Narrator and Sohan Bhai and continue their crusade of social service, turning down the lucrative offers of chairmanships of various boards. The British businessmen such as Ronu Chatterjee and Hiralal Mathur, change spots as they start patronizing the Indian goods and the handloom industry.
In *Morning*, Nayantara Sahgal comes to a chronologically a later period of recent Indians history and the novel has been acclaimed for its truthful depiction of the national scene. *Morning* has been hailed as "one of the best political novels" addressed to the national political scene in India. In *Morning* "theme, and not merely its background, is the post-independence political scene in the country." The life that it projects is the life shot - conferences, committees, public meetings, get together, discussions, seminars, processions, socials. We are given a during, intimate and explosive expose of the happenings in the protected world of politicians and administrators of the South Block....

*Morning* explores the operational contradictions of democratic political structure, simultaneously confronting the task of state and nation-building. Jasbir Jain comments:

In *This Time of Morning* politics functions at various levels... It is a political world where ideologies and policies meet, clash and confront each other; where individuals influence politicians, and policies influence individuals.

*Morning* captures authentically the travails of the nascent democracy in India. Nayantara Sahgal excels in portraying the 'dusky' as well as 'bright' aspects of India's experiment in democratic nation building in the initial decades. The novel not only exposes the paradoxes of operational politics in India but also raises several pertinent and basic questions related to the nature of the polity, such as the issue of committed and neutral bureaucracy, the erosion, and the emerging styles of leadership.

In *Morning*, Nayantara Sahgal portrays graphically the "new quotas of problem" freedom brings in its wake, as well as the Indians politicians, bureaucrats, journalist diplomats, businessmen, and the social elites confrontation with the fast changing political scenario. In the novel politics functions at various level: Kailas Vrind who is dedicated and honest, Kalyan Sinha who is impatient for results, Hari Mohan and Somnath who are guided purely personal interests, Prakash Shukla and Abdul Rahman who find it difficult to accept progress bereft of humanity and morality, the young foreign service officers who are told by the Prime minister that basically independence means 'foreign' relations because to the extent that another country influences your foreign policy or tells you what to do, you are not independent.

The horizon was daubed with several bright colours when the sun of freedom rose which was watched by the millions of the countrymen with breathless adoration with high hopes for the beginning of a new era. However, a shadow was soon cast over these hopes, as casteism, communalism, obscurantism, intolerance and corruption reared their heads. Sahgal presents a graphic and authentic portrayal of the political milieu, capturing
its subtle changes and nuances, in the immediate post-Independence India in *This Time of Morning*. She portrays the dusky as well as the "bright" aspects of the Indian political environment and leaders as it records the reverberation of the changes and the clashes ensuing from the tedious and complex process of transformation from the Imperial Rule to democracy. Sahgal’s descriptions of the Partition of the country, the election campaigns, the division of the parties owing to the petty clashes of the self-seeking politicians, sycophant bureaucrats, pliable press, the muddled state of affairs in the Foreign Ministry, the storm over the language issue, the Question Hour in the parliament have an immediacy of impact.

The foremost challenge before post-independence politics, as Sahgal perceives is "institutionalization of the Gandhian values in the formal political structures". As a veteran freedom fighter Kailas Vrind explains in the novel "The framework we have today is from the British but humanity we learned from the Mahatma" (p.183). Attempts to reconcile the two, however, have resulted in acute tension in the Indian political process. The novel seeks to explore several dimensions of this ‘tension’ through polarization of two characters, Kailas Vrind (a Gandhian idealist) and Kalyan Sinha (a non-Gandhian, pragmatic activist). There are conscientious and well-meaning and dedicated politicians like Abdul Rahman, and Prakash Shukla and honest hardworking bureaucrats like Rakesh and Saleem as well as corrupt politicians as Som Nath and Hari Mohan.

Nayantara Sahgal, far from merely passing on a piece of sociological information, excels in providing a subtly satirical portrayal of the politicians, bureaucrats and foreign educated Indian youngsters like Hari Mohan, Somnath, Dhiraj who have amassed a large fortune by misusing their public positions. Despite their lack of acquaintance with Indian conditions, and their lack of sympathy with Indian psychology" (p.218) they cling to the "central inescapable fact of what the newspapers call "misalliance" with each other "the minutiae of which political capital is made" (p.8). The novelist exposes the political opportunists who cause immense damage to country's interests and reputation by resorting to inefficient corrupt, irresponsible and unscrupulous practices and continue to enjoy the public positions though they have forfeited the people's confidence" (p.218).

By juxtaposing the corruption and idealism of the political world, the novel provides an insight into the working of politics. It explores the unethical power of politics, conflicting attitudes of men in power and the consequential problems that this
country with newly won freedom. The conflict in the novel between Kailas Vrind and Kalyan Sinha is a conflict between ideologies Kailas, an idealist, belongs "to the generation that had succumbed to the magic of Gandhi" (p.187).

The central theme is a probing analysis and authentic portrayal of the place accorded to "the human factor" in the scheme of things, as individual is the most important factor in Sahgal's thinking. Not committed to any particular ideology for Sahgal the individual is the criterion with which she judges all issues and decisions. Rakesh, chief spokesman of the author, expresses Sahgal's political thinking:

It was the assurance that every man counts that life is the sum total of moments, that the human being through the exercise of his reason is the instrument of all progress... A group was individuals. What was needed was not the burial of the self but its rebirth and celebration, for surely the only hope for people anywhere was that they should recognise and faster each other's humanity as individual. (Morning, p.136)

Kailas Vrind, in Morning espouses the cause of individual most vehemently. He considers dedicated human beings "the most indestructible material in the world". Regarding the choice of an ideology or a system of government, "the only thing that does matter is the human being, his calibre his.... dedication" (p.130). "The central consideration to any problem was the man who faced it" (p.188). Therefore the goal, for Kailas, is that "of raising a people to modern times with their own consent. For once there would not be a martyrdom of men to a cause, no mutilation of hope and sacrifice of love towards a future bloodied by tragedy and terror" (p.21). For Kailas "the balance between morality and expediency" and "the imperfect circumstances that must be accepted in the game" (p.188). Kailas is not "one of those who believed politics need be a dirty game. Any game was a dirty game when dirty people played it" (p.188). This might be idealism, but Kailas hopes "idealism is the realism of tomorrow" (p.52).

Nayantara Sahgal's vision of the role of the individual in the scheme of things comes out in Kailas's explanation to Rakesh that the government will succeed only when the poor and the humble that arouse some concern and are given a chance to live like human beings" (p 42-43). Kailas, states the official policy thus:

*We have made the human being the unit and measure of progress, so we can never at any stage abandon our concern with him*" (p.198).

Kailas and Kalyan differ tremendously on the vital issue of the role and place of the individual in the process of change and progress in the society. Kailas's total dedication to the spirit of man in the Gandhian tradition stands out in sharp contrast to Kalyan's contempt for the individual human being.
Kalyan Sinha, on the other hand swears by the group and emphasises the need "to protect society the predatory individual. The veteran Gandhian leaders such as Kailas and Prakash, acknowledge the vital significance of the ideals and values of humanity. Prakash, however, regretfully observes that the radical leaders such Kalyan "do not understand or respect this humanity" as they "go too far" (p.132). Kalyan Sinha is portrayed as an unrefined, uncultured yet brilliant and charismatic leader. Disenchanted both by the Gandhian and the terrorist methods, Kalyan had chosen to establish single handedly an Indian Centre in America in 1935. Strong willed and arrogant, he is proverbial strongmen with the "irresistible attraction that eccentricity has for the young". Impatient for progress, he despises conventional morality and idealism. For him "the only thing that matters" (p.71) is "catching up fast". Haunted by the abject poverty and starvation death of his family, Kalyan strongly feels "As long as there were starving, ignorant men there could be no relationship between a government and the governed except in terms of rapid accomplishment (p.13). In his desperate impatience, Kalyan, however supports any means, fair or foul. Ruthless in his pursuits, he is given to unscrupulous maneuvering and corruption. There is an inner contradiction in his character which he fails to realize: in order to eradicate suffering and sacrifice he creates and perpetuates both by ignoring human needs and ethical values.

But in sharp contrast Kailas acknowledges the vital human dimension of the issue of change. Kalyan feels that any change involving the erosion of moral values would be self defeating:

In all my dealings with human beings I have discovered no magic formula for change, not as long as you consider the human mind and its willing co-operation necessary to your task.

He puts his faith in the quality of the people who are involved in the task of nation-building. However to his dismay and the dismay of his senior colleagues Prakash Shukla and Abdul Rahman, the people who are actually in power do not realize. Those in power are men like Kalyan Sinha, Somnath the U.P.C.M. and Hari Mohan, corrupt and greedy, their very efficiency possessing a sweeping ruthlessness and their sensibilities immune to the refined humanistic values. Abdul Rahman feels that though during Somnath's Chief Ministership 'things had been done, targets attained but these in themselves were inadequate without a corresponding human evolvement and now stood 'like abandoned human habitation in the desert' (p.212).

Hari Mohan, a man from the business world, draws no bounds in the game of power. First he turns against Kailas whom he has long admired, and later he uses his Muslim tenants to extract a Congress ticket. He donates a large number of money to the Gandhi Peace Institute in order to become its member. He is so used to
manipulating facts to his advantage that he has long ceased to value loyalty or morality. Men like Hari Mohan who manipulate to be in power invite scathing criticism in the novel. The novelist launches a fierce attack on them for the "impenetrable gulf" they have created "separating values, policies and goals" (p.184). The Gandhi cap, once the symbol of courage, has now become "a target of derision." The corrupt Ministers, who have made this "travesty of truth" by losing the balance between "morality and expediency" (p.184), have been made the target of her satire.

Similarly the Peace Institute, a memorial to Gandhi and his aspirations to establish peace and friendliness is ironically directed by Kalyan who has no faith in Gandhian ethics, and who calls Gandhi an "emasculator" (p.133). This symbolic "a sermon in stone", supposed to represent "a step in educating the public towards making peace a reality" (p.154), ironically, has turned out to be a hot bed, of acrimonious debate and conflict.

Sahgal exposes the general atmosphere irresponsibility and greed as the Indians mistakenly feel that political freedom has solved all problems and that there is nothing more left to do but to enjoy it. The crude behaviour of members of Indian delegation to Moscow, the greed of journalists, inaction, irresponsibility and corruption of bureaucrats, lackluster attitude of students is realistically depicted.

In *Morning*, Sahgal launches a frontal attack on a harsh and ugly reality of the Indian political system - the baleful influence of communalism. Hari Mohan, an aspirant for the Congress ticket plays up the religious card to gain political weight. However, secular minded Kailas rejects his nomination as he senses Hari "is the rallying point for all the rigidly orthodox Hindu elements" and "his approach is medieval" (pp. 198-200). Hari Mohan retaliates, as he holds the Muslim community of his area "to ransom" Somnath, Kailas next in party's hierarchy however supports Hari, without realising the tremendous repercussions of the his orthodox medieval approach. As Kailas joins the central government, Hari Mohan is inducted in the State Government. Hari Mohan's induction into the ministry sets off a chain of corruption, blackmailing and maneuvering, Somnath eventually has pay a heavy price for choosing and supposing a man like Hari Mohan as he has to resign himself.

Rakesh, another I.F.S. officer seems to act as the chief spokesman for the omniscient author. Growing up at a time when young men were ardent nationalists, Rakesh is portrayed as an intellectual who has "a troubled sense of responsibility towards his country, too young actively to share its travail, too old to be indifferent to it" (p.37). Rakesh has a tremendous sense of duty and responsibility towards the nation. Being
sincere and committed himself, Rakesh is deeply disturbed by the prevalent atmosphere of inefficiency, manipulations and greed. He is bewildered by the confusion around him which is not a confusion of methods alone but also of aims.

Kailas Vrind intelligently analyses the malaise inflicting the political fabric of life. Shrewdly, he attributes the growing asymmetry in Indian political culture largely to the transition of the Congress from a movement to a political party. After independence, Congressmen exchanged their idealism for the more usual pursuits of politicians - power and its fruits. The amorphous character of the Congress resulting in an ideological ambivalence gets reflected in the larger political milieu of the nation. In the changed ethos, Kailas thinks it is possible to revaluate Gandhism as a philosophy of life and as the guiding principle for a sovereign state. Kailas maintains that the party should not abandon its moral character which was its main strength. Kailas rightly points out that politics in post-independent India is not inevitably a dirty game, for "Any game was a dirty game when dirty people played it" (p.185). If there are unscrupulous doctors, and lawyer and businessmen, and also dishonourable politicians, there are honourable ones too. (p.185). In Kailas's view, therefore a rejuvenation of Gandhian values is urgently needed to see India through the crisis of values and attitudes. However with more and more unscrupulous people flocking to politics Kailas is ousted both from the U.N. delegation and the U.P. Ministry. His return to politics is not a reward for virtue, but the continuation of a struggle. He is expected to lead another crusade for justice and equality and all crusades demand dedication and sacrifice.

Nayantara Sahgal however, conceives of the possibilities of reconciliation of Gandhian ideals and new pragmatism (as perceived in the personality of in Prime Minister Nehru. In the novel Rakesh, a young conscientious and honest IFS officer, represents the possibilities of the commendable approach assimilating the Gandhian ideals with the new pragmatism. Rakesh feels alienated from Kalyan Sinha because of his unemotional approach to human problems. The novelist's adoration for Nehru, reflected primarily through Rakesh and on a variety of issues such as the language controversy, the Peace Institute and Foreign Policy, is undisguised. For Instance, the Prime Minister is commended for having "taken upon himself a challenge unique in history that of raising a people to modern times with their own consent. Fully, supporting a democratic and humane approach to the political leadership, as if anticipating the emergency of 1975, concludes: 

No one will deny that efficiency is what this country needs but we are afraid and shall continue to be afraid, of efficiency when it is accompanied, as it so often is, by ruthlessness" (p.218).
The novel, thus not only exposes the paradoxes and conflicts raging the whirl of the Indian politics, but also raises several pertinent and basic issues such as the issues of public ethics and its erosion, and, the emerging trends and attitudes.

An authentic account and a probing analysis of the Indian political scene of the 1960s is portrayed in *Storm in Chandigarh*. She attempts to address some aspects of the problem of cultural pluralism and national integration. She seeks to interpret the issue as a pathological aspect of the body-politic of India. In *Storm*, Nayantara Sahgal chooses for authentic portrayal and perceptive analysis a catastrophic event with far-reaching repercussions - redivision of the states on linguistic basis. She analyses the political climate the political intrigues and pressures which led to such a catastrophic decision along with the persons who maneuvered the division of Punjab and Haryana. At the same time the contextual problem depicted in the novel factually relates to the disputes over boundaries, water, power distribution and the capital (Chandigarh) between Punjab and Haryana. However in the portrayal of chaos, violence dwindling loyalties and crisis of social and political values, the novel moves beyond the dated crisis. Nayantara Sahgal delineates brilliantly "the battle of philosophies" value-based Gandhian philosophy on one hand and the parochial populist philosophy as the drama of the creation of a new state the subsequent reactions is enacted vividly.

As the novel opens the very first sentence captures the distress of the situation: Violence lies very close to the surface in Punjab (p.7) Violence that was so common a feature on the national scene during the sixties, captures the attention of Sahgal and becomes her central concern in *Storm*. Out burst of brutal, calculated violence had become a feature of the cities. Violence had become routine and expected. It was dealt with each time and forgotten (p.5). The novel evidentially deals with the corridors of power and "the problem of visible and invisible violence. The old Home Minister, "the last surviving figure of the Gandhian eras left in public life" (p.9), has hand-picked Vishal a civil servant to deal the taunt situation as he has "the capacity to counsel patience" and the gift to tackle, "the problem at a human level" (p.10). The old Minister instructs Vishal to counsel patience, ease tensions and avert the crisis.

The two chief Ministers, Vishal has to deal with are not only the two persons diametrically opposite in their approaches, they are also "two political forces: One resorts to the methods of intimidation and suppression of the political opponents by sheer brutal force, whereas the other stands for justice broader perspective and liberal out look". Nayantara Sahgal analyses the malaise afflicting the political environment and pinpoints the erosion of the Gandhian ideals and values and the present generation of politicians with a parochial vision and populist policies. The perceptive analysis is
dramatized vividly by juxtaposing the political ideas, attitudes and functioning of Gyan Singh the Chief Minister of Punjab and Harpal Singh - the new Chief Minister of Haryana. The presence of the old Minister serves to highlight the contrast as his character is the very embodiment of the upright Gandhian values, ideals and dedication. Vishal, the central consciousness in the novel evaluates the political situation as well as the principal characters in this political drama.

Gyan Singh is immensely popular, eulogised in the newspapers as "a living movement to the urban working class". He is man with no qualms of conscience. For him "Conscience was no match" for honour as "Honour like prestige was public. It was a badge the insignia of hardihood, the sign of a man's standing in community. It must at all cost be up held" (p.107). He is a man with whom it is only the end which matters and not the means. The incidence of kidnapping partyworker particularly brings out the essential difference in the characters of Gyan and Harpal. Gyan Singh insists on the futility of a soft approach in politics, but Harpal Singh is deeply touched by the incident. Though he had to keep quite at that time, soon become "to represent the revival of aspiration among the dispossessed". Harpal Singh has quite clear aims and objective and works zealously to achieve them:

He could not remember a time when he had wanted power what he had passionately wanted was recognition as a champion of the under dog. And he had earned that. (p.44)

Gyan Singh, on the other hand is committed to fast progress, without questioning the means. Fascinated with machinery right from the childhood, he firmly believes that rapid industrialisation is the panacea for the country. He rightly claims the credit of setting the pace of industrialisation the state. Harpal Singh and others had protested against the corrupt methods and wanted a clean administration, but two of Harpal's men are severely beaten up the very next day by Gyan's workers and Harpal had to counsel caution.

The proposal of bifurcation of Punjab into Punjabi speaking-Punjab and Hindi-speaking Haryana, is Gyan Singh's brain wave. The nefarious demand itself exposes Gyan Singh as an egoist and unscrupulous opportunist with a parochial vision. At the Journalist's Association Meeting in Delhi, he announces his nefarious plans in a passionate and charismatic speech, as he described himself as "a simple man fired with a simple purpose to call his soil his own in the language of his fore-fathers" (p.143). Gyan Singh, being a shrewd psychologist whips up sentiments to serve his own interest and pleads eloquently the "ardour of a people for identity" (p.143).
The old Minister resists strongly as he has a single fierce allegiance: India and the invisible regard of an electorate (p.144). He falls out over the issue with the P.M. who hoped he would resign. Though the old Minister is over ruled yet the P.M. could not dare to dismiss him as the old Minister is an "institution". The other person who speaks against division is Harpal. His arguments are precise and down to earth. However his cautious agruments hardly make an impact as:

Economy, and the strength, and security of a border region, could not hold out against the colourful emotional appeal of the mother tongue. (p.144)

Even Gyan Singh is "astonished" when a Punjab "his to rule" is dropped into his lap. Harpal Singh who had opposed the division strongly, is deeply disturbed at the turn of the events. His perceptive analysis is marked by prudent vision and sincere commitment to the interests of the nation. He strongly reacts to the "butchery", as he feels that "there was something sinister at the root of the Partition mentality and those who upheld it" (p.30). Despite all his good intention, Harpal Singh realizes that "the decisive action had always been a problem for him" (p.146).

The division of the State opens a pandora's box, as both the states stake claims for the disputed Capital Chandigarh, Bhakra dam, and the boundary lines. Harpal Singh observes wryly:

Produce and idea, and it would generate its own quota of fanatics to clothe it in colour, put it to music and fire a whole population.

Gyan Singh is however riding the crest of popularity and is spearheading a public agitation to have his demands met. Despite the Nation's commitment to secularism, Gyan Singh announces introduction of religious instructions in the schools. Gyan Singh issues threat of a crippling strike to press upon his demands. Using his charismatic power of oration he whips up the regional sentiments of the Punjabi people to demonstrate against the Centre's take-over of the Bhakra Dam, claiming it exclusively for Punjab. Vishal finds Gyan an "audacious, an inverted genius" hell-bent on winning. His very narrowness gives his arguments a crude strength that no larger vision could ever have.

Vishal confronts Gyan Singh to persuade him to call off the strike-threat. But he finds Gyan Singh cannot be deflected from his path:

Gyan had stepped out the heights below which lay a kingdom. From that dazzling spectacle no one would be able to lure him. A sense of imminent peril gripped Dubey. It was Delhi, not Gyan, that needed warning if India were to stay whole. (p.76)

Vishal analyses correctly that between Gyan Singh and Harpal Singh
There was more than a political battle. It was a battle of philosophies. The juster but vaguer range of possible could seldom hold out against violent in mediate claims supported by the obvious. (p.122).

Vishal senses the change in the "tone of the politics" (p.76). Individual efforts, however prove inadequate for controlling and resolving collective ills such as wanton killing and extraction of money by police officers (p.55), proclamation of high ministers (p.141) the government services running ‘at snails' pace’ (p.165), and inconvenience caused by employees strikes in essential services (p.204). Vishal analyses "inertia" to be the real cause of the rot inflicting the entire system. The inertia is reflected in Harpal Singh's reluctance to face squarely the strike threat, in his reluctance to punish a corrupt police office; in the Centre’s "careful approach" to Gyan Singh's precarious intentions. He prophetically thinks:

One of these days, we're going to be so careful we're going to have Buny's Jigsaw instead of the map of India to administer, every bit of it jumping.

Harpal Singh seems to succumb of Gyan Singh’s pressure tactics and plans to "resign" (p.148) However Vishal exhorts Harpal Singh to "not to yield to it. Face it". (p.20) and to "Make a stand", Vishal understands the risk, and explains intelligently "but there are greater risks the prospect of the machinery of two states running down at the behest of one man, without any kind of stand made against him. Vishal, with Harpal's assent, plans out a strategy and executes it successfully with tremendous skill and courage and patience. The core of his strategy is: "Above all government must give sign of decision and action. No dithering". (p.210). Old Home Minister, who is "a creature with a defined inner structure and a sense of unfettering discipline" (p.211) too supports Vishal's plans.

Unfortunately, the very same day the old Home Minister dies. Ironically Gyan Singh calls off the strike "as a token of respect for the death of patriot". (p.240) though he has least respect for the ideas and values of the old leader. The "storm" on the political plane is thus contained, but only temporarily as Gyan Singh continues to dominate the scene very much least deflected from his path, and ideas. Vishal however feels "a peculiarly intense grief". To him the funeral of the old Minister symbolises.

... more than a state funeral. It would mark the end of an era known as Gandhian. In politics that had indomitable will in the emaciated body of India... (p.240)

Back at Delhi, Vishal experiences the change as he is grilled by his senior Kachru, for his firm stand. Though explains that "It was an action supported by the Home Minister" (p.245). He feels himself placed in "an environment of subtly altered loyalties" (p.245). Vishal feels on his pulse the "bleak and wintry" atmosphere which is accentuated by the
absence of the old Home Minister. The novel thus initiates a psycho-cultural perspective to the phenomenon of the political crisis generated by linguistic regionalism during the 1960s in India. However, in the portrayal of the crisis of social and political values, the novel moves beyond the dated crisis.

A perusal of any standard account of the post-Nehru period would reveal the disintegration of ideals, the degeneration of men and morals, the destruction of 'old-fashioned' values like nationalism, sacrifice and service oriented life of a man in politics. The most significant feature of the period was the populist, leftist leaning policies of the government and the escalating misery of the people in spite of these. A Day in Shadow despite it's fictional from, is perhaps one of the best accounts of the period.

In A Day in Shadow, Nayantara Sahgal asserts, with full vigour, her claim as a successful historian of current history. The novel abounds in socio-political echoes of the post-Nehru period and invokes veritably the political scene marked by the steadily growing forces of disintegration and moral degradation of the politicians. It was a time in which the euphoria generated by Independence had spent itself and a rot had set in, eroding the edifice of the value based Gandhian politics. It reflects truthfully the growing disillusionment among the people as "the belligerent new politicians" (p.3) with populist policies, unscrupulous morals and dictatorial tendencies take over from the altruistic, compassionate and devoted band of Gandhian politicians. To catch the imagination of the people slogan mongering is at a feverish pitch. Raj Garg, a devoted and sincere Indian, worries that Delhi would become "the heart of a crisis", if the politicians in power keep spinning out their slogans while millions queue up for job" (p.12). The retreat from the Gandhian values of sincerity, devotion, compassion is evident in its full effect. The crusader's zeal so prominent in the personality of the older generation of politicians has lost its steam. Nayantara Sahgal correctly records:

"They will dispense with him when they are good and ready", Raj Garg fears, "but meanwhile they'll keep resurrecting him cold bloodily - unwinding the memory - whenever they need him. A more cynical bunch of manipulators would be hard to find" (p.10). The devoted and sincere leaders have been succeeded by "the absurd Lilliputian ilk, inflated with office" (p.12) who are pathetically indifferent to the problems of the present, as well as to the planning for future. Degeneration is evident even in the bureaucracy. Most of the civil servants are a "kind of non-personality who stayed out of trouble and survived" (p.31). Even on the economic front, the government policies
are hardly bearing any fruit. The proposed "ceiling on dividends" and seizure of shares" (p.209) would gather together an "avalanche in driblets" (p.229) wiping out not only the rich but also the growing struggling middle class of the country. Mr. Shah, a businessman laments: "other countries put their business houses on the honour roll. We treat ours like criminals". (p.9). Mr. Shah holds out Japan as a model country where there is a complete meeting of minds between the government and business, and the workers work. That is why they prosper and are not plagued with strikes" (p.87). Though unwilling, yet he has to donate to the funds of the political party in power. The whole affair is "under-cover, of course", to keep the government's reputation intact (p.144).

The issue of the oil deal with Russia is taken up as the focal issue, a sort of touchstone - which brings out the true colours of the personalities. It underlines the selfishness, imprudence and the Russian influence in both Sumer Singh and his government.²⁵ The oil deal also brings to light the rational approach and prudent wisdom and dedication of Raj Garg and Sardar Sahib. The hard political reality of the day - growing Russian influence and the government's populists policies, lack of prudence, unscrupulous politicians, virtual action of the votes of independent M.P.s, the neglected older, wiser and dedicated Gandhian politicians, the dictatorial tendencies of the New 'radical' government, the throttling of press-all stand exposed as the novel unfolds. Thus a brilliant and truthful record of the day, gives the novel a firm footing as a chronicle of the period.

In A Day in Shadow the new breed of self-seeking, dictatorial, unscrupulous politicians are represented by Sumer Singh. Sardar Sahib the veteran Gandhian is presented as a foil to Sumer Singh. Sardar Sahib, the old ailing Petroleum Minister represents the vanishing, older generation of compassionate politicians, who are devoted to the welfare of the country with a crusader's zeal. Raj Garg, a young independent M.P. represents those who feel "responsible" for India. He takes up the challenge of checking the rot that has set in our political scene as a "personal crusade". Raj Garg, along with his friend and mentor, Ram Krishan, the editor, represents the values, Nayantara Sahgal wishes to project as the ideal and the most suitable ones to confront the present chaos in the national fabric.

Sumer Singh, the representative of the new breed of politicians, is a flamboyant ex-zamindar. He had been planning to enter films when the offer of a Congress ticket had turned him into a politician. Sardar Sahib correctly assesses Sumer Singh as "an election gambit that had worked", but Sumer Singh "would not have the remotest idea what election meant in terms of the service of this country" (Shadow, p.126). Moral values such as altruism, compassion, devotion sincerity, honesty determination,
non-violence and courage, which had inspired a whole generation of politicians, are merely meaningless, empty words for Sumer Singh. Sumer Singh's values and ideals are quite different. He thinks, "Popularity in politics depended on backing, on the cheer from the crowd - any crowd but in large number" (Shadow p.126). Populism is the creed by which these leaders live - Sumer Singh will never risk his political life by taking an unpopular decision, however crucial the decision may be. He cares a fig for the problems of the present, for the real welfare of and the long terms planning for the country, the only thing dear to him is his own popularity among the masses, as is evident from his dealing with the issue of oil exploration. Sumer Singh's decision is warped and he lacks the prudent wisdom to realize the crucial significance of creative, inventive and vital action for a young democracy like India. Sumer Singh has to "tolerate" Sardar Sahib's advice, as he has been told to avoid "direct confrontation" with the old Minister.

For Sumer Singh democratic methods have no value, he is clearly dictatorial in his approach. He is not prepared to listen to Sardar Sahib or Raj Garg. "The Government, since the recent split in its own party, needed every vote it could get and the scene in the lobbies before a major debate seemed like the Stock Exchange on a market day" (p. 151). It was any body's guess how many would hold on to their principles in an action where the stakes were high and sometime dazzling." Sumer Singh first lures Raj Garg and then even threatens him. When he does not succeed, he manipulates the votes of other Independent M.P.s with Rs. thirty thousand each. (p. 191) The press, reporting Raj Garg's and Sardar Sahib's views, is for him an "interfering lot" which would have to be throttled. Sumer Singh's approach is representative of the government's stance, which is based on its need for instant success and popularity. For people like Sumer Singh the goal is not the challenge of development or poverty, it is only power. For him, "Policies, programmes, moved outside it. Those were the tools. Power was the goal within" (Shadow, p. 130). The past, Sumer Singh thinks, has outlived its utility and is a spent force. He thinks "there is to be a clean up, a break away". (p. 192) He wants to "throw away the sentimental, the weak, the worn-out liberalism of the past, to bury Gandhi and write a new page in Indian History". (Shadow, p. 186) The new generation of politicians like Sumer Singh want to do away with the whole Indian past leaving it "disremembered and ground to fine dust (p. 120). Publicly they have to accept old leaders as Sardar Sahib, and are unable to dispense with them for "no one could capture and hold the masses without it".

In direct contrast to Sumer Singh, is the old, ailing Petroleum Minister Sardar Sahib. Sardar Sahib projects the Gandhian values of dedication, moral courage, commitment and determination which Nayantara Sahgal wishes to uphold as the ideal values. He represents, in the novel, the older, dedicated self-abnegating and sacrificing
generation of politicians. All his life, he had worked zealously and sincerely for the
country (p.115). He had been "schooled mostly in hardships", and was one of "the
toughest of the freedom fighters", (p.117) The goal for him was "first the star of freedom
and then the great grinding challenge of developments." (Shadow, p.120). The goal,
Sardar Sahib believes, "was nothing less than the continuation of Indian history, the
soul's continued longing to see India fulfil herself" (Shadow, p.120). Sardar Sahib had
accepted the oil Portfolio as a challenge. And he did prove his mettle with a fury of
obstinacy and determination as he courageously fought "hostility" in parliament as well
as in Public. He has all the ingredients of a great devoted leader: massive common
sense and complete hold over his subject; planning and invincibility, devotion and a
crusader's zeal for action; prudence and determination.

However the elderly leader's "massive common sense" had warned him that "there
were political changes coming and he was stop gap" (p.120). He fears that country's
future is "endangered" with the new government's populist policies, whims and slogans.
He could not overlook the hard fact that Sumer Singh was the future. He wonders but
how had such a future arisen out of such a past? (Shadow, p.125). Lying close to death
on a hospital bed, the novelist presents him troubled in his soul:

A man of Sumer Singh's calibre in government was an indication of
how Sardar Sahib and his generation had failed. They built up no
trained dedicated cadre in the party to take over". (Shadow, p.126)
The realization that somehow people had not been prepared to guard their interests
disturbs Sardar Sahib:

A service was as successful as the men and women who had maintained
it, as good as the public it catered for. People would have to demand
high standards before there could be any (Shadow, p.126).
The novel reveals tragically how the time of the old, idealistically - inclined leaders like
Sardar Sahib was "up" (p.125) and the mantle of safeguarding the values they cherished
has been passed to younger men like Raj Garg.

Raj Garg, the chosen exponent of the novelist is an Independent member of
Parliament. He is a "man of dedication" with a zealous commitment to the interests and
welfare of the country. Raj felt "he was responsible for India. It was almost his personal
possession". (Shadow, p.15). He has a rational and intelligent grasp over the present
political situation. He perceives that "the world is at the threshold of immense change"
(p.43). He has the prudence to realize that to survive and progress, Indian have "got to
measure upto them [the changes], to be free-willed and creative, not the plaything of
He laments the typical Hindu apathy and stoic acceptance of injustice and exploitation. He realizes and accepts zealously the massive responsibility of the intellectuals in a democracy to safeguard its interests and freedom because:

If the inert mass of them did not wake up to the fact that they were their own masters, the brutal and single-minded among them would (Shadow, p.43).

He prudently asserts that instead of "Russia-lovers" and "America-lovers" among us, "what we need is a new breed of India-lovers". At the same time Raj has a "fanatic's devotion to Parliament" (Shadow, p.150). Realistically enough he is aware of the fragile and sensitive fabric of the nascent democracy in India. The parliament, he feels is: "a microcosm of all the growth and decay, the hope and despair of India - its brave modernity along with its gross old superstitions". (Shadow, p.150). Raj Garg belongs to that minority of courageous, and devoted intellectuals, whom Nayantara Sahgal exhorts to shoulder the massive responsibility of stemming the rot that has set in our political system.25

Raj Garg perceives the dangerous portents of the drift of the government toward populist policies. Raj Garg, just like Sardar Sahib, realizes the far-reaching fallout of the crucial policy decision in the field of oil exploration. He, too, like Sardar Sahib, prudently supports the wiser, though unpopular decision of inviting neutral help only. He boldly holds on to his principles in the "auction" organized by Sumer Singh "where the stakes were high and sometime dazzling" (Shadow, p.151). Raj is disgusted that "the world as he knew it was slipping away and some bigger outer future shaping itself remorselessly around them". (Shadow, p.154). However the Soviet offer wins the majority and Raj realizes that democracy too has its weak spots as it is "the victory of numbers - and like progress it does not always do the right thing". (Shadow, p.156).

Sahgal's sarcasm at the way the parliament functions becomes obvious when Sumer Singh is rewarded with a promotion to the rank of a cabinet Minister with the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. The Chaotic, inept system of our democratic government, its hypocrisy, futility and sheer incompetence is laid bare in the following passage where both the Houses of the Parliament assemble to transact their business:

This was a place of business enacted among men and women who were not at all Parliamentarians by conviction or temperament.

Sahgal employs pungent satire and sarcasm in describing the way Parliamentarians function. Though all done yet he is resolved to fight corruption and injustice as "his tradition" is "public service", and men like him were "born to lead and educate" (Shadow, p.236).
Ram Krishan, conscientious and bold editor, is another character who upholds the vision of values Nayantara Sahgal wishes to project as the way out. A zealous freedom fighter even after Independence he boldly attacks any development he finds portentous, such as the Partition, language based divisions. But in the changed political climate he too is "dejected" and "lack-luster" as he feels he is "soggy with repetition, moreover no one is listening to any of it". (Shadow, p.165). He also tries to analyse a problem pricking every Indian Intellectual as to why Gandhian influence dissipated so soon from India. "There we followed the man, not the idea. The idea had remained vague and sentimental. That's why it has not really made an impact with us" (Shadow, p.176). Though deeply disturbed by the grave and portentous direction Indian politics was taking yet Ram Krishan had ‘a mulish belief in the ordinary human beings sense of decency and justice". (Shadow, p.180). He exhorts the common people to have ‘faith in themselves," and wants religion to become the "source of strength and hope in the hut and factory". (Shadow, p.195). As in India no single belief has the answer, he feels, an amalgam of Christianity and Hinduism would be a powerful answer and a new "basis for action" and not merely a scripture and a ritual" (Shadow, p.196).

Even though using fictional setting and characters, Shadow recreates brilliantly the political milieu in the corridors of power after the assumption of the prime ministerial office by Indira Gandhi. The novel thus is a faithful political chronicle of the period. However the political analysis novel has not been well-received by some of the critics. Asha Kaushik, holds, "the novelist’s treatment of left-orientation in India’s domestic and foreign policy stands mis-represented". The novel exhibits undue apprehension of violation of the principles of non-alignment through Indo-Soviet collaboration. Irene Gilbert, while reviewing the novel, remarks that "Nayantara Sahgal writes from the fringes of Indian Politics", and that, totally oblivious of the changing international situation, the novel isolates a specific dimension of foreign policy and misrepresents a vital issue by over simplification and sentimentalism. As vindicated during subsequent decades, Indo-Soviet friendship and collaboration, far from hampering the pursuit of goals of non-alignment as a strategy of change in international arena to combat the relevant structure of dominance. Though the novelist might be held guilty for slightly exaggerating the dangers of left-orientation in Indians domestic and foreign policy, yet the cautious approach advocated by the novelist is commendable. Moreover the novel is still remarkable for the graphic chronicling of the political milieu, the perceptive analysis of the change in the tenor of the political leadership and the dismal aberrations of the political system.
Nayantara Sahgal's next novel A Situation in New Delhi stands out distinguished in its exposition of the political reality supplemented with a perceptive analysis of the Indian political scene - in all its sordid and unsavory details - of the immediate pre-emergency political scene. It captures the desperation and urgency of the explosive political situation in India in early 1970s. Not only does Sahgal truthfully depict the political situation, she also presents a perceptive analysis of the latest developments. Moreover, she tries to probe deeper into the malaise afflicting our national fabric offering a very perceptive analysis. Situation is highly commendable for its political contents and diagnosis.

In Situation, Nayantara Sahgal moves beyond the Indian liberal’s brooding mood over the vanishing Gandhian values from public life and comprehends the complexities of the political process in view of the upcoming political repression, preceding the emergency. In exploring the sources of the creeping politico cultural conformism and loyalism, the novelist examines the pertinent attitudinal variables of guilt and responsibility, ideology and action, commitment and neutrality, in private and public life. By choosing articulate personalities, academicians, educated politicians and aware businessmen, as the principal characters in the novel and making them 'act' with or besides their accepted political positions, Sahgal transcends the liberal dilemma (of ideology versus action) in a remarkable manner. That probably makes it her best political novel. In this novel she also offers a strategy to fight the fissiparous forces.

A Situation in New Delhi, is built around "the narrow rigid atmosphere about us", says its author, and the novel "reflected the mounting unease and, at times, the feeling of impending disaster. I had as I wrote them".\(^{30}\) It records Sahgal’s "mounting horror of the Gulag Archipelago growing invisibly about us".\(^{31}\) Even a cursory browsing through any account of the current history of Indian politics, by perceptive observers as Kuldip Nayar\(^{32}\) or Durga Das\(^{33}\) would vouchsafe the validity of the picture invoked by the novelist. The novel records: the ominous beginning of populist policies; the emergence of pseudo-radicalism; the crushing of individual liberties; the pervading chaos in the nation fabric, wide scale repression; growing violence and insecurity; throttling of the freedom of the Press and the government’s authoritarian and imprudent stance.

A Situation in New Delhi begins with the news of the PM Shivraj’s death and proceeds to deal with the political situation arising out of it. The character of Shivraj is meant to be based on the character of Jawahar Lal Nehru, the writer’s uncle. Shivraj, the deceased Prime Minister was deeply committed to the people and the environment around them, "the land its rivers and hills" (Situation, p.53). He had missionary's vision
and devotion for the country and her people. Shivraj was a crusader who fought zealously first for the freedom of the country and then for its progress. Shivraj, in the novel, represents the devoted and sincere band of Gandhian politicians who were guided by high principles and values such as dedication, honesty, compassion, determination, non-violence and justice for all. He had genuine affection for the Indian people, whom he preferred to call "multitudes" rather than "masses". The term "masses", he felt "lumps humanness into a thing like a mass of clay, for some one else's use" (Situation, p.51).

Shivraj had such divine zeal for the country, that Michael, a European reporter, was reminded of Moses speaking to his men from the hill-top. Shivraj had a mesmerising hold over Indian people because of his sincere and dedicated personality. His electrifying speeches reflected his awe-inspiring sincerity and devotion and held the listeners spell bound. Michal Clavert - a British journalist, family friend admirer and biographer of Shivraj - admired Shivraj as an "Asian who believed there was a middle road between capitalism and communism" (p.5), conveying "whole visions and possibilities and get people to work for them" (p.8). Usman eulogises Shivraj for his leadership qualities, his "gift of putting things in perspectives".

However, Shivraj is dead now, and the new government has taken over. "The Professors in the Cabinet have put everything Shivraj stood for" on his funeral pyre with his death (Situation, p.38). They have uprooted "the sense of values Shivraj had planted like roses with his two hands" (Situation, p.38). A disintegration of ideals and values has set in fast. The cabinet are hardly the men of Shivraj's calibre. They are pseudo-radicals, unscrupulous and authoritarian politicians like Sumer Singh in Shadow. The dead leader's sister, Devi has been included in the cabinet as Education Minister as a mark of respect to the dead leader. But she is given hardly any weight, not even in the matter of education policy. Devi along with her friend, Usman Ali, the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University, is aware that Shivraj's successors are destroying what he built. Devi argues that "Shivraj's successors, playing at revolution, have set the clock' back dangerously" (p.16). Michael, Shivraj's close friend, arrives in New Delhi to write a book on Shivraj and comes across a totally changed political climate.

In Situation Nayantara Sahgal depicts the stark political realities and subtle changes. Rather than removing the suffering of the people, the attempt of the government is directed towards covering it up. The cabinet, despite its professed radicalism, has atrophied into the establishment and has conveniently closed its door on progress of even on the real grave issues such as poverty, unemployment and educational reform. To lure the masses, slogan mongering is at a feverish pitch.
They were for the Poor and the Small against the Rich and the Big and as proud of it as if they had discovered social justice all by themselves. (*Situation*, p.129).

The people in power are mediocrities with populism as their creed. The Government's failure to mitigate the agony of the people incites young people like Rishad, Devi's son, to join the Nexalite movement. The government reaction to the Nexalite movement is typically repressive: it seeks to cow down dissent by brutal show of strength. It never initiates any move for peaceful talks with the Nexalite leaders. Neither does the government try to understand as to why intelligent rational and well educated young people take recourse to such terrible actions. It fails to see the root cause inciting the revolutionaries: the unmitigated suffering and poverty of the common people. The Nexalites are hounded like criminals by a brutal police force; freedom of all kinds is being curbed. "There is a general drift in the direction of more controls over newspapers, films, books and so on, more censorship..." (p.106).

The new governments imprudent and apathetic attitude to the country's future and progress is again evident in its rejection of Usman's blueprint for educational reforms, despite Devi's best efforts, as the criterion has come to be popularity and not progress. The new P.M. declares himself to be "the champion of the poor", but hardly does anything concrete for improving their lot. These leaders are out of immediate touch with those whom they profess to lead or work for: people are merely instruments of a process for them. The "new aristocracy of ministers", sits in a "cool capsuled cabinet room" away from the misery of the people, and believed that "one hypothesis, unshakeable, unquestionable could be true for all time" (p.16). They forget the plurality of the Indian society and the vital need to move forward carrying everyone together and Devi questions their parochial and imprudent vision.

Devi, Shivraj's widowed sister, in her awareness of the multiracial and poly-religious tradition of Indian history and in her advocacy of the humanitarian cause, is a continuation of what Shivraj stood for. Devi feels 'queerly isolated' amongst these men. She strongly feels that the political situation has subtly changed and has perhaps lost the sense of direction which was there in Shivraj's time. If on the one hand Devi senses the disapproval of her cabinet colleagues, on the other side she is also conscious of the distance between herself and her son Rishad, who, she feels, is the younger version of the 'professional evasion' she senses during cabinet meetings (p. 17). Devi realizes that the cabinet lacks individuality and reformatory zeal whereas Rishad is unable to co-relate his beliefs to his life. Though Devi herself does not have a solution, she believes in adapting according to the needs of the times. She still knows that never "could one hypothesis unshakable, unquestionable.... be true for all times" (p.16). She
lends whole-hearted support to Usman's manuscript and sincerely appreciates the crucial significance of the long awaited educational reforms. However despite her best efforts she fails to get the plan accepted by the Cabinet. But she also feels helpless in containing the senseless and aimless violence and terror let loose by a few students on the campus. Devi feels that 'all the sovereign forces that bring change and mellowness in the course of time have been cut off like that air-conditioner" (p.16) which does not work. Finally Devi is able to come out of her shell of helpless inactivity, as she resigns and joins Usman to herald a new future based on trust and faith and participation. She joins Usman in his constructive endeavors to stem the rot and resurrect the heritage of Shivraj. Shorn of her official position, she eradicates herself to the causes which were dear to Shivraj. She once again chooses the path of challenge and struggle, this time against those who are guilty of insincerity and selfishness in their recourse to parochial populist policies.

The novel also exposes the indifferent attitude of the Western countries to the nascent Asian democracy like India. Michael Clavert an English journalist sums up the Western reaction:

The experts who knew all about democracy ... had led the chorus prophesying chaos instead of supporting his Herculean labours. Nor had the other side given Shivraj his due. The communist Monolith, before it broke in two, had petted him with its dreary bagful of cliches ... As Asian who believed there was a middle road had evidently been an insult to both sides. (p.6)

Michael senses "a general drift in the direction of" more censorship (p.106). Yet the British High Commissioner Sir Humphry condones the vetting as "it is an Asian country.... And we can't apply our yardsticks here" (p.107). He still holds that the democratic values such as freedom of press are only "British connections rubbing off". Sir Humphry even supports the repressive measure of the government as "These people used a strong leader to achieve a "homogeneous look". (p.107). Michael, who understands the Indian spirit and culture corrects him that "homogeneity was never a value here Michael's arguments, however hardly have any effect on Sir Humphry.

The novel also portrays vividly and realistically the younger, post-freedom generation in India. The novel portrays this generation's perceptions through several specific instances: contentment in the affluence of Pinky; brutal rape of a young girl Madhu, on the University Campus; and the bored and violent students of the University; and the young Naxalite revolutionaries like Rishad the young son of Devi, and at the same time intelligent sincere and committed Swaranpriya. Sahgai recounts vividly and authentically the rowdyism in the University student body and its politicization.
Despite Usman's and Devi's strong intentions to punish the guilty students, the student manages to go scot-free due to the political patronage they wield. Usman warns Devi about "The dangers of boredom and how they were affecting the University. A contagious disease spreading its tentacles into the very vitals of the system." (78) Yet Usman understands them as he can't blame them "entirely". However, the government fails to understand the growing discontent among the educated, turmoil and disorder in the universities. The politics of suppression and despair overtakes purposive protest as the police swoops down on a student's meeting, beating up the students mercilessly. However, in the same student community there are sincere and committed student-like the one who meets Usman to apologize for the misbehaviour and violence though he was not among them - Usman is deeply touched by such "Signs of grace" (p.159). Finally when Usman resigns and launches the agitation it is the young students only who respond courageously and zealously.

In the rapidly deteriorating political situation, old strategies would not suffice. Rishad, Devi's nineteen year old son, in his fiery idealism provides the first way out of this impasse. Rishad joins the Nexalite movement which aims at arousing public conscience through the shock of violence. These young people are charmed by instant success violence brings them. Revolutionaries, Rishad explains:

Would be people who felt a recoil from the waste, and affluence the country could not afford, hatred at the contrasts, determination that these must end. Politicians, whatever their political colour, and whatever they piously said, got fat from office. They would never banish the contrasts, never in ten thousand years build an equal society. How could they, when they were products of the rot themselves, of caste, of vested interests, and stinking old ideas? It would take the young to build, and to do that they had to pledge themselves to sober, calculated destruction. (p.67)

Disgusted at the failure of the politicians to deliver the good the Nexalites banked upon the young and eventually the common masses to take up the crusade. With firm faith in the cult of violence, Rishad holds:

This cult of violence had to clean, cold and disciplined, unaided by motive, by drugs or mental aberration. This was violence of the sane with a passion for justice. To build a new world the old one had to be razed to the ground. The way to do it was through the systematic creation of panic. Panic to chaos to ruin. And out of ruin open revolt and power. Only them could the new social order arise Not Utopia. Just food in the stomach and a decent wage. Utopia for the poor and the downtrodden. An India Utopia. (p.58)
Rishad's commitment to violence raises the question of legitimacy of non-violent incremental changed context. Rishad's contention is that the non-violent freedom struggle has not yielded the desired results and changes. (p.125) For Rishad, socio-economic freedom is as important as political. Rishad and his group is deeply touched by the plight of the quarry workers: The huge population called underprivileged the weaker section 'lived from day to day' from hand to mouth. Rishad understands their problem:

The outskirts of Delhi or the fringe of society or the edge of history, it was all the same thing (p.97-98).

Rishad and his group devote themselves to arouse a sense of awareness in these exploited people. Rishad exhorts them to claim their rights of the limited hours of work and pay and to protest against victimization and physical exploitation.

The law provided the redress. How difficult just to teach them they were human. The law, of course, said they were, and all their rights were on the statue book. But they couldn't read and those in authority had not taken the trouble to see that the laws were observed and if they did, justice was slow and layers of sluggish procedure clogged each step of it. The law of land lay like disintegrated rubble in the quarry. (p.98)

Even Rishad has doubts regarding the revolutionary theory that "Revolution was made by circumstances not men". While working with the rural farmers he realizes that despite their harsh circumstances, farmers cannot be aroused, shackled as they are by their fatalistic attitude:

They (farmers) were just waiting rooted to their patches of soil, for the rain to come. Once it did they would not care a fig for anything else. To stir, to break and rebuild that mentality was beyond him and his group.

Sahgal builds up the portrayal of the Nexatile leader Naren subtly and indirectly, seen as he is through Rishad's eyes. Naren, emerges as an intelligent, aroused compassionate leader, with the best intentions of change but misguided in the choice of the means and tools of the revolution. Sahgal does present a sympathetic portrayal, while exposing simultaneously the sincerity and commitment to equality and justice and the counter productive use of violence, chaos or panic to achieve the end. Naren is not a sadistic saboteur and criminal as the police would like to have him branded. Naren is a product of the best school in India, an honors graduate from Harvard, a Ph.D. from Oxford. Despite his birth in the privileged life, he felt tremendously "involved with other men's misery" (p.104). Naren had voluntarily chosen the hard life, dedicated for the cause of the people not even remotely connected with his luxurious and privileged life. Rishad
is deeply influenced by "the tumultuous reality" (p.105) of the Naren's personality gifted with the "magic of communication" and leadership qualities Naren had to suffer a lot at the hands of Police : an intricate map of burns had been scorched on his back, the skin of his ankles had been shackled together to prevent his escape. Yet he had escaped from the police custody. And he had to live as hidden fugitive continue changing place. He is too ill festered with livid wounds, malaria and other diseases, to provide any guidance. Finally his life ebbs away, due to lack of proper medical treatment.

Despite the sincerity and the best intention for the change equality and justice the Nexalite revolutionaries are not able to achieve any concrete result. Nayantara Sahgal points out that the means chosen for the revolution and change - violence, chaos, panic and ruin - prove to be counter productive. The movement which had begun so promisingly with zealously committed workers like Rishad and leaders like Naren, collapses, proving the failure of violence as the means of change. Rishad analyses that "It had not been able to create a proper revolutionary center" (p.104). Its leaders like Naren had become hunted fugitive or too broken bodied to carry on. Its members were scattered and disorganised. Without proper planning and guidance, the violence deteriorates into aimless terror and Rishad realizes "there was nothing worse than aimless terror, aimlessly released" (p.126). Devi, Rishad's mother points out the lack of the human element in the left wing phenomenon, as it "had no understanding of the bigger slower human process a struggle that learns through its own experience" (p.90) though it "understood so clearly a fuzzy emotional egalitarianism backed by force, or threat of force", (p.90) Rishad, himself has his anagorisis through the agency Swaranpriya, a young college girl, he later falls in love demonstrate that "revolution begins with oneself is not a lesson given to others" (p.146). Rishad finally decides to have a clean break with the life he led and end this sterile intellectually participation (p.146). However, he dies heroically in a desperate bid to save a cinema hall from a bomb explosion.

The novel's portrayal of the Nexalite movement its ideas, ideology, Readers like Naren workers, like Rishad had a "definite authenticity". Usman Ali has pertinent views:

The state owns the big guns. Any confrontation with it, if it's to succeed must be non-violent. There never was another way besides it's the only way most people in this country understand and will give their allegiance to" (p. 116).

The novel thus "projects militant movement as antithetical to the basic value precises of Indias political culture". Finally, it is Usman, the V.C. of Delhi University, who projects the vision of values and ideals Nayantara Sahgal wishes to present as desirable to atom the rot that has set in. It is Usman who finally offers the strategy to fight the
fissiparous forces. Usman is an academician, fully aware of the country's past. He is infused with a crusaders zeal and courage for reforms and progress. Usman had fought along with Shivraj for the country's freedom. Usman now realizes that revolutions never end, they continue:

Revolution if they had any meaning meant putting oneself into the crucible of change revolutions went on. They did not get congealed in their tracks of follow beaten tracks. (Situation, p.30).

Realizing the dangerous and far reaching portents of the British education policy, Usman prepare a blue print for educational reform. He prudently outlines "a new pattern that stood education down in its own cultural milieu and envisaged experiments where it become a two way process between the teacher and the taught (Situation, p.114). Usman's manuscript for educational reform symbolizes the need for a new society which in essence, should be a continuation of the old. Usman's manuscript holds the plot together and the real crisis of the novel comes with the rejection of the manuscript by the cabinet.

Dejected by the opportunist apathetic and populist government, Usman resigns as V.C. He courageously dissociates himself from power and comes to the streets to lead a peaceful revolution against the government. He leads the younger lot to search a way out to stem the rot. The remedy is for the educated to come out and give the movement direction. "If the educated don't take to the streets now in proper way, the mob will" (p.116). He realizes the only way "of action could be non-violence", (p.116) for "it's the only way most people in this country understood and will give their allegiance to" (p.116). He knows that any ideology serving the interest of the Indian society must needs have "its roots in the village and its inspiration dean from the Indian heritage" (p.27). His idea of government with maximum power to the small community. (Situation, pp.83-84) represents a sincere attempt to restore the human factor lost in the maze of ideology to its proper eminence. Now he launches "a revolution from the ground in all its forms" (p.117). He has an abiding faith in touching "the individual readiness for hardship, the personal desire for sacrifice (Situation, p.158) in those who could be inspired. Usman becomes the new symbol of humanistic values transmitting them to future leading his gathering which takes the "odd shape" like the sign of the cross, a wobbly cross but a distinct one (p.103). Usman's appeal for the peaceful agitation evokes tremendous response from the young students who gather in very large number of hear his speech. Devi, too, joins Usman in his constructive endeavors to stem the rot and resurrect the heritage of Shivraj. They would work zealously to establish the nearest thing to a republic of virtue" (Situation, p.80), where words like 'love', honor, 'purity' the soul's surmise' could be used" (Situation, p.83). The novel ends with launching of
another struggle - this time to check the rot the murkiness of the socio-political situation. The novel thus conveys the gravity of the national crisis urging the intellectuals to act before it is too late. The mounting nihilism is counter-balanced by the reassuring, closing remark in the novel by Michael Clavert: "perhaps we've been in too much of a hurry to say that Shivraj is dead" (p.165).

The novel thus chronicles the phase of Indian history subsequent to the one portrayed in A Day in Shadow. The novel is a graphic presentation of the political climate and leadership of India in the mid seventies. All though there is characteristic liberal predilection in Nayantara Sahgal to avoid 'confrontation' as far as possible, she serves an exhortation for both dejected liberals and disillusioned radicals in India by urging them to protest and defy authority. The intensity of mixed perception of ballots, concern and non-compliance available in the novel, calls for "something stronger than the neutral work" 'situation', used in the title of the book. The situation interweave with experience, ultimately presents an artistic integration of "freedom justice and aesthetics having no frontiers. Asha Kaushik holds "Sahgal's A Situation in New Delhi is a valuable interpretation of the changing political ethos of the era".

In Rich Like Us, she vividly and poignantly delineates the socio-political scenario of India particularly during Emergency, the backdrop of which is Delhi. Among the Indian intellectuals who fought for the restoration of democracy and human rights in India, after the proclamation of Emergency, Nayantara Sahgal was perhaps one of the most vociferous and outstanding. She resigned from the executive committee of the Authors' Guild of India and Sahitya Academic Advisory Board, in protest, because her suggestion that the Board should pass a resolution to condemn censorship of press and imprisonment without trial, was not acceded to. Along with her resignation, she wrote a hard hitting letter:

We are not faced with a 'political' issues in a normal political situation. We are faced with a dictatorship which has ruthlessly demonstrated its policies and intentions.... The Emergency has made it clear, if any clarity were needed, what kind of government we are dealing with in its naked disregard of democratic functioning and human rights.... I hope this situation will change but no change is brought about by a servile population and certainly not by an educated elite that falls in like with every excess a dictatorship commits. I am very certain that I can be no party to any of this.

Stifled by the censorship and inability to fight against the suspension of civil liberties in India Ms. Sahgal went to U.S.A. and carried on her relentless campaign through the press and the public platform. She used every available opportunity university seminars, radio and T.V. interviews, journalism, to expose and express the agony and discontent
of the "Imprisoned India" Later she published a collection of selected anthology of her writings - outspoken, honest and prophetic. Sahgal's *Voice for Freedom* with its burning eloquence and vitriolic writing and honest criticism and painstaking expose of the authoritarian regime is a brilliant work of 'protest literature. The book is dedicated significantly:

to the many innocent Indians who suffered imprisonment, humiliation and anguish during the Emergency.  

In *Voice for Freedom*, Nayantara Sahgal chronicles the political situation, climate and trends of the years immediately preceding the Emergency. Ms. Sahgal records that the Congress split in 1969, was the first signal of the danger as it made "a carnival of principle, procedure and convention" and went on to make a carnival of politics and economics (p.11). By 1971 it was clear to Sahgal that "Indians were being pushed towards an authoritarian order" (p.14). One significant sign of this was the condition of the congress itself. It was being deprived of discussion and debate. The good leadership material with it was being held in check, and later dispensed with, while obliging mediocrity was brought forward and put in key positions. No propaganda effort was spared to set up the one-party one-leader idea. Eventually the Emergency sealed and sanctioned this development in a series of steps Mrs. Gandhi had the law changed to immunize himself - a leader above the law - against the Allahabad High Court Judgement. And finally, in 1976, came the amendment package in parliament that made the Prime Minister a virtual dictator. J.P., as Jaya Prakash Narayan, advocated non-violent civil disobedience on Gandhian lines to bring down the Government, and his non-party crusade succeeded in attracting wide support from all sections of the political spectrum. The Opposition leaders and their active supporters were arrested. Sanjay Gandhi was projected as the Crown Prince of the dynastic dictatorship.

Nayantara Sahgal had sensed the main current of the political climate since 1969, a "muddled radicalism masking the growth and entrenchment of personal rule, unaccountable, it seemed, to any forum", and the novels written during that era, reflected "the narrow, rigid atmosphere". Two novels, *The Day in Shadow* and *A Situation in New Delhi* "reflected the mounting unease and at times the feeling of impending disaster I had as I wrote them". Unfortunately Ms. Sahgal's premonition proved true and the Emergency came. She records:

Suddenly we inhabited a police state. Unknown tens of thousands were in jail and it was not fashionable to ask the reason why. Cliches flowed off the tongues of the only people permitted to speak - spokesmen of the Congress, the CPI, and those who supported the Emergency.
Rich Like Us is the graphic and authentic presentation of the socio-political environment and arrests of the nation at that crucial juncture.

In Rich Sahgal presents an all-encompassing view as she explores sensitively and depicts the grave repercussion of the Emergency on the political, the social, the bureaucratic, the economical as well as the human plane. Sahgal succeeds eminently in giving not only an authentic and vivid picture of the reality but also supplements her account with a perceptive analysis. The novel offers a multiple vision and point-of-view: it relates the story of an English woman Rose married to an already married Ram in the Pre-Independence India and the story of Sonali, a young I.A.S. officer in the independent India. The experiences of the two women are supplemented with the experience of Ram's son Dev, his wife Nishi and his father in law Kishori Lal, and those of Sonali's father, Keshav, an idealist bureaucrat. The narration moves to and fro between the past and the present. The story of the two families - the business class - family of Lalaji, his son Ram, and Grandson Dev along with the story of Sonali's family her father grandfather, present a panoramic view of checkered socio-political history of the nation from the colonial times to the Emergency declared by Mrs Indira Gandhi. The Panoramic view evokes a comprehensive view of the political history of the nation as well as serves to highlight the enormity of the heinous crime of the suspension of the civil liberties, earned after much struggle and sacrifice.

Sahgal evokes vividly and authentically the epoch-making Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhi (p.59). Sahgal captures the intense nationalistic fervor aroused by Gandhi as she gives a detailed and vivid description of the huge procession of the common man transformed into zealously aroused freedom fighters (p.58). Ram's father, old Lalaji, who had been flogged as a child for defying the British soldiers, too is deeply moved. Incensed by the British Government's action of arresting Gandhi, he declares that he is "through with British hypocrisy" (p.114). Rose, Lalaji's British daughter-in-law, sympathizes with the human urge for freedom and equality. She is accepted by Lalaji and others as one of them. Yet Lalaji's own son Ram takes it easy. He represents the upper starta of society who are as usual indifferent and insensitive to the chilling upheavals around, lost in his own, rich glamorous world of clubs, parties and get-togethers. At the same time the Indian society had young educated and intelligent men like Keshav, who were on the "Seesaw" with the family pressure to join the I.C.S. and the inherent sympathies for the freedom struggle (p.61). the divided conscience was driving him "crazy" (p.61), yet he has to become what his parents want him to be. Other significantly events such as the mutiny in the army, the lightening naval mutiny in Bombay (p.142), the fall of Singapore and the I.N.A. trials (pp.142-143) too are recorded.
Rose, a common English woman married to an Indian, Ram, is awestruck by the sheer intensity and number of the processionists. She understands the true nature of the Imperial class:

England hadn’t occupied territories to give English lessons. Empire was for profit. She loved to hear Keshav talk about British fair play and British justice, but it was the urges underneath that decided matters. (p.144)

She rationally analyses the political situation

...The British wouldn’t leave until they decided the game was up and it would never be up until they saw doom spelled out in a language they understood. When it was, nothing would induce them to stay. (p.143)

Rose’s ‘instinct’ proves to be true, as the country in granted freedom soon in 1947. The joy of the freedom is however tragically marred by the partition and the mass exodus, fratricide, and the barbaric butchery and rape and robbery on the two sides of the border (p.144). The pathetic sight of the ragged, bloodstained columns of refugees, make Rose’s "heart leap into her throat and stop there, squeezing it tight" (p.144). Shagal realistically records that many from the upper strata, such as Lalaji, of the society escaped the savagery and the losses as they had anticipated the trouble. Sahgal unsparingly criticizes the failure of the political leaders to protect the lives, honor and property of the millions of the innocent people (pp.145-146).

The 1950s are depicted as the golden years of Indian independence, an era of optimism and enlightened leadership, when the country seemed to carrying through the essential tasks of modernization and self-reliance (pp.148-149). For Keshav Rao, the I.C.S, the seesaw stops at Independence. He works harder then ever, but with energy of a whole not a divided man. Keshav’s daughter Sonali, too joins the Indian Administrative Service.

However, with 1970s, the situation starts changing. Sonali is disturbed as she realizes that "poverty had grown and multiplied" and the democracy was in "deep trouble" (p.150). Sonali and Keshav Rao sense the change in the political currents. Ravi, standing of a taxi’s bonnet delivers a speech, hardly appropriate for the civil servant of a democratic country:

After all... what the Government, the Cabinet, the Ministers, the states, the municipalities? They were to do Her [the P.M.] bidding. What was the country. It was she, who like the many armed goddess would be ever victorious against those who were plotting to dethrone her (p.152).
Sonali prophecies that an "alien note" has been struck. Keshav Rao, despondently warns:

This was a democracy only because we believed it was, and felt morally responsible about keeping it one. Two decades of parliamentary democracy would go up like a Dewali cracker if this nonsense were allowed to go on (p.152).

Sonali and her father apprehensively watch as the "populism bursts" (p.153) upon the nation. Sonali questions Ravi: “How can you be a socialist and believe in family rule?” (p. 155).

Sonali is willing to detach herself from her background and look at it critically - her mother's caste feelings, her colleagues' manipulation, all leave her cold. Sonali's mother and Ravi's mother hail the dynastic succession of the Nehru family as they are Kashmiri Pandits too, and hence the "all powerful bond of blood, the mystical kith-and-kinness that held us in thrall and would made us naturals, pushovers, for a dynastic succession" (p.154). They denigrate Shastri as a "shrimp of a Kayasth", ignoring his tremendous contribution towards the nation-building. Sonali goes to hear J.P. speak the night before he is arrested and the emergencies launched. J.P. raises the fundamental issues such as poverty, inequality and corruption. He evokes tremendous response, as a very big crowd gathers there voluntarily. However he is arrested, and Sonali analyses:

Teaching the virtuous life when virtue is in short supply is treason (p.156).

The day - 26th June, Emergency is declared, Keshav Rao is too stunned for words, as they feel helpless - "dwarfed and midgeted" (p.156). Keshav Rao thinks of "battles for freedom fought and won and all that sacrifice now come to this" (p.157). Struggle and sacrifices of the great leaders and the common men haunt his mind. He is appalled that "history would now be revised and rewritten. All dictatorships meddled with history" (p.157). The shock proves fatal as he dies soon after some days.

With the imposition of Emergency the government imposes complete censorship and suspends civil liberties. Despite of the news blackout, Sonali realizes that "the artificial silence" starts "exploding" as "the facts it is trying to conceal shriek out to be noticed" (p.). The news travel by grapevine reporting clearance of the slum dwellers to distant locations (p.23), hunger strikes and a break out of political prisoners from Tihar Jail (p.23), at random picking up and beating up of the common citizens by heavily armed police (p.23), the forced mass sterilizations and blinding of the criminals by police in Bhagalpur (p.30). Kishori Lal, Dev's father-in-law, a common man a plain shopkeeper with hardly any strong political affiliations, is humiliated, beaten and arrested on a very
flimsy ground (p.168). He is severely beaten up and branded "a saboteur part of a conspiracy to overthrow the government" (p.170). Sahgal gives an authentic and detailed description of the inhuman treatment meted out by a rude and authorization police to common man like Kishori Lal and the young student his cell-mate. Kishori Lal's daughter Nishi, approaches Ravi Kachru, who is close to the P.M., to secure her father's release. Armed with a letter from "higher ups", Nishi reaches the prison, only to find her father walking with a limp and in a mentally deranged condition. Kishori Lal refuses to move out of the jail until the young student too is released. Nishi feels "rick and faint at what they must have done to him to make him forget the most important thing in his life [his family and business] and leaving hies mind to wonder" (p.212). Deeply touched by the agony of the young student and the barbaric savagery of the authoritarian regime, Kishori Lal is transformed completely. He feels he was 'meant to be a teacher, to touch the minds and spirits of the young to pass something of himself along that they could carry with them all their days" (p.213). Sahgal's depiction is no exaggeration, as she writes: "Amnesty, International's account of it proved there was an everyman's library of torture, now classic, illustrated editions of it passed from country to country, ideology to ideology knowledge freely shared" (p.183).

Despite the professed radicalism, and the special programmes for the poor and the oppressed there are hair-raising incidents of collaboration of the landowners, the police and the local officials to perpetuate savage acts of violence and exploitation. Not far from Delhi landowners send for the police at the harvest time to make sure that the share-croppers don't get off with their legitimate share. The police arrives in full strength, plunders their stored grain, animals and sets their huts on fire if there is any resistance. The account of the gang rape of the wives of the sharecroppers is hair-raising (217). Later on the poor women are herded together and sold to the brick-kiln contractors into bonded labour. Next year the share-croppers join the movement launched by the downtrodden. The landlord reacts strongly and two of them are chosen as random examples for punishment. Their hands and legs are chopped off in the landlord's backyard and are dumped in a thicket. One of them dies the other one however survives and lands up in Delhi. This is the tragic tale of woe related by the spidery beggar to Rose and Sonali (pp.224-227). Sonali realizes "if ever there had been an emergency, it was this" (p.227). Rose adopts the beggar and feeds him regularly. However anybody else is hardly bothered about his presence. To Sonali such events "make peaceful change and progress" sound like macabre jokes (p.228). She tries to help the beggar as she manages to get artificial limbs for him and takes him under her wings.
Despite savage suppression of the civil liberties, there is hardly any protest, even the bureaucracy is terrorised into silence. Public acclaim and support of the Emergency is engineered, as delegations of traders, teachers, students, workers, writers, businessmen and trade unionist are ordered to appear at the P.M's residence to congratulate her on the emergency. Radio and Television are used blatantly to promote Madam and her son and to feed the official version of the changes. Huge posters and pampers hailing her leadership along with Her pictures in every shop and establishment are made to appear overnight. School children are made to sing songs to eulogize Emergency and the leaders in the public functions (p.42). Congregations mushroom to applaud the timely action of Madam, the Prime Minister. Nishi, Dev's wife, too forms a new Entrepreneur's wife's association to motivate "the wives to pool their energies and ideas to popularize the emergency more and more" (p.77). Even the intellectual elites of Delhi such as the professors, the Editors, the lawyers and the writers exalt the authoritarian dynastic succession (pp.82-84), without raising even a whimper of protest against the excesses being committed by the police. Rose's comment sums up their entire reality, she feels they are "like cherry stones on a plate, not like people" (p.86).

Under the Emergency, the racket of the greedy businessmen, corrupt politicians and the sycophant bureaucrats flourishes where as the honest and bureaucrats have suffer a lot. Neuman, a foreign collaborator, along with Dev, Ram's son, move a proposal for cold drink factory - Happyola. Sonali is unwilling to bend the rules to suit the politically influential businessmen, and hence has to be sent in political disgrace and transferred. The sycophant Ravi Kachru is brought in the very next day to do the needful. Sonali tries to understand the reason for "the punishment" meted out to her: "The logic of June 26th had simply caught up with me" (p.28). The Minister, who had been bribed by the company, happily lays the foundation stone of the factory. Even such an unessential item as the fizzy Happyola is declared "the augury of the country's bright future" (p.44) by the Minister. The speech delivered by the Minister on the occasion is a revealing comment on the true state of affairs (p.44).

Dev, Ram's son, is successful, and as a winner he is exempt from all criticism. There is no need to consider his bonafides as a man. In Sonali's opinion he's a dunce, but his unreliability and mediocrity are ignored as he proves to the very useful to Madam's son. He takes up the project of the car being manufactured supposedly by Madam's son. He is rewarded for his co-operation and is made the Chairman of the New Entrepreneurs. It is the strategic "Location" of a man which is valuable nothing less and nothing more. People had ceased to be individual or to have opinions; there were simply two categories, those in power and those out of it. Unabashedly Dev uses forged signature of his father to withdraw money from the bank. The ensuing altercation
leads to Ram's paralysis and Rose's efforts prove ineffective. Sonali pleads with Ravi to take up Rose's case. Dev, however proves to be too much influential politically and this time it is Ravi who is suffer political disgrace and victimization. Rose too has to suffer for her too outspoken comments exposing Dev's secret deals of the car parts and the bribes given to the Ministers. Dev gets her murdered just as she is preparing herself to fight for her rights. Dev, who has built up himself as a youth leader by organising a "youth camp" of the heavily armed loafers and ruffians, is rewarded with a cabinet-Ministership. Rose's murder goes unreported and is passed off as suicide. Rose's murder along with the beggar's fearsome tragedy leaves Sonali wondering:

When the saga of peaceful change I had been serving from being my desk had become a saga of another kind, with citizens broken on the wheel for remembering their rights. (p.227)

There was no logic in the happenings in the political world. The only logic that worked was one of power. Against it, heritage, human values, idealism and justice were all meaningless words. It is now that Ravi, whose intervention for Rose had led to his "fall", realizes the changed political situation:

Things have slipped out of control. There are no rules and regulations any more. I never realized it would come to this. (p.229)

Ravi shares with Sonali "the absurdity" of the situation. Sahgal depicts how politics for once rules all other spheres of life, ranging from the economic to the personal".

Sonali realizes, looking back into the past that India has been through a lot and has recovered from many a setbacks. Sonali, in the ends is optimistic that India will survive the onslaught of the repressive regime. Waiting optimistically she plans to keep herself busy with a research project regarding 17th century - the glorious era of India.

Another significant political theme which engages the attention of Nayatara Sahgal is the beurocracy vis-a-vis politicians. Bureaucracy is the cardinal institution which is responsible for implementing the government's policies and programmes. Though screened from the limelight, the influence of a nation's bureaucracy on its progress and strength is as crucial and vital as that of the politicians. Zealous, honest, efficient and responsible bureaucrats are an invaluable asset for a nation, yet at the same time corrupt and inefficient bureaucrats are a bane for the nation, who can jeopardies its progress and freedom. In a democracy, the effective and honest functioning of the bureaucracy depends crucially on a conducive political environment. Only a dedicated and co-operative effort of the politicians and the bureaucrats can tackle the seething complex of problems and grave issues that confront a new democracy like India with its vast territory, diversity and plurality of society.
The Indian experiment in democracy confronted an unfortunate development soon after the independence: the unholy nexus between avaricious and corrupt politicians and the sycophantic, irresponsible bureaucrats. Gradually a growing conflict emerged between the politicians and the bureaucrats on the side and the common man on the other side. So central is that conflict to the life of India that the phrase "Neta [Politician]; Babu [Bureaucrat] Raj" "has gained wide currency. After Independence the elite business class amassed huge wealth and over a period of time converted its economic power into political power by financing elections. Then the politicians in their turn bent the bureaucracy to their will. The sycophant bureaucrats readily oblige and the upright and sincere bureaucrats stand unprotected from the political pressure.

It is interesting to discover a very perceptive and authentic portrayal of this very significant facet of Indian democracy i.e. politicians vis-a-vis bureaucracy-in the works of a Nayantara Sahgal. She could speak authentically placed as she is at a vintage point in the corridors of power through her relationship to the Nehru family. She offers rich material to the political scientist and observers for studying the relative importance of the various organs and institution of the Indian Society. Though Nayantara Sahgal has been consistently and predominantly concerned with the role and functioning of the bureaucracy in India. Yet this dimension of her work has not yet been explored by the critics.

Sahgal gives an authentic and vivid account of the role and functioning of the bureaucracy in India. She daringly exposes the diverse dimensions of the rot that gradually set in the Indian bureaucracy. She depicts, analyses and comments on the consequential hazards and tensions faced by the honest and dedicated amongst the bureaucracy. Nayantara Sahgal novels. This Time of Morning, Storm in Chandigarh and Rich Like Us offer a realistic and penetrating study of bureaucracy in India, particularly vis-a-vis its political mentors. Another particularly remarkable feature of these novels is that each one presents an authentic account of the role and functioning of the bureaucracy in the particular period it is set in. And all her novels taken together can veritably be studied as a chronological account of the Indian bureaucratic life.

Nayantara Sahgal's This Time of Morning (1965) gives a graphic account of the different dimensions of the degeneration had set in the bureaucracy in the immediate post-Independence period in India. Unlike any other Indian-English novel, This Time of Morning, thus, draws our attention to the anachronisms of administering an independent polity through a colonial framework. The Indian Foreign service soon caught the infection of 'lording' and 'politicking'. The writer excels in exposing the atmosphere of greed, inefficiency and irresponsibility that has cropped up in the Indian
bureaucracy due to the unholy nexus between the corrupt and sycophant bureaucrats and corrupt and opportunist politicians. In this novel, Sahgal picks up the External Affairs Ministry and the Indian Foreign Service as the representative institutions for a penetrating study. Sahgal excels in exposing the politicians and bureaucracy like Hari Mohan, Somnath, Dhiraj and Sinha, who have amassed a large fortune by misusing their public positions. Rakesh, an upright and responsible bureaucrat criticizes the clouded atmosphere of greed, irresponsibility, inefficiency and intrigues for coveted posting. He satirically refers to the Ministry of External Affairs as "The Ministry of External Affairs" for:

> Things drift. Decisions pend. The Psychological moment comes and passes unnoticed. The riddle of who is appointed where and why becomes more and more unfathomable. (Morning, p.120)

Sahgal presents a subtly satirical portrayal of the avaricious and irresponsible bureaucrats such as Dhiraj Singh. His whole life is a series of advantageous manipulations, right from the army bread which finds place on his table, the whisky in his parties, the huge money in his bank and the coveted posting and appointments he seeks and gets. As the chief secretary in U.P. He had been involved in some financial scandal and later in Delhi, in an affair with the wife of the Turkish First Secretary. Being a man of low scruples and morals in neither case "the moral aspect of the issue troubled him, for he did not consider morality relevant to either. Both had been practical propositions that had come his way and he as glad he had availed himself of what they had to offer". (Morning, p.98)

Hardly ever bothered about his crucial responsibility, Dhiraj’s entire life and actions are geared only to meet his own selfish interests and needs. His bloated ego is hurt as he is posted to a relatively insignificant country as Burma. However, he does manage to get out of it by approaching Kalyan Singh, the Minister, who is only too willing to oblige in order to win supporters. A journalist Jeevan reports the whole episode in his paper. However, Jeevan too succumbs to the tempting offers made by Kalyan Sinha. In the dark atmosphere of the political and bureaucratic corruption, there is still some hope in the form of conscientious and responsible bureaucrats such as Rakesh. For Rakesh "the muddled yearning of his school days found as outlet in his career" and for him the civil service is not merely a career, rather it is the restoration of national opportunities (p.51). Uneffected by the petting bickering Rakesh has tremendous sense of duty and responsibility towards the nation. The novel also portrays the anglicized Indian Officers of the I.C.S. who had served the British Government prior to the Independence. Sir Arjun is a relic of the British Raj and for him politics had emanated form Whitehall. As, he could not turn to Whitehall now, he feels like a
In Morning, Nayantara Sahgal presents a comprehensive picture of the functioning of the bureaucracy in the newly independent India, capturing realistically the limited awareness of values and sycophantic bureaucrat in league with corrupt politicians as well as the few upright and dedicated bureaucrats.

In Storm, Nayantara Sahgal takes up an in-depth and detailed study of the Indian bureaucracy in a later period. Here she chooses an upright civil servant as the chief protagonist of the novel, and the focus is on the problems such men of integrity have to face. Vishal, a senior bureaucrat of the Indian Administrative Service, posted at Delhi. He is chosen by the old Home Minister as the Centre's emissary to Chandigarh, to tackle the explosive situation arising out of the creation of Haryana out of Punjab. Vishal is singled out by the conscientious and dedicated old Home Minister, for his remarkable capacity to counsel patience and the gift for tackling a problem at the human level. Vishal immerses himself in his job with such sincerity and dedication "not because it was your job and you were paid for it, but because it was yours, as everything you touched with tenderness became yours, even the maggots and sores and the skrunken dreams and anguished cries". (p.84)

Vishal has been deeply influenced by his mentor, Trivedi, an I.C.S. officer in British India. For him "the service had been principally, incredibly, a service". Trivedi was "British trained yet painfully involved with his own culture". (p.77) Vishal, however, perceives a gradual deterioration in the quality of men forming the superior most administrative service of the nation:

Delhi was the top drawer and once there, no official budged if he could remain, unless to become a State Governor or an Ambassador, or become the recipient of a generous international grant for work abroad... No one ever went back to the smaller canvas and comparative obscurity of State administration.

He feels "stale" in Delhi, because there is "nothing in his days routine that stretched his faculties or kindled a spark in him". He feels suffocated by "the small talk and small ideas of a confined society" (p.11) He does not want "to slip into the rut of seniority, promotion and spiritual vacuum" (p.12). He accepts the challenging post of the Centre's emissary to Chandigarh as "the much-needed shot of aspiration, to revive his crude being". (p.12) He even spurns a lucrative proposal of an American Scholarship. Appreciating the urgency of the taut situation he immediately rushes to Chandigarh. Though, in his mind he questions the rationality of this bifurcation, but is bound by his limits, as "it was the kind of question civil servants did not ask politicians". (p.12)
In Chandigarh, Vishal intelligently analyses the taut political situation and immediately grasps the true colours of the two politicians, Kalyan Singh and Harpal Singh, he has to deal with. Vishal intelligently discerns the change in the tone of the political life of the nation. Vishal finds himself amidst a political confrontation in Chandigarh where Gyan Singh by linking the issue of language to religion is trying to exploit religious sentiment for ensuring his own personal position. His instigation is a threat to the peace and normalcy of life but no one is willing to take a stand against it. Politics had virtually degenerated to a clash of personalities as Vishal tells Nikhil here are "no issues left, only squabbles" (p.18). Vishal confronts Gyan Singh to persuade him to withdraw the proposed strike. He exhorts Harpal Singh not to submit passively to Gyan Singh's threat, in an attempt to check the general malaise of paralysis. Vishal Dubey's advice does pay dividends for the very act of having made a stand restores Harpal's confidence and bestows a positive tone to the Government's functioning.

Sahgal reveals in a telling manner how the loss of a perceptive caring political head is irreparable for an upright Civil Servant for the former provides the very conditions in which the latter can function effectively. This is demonstrated by the relationship between the old Home Minister and Vishal in *Storm*. The old minister knows how the old values which Gandhi stood for are no longer in vogue for the Gandhian age has been left behind. Not only the dedicated politicians such as the Home Minister have disappeared from the scene, but even within the bureaucracy there are bitter polarizations, groupings and dictatorial tendencies. He feels

> There is a crying need in administration to give man a scope to exercise responsibility to get on with the job, even to make mistakes. (p.245)

Though Vishal's decision is supported by the old Home Minister, and is based on sound practical reasons of national interest, yet his actions are not appreciated by his Chief. Nayantara Sahgal finally reasserts the crucial significance of the bureaucracy's independence and efficiency:

> Upon them rested the onus of the transition from servitude to freedom, a mighty task by any standard. And today they were divided not on principle or convictions but by nauseating hypocrisies (p.247). Dejected by the nauseating atmosphere Vishal yearns for the dead old Minister's power of understanding and support. However, he has to carry on in "a bleak and wintry" (p.247) atmosphere now onwards.
In *Rich Like Us*, Nayantara Sahgal explores and mirrors and illuminatingly the consequential hazards, tensions and pressures that the bureaucracy felt in Indra, during the Emergency imposed on the country by the P.M. Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1975. The "bleak and wintry" atmosphere apprehended by Vishal in *Storm*, touches its nadir in the period evoked in *Rich Like Us*. The novel presents an authentic record of the absolute and suffocating tyrannical hold of the politicians over the bureaucracy. Sonali, one of the major characters of the novel, is a bureaucrat in the Indian Administrative Service. She has been deeply influenced by her father, who too is an honest, hardworking and conscientious bureaucrat, zealously devoted to the interests of the nation. He instills in Sonali and acute awareness of the "precious responsibility", of the bureaucracy of a newly Independent country, to create "a new tradition" and to prove "our own independent worth" (p.24).

For honest and efficient working of the bureaucracy, its independence is crucially indispensable. Political interference, can lead to grave consequence. The bureaucracy in the beginning maintained its independence and stayed "free of the political circus". But gradually a decay set in Sonali laments the unholy nexus between the bureaucrats and the politicians.

Where had the tradition we were trying to build gone wrong? The distinction between politics and the service had become so badly blurred over the last few years it had all but disappeared. The two sides were hopelessly mixed, with politicians meddling in administration, and favorites like Kachru, the prime example, playing politics as if his life dependent on it. His career certainly did. (p.26)

Kachru, Sonali's batchmate has no extraordinary qualities for such favour except that partly because he is a Kashmiri - of the same caste as the P.M. Ravi Kachru becomes "indispensable" for the P.M. because he is that "ineffable blend of mediocrity and respectful response embroidered with manners that counted with the political bosses" (p.24).

Sonali and her father have premonitions of trouble, when they watch Ravi doling out favours and loans to a gathering of taxi drivers and hailing the PM as the omnipotent, omnipresent undefeatable many armed goddess, Sonali and her father are shocked by the "alien note" struck by the sight of a civil servant performing such a "political hoop - la from the bonnet of a taxi". (p.151) Sonali's father warns of the grave danger inherent in the unholy nexus between the politicians and bureaucrats. Two decades of parliamentary democracy would go up like a Divali cracker if th's nonsense was allowed to go on". (p.152) But they feel helpless as
Who was going to disallow it when rallies to hail the Supreme began to be held by the Supreme herself at the round about outside her house. (p.152)

As the Emergency is declared, the bureaucracy does not even raise a whimper of protest. They pretend that the emergency declared for the personal reason of staying in power by the P.M., is a real emergency, even when they do know that this it is not so. Sonali accepts the feebleness of the Indian bureaucracy.

We know this was no emergency. We were all taking part in a thinly disguised masquerade preparing the stage for family rule. And we were involved in a conspiracy of silence... No one wanted trouble. So long as it didn't touch us, we played along, pretending the empress's new clothes were beautiful. To put it charitably we were up against a power we couldn't handle, individually or collectively. (p.25)

Sonali, traces this passivity and unresisting tolerance to the inertia bred by ancient religious stances: "We do not see what we do not want to, and when we cannot avoid a nasty sight it still can't do much to hurt us". And the civil service elites pretend as if all is well and survive. Sonali's father is terrible shocked. He is appalled by the tremendous waste, as he thinks of 'the battles for freedom fought and won and all that sacrifice now come to this'. (p.151)

Sonali pays the price for her honesty and conscientiousness. She rejects the "preposterous proposal" requiring the import of more or less an entire factory, for such an unessential commodity as a fizzy drink called Happyola. Sonali's rejection is based on the sound national policy of self-reliance and cautious approach towards the import of fancy and unessential products. However, Sonali is aware of the change in the atmosphere.

"The emergency had given all kinds of new twists and turns to policy and the world's largest democracy was looking like nothing so much as one of the two bit dictatorship we had loftily down upon.

However, the company bribes the Minister and not only manages to get the proposal passed but even gets Sonali punished. The very next morning she is replaced by Ravi Kachru. She is not merely transferred with out warning, but has been demoted, punished and humiliated. Sonali is punished because the bureaucrats are "not expected to reply" but are only "expected to obey" Just like "automatons" (p.27) A dazed Sonali realizes:

The logic of June 26th [The day the Emergency was imposed] had simply caught up with me. The same soundless midge that landed me in the ditch had carted the thousands off to jails, swept hundreds more out of sight to distant "colonies" to live, herded as many like animals to sterilization centers. (p.28)
The Minister lays the foundation stones of the Happyola factory with much fan and fare. The Minister describes the totally unnecessary fizzy drink as "the augury of the countries bright future". (p. ) the whole Happyola episode exposes the secret nexus between the corrupt politicians and bureaucrats, who care a fig for the real welfare and problems of the country and the tensions and obstacles and humiliations to be faced by the upright civil servants. The episode is a realistic and brilliant illustration of the Neta-Babu Raj.

Sonali, is terribly shocked and still more appalling images of torture and cruelty perpetrated by the police under the blanket protection of the emergency. Cross her mind. She is desolate and dazed.

The Emergency had finished my career, but suddenly I didn't want a career in the crumbling unprofessionalism that bowed and scraped to a bogus emergency. (p.31)

She does not wish to grovel and beg favours and be pardoned, instead she quits with her self respect in fact.

Perhaps as a measure, of poetic justice Nayantara Sahgal delineates the fate that awaits Ravi of perhaps she wishes to reveal how civil servants in an unholy alliance with politicians side a rigger which can only be a calumination experience. Ravi, also has his nemesis is later. On Sonali's request he intervenes against a forgery being committed by Dev, a person close to the Minister, to protect the financial rights of Rose, the helpless widow, the British Stepmother of Dev. However, his intervention for Rose proves to be "most unwise" and he falls from the favour of the political bosses. He is "no longer chief explainer of the emergency" and is soon to be "shunted out of Delhi". (p.221) It is now that he painfully realizes the torturous pressures of dictatorship. It is now that he realizes the tremendous loss suffered by the nation:

Things have shipped out of control. There are no rules and regulations any more. I never realized it would came to this. (p.229)

He is saddened and widened, but perhaps only temporarily. Sonali thinks that Ravi's Kashmiri mother would soon start a campaign to restore her son to royal favour and "he would probably let himself be restored" But for a moment at least, he shares with Sonali "the absurdity of it all" (p.231). Sonali meanwhile immerses herself in a research project on the Mougal history and all the while "future when Emergency would no longer be there.

Nayantara Sahgal mirrors and analyses with penetrating insight the Pre-Independence bureaucracy of British-India. She renders veritable and vivid portrayals of the British bureaucrats as well as the Indian bureaucrats serving the British
Government. We come across in *Plans for Departure* an in-depth study of a British bureaucrat with remarkably psychological consistency and detail. Henry, British District Magistrate, is posted at the calm and far-flung mountain district Himmapur. He is sent there to recover from the "chronic attacks of ruling-class conscience" (p.23). Henry, is a unique administrator, as he is a celebrated traitor to his own cause" (p.77). His sympathies are with the suppressed and exploited Indians and Britishers he feels are just "Looter" and nothing else. He is terribly upset by the execution of a young Indian Khudiram, he had to supervise. He later tells Anna:

> It was myself I didn't like the look of as i watched the boy strung up.  
> And I am not alone. There is another England one that doesn't preside over executions on soil where it has no right to be in the first place.

He, represents, those bureaucrats, who being sensitive and just loathed the injustice, cruelty depravity and exploitation perpetuated by the Britishers. Finally he quits Indian Civil Service and joins the allied Army to fight in the world war.

At the same time, many sensitive and compassionate among Indian bureaucrats in the British Government were bogged, down by the conflicting demands of their service and their sympathy for their nation. Trivedi in *Storm* and Sonali’s father in *Rich* are the prime examples. Trivedi is deeply involved with his own "culture" (p.77). He unsuccessfully tried to understand his role in a political system his soul didn’t accept. Sonali’s father too suffered from the similar pangs of guilt when he served in I.C.S. In the British India. He had remained on "the seesaw all his working life till Independence" (p.188). Independence resolved his conflict and he worked zealously and with earnest commitment for the progress of the nation. As a foil to Trivedi and Sonali’s father however, are Harish in *Happy* and Arjun Mitra in *Morning*.

Harish in *Happy* is an Indian bureaucrat of I.C.S. Who is thoroughly anglicized. He has an "unshakeable faith in the foreign label and his implicit belief in foreign advice and opinion (p.18). He is "one of the most successful creations of the British raj" (p.19). He is openly contemptuous of the Congress and its band of dedicated and patriotic workers. After independence to his great discomfort and dismay he finds that his chief is none other than a dhoti-wala Congressman.

Nayantara Sahgal, is eminently successful in providing a penetrating realistic and comprehensive study of bureaucrats in a recognisable socio historical milieu. She realistically and vividly depicts the gradual deterioration of the civil service. She analyses two chief reasons for this degeneration: the general erosion of values and sense of duty among the bureaucrats and the unwarranted political interference of the corrupt and dictatorial politicians. Nayantara Sahgal not only recreates perceptibly the
bureaucratic imbroglio but also analyses perceptibly its crucial implication and suggests valuable administrative reforms. An independent, honest and efficient bureaucracy she holds can form a formidable tool for progress and change.

In Sahgal’s opinion can offer a solution for resolving the political impasse. For her the acme of humanitarianism is Gandhism. She forcefully argues that Gandhism, reinterpreted and re-appraised in the modern context, is India’s only hope:

The survival of India’s people can matter only as long as her spirit survives - the spirit of Gandhi, and older than it is, the fathomless spiritual reservoir from which he drew his faith and inspiration. (Fear, p.6)

The Gandhian concept of freedom in all its humanitarian and egalitarian nuances gets faithfully represented in the thinking and aspirations of the positive heroes of Sahgal’s. As we have seen in each novel of Sahgal’s, characters cast in Gandhian mould project her vision: Sohan Bhai (Happy), Kailas (Morning), Ram Krishan (Shadow), Usman (Situation) and Bhaiji (Identity). All the positive protagonists vehemently espouse the cause of the individual. For Kailas Vrind in Morning "the only thing that does matter is the human being, his calibre, his … dedication" (p. 130). Acting as the author surrogate, he opines: "Government will being" when even those remotest from the centre of authority arouse concern and "are given a chance to live like human beings" (pp.42-43). Sohan Bhai (Happy), the mythical Shivraj (Situation), the visionary Prime Minister (Happy) Sardar Sahib (Shadow), Keshav, Kishori Lal (Rich), Home Minister (Storm) and Bhaiji (Identity) - all are deeply concerned about the place and role of the individual in the body politics. Usman (Situation) vehemently espouses Gandhian deals and ideas. His idea of government with maximum power to the small community" (pp.83-84), his awareness of non-violence being "the only way most people in his country understand" (p. 116), and his working for a revolution from the ground, a hunger and thirst for justice in all forms" (p. 117) represent a Gandhian endeavour to put politics on a saintly keel by restoring the human factor to its proper eminence in politics. These characters not merely expose the malaise afflicting the very core of the polity, but also initiate constructive action to stem it. They, thus represent the Gandhian mean of purposeful action coupled with proper means. Kailas in Morning is neither bogged down to passivity nor is he a reckless achiever like President and Prakash Shukla are others who work zealously yet cautiously bothered about the means. Harpal in Storm too is another zealous achiever who has worked with ‘fanatical’ devotion (p.30) for Congress Party, and crusader Like Raj, an Independent M.P. who feet’s "responsible" for India, keeps the Gandhian tradition alive as he fights single handedly against the "shadowy beginnings of a vast alliance". In Situation Usman’s blueprint for change and his
resignation his non-violent protest march to start a peaceful revolution, are other manifestation of such constructive action. In Rich Sonali decides to involve herself in the situation rather than withdrawing. In Identity, Bhaiji's Satyagraha and non-cooperation are avowedly Gandhian.

In her novels Sahgal explores another issue close to Gandhian's heart the elite-mass dynamics. All her positive protagonists are either well integrated with the masses already or they arrive at the stage of such integration in due course. The Narrator and Sohan Lal, Maya in Happy, take to politics as a mission, renounce luxurious lives to lead a life of dedication and service to the masses. Kuntiben, the staunch Gandhian Congress worker has no other identity and thoroughly devoted Sanad too discards his Western mode of life and strives towards greater involvement with the common people. In Morning Kailas Vrind, Abdul Rahman and Prakash Shukla are responsible and honest leaders, duly concerned about the people they represent. Sahgal also explores the aberrations in the healthy flow of elite-mass dynamics such as charisma. Kalyan Sinha (Morning) and Gyan Singh (Storm) are two very significant and pertinent studies in distorted elitemass dynamics. Kalyan possesses "fascination" or "charisma" "against all the rules" (p.62). He knows how to use people and their weaknesses for the fulfillment of his "hunger for identity" (p.132). Kalyan's eccentric obsession with success populist rhetoric, ruthless efficiency mesmerize people around him Gyan Singh with his unabashed rusticity, parochial populist policies exploit their helplessness, whether they are Partition scarred or tied down instinctively to their region, religion or language. Ironically such leaders as Kalyan and Gyan are able to overshadow, at least for sometime, men like Kailas and Harpal with secularism, humanism and impeccable Gandhian credentials. Eventually, however men like Kailas and Harpal triumph, vindicating their Gandhian ideals. In Situation Sahgal presents her vision of the elite-mass dynamics. Usman and Rishad are the two intellectuals from the elite class. Though physically insulated from the harsh realities yet they both feel deeply involved and concerned about the plight of the masses. They analyse the root cause of the malady afflicting the people. Rishad actively participates in the nexalite movement to ameliorate the lot of the poor. Usman leads the non-violent students agitation involving a large number of students. Thus they both reflect a deep emotional and intellectual involvement despite their elite class. In Rich Sahgal exposes the undeserving charisma around Indira Gandhi and her son, whipped up by the sycophants.

Significantly, Sahgal is not overwhelmed by Gandhi's charisma. As a matter of fact the novelist herself endeavours to divest Gandhi of his halo by bantering instantly Gandhi’s suggestion of brahamcharya. Sexual abstinence Kuntiben's professed abstinence to follow Gandhian dictates is ironically exposed an attempt to sublimate
her repressed desires. In Identity, the portrayal of Bhaiji is marked by a healthy skepticism and a humourous banter. Gandhi’s "puritanical twaddle" (p.72), his idea of sexual abstinence are gently mocked at by the commrades and Bhushan. In Shadow Ram Krishan meditates on the gradual dissipation of Gandhi’s influence and points out. "There we followed the man, not the idea. The idea has remained vague and sentimental that’s why it has not really made an impact with us" (Shadow, p.176). Sahgal believes that Gandhism is to be viewed as a vibrant belief rather than a laconic legend, which would necessarily need a constant reappraisal of the creed. Humanitarianism is the guiding principle of Sahgal’s vision. She believes that "a country battered into conformity or confined by ideological prejudices" can never have individuals living in it. 

There is a crying need for change. We are urgently in need for revolution, both social and economic. It is of terrible and crucial significance what kind of human material leads this revolution and in what manner. It becomes incumbent, upon the intellectuals to involve themselves with the people and see that the human essence is not abandoned. "To see that justice is done is not an optional task of the intellectual". Rather "It should be the essence of his functioning". Steward D. McBride in his interview with Nayantara Sahgal for the Christian Science Monitor reported how much the novelist felt "frustrated with the failure of India’s intelligentsia" to resist the Emergency repression. Guarding freedom is a common cause, for freedom is not a gift. It is "an achievement" and every generation has to do its bit to "continue and preserve the tradition of freedom".

A significant dimension of Sahgal’s novels is the characters based on real-life prototypes - particularly the famous political leaders such as Nehru, Patel, Gandhi.

She capture the essence of some real historical figures so authentically and in so large a measure that their fictional counterparts immediately reveal the originals.

Sohan Bhai, depicted in Happy, has been influenced not only by the Mahatma (pp.87-88), he is directly suggestive of Gandhi with his spinning, his broad humanitarianism his probing philosophizing and his crusading, zeal for wiping tears form other’s eyes. The unnamed P.M. in Morning and Shivraj, the P.M. in Situation both visionaries as well as tireless workers for their ideals, are clearly drawn from the figure of Jawahar Lal Nehru. Prakash Shukla in Morning with his anti-corruption zeal resembles Pheroz Gandhi. Kailas Vrind, the Chief Minister of U.P. in Morning, in his commitment to high ideals in politics, in his concern for human values, and in his scholarship reminds one of the novelist’s father Ranjit Sharan Pandit. Kalyan’s ego-mania, his preference for personal loyalty over ideology, his rhetorical propensity - in fact the totality of his public image immediately brings to mind Krishna Menon, active on the political scene in the late fifties and early sixties. Gyan Singh, the Chief
Minister of Punjab in Storm, with his earthiness, his zeal for action uninhibited by norms is suggestive of his real life counterpart around that period - Pratap Singh Kairon. Vishal (Storm) and Raj Garg (Shadow) seem fictional prototypes of E.N. Mangat Rai, an I.C.S. Officer at the Centre, who had felt on his pulse, as he himself explains in his memoir, Commitment Mystyle, the growing authoritarianism with in the haloed precincts of administration. Usman, the academician, bringing to politics a fresh whiff of idealism and personal involvement, resembles Jayaprakash Narayan, a staunch Gandhian and selfless sarvodaya worker. J.P. as he was popularly known, a veteran of the nationalist movement whom many regarded as "the moral heir to Mahatma Gandhi J.P advocated non-violence civil disobedience on Gandhian lines to bring down the Indira Gandhi government. The movement which began as a student movement just as depicted in Situation, succeeded in attracting wide support from all sections of the political to spectrum.

Rich like Us, is embarrassingly abundant in such parallels. The madam in the novel, who has imposed the Emergency is Mrs Indira Gandhi and the soft is Sanjay Gandhi. The novel depicts authentically many controversial events and burning issue raked up by the authoritarian regime particularly mentionable are the Maruti controversy, the family planning drives, the fund-collection by the Congress-I workers and leader, the emergence of the Youth-Congress I, government engineered rallies and conferences to hail the Emergency. However, the novel "goes beyond this to include a number of things attributed in popular imagination to the duo-nepotism, attempts to foist family rule, PM's designs to make herself President and to bring her son to power by the back door". J.P's arrest for his anti-government activities, his incarceration under Emergency-provisions, his deteriorating health-all historically verifiable facts are depicted in the novel. The novel also records the apprehension that the authorities would not let him alive - again reflection of a widespread fear. In Plans For Departure, sir Nitin Basu's character is clearly - modelled on the Indian scientist Jagdish Chander Bose who worked on the similar project of research - sensitivity of the plants and was knighted by the British government. In Mistaken Identity, her latest novel Bhaiji's character, certainly is fashioned after Gandhiji. Bhaiji's spinning, firm faith in non-violence, Brahmcharya, prohibition, fast and his frail old body, resembles Gandhi.

Nayantara Sahgal, played down some of the parallels suggested her, laying emphasis on "the fictional roles these characters play" in view of the thematic totality of the work they figure in. It would certainly be hazardous to overemphasize such resemblances and thereby oversimplify matters. It is indisputable that the above mentioned characters do reflects some traits, mannerism and ideas of some famous personalities. However, significantly such characters do merge themselves into characters
do merge themselves into the narrative and represent some one easily comprehensible ‘approach’ or another with a clear preference for definite political stands which condition their action. In all her novels Nayantara Sahgal uses political chronicling for a perceptive analysis of the political process.

Another significant dimension of Sahgal’s novels is the anticipatory nature of her perceptive political analysis. This aspect of her novels has been well-appreciated by the critics. G.P. Sharma comments “It is a tribute to her as a political novelist that she could sense and show the danger in the new trend . . . years before the country had actually experienced the culmination of such a trend”.56 “Fiction often foreshadows Fact”,57 Nayantara Sahgal agrees. She is herself aware of the anticipatory nature of her perceptive political analysis in her novels:

Storm based on the second division of the Punjab and the creation of Haryana State, with both... demanding Chandigarh as the capital was written a year or more before this event came to pass.58

The Day in Shadow had as an accompanying background to Simrit’s 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. The "situation" creeping up on us in A Situation in New Delhi - a book I had completed writing in January 1975 - was upon us in June, and I myself was hung with it.59

Storm anticipates the "manoeuvres outside political channels and conventions, outside the party and outside the cabinet”,60 "the street sallies and demonstrations efficiently organized . . . and the language of incitement and incitement . . . used to stir up the people"61 - all characteristic of the Indian political scene after the Congress split in 1969. Storm also foreshadows the "arresting [of] the natural development of post-Nehru leadership within congress”62, so that a nation accustomed to Nehru’s heart searching and eloquence, a party once led by towering intellectuals should now be at the mercy of what Sahgal calls "a handful of minibrains with three-and-a-half catch phrases between them in place of vocabulary".63

In her novels, Nayantara Sahgal offers a direct treatment of political process, inclusive of political antecedents and traditions, institutions, practices and formation of change. Her novels incisively chronicle a long period of recent Indians history in all its completeness and complexity. At the same time she also analyses the political culture, the means and values that are salient for political action. She goes beyond mere delineation and analysis to pinpoint dangerous trends and their likely fall out.
Humancitarianism, she holds, can be an effective solution, if sincerely adhered to. Intellectuals, she feels, must shoulder their responsibility and must resist repression and safeguard the freedom and justice and champion the issue of human rights.

Notes and References

8. Ivring Howe, in his very significant book Politics and the Novel (1957) clears off many doubts and installs the political novel on the centre stage of literature. After pointing out the barren limitations that a rigid and mechanical definition of the subject would inevitably impose on any consequent discussion, he went on to open up the area of inquiry radically by stating: "By a political novel I mean a novel in which political ideas play a dominant role or in which a political milieu is the dominant setting ... Perhaps it would be better to say: a novel in which we take to be dominant political ideas or the political milieu, a novel which permits this assumption without thereby suffering, with the possibility of some analytical profits". (Emphasis in the original). Howe further explains, the kind of book he calls political novel is: "the kind in which the Idea of society as distinct from the mere unquestioned workings of society has penetrated the consciousness of the characters in all of its profoundly problematic aspects, so that there is to be observed in their behaviour, and they are themselves often aware of some coherent political loyalty or ideological identification". Howe's idea of the political novel is simply one in which "the relation between politics and literature" merits consideration.


12. Michael Wilding, Political Fictions (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980). He explains "Political fictions can take many forms what we can call a political novel might also be called a novel of society or a novel of colonialism, an historical romance, a utopian fantasy or a fable. Political fiction is not something to be narrowly define. Categories overlap" (p.1). George Eliot and Disraeli, Stendhal and Dostoevsky developed political fictions from the major realistic strand of the nineteenth century. But as tradition realistic modes came to be less appropriate for political perceptions, novelists concerned with the political turned back to the fable and the utopian fantasy. And an equally important non-naturalistic, tradition of the fable, the imaginary voyage and utopian narrative leads through Swift to William Morris, Jack London, H.G. Wells, Eugene Zamyatin, Adous Huxley and Orwell.

13. Sahgal's first novel Happy has been ignored by most of her critics as a weak political novel.


19. Ibid.


27. Mark Tully, Raj to Rajiv, op.cit. pp 118-120.
31. Ibid.
33. See Durga Das, India From Curzon to Nehru and After. op.cit. pp.125-130.
34. Asha Kaushik, op.cit. p.132.
36. Ibid. p.4.
41. See C.P. Bhambhri, Bureaucracy and Politics in India (Delhi: Vikas Publication, 1971).


53. Ibid. p.188-92


57. Sahgal *Voice for Freedom* p.100.


60. Ibid. p.57.

61. Ibid. p.57.


63. Ibid. p.100.