Nayantara Sahgal's genuine concern for human values leads her to portray individual caught not merely in the welter of politico-historical forces but also in the passions, emotions and aspirations closer to heart. In all her novels she skillfully juxtaposes two worlds: the personal world of man woman relationship and the impersonal world of politics. Her novels reflect, her strong urge to explore and reveal the essential aspects of the political as well as social reality. She critically examines the prevailing notions of social and cultural evolution and their intimate co-relation with the personal life of the individual. She excels in delineating political, psychological and personal turmoils and studies them with keen perception, rare sensitivity and deep insight.

Nayantara Sahgal explores the theme of man-woman relationship from various angels and dimensions, in realistic terms in her novels. Displaying an almost uncanny grasp of human relations, she consistently explores the human relationship in the context of the rapidly changing socio-political milieu. Her particular strength lies in the probing analysis and sensitive portrayal of the subtle nuances of the complex psychology of the man-woman relationship. Her novels can be viewed as significant contributions, exploring the various dimensions of confrontation, tension and conflict generated by changing social conditions and perceptions. Her consistent concern with the theme of man-woman relationship has been duly noticed in the critical circle. T.K. Thomas, Shyam Asnani, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Jasbir Jain and K. Meera Bai have commended Sahgal's treatment of the theme.

Man-woman relationship in India has been for centuries governed by rigid orthodox order that clearly demarcated a superior and all powerful role to man and an inferior and depreciated one for the woman. Social convention and opinion, religious orthodoxy and economic dependence, had led to subjugation and exploitation of women by men. The reality of the situation is grim: "men treat women as possession who belong to them by contract or by blood. For men their role was sexual and their job procreation. They were dependents, not individuals." Even in ancient India, women's lot was no better and they were generally assigned, barring a few honourable exceptions, secondary roles in a male-dominated society by religious injunctions and social conventions. The
Indian epics such as Ramayan and Mahabharata present and set a very defective and discriminatory image of manhood and womanhood. As a result of such bequeathing of "sanskaras", women's suffering and self-effacement are taken for granted. Such a dubious heritage or "sanskas" have adversely affected the attitude of even the educated class, what to talk of the illiterate masses. Other prevailing social customs and conditions such as dowry, the religious rituals, economic dependence, inferior social status endorse such discrimination directly or indirectly.

It is with a rare sensitivity and concern that litterateurs have come to the analysis of the social chores inflicting man-woman relationship. Novels in different Indian languages have examined the anomalous role assigned to women in the otherwise progressive Indian society, sought to be modelled along modern, egalitarian lines. Indian English novelist share this concern and have repeatedly taken up the theme of man-woman relationship for an intense and indepth portrayal. R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, and Anita Desai have explored the theme from various angels and dimensions.

R.K. Narayan's women characters are seen through a fundamentally chivalrous and deferential point of view. The centre of life for Narayan is domestic life and romantic or passionate love as no place in it. R.K. Narayan portrays the romantic recalcitrance of adolescence in The Bachelor of Arts (1937). In a gently, uncastigating accent, he traces the traumas of domestic disaffection in The Park Room (1938). He reports the melancholy disruption of married life as well as the rapture of spiritual communion in The English Teacher (1945). His first four novels Swami and Friends (1935), The Bachelor of Arts, The Dark Room and The English Teacher, project an axiomatic world of domestic withdrawal and return. Swami (Swami), Chandran (The Bachelor of Arts), Savitri (The Dark Room) and Krishan (The English Teacher) all go through the mild shock of truancy, rebelliousness and separation and them return to the known world of habit and custom, loyalty and assurance, solace and harmony represented by home and family. Even Savitri's tenuous individualism in The Dark Room is but a flash in the domestic pan. Although she revolts against the Doll's House of conventional Indian womanhood by retreating into the logistics of her tradition bound society. The complex relationship of Rose - and Raju in Guide (1958) is portrayed with all its complexity and sensuousness. Rose stands out in R.K. Narayan's entire fiction as a fully drawn individual. In the attitude towards women, Narayan is characteristically Indian as he upholds the irrefutable value of woman's fidelity to hearth and husband.
Raja Rao, strikes an altogether different note in *The Serpent and The Rope* (1960), as he contrasts oriental and occidental world views in respect of basic issues such as love, marriage and family. The Themes of true love and marriage leads "to the larger theme of the quest for self knowledge suggested in the title". He explores the very complex and intimate relationship of Ramaswamy, a young Hindu, his French wife Madeleine and his Indian lover Savitri. Raja Rao explores the metaphysical and philosophical dimensions of these relationships. Realizing the gulf between their conceptions and ideas, Madeleine withdraws not only from Ramaswamy but also from the world and he realizes that his love for Savitri, far from being of the kind that would find fulfillment in physical union, is actually an instrument of achieving the higher love, the ultimate union of the soul with God. Savitri's role in the novel corresponds with that of her mythical name-sake as she brings enlightenment to Ramaswamy and save him from dying into a purely worldly life. Their relationship is associated with the hoary names of Savitri and Satyawan, as also of Iseult and Tristan and of Radha and Krishna. The checkered history of Rama - Madeleine - Savitri all its' emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual facts is Raja Rao's unique contribution to the study of complex labyrinth of man-woman relationship.

For Mulk Raj Anand marriage is a linear extension of the social structure and its contradictions. Anand, the champion of the out castes, pictures in his novels the predicament of woman too, for she is another victim of the rigid social order. He is quite impartial in his treatment of this theme and he presents both viragos and devoted wives, docile as well as revolutionary women. He "brings out well how the strains of the new situation modify, wrap of transmute into yet finer forms the traditional responses of the women". The widowed Maya in *The Village* (1939) breaks through the shackles of vicious society and joins her lover Lal Singh. Though Maya's turning into a revolutionary in *The Sword and Sickle* (1942) 'in a flickering of an eyelid' to assist her husband is not convincing enough, we see in her character women's change in role in the modern world. Janki in *The Big Heart* (1945) dares to live with Ananta though their relationship has no social sanction. However modern and revolutionary Maya and Janki may be, their role is only subsidiary because they try to propagate the feminine ideal of their lovers by identifying themselves with it. *The Old Woman and The Cow* (1960) is the only novel in which Anand spins the plot around a woman character.

*The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960) by Anand is one of the important Indian-English novel focusing on man-woman relationship in rural milieu. Gauri, a peasant woman is the central character, who is meek and suffering, gentle and uncomplaining country woman offering a close parallel to Sita in her mute acquiescence.
After her marriage with Panchi, a peasant boy, Gauri adjusts patiently to a life of unremitting hardships, squalor, pain, and even insults thrust on her by her mother-in-law and her husband. Wrongly accused of impurity and adultery she is driven out by her husband. Extreme poverty forces her mother to 'choose' between Gauri and her cow and she chooses the cow, selling Gauri to a lecherous old Seth. All through this trial, Gauri emerges as a traditional Hindu wife - full of sacrifice and forgiveness. She runs off from Seth and is employed by a benevolent man Col Mahindra as a nurse. Col Mahindra's association brings about a metamorphosis in her. From the gentle, meek and docile "cow's acquiescent visage" she is transformed into a self-willed woman with an individuality of her own. Col Mahindra helps her to get back to her husband, but Panchi is a typically chauvinist male. Instigated by village gossip Panchi compels her to prove her chastity. Gauri, however, refuses to surrender to further humiliation and oppression and decides to leave Panchi. Anand, brilliantly captures the momentous decision:

for a brief moment the thought that the earth must open up to rescue her as it had opened up to receive Sita, came as an echo from the memory of her race. But the ground was hard and solid under her feet, and showed no signs of opening up to prove her innocence. She waved her head to forget Sita, and thought of the road to the town.

(p.284)

The Sita Myth is introduced only to be exploded at the climactic point. He re-creates the Indian classical myth of the modern context to suit his purpose. Anand intends to show through the transformation of Gauri, how man must depend on himself rather than on God or supernatural powers to shape his destiny. Her relationship with Col Mahindra exposes her to modern urban world and opens up for her new and bright vistas of hope and liberation. That is why she defies her husband, her family, disassociates herself from it completely and takes a crucial decision of living her new life on an altogether new basis.

Anita Desai, is another major Indian novelist preoccupied consistently with the portrayal of man-woman relationship particularly from a feminine point of view. Through her detailed and in depth portrayal of incompatible couples, she projects the existential predicament of woman. Anita Desai chooses to focus on the exploration and portrayal of the inner psychological reality. She concentrates purely on the incompatibility of marriages and inharmonious man-woman relationship, probing the inner psyche. Her very first novel *Cry the Peacock* (1963), best exemplifies this. It portrays the strained marital relationship of a thoroughly incompatible couple - a hypersensitive, emotional romantic and instinctive wife and an unromantic, insensitive,
rational practical and extremely busy husband. To complicate matters further is Maya's father fixation. The matrimonial bonds that bind the two are very fragile and tenuous, neither true nor lasting "but broken repeatedly and repeatedly the pieces were picked up and put together again" (p.40). It is a communion that she seeks - the true marriage in which body, mind and soul unite - the sort which the peacock seeks. She has a scale of values and expectations far beyond Gautam's comprehension. Alienation and frustration and loneliness drive Maya to the verge of insanity and finally to Gautam's murder and her own suicide. Through her tragic end the novelist stresses the great yearning of the woman to be understood by her male partner. Desai's later novels too explore exhaustively the man-woman relationship and depict the strain and pain of the mismatched couples.

Whereas R.K. Narayan explores the ethical and attitudinal dimensions of exploitation of women, Mulki Raj Anand and Nayantara Sahgal probe the economic, legal and institutional ramifications of the problem. Unlike Raja Rao, who idealizes womanhood in spiritual, metaphysical sense, all these four novelist portray women as role-performers: aspiring, suffering, reconciling and protesting as wives, mothers, sisters and mistresses. When role expectation and role-performance come to be at cross purposes, emotional isolation, crisis of values and clash of tradition with modernity threatens to ruin the family world of 'order' 'discipline', and 'harmony'. The novelists, however do not accept ignorance as bliss. The simmering discontent the awakening consciousness and purposive determination are depicted favourably. In the novelist's perception this might prove to be an antidote to the emerging negative tendencies of apathy and alienation.

Despite reservations on its modus operandi, the Indian-English novelists, by and large, accept the sanctity of marriage as a social institution. Mulki Raj Anand, B.K. Narayan, and Nayantara Sahgal, are all critical of the oppressive marriage. Where as Anand and Sahgal are not hesitant in suggesting separation, in cases of discord, Narayan is still convinced of the efficacy of moral approach based on faith in ethical discipline and cultural resilience. The ideal image of woman for Bhattacharya and Narayan remains one of symphony, goodness and cooperation, despite the undercurrent of ever lurking dissonance and humiliation. A sort of complacency and hesitation to go for unpleasant alternatives is visible in Narayan. Anand and Sahgal, on the contrary, are vociferous in their condemnation of injustice. Savitri (in R.K. Narayan's The Dark Room) reconciles herself to her fate and chooses to stay at home and suffer so as to preserve harmony and familial happiness. However Gauri (in Anand's The Old Woman And The Cow) and Rashmi (in Sahgal's Morning), Saroj (in Sahgal's Storm) Simrit (in Sahgal's Shadow) boldly step out of the suffocating and tortuous relationships. Shyam
Asnani heralds, Anand, Sahgal and Anita Desai as the exponents of "New morality." Whereas Anand explores the rural setting reeling under superstition, irrationalism, ignorance and male chauvinism, graphically indicating the helplessness of uneducated or semi-educated women, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai portray the man-woman relationships in the elite upper urban class. Sahgal's women struggle to change the existing world order and usher in a new order where there is no place for hypocrisy, pretence and dual morality. Anita Desai's women either succumb or barely survive the existential problems within the family fold whereas Nayantara Sahgal's women come out of the bond if need be, to live as free individuals. The theme of husband-wife alienation and marital disharmony "though not a new theme gains depth and meaning" particularly in the novels of Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal.

Man-woman relationship, Nayantara Sahgal, visualizes should be based on mutual respect, consideration and deep involvement. Honest communication, she insists, should be assimilated too in a mature approach to marriage. At the same time, she lays special emphasis on the need to nurture it with love and care, frank candor and understanding. The man-woman relationship, and more particularly marriage, has been subjected to tremendous social-economic changes and conflicts. Partly the break up of the joint family system itself is responsible for the increase in friction between husband and wife. Partly social and religious conventions have not kept pace with the changing social expectations. Moreover, as women have been stirred into a sharp awakening and awareness of their rights, and their strong yearning for freedom disturbs the age-old power relationship based on male-dominance. Nayantara Sahgal confronts squarely the strain, conflicts and clashes caused by the changing order, rather than falling for metaphysical idealistic or complacent alternatives. As an analyst of contemporary society, Sahgal depicts sensitively the subtle nuances of the man-woman relationship usually capturing vividly the transformation of the alienated and sensitive existences on the periphery into itinerant protesters.

Despite vociferously attacking the exploitation of women in marriage, Sahgal does not imply that it has failed as a social institution or that it has outlived its utility. Rashmi in Sahgal's This Time of Morning conveys Sahgal's viewpoint, as she says:

"Since marriage can be so unhappy. I suppose it can be happy, too, with the right ingredients" (p.41)

The "right ingredients" for a happy marriage are mutual respect, communication, honesty, caring attitude and respect for each other. Sahgal's women like Saroj and Simrit do walk out of marriage, but they do value and seek wholeness and complete involvement in relationship. Enlightened and compassionate men like Vishal, Raj and Nicholas can
be caring, understanding and base their relationship on honesty and mutual respect. Sahgal emphasises repeatedly the need for reciprocal relationships, involving men too for an absorbing, fuller and lasting relationship. Nayantara's viewpoint appears to be a desire to place marriage in the proper social and emotional perspective. Man-woman relationship, whether within or outside marriage, needs to be a liberated from conventional approaches in order to become a satisfying and fulfilling one. Sahgal's "new marital morality" as revealed in her works is based on honesty, mutual trust, consideration, understanding and freedom. She assails selfishness, pretence, self-centredness which result in schism and subsequently in marital breakdown.

Appreciating "the dispassionate honesty of the novelist in treating the discordant relationships fictionally" Sahgal emerges, as Shyam Asnani puts it as, "a trenchant defender of human values".

Nayantara Sahgal zealously espouses the cause of women emancipation and self-realization. Her concept of a free woman transcends the limits of economic or social freedom and becomes a mental or emotional attitude. Modern and liberal in outlook, Sahgal believes in "new humanism" and "new morality", according to which woman is not be taken as a "sex object and glamour girl, fed on fake dreams of perpetual youth willed into a passive role that requires no individual identity", but as man's equal and honoured partner. In all her novels the women try to break out of the "shell" of oppression.

Sahgal's women seek to establish a new order with changed standards where women can be their true selves, where there is no need for hypocrisy and where character is judged by the purity of heart and not chastity of body! The relationship not based on companionship, communication and equality generates much misery and inevitable alienation. A perpetual quest for meaning and value of life, an attempt to grasp the incomprehensible and external existential struggle of the individual who refuses to float along the current form the core of her novels. Her character are distinguished by the qualities of introspection, introversion and a refusal to surrender their individual selves.

The emerging picture is that of the battered and bruised individuals writhing in pain and anguish yet not surrendering their self to it. About her women characters, Nayantara Sahgal herself comments:

I try to create virtuous women - the modern Sita, if you like. My women are strivers and aspirers, compassionate world. Their virtue is a quality of heart and mind and spirit, a kind of untouched innocence and integrity. I think there is this quality in the Indian woman.
The central character in most of Sahgal’s novel is an intelligent woman of keen awareness and sensitivity, in quest for her identity and individuality. Sahgal places women characters, mostly with good educational background, in conflict with a parochial society and depicts their struggle to emerge out of their shells. Traditionally, the women are conditioned by her mother, family and society to stay acquiescent, subdued, silent and suffering. Sahgal’s women too spend half their lives as submissive and conforming persons, then they - like Rashmi, Nita, Saroj, Simrit - show the signs of awakening reject the stereotype and mount the quest for equality and freedom.

All the eight novels by Nayantara Sahgal take up the suppression and exploitation of women as one of the major thematic concerns. Not withstanding the statutory penal provisions, despite the contributions of various social and political reform movements and the statutory position regarding women’s rights, emancipation of women, has remained largely a matter of scratching the surface. The sort of deception often seen, sermonizing about women’s emancipation, without accepting their equality, has indeed made a mockery of statutory provisions. Women’s aspiration for equality, individuality, freedom and self respect, often clash with the orthodox Indian male - chauvinistic values and attitudes. In their aesthetic perceptions, the Indian-English novelists, however, transcend nihilism and indicate an emergence (howsoever slow) of consciousness of individuality and selfhood among Indian women and gradually, possibly marginally, changing corresponding attitudes in society.

Nayantara Sahgal, continues the theme of injustice against women, taken up so effectively by M.R. Anand. Asha Kaushik insists: "Mulk Raj Anand’s Gauri and Nayantara’s The Day in Shadow that the emergence of independent womanhood is perceived to have attained a level of reckoning. The two novels, therefor, might be taken as instances of emerging innovative feminine consciousness".22 Whereas Anand explores the rural setting reeling under superstition, irrationalism, ignorance and male chauvinism graphically indicating the helplessness of uneducated or semi-educated women, Nayantara portrays the upper crust glitter in metropolitan India and the fraudulent core beneath the superficial glamorous trappings reducing woman to an object of exhibition and a commodity. The issue is whether in a remote innocuous village or in metropolitan complex, Indian woman by and large, is involved in a fundamental quest for self-identity.

Significantly Nayantara Sahgal does not equate emancipation of women either with the economic freedom or with the party going and club - centered life. Superficial defiance of convention and trendy dresses and accent, can never be called emancipation. Women like Devika, and Lalita (Happy) Pinky (Situation), Kiran (Rich) are not modern
in the real sense of the word. They have merely adopted the facade of modernity with out any corresponding change in their viewpoint on any of the significant issues in life. Uma Mitra (*Morning*) and Leela Dubey (*Storm*), Nishi (*Rich*), Willie May (*Identity*) likewise are not truly liberated, they merely conform to a different pattern of behaviour. Nayantara Sahgal differentiates between the trappings and the essence of freedom. Freedom is a mental attitude” (p.128) as Abdul Rahman the aged Governor of U.P. tells the young students of Vidya College in *Morning* and as such it has to come from within. Freedom may be explained as defiance of convention but is at heart a refusal to tolerate injustice. And self-awareness on the part of women automatically changes the basis of man-woman relationship making it a more equal one.

In almost every novel Nayantara Sahgal has a central woman character who enacts the woman’s struggle for love, freedom, honesty and equality: Kusum (*Happy*), Rashmi (*Morning*), Saroj (*Storm*), Simrit (*Shadow*), Devi, Priya (*Situation*), Sonali and Rose (*Rich*), Anna (*Plans*). The "process towards selfhood" begun unconsciously by Kusum and Maya in *Happy* is consciously realized only by the heroines of her later novels and culminates in the struggle of Sonali (*Rich*) and Anna (*Plans*). The process has been a painful and a slow one for women as they have had to overcome not only social opinion and orthodoxy but also personal hesitation and reluctance. Self-awareness is a two way process requiring not only the social circumstances conducive to it but also the sensitivity and fineness of the individual perception. Significantly, Sahgal’s novels have broad-minded, liberated and compassionate men such as Jit and Vishal (*Storm*), Raj and Ram Krishan (*Shadow*), Usman (*Situation*) Keshav Rao (*Rich*), Nicholas (*Plans*) who not only condemn vociferously the suppression and victimization of women by men, but also accept women as their respectful equals. Still more significant is the fact that these liberated men, consciously and constructively, help the women, close to them, in their quest for self-realization, equality, individuality and expression. This unexplored realm of man-woman relationship has been brilliantly depicted and analysed by Nayantara Sahgal in her novels. The concept of individual freedom continues to be the central concern of the novelist in *Morning, Storm, Shadow* Vishal and Raj, intellectually superior to the rest of the characters have a "Herculean task" to perform because Saroj and Simrit are not only individuals, they are the symbols of "a culture, a tradition, a patient, enduring passivity",23 as their creator says.

Not only the women characters but even some men characters react strongly to the imbalanced and orthodox approach to the man woman relationship. Enlightened and liberal men like Rakesh, Kailas (*Morning*), Vishal (*Storm*), Raj Garg (*Shadow*), Usman (*Situation*), Keshav Rao (*Rich*), Nicholas (*Plans*) effectively emulate and convey Sahgal's approach to man-woman relationship. Vishal Dubey's (*Storm*) impatience at
the way society treats women is an echo of the writer's feelings. Vishal feels outraged that men treat women as possessions who belong to them 'by contract or by blood'. For men 'their sphere was sexual and their job procreation. They were dependents, not individuals'. Vishal thinks of the Indian women as "the subdued sex, creatures not yet emerged from the chrysalis, for whom the adventure of self-expression had not yet begun" (Storm p.189). Just like Vishal, Nicolas in Plans, understands the crucial significance of the woman's right to expression and individuality. Raj (Shadow) is another sensitive and compassionate man who vociferously condemns the exploitation and calls for a reorientation in the realm of the man-woman relationship.

These men are able to establish a sound relationship with women in their lives, based on a mature approach of equality, love, honesty, compassion and free expression. Some men such as Inder (Storm), Som (Shadow), Ravi (Rich) are however unable to accept the changed conditions - belonging to the "he-man" school they uphold rigidly the traditional chauvinist notions of male superiority and dominance. Such rigid and unsympathetic men cause much misery and disharmony, particularly if they happen to be related to sensitive and compassionate women. Nayantara Sahgal presents a brilliant perceptive and detailed analysis of such mismatched couples. Her novels abound in such incompatible pairs.

In her treatment of sexual relationships Nayantara Sahgal is different from most of her contemporary Indian-English writers who are largely governed by orthodox moral conventions of society promulgating different standard for men and women. Typical Indian attitude spells out very rigid restriction of physical relationship, particularly for women, physical relationship outside marriage or even prior to marriage is an unpardonable sin. Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya abide by the orthodox moral conventions. In Narayan's Guide, the heroine is viewed as a fallen woman for her extra marital affair. Anita Desai's women characters, too don't stray outside the fold of marriage.

Nayantara Sahgal, however accepts sex, as a natural and normal part of man-woman relationship which cannot be suppressed or ignored or bypassed. Treating the issue honestly and frankly she relates it to the feelings behind the act, the involvement or indifference with which it is beset, and also the equation it results in. The attitude which governs the approach to sex goes a long way towards establishing its morality. Sex in or outside marriage is not an unrelated or a self-contained act. It is to be viewed with reference to a situation and an attitude and no single rule can help to judge it. Uma Mitra in Morning enters into adulterous relationships in a spirit of revenge, while Kalyan Singh's many relationships with women merely feed his ego.
Leela's attitude to an extra-marital relation is one of self-deception. For Gauri, in *Storm* the beautiful wife of a busy industrialist, it is a mere habit helping to keep her marriage on an even keel. Gauri and Vishal's relationship is limited to physical contact and none of them is bothered to look below the surface. In the same novel Mara considers it a form of power in her hold over Inder. Contrasted to these condemned relationship is Rashmi's relationship with Neil, in which the sexual act symbolises a return to life. For Simrit (Shadow) the physical relations with Raj come naturally and spontaneously with the "reassurance that the bond between them was reliable" (p.184). It leaves Simrit content with fulfillment as "good tidings of great dancing joy, invigorating, uplifting" (p.207). For Devi in *Situation*, her relationship with Michael and Usman it is a spontaneous culmination of a strong emotional and intellectual affair.

Nayantara Sahgal attacks vociferously the concept of chastity - "the fable of flesh unpolluted by man. Vehemently Sahgal exposes the double standard of the orthodox Indian men. Significantly in the area of moral behaviour she seeks to reinterpret the rigid concepts of virtue and chastity by studying the aesthetics of the situation and projects a new morality which discards conventions and upholds the freedom of individuals to work towards self - realisation and involvement. Morality ceases to be isolated from the rest of human life and becomes a growing part of life. Adultery or asceticism is not good or bad in itself. In an article on "Adultery in Life and Literature", Sahgal writes

> Perhaps both in India and the permissive West, the deciding factor before we act or judge the actions of others, should be the aesthetics of a particular situation. It is guided by love and aspiration, or greed and gluttony? Is there truth and beauty in it, or only desire for gain?\(^\text{24}\)

Chastity for Ms Sahgal is not a concept of the flesh significantly it is one of the spirit". She seeks to reinterpret the rigid concepts of virtue and chastity through her women characters who have a kind of "untouched innocence and integrity".\(^\text{25}\) Jasbir Jain explains that: "her woman are virtuous not in the conventional sense but in a more real sense for they have shed all hypocrisies and pretences with their own selves".\(^\text{26}\) Simrit (Shadow) and Saroj (Storm) and Mara (Storm) find themselves unable to be sexually involved in relationships which have lost all other meaning and their emotional withdrawal effects a distancing which helps them retain their self respect. Sahgal vociferously attacks the orthodox hypocritical notion of female chastity in *Storm*. Inder is haunted by the pre-marital relationship of Saroj, his wife. Though he himself is and has been promiscuous.
Rose in *Rich*, however restrains from yielding to Ram before their marriage. Rose's insistence is not inspired by any conventional ideas about virginity. Rather she feels: It was the only way she could show him (Ram, her fiancee) she had a mind and feeling of her own. For Sonali, in the same novel, physical relationship with, Ravi, her childhood friend and lover, is "a little more than rejoicing in our long familiarity" (p.102). For Sonali, the physical relationship marks "completeness" of their relationship. In Rishad's relationship with Priya, physical relations happen as a spontaneous affirmation of their love. Rejecting the prudish negation of the instinctive yearning for sexual fulfillment Priya and Rishad react spontaneously to each other's love (p.145). Similarly for Bhushan and Sylla in *Identity* physical relationships form a natural and joyful part of their relationships. For them, sexual relationship is the spontaneously expression the closeness and depth of their relationship. For Nayantara Sahgal sexual relationship whether within or outside, marriage has to be an expression of closeness and love. The feelings, the love of the two persons for each other seems to be the only criterion and the marital status and prejudices and prudish notions of virginity seem to have lost their relevance, Sahgal envisions.

The quintessence of Nayantara Sahgal's fiction consists in an artistic exploration of the human psyche and relationships in the context of complex changes of values. Her novels chronicle the changing attitude towards man-woman relationship. Sahgal excels in the portrayal of the marital relationships and the intimately inter-related extramarital relationships.

Nayantara Sahgal's first novel *A Time to be Happy*, (1958) though an artistically immature work portrays authentically the man-woman relationship in the changing social scenario of the Pre-Independence period of the early twentieth century. The novel captures truthfully the traditional Hindu concept of the man-woman relationship as well as the passing winds of change. Man-woman relationship, at that particular juncture, were based on the traditionally indissoluble marital vows. Marriage, may or may not be the source of harmony and happiness, yet was indissoluble and unquestionable. The man-woman relationship, were guided completely by male-dominance and social customs. Most of the women accepted the limitations meekly, and could not think of crossing the domestic frontiers. Maya's marriage with Harish fails miserably as they are poles apart. The average woman such as Lakshmi, Devika, the narrator's mother, Prabha Mathur, find happiness within the confines of Hindu orthodoxy. Primarily because they have accepted it in its totality and do not question its injustice.
Sahgal depicts the disharmony and distress caused by yoking together persons from entirely different backgrounds: the anglicised Indian and the simple orthodox Indian. Maya and Harish's marriage, is an arranged marriage, which has yoked together two entirely different personalities.

Harish's very presence was flamboyant, while hers was subdued. She had the cool purity of the eucalyptus, as compared to his extravagant Gulmohar. She was the mirror smooth lake to his rushing water fall.

(p.24)

Harish Maya looks for "some kind of a response, a recognition of her existence: 'Not a good one or an approving one, necessarily just a response of any kind. Even whether we live or die is not important unless it is important to some one (pp.65-66). Though living in the same house, they live "as remote from each other as strangers" (p.33). Maya and the narrator, realise that they can communicate and respond to each other's emotional expectations. The first meeting proves to be the last one and the narrator is deeply touched by "the discovery and the loss, the beginning and the end" (p.69). The narrator knows that he couldn't have "Begged her to go away with me or Continued to see her and love her, what cost for? Such solutions are for fairy tales. Reality is framed in another perspective" (p.67).

Nayantara Sahgal's later heroines like Rashmi, Saroj and Simrit, can consider other possibilities but not Maya. Ironically enough it is men who expect women to conform to the standards laid down for them while they themselves remain free to abide by other rules. Hira Lal Mathur, in the same novel, marries for the second time in his desire to have a male heir and both society and his first wife Prabha accepts it. However Nayantara Sahgal chronicles only the traditional view of this early phase, liberal man-woman relationship is not delineated fully. Kusum's marriage to Sanad which is half-way between the two world of orthodoxy and freedom is not dealt with exhaustively. They are in love but their responses are timid and tuned to normal expectations.

The political independence of India set the pace for greater liberalization of women in India. This Time of Morning portrays the effect of the changing social condition over the man - woman relationships. Rashmi's marriage has been "a failure, she contemplates seriously on the choice of divorce available to her. Rashmi seems "unnaturally subdued to Rakesh, her childhood friend nursing disclosed love for her. Rakesh, who has keenly observed her from childhood and knows her very well, realizes that Rashmi has "changed profoundly (p.36). Having lost her "contentment" irreplaceable "brightness" and warmth, Rashmi looks displaced. Rakesh observes. "It was marriage, then that had altered her, made her a moth trapped in cement" (p.36). Deeply hurt and
grieved by the efforts gone waste, Rashmi withdraws into herself, unable to share her grief with anyone. Kailash, Rashmi's father however understands her "reticence well" as:

The barrier of sealed emotion that was in part personal temperament and in part the inheritance of a thousand years, prizing control above all else. (p.23)

Social conventions and conditioning forces Rashmi to grope slowly her way towards freedom. Understanding Rashmi's loneliness, her father encourages her to meet the Danish architect Neil as "time spent with a total stranger would not make emotional demands on her" (p.24). Unencumbered by the chauvinistic Indian egoistic attitude Neil appeals to her and they strike quick support. They both have unhappy marriages behind them. Neil evokes emotional response and restores Rashmi's sense of involvement with life. She becomes emotionally involved with Neil and sex with him comes to her as a "natural part of it" (p.145). Rashmi wants an all absorbing intimate relationship with Neil:

Me without any part or future, just me lying on the grass. That's not me Neil... We have to invade each other's privacy a little, or we shall stay just where we are. (p.150)

Neil, the European "vagabond" is surprised by Rashmi's insistent inquires about his past, family, father, son, wife and even his work. Rashmi is hurt by his attitude of distance: "all that had gone into making of him" (p.157).

People got only what they demanded of each other, no more, and how little they demanded: a few moments of the body, a slice of the mind, compartments of feeling, but never total surrender. She could not blame him. It was an age of impertinence, of brief meetings and partings. It was not the setting for completeness of any sort. Morning (p.157 - 158)

Rashmi feels that they are still "strangers" (p.161). Neil's lack of involvement disappoints her. She realizes that they can "very easily and pleasantly part tomorrow, both of us untouched" (p.162). 'Infact she rejects the social and emotional attitudes of the West which are represented by Neil. Despite her bitter experience, Rashmi is still optimistic about marriage as she believes that if marriage can be unhappy, 'it can be happy, too with the right ingredients' (p.141).

Rashmi's quest for a fulfilling and compassionate relationship, then leads her to pay attention to Rakesh, her childhood companion. Rakesh, who had always nursed undeclared love for Rashmi, understands her remarkably well. He values Rashmi as a person for the spontaneous warmth, liveliness intelligence and sensitivity of her
personality. Deeply in love with her, yet he is unable to express himself. Unaware of his true feelings Rashmi marries Dalip. Rakesh however "had not accepted the fact, Rashmi had invaded his thoughts, his plans, his work" (p.36). Meeting after a long time, Rakesh is sensitive enough to notice at once not only the change but the cause of change in Rashmi. Raskesh feels "a sudden murderous desire for revenge against" the man who had caused such grief to her. Rakesh never ceases "to feel responsible for" Rashmi. Separated from Neil, Rashmi, realizes the true nature of Raskesh's feeling for herself. The novel ends with the optimistic signs of a stable and mature relationship between Rakesh and Rashmi. Sahgal thus blows up the orthodox prudish Indian notion which prohibits the women to seek happiness and fulfillment and restricts her to only marital relationship however tortuous and dissatisfying.

Unable to understand Rashmi's yearning for freedom and self fulfillment her mother Mira, puts it down to a "tasteless parody of a transplanted modernity'. Conditioned by the rigid social traditions, Mira is shocked by Rashmi's decision:

> What reason under heaven could sever the marriage bond?  
> Women stayed married, had since time immemorial stayed married  
> under every conceivable circumstances, to brutal insensitive husbands,  
> to lunatics and lepers (p.146).

Rashmi's father Kailas, however understands them both. Mira, he knows "indeed judged people by her own unflinching code". Mira is the woman of the earlier generation who firmly believes in "all that had moulded and upheld a centuries old society" (p.149). Rashmi is however the woman of the new generation who has different values and aspirations and parameters. Kailas understands and sympathizes with Rashmi, accepting her decision. Accepting the change, Kailash, interprets Rashmi's decisions as "a torrential release from ancient groover and bonds, ancient pain and suppression' (p.214). Mira withdraws her" accusation of Rashmi, longer honoured. First she inflicts the stern morality of her own generation on Rashmi, later she concedes that

> The moral order did not degenerate nor was it enshrined forever in unchangeable patterns of behaviour It had to be refashioned and protested in every age and every generation found its own way to do this. (p.164)

She is forced to notice that "the new vistas presented a range of new conflicts and tensions that society had not known in her youth" (p.164).

In Morning, Sahgal strikes a different note with the portrayal of Uma - Arjun Mitra relationship, which characterizes the breakdown of norms governing social interaction. Arjun Mitra, a top civil servant, with a western background at the age of thirty three marries a young vivacious and beautiful nineteen years old girl Uma. The
incompatibility due to age and Arjun Mitra's obsessive concern with his work prove fatal for the marriage. But Arjun remains oblivious of her physical and sensual needs and expects her to take interest in the library or "share his life" of books and ideas. Afflicted with his indifferent behaviour Uma loses her balance. In sheer desperation emotionally and sexually, she deviates from the social norms, and she takes to drinking and moving alone with men. Arjun Mitra reacts strongly to the scandalous rumours circulating about her. Instead of striving to cure the cause of her desperation by offering her his love and company, Arjun Mitra "condemned himself to an isolation where she would never reach or touch him again" (p.28). "Uma was dead" (p.28) for him though he continues to provide her with food and shelter as his legal liabilities. Accepting the finality of the Hindu marriage and concern for his reputation, Arjun makes" the most humiliating discovery" that he would say nothing to her because he wants peace, though it is "a cruel mockery of peace, a graveyard of feeling forever" (p.29). As far as Uma is concerned she finds her marriage a total failure as it cannot offer her love and companionship. So she wanders freely to seek it in the company of other men feeling least guilty. Indifferent to Arjun's reputation or hurt, she seeks "relief" in the company of men who satisfy her ego and physical needs. The happiness and success of Mira and Kailas' marriage forces Arjun to analyses his own. Touched by Uma's desperation and frustration, he realizes his own contribution to it:

How many nights they had lain apart, a labyrinth of tortured vanity between them and how compared with the abysmal gulf it had created.
Though we give our enemies another chance, he thought we never forgive those we love. From them the full terrible penalty is exacted.
(p.169)

Repenting the loss, Arjun Mitra decides" if she would bear with him, they would talk and a way might still be found, late though it was" (p.170). In the portrayal of Uma - Arjun relationship, Sahgal successfully depicts the transformation of a lovely innocent and loving girl into a wild "tigress in a meadow" (p.26) due to neglect and dissatisfaction.

*Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) portrays sensitively and brilliantly the psychic trauma of marital conflicts as well as extra-marital relationships. Storm has been very well appreciated by the critics. Shyam Asnani comments:

*Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) provides with an unmistakable evidence that the novelist has developed a clear thought, she has vision, she has objectively, and she has spunk. As a writer, she never ceases to be adult. The stamp of good and sophisticated living runs through her pages. What T.S. Eliot calls Blake's "terrifying honesty" is there in abundance in her. The novel spotlights the fearsome jungle of man-woman relationships.
Written with restraint and perception, it depicts man's desire to gain control over other's mind, and analyses the deeper layers of human behaviors. Here also, as in the earlier novel, Sahgal deeply concerned with the failure of marital relationships, the loneliness of living and private terrors. The characters try to reach out to one another, suffer loss of dignity, face rejection or acceptance. Despite its explicit political setting T.K. Thomas finds *Storm*, to be primarily "a story of broken houses and changed relations". The novel portrays the mismatching and consequent disharmony and grief in the marital relationships of three couples - Vishal-Leela, Inder-Saroj, Jit-Mara, with remarkable psychological consistency and probing details. At the same time it portrays sensitively and perceptively extra-marital relationship of Saroj-Vishal, Inder-Mara, Gauri-Vishal and Leela-Hari. In *Storm*, the portrayal of personal relationship is marked by vivid, dramatic presentation, as the emotions, expectations, frustrations, fears and responses are laid bare through dramatic action and interaction.

Saroj - Inder's relationship is one of the most exhaustively, sensitively and brilliantly portrayed among all of Nayantara Sahgal's novels. Saroj - Inder's marriage is haunted by the incompatibilities of their nature, outlook and background. Brought up in a free atmosphere, Saroj like her creator, belongs to the "sphere of intense, sharpened sensibility", whereas Inder, absorbed in his weaving Mill, is an insensitive self-centered, typically brusque Indian male Saroj and Inder differ tremendously, yet they are yoked together in marriage. Saroj had been attracted by Inder's vitality and the facade of modernity, and had chosen Inder herself. It is however, as she discover later, that beneath the veneer of modernity, Inder is a typically prudish male chauvinist. 'They are two different cultures', and as Vishal comments.

That can only happen in a country like this which produces people of such vastly different traditions. And a thin veneer of Westernization succeeds in fooling people so unlike together in marriage and every effort at growth on the part of one can look like an act of betrayal to the other (p.160).

Born and brought up in a liberated and modern household, Saroj has grown to expect equality trust and respect. Whereas Inder has rigid chauvinistic notions regarding women. Inder belongs to "the He-man-school" as Gauri explains to Vishal, and born and brought up in an atmosphere where male dominance is the most formidable of cults, there is no question of any freedom or self-expression for Saroj. She yearns for self-expression and a recognition of her individuality. Intensely emotional herself, Saroj expects to build up a sound relationship with Inder based on deep involvement and compassion. Inder, however, views their relationship as merely one of master-slave and he loves her, but only as his possession or commodity. Ruthless and aggressive by nature,
Inder is impervious to her affection and emotions. He on his part treats her merely, as a wife - a possession not a person. This difference of outlook casts a heavy shadow on their physical relationship also: for Inder sex is merely a biological process without any real emotional significance, whereas for Saroj it is an expression of love requiring emotional involvement. But Saroj desperately wants "the touch without sexual significance, the caress of affection." Inder fails even to recognize Saroj intense yearning for companionship. Inder feels that kind of companionship had always been difficult for him, just as to take a walk with her became a equality and involvement and continuity.

Inder is disturbed by "the curious concentration of her spirit upon whatever came her way" For him, the role of wife, who is not an individual in her own right, is well-defined:

A wife was one half of an enterprise, the complaint partner who presided over home and children and furthered her husband's career. (p.102)

Expression or assertion of individuality by Saroj disgusts him, and drives a wedge between them. He strongly holds that man - woman relationship will always be one of domination, "A thousand years from now a woman will still want and need a master, the man who will own and command her-and that's the man she'll respect" (p.102). Saroj, however desperately makes efforts to save her marriage. She clings to moments of response and communication.

Saroj longs to communicate with Inder but finds it difficult to do so for their relationship is one of silences and pretence:

We must talk, but what about she wondered nervously. Which after all these years, were the safe, unguarded topics between them, those without consequences? She searched her mind for a neutral subject that would keep the ground level between them (p.91).

Saroj feels condemned to isolation as the intimacy between them does not go beyond the physical. The only certainty which she can feel in their relationship is only the physical one thus she thinks:

Perhaps the rest-the mist of longing for all that remains unanswered lies outside the cycle. Saroj knew that she could not tear away the blinds between herself and Inder or take him her thoughts. In the labour of living together there had never been that intimacy between them. Perhaps, she thought desolately it was not meant to matter (p.92).
Overcome by a sense of desolation, she accepts her loneliness and devotes herself to her plants and her children.

Saroj and Inder’s differences of outlook and values, lead to many conflict, and most prominently in the issue of Saroj’s premarital relationship with a boy. Saroj, herself tells Inder that once during her college days she had shared bed with a boy with “enchanting innocence”. However Inder is tremendously shocked as he considers it to be a heinous unpardonable moral lapse for a woman. Though he himself had been “happily collecting experience” wherever he could, but for Saroj he applies different moral standards. He feels he has been “cheated” of his right to wife’s chastity and the marriage has been made a "mockery and betrayal" (p.198). Saroj’s act has sullied her and has completely devalued her as a possession. Her act, Inder feels, has no place:

in an order that clearly demarcated the roles of men and women, unless that venerable order was breached, trampled and mocked. He was maddened by it when it came over him, he sat looking at Saroj with a revulsion that had ancient, tribal, male roots (p.96).

Saroj, however, is not really guilty. For her it is a part of her "growing up" and she is honest about it. When she marries Inder, it is already behind her - a relationship hardly remembered. For herself she is warmly and wholly involved in her marriage but Inder is obsessed by this one act which he uses to humble and torment her and to destroy her sense of innocence and self respect.

Saroj’s pre-marital relation becomes a psychological obsession with Inder. Again and again he “resurrected the other man” and is transformed. He even plans and dreams of torturing and killing "that" man. Once he even tries to strangle Saroj, as he is dreaming about "that" man. He feels "cheated" and "the past rose in dreadful images to that his manhood. Jealously had caught him unprepared" (p.198). His entire psychology is haunted by the bitter feelings for that man:

The abomination took life and shape and exploded like poison in his consciousness" (p.198).

Saroj is deeply hurt by Inder’s sudden silent withdrawls "At times she would beat against his numbness like a bird against a window pane, trapped in a futile frenzy" (p.96). Despite Inder’s ostracism and torture, Saroj doesn’t yield completely to Inder. Significantly she still feels, that only a part of the her "self that surrendered to terms and conditions to make living with Inder possible. She was a being of pride and purity with a face uplifted to the stars". She does not "want forgiveness" as she feels she "committed no crime", but she had forfeited the right to radiance the day she had told him of her first experience and been branded sinner (p.96). For Saroj "that" man had
"meant so little. It was Inder who had inflated his importance" by reviving him frequently. Significantly, despite their vast differences Saroj tries to understands Inder's violent reaction:

It was the long line of inbred reaction before him that had poured a woman's emotional and sexual nature into one rigid mould from which nothing - no moral thing would liberate it. (p.98)

Sahgal's portrayal of the tensions and conflicts tormenting Inder and Saroj are remarkable for its psychological pertinency and truth fulness. The complex nature of their disharmony is laid bare as the points of view of both Saroj as well as Inder are lucidly and sensitively projected. Saroj's loneliness, grief as well as Inder's frustrations and conflicts are vividly and dramatically portrayed.

Vishal who is liberated, intelligent and sensitive to tender and finer values such as truth, honesty, compassion and equality induces a chain of events. Vishal is presented as a foil to Inder, has a deep understanding of the feminine sensibility. He has tremendous sympathy for the exploited women whereas Inder belongs to the "Human School". He meets Saroj at her house. Vishal too is haunted by an unhappy marriage. His wife Leela is dead now Vishal's marriage with Leela had "turned out to be vanishing search for communication" (p.). He had expected to build truly involving and compassionate relationship with Leela-

Despite Vishal's liberated and compassionate approach to marriage, Leela's attitude to marriage is totally different Leela "had not been interested" in Vishal as a person. She had selected what she wanted of him: "the distinguished escort at parties, the successful civil servant with a promising future, the husband who could be relied upon to take pains with whatever problems she took to him. And she had ignored to rest. She had given herself selectively too, what she had considered it prudent and convenient to give, and left him empty of the reality of herself" (p.71).

Even her "vitality" which had initially attracted Vishal, needed "an audience" she "scintillated in company" But "alone with him she had little to share" (p.72). Their difference of opinion had been so vast that at times Leela had considered even "his intensity a lapse of taste, a travesty of manners" (p.213). Hence the chasm between them had opened early and never quite closed. Even her extramarital affair with Hari was "sealed in secrecy, with not crack in her facade of perfect wife, nothing admitted" (p.214). Vishal was willing to accept the affair as "an expression of herself" provided she talked to him about it. Vishal had lived with her, "in depth and detail and had wanted her to live with him" (p.215). Vishal had repeatedly pleaded:
Forget all the rules, what is and isn't done. Don't you understand what I want is something of you? For God's sake give your natural self. (p.215)

Yet "To the last she had released only the emotion appropriate to "wife". (p.215). Though Hari, Leela's lover, had met Vishal and had pleaded him "to release" Leela. Only Leela herself had said nothing at all. Despite Leela's dishonesty and frigidity, Vishal's attitude to Leela is one of compassion respecting her individuality. Vishal explained to Hari: "Fidelity isn't something either you or I can demand of Leela That kind of exclusiveness can't be varied or conferred by her as a favour" (p.215). Even after Hari's pleas there had been no outward change between Leela and Vishal as she was dedicated to the "cult of conformity" to observing forms that his most intense please had not been able to penetrate. She clung to the facade of a fidelity that had no meaning for him. Vishal ruminates about the complex gamut of human relationship:

The rules : The regulations. The laws that made people fearful of each other. The whole mindless mess going on down the ages with never a shaft of new light on it. Men and women contorted into moulds, battered into sameness, the divine individual spark guttered out. If the spirit had a shape, what shapes would emerge from the grotesque twilight people called living. Somewhere under the sun there must be another way to live, with relentless honesty, where the only cruelty would be pretence. (p.216)

Vishal's ideas are very lucid and significant exposition of Nayantara Sahgal's humanistic vision of man-woman relationship.

Vishal's relationship with various women, Leela, Gauri and then Saroj illuminate Sahgal's view point thoroughly. His relation with Gauri is honest with no pretences of any emotional involvement and their interaction is limited to physical level only. Vishal's relationship with Saroj however rapidly gains intimacy, depth as it, involves both of them deeply. Saroj and Vishal find a easy rapport between them soon, as they talk freely and frankly. After a long time, Vishal feels: "She had everything in her to companion him. The things she said and the simple confidence with which she said them woke forgotten yearnings in him. He felt alive and growing again" (p.89).

He has a yearning "to understand" Saroj - "the shine and shadow of her entire personality" (p.89). As both Vishal and Saroj have undergone the torment of isolation pretence and difference of opinion, they both immediately understand each others predicament and pain. They both realize their affinity and deep yearning for honest companionship. Vishal and Saroj find they have much to talk and 'share. Vishal feels
so involved with Saroj that he finds himself taking keen interest in Inder's child she is expecting. Vishal explains to Saroj that "decent human relations" just don't happen by luck or by chance, rather they happen:

With care, With love, when possible and otherwise with time and interest. And always with truth, or as much of it, as the other person will allow. All of that reduces the heartbreak and a lot of the loneliness of living (p.91).

Saroj realizes the reality intensity of Vishal's expectations:

Only she knew Vishal did not want a kiss, and the "more" he desired was not the flesh of her. He wanted the bone and sinew of truth between them, the vital ingredient of his grand design, and from her nothing else would satisfy him (p.91).

Saroj's remark that "I am alone even when Inder is here" (p.196) conveys her deep anguish loneliness and distress. She has been living in the house entirely on Inder's terms. Vishal, she realizes is "her kind of man", however at the same time she painfully realizes the distance between them. Their relationship takes off at the level of intellectual companionship. A "delirium of talk" is released as they share with each other their experiences and ideas.

Vishal helps Saroj realize that woman is an "individual" and more than that, an honourable and equal companion to man. He is outraged at Inder's double standards dominance and tortuous hold over Saroj. He is all the more stirred by Saroj's meek acceptance of her exploitation, humiliation and torture. His sensitivity is outraged at the way women are treated by society in general and by men like Inder in particular. He feels outraged that martyrdom bred into women was even elevated to a mystical importance, glorifying their acts of self effacement and never more than when it demanded the sacrifice of their essential self. He thought of his own country women as the subdued sex, creatures not yet emerged from the chrysalis, for whom the adventure of self-expression had not even begun. Whatever woman hood had once meant in India had been lost in the mists of antiquity. In its place there had long been a figure of humility, neck bent, eyes downcast, living flesh consigned to oblivion. Women had served a hard apprenticeship and few things roused Dubey's are more than their own continued acceptance of its rigours. (p.191)

Vishal protests vociferously about the men's attitude of treating women merely as possessions

The end of the cult was always a shock, stirring racial memory to the drugs. And male dominance was the most formidable of cults. (p.193)
Nayantara lashes out vehemently and sarcastically opines that if chastity is so important and so worth preserving it would be easier to "safeguard it by keeping men in seclusion, not women", for, as she holds, "the biological urge is supposed to be much more stronger in men, so it is men who should be kept under restrain and not allowed to roam free to indulge their appetite". (p.193) Unresisting acceptance rather than rebellion has been the code of conduct for women. Vishal however exhorts Saroj to think about change as:

It was life's precious obligation to rebel, and humanity's right to be free, to choose from the best light it could see, not necessarily the long-accepted light. (p.193)

Impressed by Vishal's liberated ideas and compassionate attitude, Saroj visualizes that marriage to him would not be a "shaky affair." but "uncommonly strong" as it would recognize the imperfect human being to be valued for her own sake. Significantly, Vishal despite being a man himself, is grieved by the disgusting notions of male superiority held by the majority of men such as Inder for whom women

... were wives, daughters, mothers. They belonged to their men by contract or by blood. Their sphere was sexual and their job procreation. They were, dependents, not individuals. When you wanted them it could apparently only be for sex. You could lust after their bodies and that was all right and the way of the world so long as you did it clandestinely and never pierced the facade of respectability. The one thing you could not condone, the thing that was a crime, was that splendour and variety of human choice before them.

Vishal points that not only men, but even women themselves too are responsible for aiding and abetting the exploitation:

They were afraid to protest for they had no preparation for it. They did not believe in themselves. (p.192)

Vishal lashes out vehemently at the hypocritical notion of chastity of women. Vishal finds Saroj as "pure and fresh as a rose". He explains that purity means "the quality of you as a person" and not chastity. Vishal condemns vociferously the different set of morality and touchstone of purity for women: He discards the hypocritical concept of purity: "the fable of flesh unpolluted by man. A woman was not entitled to a past, not entitled to human hunger human passion, or even human error". (p.192). Vishal speaks with vehemence because "reform", he feels, never comes softly, "It blasted it way". (p.194).
Sahgal, hits hard at the double standards allowing sexual liberties to men. Inder's violent reaction to Saroj's pre-marital sexual indulgence and then to her mere companionship with Vishal while he himself is carrying on liaison with Mara ironically exposes the hypocrisy entrenched in the Indian society. Saroj frankly tells Inder that she likes to talk to Vishal. Saroj tries to analyze logically Inder's violent reaction:

There were apparently generations of men behind her fathers brothers, husbands-who would have killed at the very suggestion of what she had done. Why she had never known such people existed (p.198).

However, she decides that she would not give her "allegiance" any more to the rigid cut of male dominance. Inder too realizes that Saroj's association with Vishal has "terrible potential" - the beginning between them of death" (p.199). Nayantara Sahgal portrays vividly and objectively, Inder's feelings and conflicts too and he is not presented as an ogre. He feels:

He had not hit Saroj. He had struck out at an elemental darkness that shut out more than sight. He had hit out at treachery not hers, but at something between them that had no right to be there (p.200).

Saroj realizes that she does not want any longer, or ever again, to live in uncertainty with him" (p.202) as there is no hope of companionship communication or equality. Saroj's tells Vishal her story of pre-marital relationship and Inder's violent reaction to it. Vishal insists

Not just this but to accept comradeship with your past, all of it, and with all of you. That is the meaning of living together. Is there anything on earth to compare with the great glory of communication, and that is only possible when people accept each other in truth (p.226).

Championing the cause of women's freedom, he insists

But there's yearning for freedom in every thing that lives... Freedom is still an isolated political achievement for us. It has not become a habit of mind or a way of life. We are still bound by meaningless doctrines and we show no mercy to those who do not conform (p.227).

Vishal exhorts Saroj to assert her individuality and seek fulfillment as an individual. Saroj feels "strong and serene, armoured against loneliness and most of all against futility" of her efforts to penetrate Inder's inflexibility (p.230). She realizes that there was a child to be born, a life to be lived, hers to mould (p.231). She takes the final decision as Inder condemns her to isolation once more, and also warns her not to meet Vishal. Saroj finally accepts her failure with Inder and leaves his house forever. Vishal accepts Saroj as he "had identified himself with Saroj and that unborn child of hers". He assures her: "No need to be alone I will be with you" (p.223), infusing her with "the
strength of [his] spirit”. Vishal feels he has at last found the companion, the sensitive Human being. He feels settled as he knew "his joy was for the fact that he had come home, and that a life times living would now be concentrated on loving Saroj" (p.229). Shyam Asnani points out "the ultimate assertion of her individuality is reminiscent of Nora's character in Ibsen's The Doll's House, who also revolts against her husband's inhuman behaviour and plans a flight in the similar circumstances". Saroj's departure is a move towards personal freedom and a rejection of the role Inder had wanted to thrust on her.

Another relationship which is portrayed sensitively and perceptively is that of Jit and Mara. In the scheme of the characters, Jit and Inder are designed to be a foil to each other. Both are young industrialist, both have had the traumatic experience of the partition in their youth, their parents lost, emotions uprooted, a whole past destroyed and with it a substantial inheritance. But Jit is more liberal and practical and has a broader and more humane perspective on life and things. Jit is married to a modern girl Mara who has been brought up and educated in foreign countries. Though Mara seems to be thoroughly modern by her appearance, dress and bearing, however mentally she is still bogged down by the rigid orthodox notions of male dominance. Jit and Mara's marriage too is haunted by their difference of opinion and outlook. Jit is a liberal man who values his wife as an equal honourable individual. He expects to build up a compassionate relationship with Mara based on truth, equality and communication, and strives for it. Mara's approach to marriage is however is strikingly different: Unconsciously she expects to be dominated and wants Jit to be more aggressive. While Saroj wants to be able to take her innermost thoughts and feelings to her husband, Mara deliberately holds herself aloof from her marriage believing mistakenly that "men do not relish the truth". (p.135) Jit realizes:

He had never been able to convince her she was his equal, and tenderly held. She could have come to him with anything. (p.135)

For years Jit had done "everything in his power to make her happy. He had racked all his resources to get some human response from her" (p.134), yet he had failed. Jit feels that all his efforts, care and affected are wasted on her:

Back to the caves, she had said, and that was what would suit her best. You gave a woman the perfection of which you were capable, the finest flower of your most evolved instincts, and it is a waste. She didn't want to be cherished and affection made no impression. (p.134)
Jit, however realizes, at the same time that Mara is "intelligent", "fine", and more significantly she has "pride" so she "would never be an object for anybody's use" (p.135). He realizes that Mara is not "happy with him. He had looked continuously for the source of her discontent and for ways of bringing it to rest, but with any success. He accepts their incompatibility:

It was something, he decided to do with the chemistry of their two characters, an insoluble difference, nothing that could be sorted out even with patience. In fact, patience seemed the wrong ingredient for it. She needed at times to be pried loose from her attitudes, shaken into yielding, ut he lacked the course grain of behaviour that could have accomplished it. (p.107)

Mara, however is not an orthodox woman, even Jit accepts that she is "fine", "intelligent" and is "oddly fearless and gallant". Mara's problem is that Jit's serenity and gentleness seems to be a sign of complacency and blindness to her. She wants Jit to be more aggressive and be passionately involved. Intelligently Mara analyses the reasons for the failure of her marriage:

There was some sense to child marriage, she thought, to two people growing up and old together, gradually becoming moulded to each other's needs. There was some sense, too, in marrying late in life - now for instance - when you had discovered what you were and what you valued. But marriage did not come at either of these sensible times. It came instead when you were young and desire was ripe and easy to confuse with the more complicated need called love, and above all before there had been time to realize what you wanted out of life. And so you married the wrong man because it was time to marry - the sweet - tempered, considerate Jit, the young girl's dream of a romantic lover - when your own needs were both simpler and more profound. And some time years later, the true need, if it had not by then been blurred by the paraphernalia of living, burst through. You stood face to face with it alone on a dark evening with no glimmering of how to cope with it, and only the burning knowledge that it was there and you were utterly submitted to it. (p.102)

Mara feels that her marriage has petered out "in the mere unwinding of day upon day" (p.102). Mara is infuriated by Jit's "placidity, inborn and ingrained that would not recognize disaster unless the very roof caved in" (p.108). Mara opens a school shoot to keep her self occupied.

Dissatisfied with Jit, Mara meets Inder at first her school then frequently and she makes no attempt to hide the attraction she feels. Mara longs to "know him better" (p.104).
Inder frankly communicates his ideas to Mara. Mara is able "to force his interest and hold it" (p.104) hence he responds to her. When Mara lightly comments about Saroj's meeting with Vishal, Inder's violent reaction astonishes Mara. Inder remarks:

That kind of remark disgusts me. The thinking behind it disgusts me. There was a time when such things couldn't be spoken or even thought, except with shame. There's no shame nowadays, no barriers. Everything is taken lightly. And women talk and behave like men. (p.104)

Inder bluntly declares that the jargon of women's emancipation has no use for him. His absolute faith is:

A thousand years from now a woman will still want and need a master, the man who will own and command her - and that's the man she'll respect. (p.104)

Mara appreciates that "at least" he is "honest enough to admit it. Mara realizes that Saroj is not Inder's kind of woman and Inder is not "her man," hence both are attracted to Vishal and herself. Mara wonders;

So where does that leave us all, husbands and wives though we be? And do our neat labels protect us from our private torments (p.105).

Mara feels on her pulse the strain of the extra-marital relationship - "Inder and Jit. Jit and Inder. The duality of it tore her apart". (p.172) Inder presses Mara for sexual relations, however Mara realizes that "she could not make love to a mystery" (p.173) Mara insists that instead of "stumbling" into love making, they should meet more and get to know each other. Surprising Inder understands and feels that "An aimless fever had dropped from him like a worn-out garment, and he recognized a new feeling, respect, that had never played much part in his relations with women. He knew that he was in the one place where he could be himself". (p.174) Inder realizes that suddenly "all the difference between loving and not loving had become apparent" to him (p.175). He wants "to keep the softly glowing intimacy between them alive", hence feels no hurry "to possess" her. He feels at peace with himself as even his "wound had healed and vanished, lifted out of him by Mara. Inder, for whom love had meant merely the physical act, now feels differently: "The act of love, so final and complete with other women, a thing with a beginning and an end was never ended with Mara. Its culmination brought a flood of tenderness that flowed into a hundred different newly awakened channels of his being. And with her, every act was an act of love. She stimulated his mind and involved him in ways no woman ever had". (p.178)
Inder experiences the warm intimacy of love with Mara, as he shares with her his ideas, experiences. Inder's happiness is reflected even in his behaviour with Saroj and their kids. The transformation however is not deep enough, an hence short-lived. As Inder is basically an egoist, who would ultimately value only "flesh and blood and its prompting". He tries to force Mara to yield to his demands. Mara, however, sensitively senses that "the thing" they were trying "to build" is "gone" as Inder has "torn it down" Mara realizes that Inder's attitude and idea, are too obdurately orthodox to allow any truly involving and emotional relationship to blossom. And mere physical relations without any emotional involvement disgust Mara. Inder's anger boils as he feels: For all her airs and graces she wanted him like any other woman. But she had to call the tune. He had catered to her whims long enough" (p.222). Inder lets Mara go with "the finality of blast, wiping him clean of all emotion. Though for a movement he wants to repent and go back, "not just to Mara, but to the oxygen of understanding to the growing thing between them he had killed", (p.222) but his ego intervenes and he just leaves Mara. Isolated both from Saroj as well as Mara, Inder pays a heavy price for his chauvinist ideas and egoist outlook. As Saroj and eventually Mara too, realize that Inder is incapable of nurturing a permanent relationship based on involvement and emotions, handicapped as he is by his rigid, chauvinist ideas and outlook. For Inder, women, whether Saroj or Mara are eventually only possessions valuable for sexual satisfaction. Inder fails tragically to appreciate and nurture relationship with women on any other plane.

The predicament of the man-woman relationship facing disaster, is conveyed symbolically through the 'cave theory of Vishal (p.133) which stands for hypocrisy, darkness, ignorance, breach of communication and rigid attitudes. Vishal's plea for frank and friendly talks draws the "rational young couple" (Jit and Mara) closer together. Mara's grief, touches Jit deeply. He at once sense's Mara's "need" and "reach's out" to her. Realizing that she "had gone" from him after all, he feels "If nothing else, he could still be a friend" (p.233). Pleading for a frank intimate and honest relationship, Jit says:

There's been a silence between us on so many matters. Not that we've planned it that way. It has just been taken for granted as the way a couple should behave. No intimacy except in bed. Strange, isn't it, and yet most people accept marriage in those dried out one-dimensional terms and expect to live almost like strangers. (p.234)

Jit points out to Mara that they both belong to "those who live by reason". Jit offers his sincere help to Mara to find here way out of the "emotional jungle" she has landed
herself. Mara to accepts that she needs Jit's help. Hence Mara and Jit are able to overcome the distance between them and are initiated into a really mature and strong relationship based on truth, intimacy and compassion.

In *A Day in Shadow* (1971) Nayantara Sahgal takes up for an in depth analysis and sensitive portrayal, the delicate situation of the failure of a marriage, leading to divorce and the consequential problems and issues. *Shadow* takes up specifically the issue of divorce, in the orthodox male-dominated Indian society. It depicts vividly how the male-dominated society renews its repressiveness in other forms and strives to reverse the accomplishments of hard-won identity.

In *Shadow*, Nayantara Sahgal stresses once again the crucial need to reexamine and re-vitalize the Indian social and ethical and religious conventions and attitudes towards marriage, the orthodox approach which demands submission of the wife to the unquestionable authority of her husband, often causing much misery and victimization. The women who belong to the "sphere of intense, sharpened sensibility", can no longer accept the victimization and the suppression, unquestioningly as their destinies. Rejecting inequality and male-chauvinism they demand a humane and compassionate approach to marriage based on love, care involvement, honesty, equality and free communication.

A few decades ago the oppressed women had no option, no way out of a stifling, tortuous marriage as the marital ties were considered divine and insoluble Maya in *Happy*, lives in a British ruled India, and hence has no relief from a suffocating marriage. As divorce was not feasible either legally or socially, Maya had to accept the marriage as her "fate", In the Independent India however statutory sanction has been provided for women's rights. A significant step has been the legal provision of divorce for both women as well as men. In the earlier too novels *Morning* and *Storm*, divorce is obliquely suggested as a way out for the female protagonists as Rashmi and Saroj are actively contemplating divorce. In *Day in Shadow*, the divorce has actually taken place as the novel begins and with divorce come the actual realization of the misery, the economic hardships, the feeling of loneliness and a score of other existential problems for Simrit.

*Shadow* can be read as a sequel to *Storm* not only from thematic point of view but also from the point of sustained moral vision of the novelist that shapes and directs the destines of the main characters. "The linear development of the theme is clearly discernible, the lack of sympathy and understanding in the man-wan relationship leads to the failure of the marital bond and ultimately divorce".30
Thus, unlike Savitri (in R.K. Narayan's *The Dark Room*) and Mohini (in Bhattacharya's *Music For Mohini*) who reconcile themselves to their fate and choose to stay at home and suffer so as to preserve harmony and familial happiness, Gauri takes the fold step of leaving home, "transfigured from the gentle cow's acquiescent visage of the time when she had arrived in Panchi's house, to that of a woman with a will of her own" P.224). Gauri, thus rejects the meek submission to exploitation and chooses to assert her individuality, as she plans to start afresh.

Nayantara Sahgal’s *The Day in Shadow* examines and stresses the urban, affluent class milieu in a metropolitan situation, only to bring home an equally grim reality of Indian women's plight. As the novel opens, the divorce of Simrit and Som has already taken place. Simrit, had herself chosen Som, charmed by "his flash", contrasting so vividly with her solitary book-loving childhood. She had felt that "Som was colour and life and action". But the glitter of So's personality had misguided Simrit, as she later realizes the tragic mistake:

> They had got on easily enough on the surface, and that had created a game of its own in which intensity, depth and devotion were never brought into play at all. Nor was partnership. Som the rougher element, had led. Not that she had wanted to lead only to *be*, though that would have meant a battle-and she had never been prepared to fight. (p.4.)

Simrit like Saroj in *Storm*, belongs to the sphere of intense, sharpened sensibility. She is a sensitive and compassionate woman, who expects Som to foster an intimate relationship based on love, involvement, care, equality, honesty, understanding and free communication. For Som, however, Simrit is only a valuable possession and he expects her to conform to his ideal of subdued womanhood. Som dominates Simrit completely, so much so that she has no say in the ordinary decisions of the household Simrit finds this denial of experience, as little, insignificant things a cog a machine - with which it had become impossible to live (p.38) Som's world of commerce, ambition and power has no room for softer moral norms, values and friendships. Simrit on the other hand is a scholarly woman who values 'scholarship ethical' integrity, and most significantly "descent human relations. The gulf between the discordant values increasingly widens, as Som is caught up in "a spiralling mania for affluence." (p.87) All his relationships are governed by material considerations as motivated a sense of ruthless ambition, which brooks no obstruction. He has no qualms about changing job and discarding even close friends such as Lalaji on his way to the top. Som's growing obsession with power and possession disgusts Simrit. Being a sensitive writer she longs for "a world whose texture is kindly and soft" and feels isolated in Som's world:
Talk was the missing link between her and Som, between her and his world. She had a famishing need for talk. She was driven to a quiet desperation for want of it. Good talk about books. Events, ideas, people. (p.93)

Som lives in male - centered world, and his pride of procreation is concentrated only on his son Brij. Simrit is pained to find the daughters being discriminated by Som. Even with Brij, Som substitutes money for affection, care and interest and Simrit resents. But Som is already attuned to the palliatives of the money world and has only these to offer. To Som however it is Simrit who is abnormal. For his own point of view, Som finds himself a good husband as has earned so much money (p.89). Simrit yearns to get a clean cold atmosphere where there was some goal beyond self-advancement.

Som, however, fails even to understand Simrit's grief and expectation. He feels his duty to his wife is over, just by providing a "wonderful life" of affluence and luxury. He is so absorbed in his own success that he fails to notice Simrit's gradual with drawl from his world of fluctuating loyalties, and commerce. The dissonance in their relationship, casts its shadow on Som and Simrit's sexual relationship too. Simrit wants the physical act be infused with the emotional involvement, where as for Som it is merely a physical act. Despite Simrit grief, Som must have his pound of flesh, "compelling her with his urgency, but it could no longer transport her unresisting to comfortable place" (p.90). Simrit stays, excluded, rebellious as she feels sex cannot be isolated from the rest of life. Unaccountably alone in the night Simrit feels once the edge is off hunger a meal has to be more than food:

And once past its immediacy sex had its visions too-of tenderness of honour, of more than a physical act. Sex could be an arguments act. Sex could be an argument or a problem shared. The same spring fed all its facets-the day's work in office, children at home, bed at night. Simrit felt on the verge of a fatal realization. She was no longer able to follow the goals Som had set for himself, and the inability seemed to be spreading through her veins, affecting the very womb of her desires, drying the fount within her. (p.93)

Som is baffled at first and is them angered by her behaviour, as if she had attacked his honour. Simrit feels attenuated and she pleads to Som We don't have to live like strangers, do we? (p.96) She passionately asks Som to be "friends":

Can't we just hold hands? Can't a husband and wife be friends? Is that forbidden? ....And out of that non-insistence, that non-preying upon each other, something sweet may down. (p.96)
Som, however lacks the tenderness to respond sensitively to her needs. Friendly, involving and free relationship with Simrit are "quite beyond" him and this resulted in the "systematic cutting off" (p.97).

Simrit gets terribly shaken when Som abruptly warns her that one week should give her enough time to decide what she wants to do: "get on with a normal life or finish this farce once and for all" (p.997). The "ultimatum" stuns her. She knows intuitively that he had settled the matter, already complete without her, on his way to a new chapter." (p.98)

Legally speaking, it was true that" the only thing you could get without a hitch was a divorce" (p.45), yet in a society, age-old perceptions and attitudes regarding women's independent identity had not changed. Legal provisions were no solace, nor compensation for social frigidity. Simrit, therefore "feels uprooted and abandoned in a husband - centered world" The divorce settlement continues to weight heavily on her, not only in sociol - economic but also psychological terms:

The tissue of marriage could be dissolved by human acts, but its anatomy went on and on. And skeletons could endure for a million years. Just living together daily routine produced that uncanny durability. It made the question of whether one had loved or not, been loved or not, been the transgressor or transgressed against trivial by comparison (p.64)

Simrit herself, it seems is unable to transcend the middle class sensibility of Indian women ingrained over time. Simrit herself feels she has "offended against something old and ordained (p.131). Holding herself guilty, she feels as if she were entirely to blame for upsetting a cosmic harmony" (p.138).

Even after divorce, Som manages to pin down Simrit in the role of a victim by the way of divorce settlement called Consent Terms. It puts shares of some companies in the name of Brij as Simrit as his guardian, and hence she would have to pay the heavy taxes till Brij attains adulthood. The heavy tax payments are an attempt to enslave her in every way, and divorce instead of being a new beginning is a confrontation with the age-old orthodox views regarding the status of women. Simrit realizes that the heavy tax payments are not a mistake or an oversight but Som's way of punishing her. The settlement reflects his ethics:

She felt surrounded by a remorseless complicated machinery from which there was no escape, all because of money. Money had been a part of the texture of her relationship with Som, an emotional, forceful ingredient of it, intimately tied to his self-esteem. Money was, after all, a form of pride, even of violence (p.60).
Som is clever enough to tell Brij about the tax problem from his own point of view before Simrit can do it and thus forestalls any understanding from that quarter. All her attempts to make others see the divorce settlement from her point of view fail because people do not have any sympathy for a woman seeking freedom and fulfillment. Moolchand, Som's employee interested and disinterested parties both see nothing wrong with it. Raj, however is outraged by the ruthless pinning down.

Recovering from bewilderment and emotional trauma of divorce, Simrit struggles to build a new life for herself and her children. Simrit meets Raj, a bachelor and sincere and conscientious Member of parliament. The broad sympathies and humane attitude of Raj attracts her steadily. He helps Simrit regain her equilibrium, both emotional and intellectual. Raj, is cast in entirely different mould than Som. Unlike Som, and like Simrit, Raj values tremendously the human value and human response to life. "Raj himself draws his strength not from his position or his religion but from his awareness of himself and others as human beings, from his honesty of purpose and sincerity of belief". Raj has the capacity to be involved in causes not entirely. His own and not in the hope of a reward or a reputation but purely out of conviction. Involvement to him is the real meaning of the act of living. Raj, like Rakesh in This Time of Morning and Vishal in Storm is a man with his faith in modern liberal humanism.

Simrit, draws on Raj's strength and understanding to stand upright and alive once again. Simrit feels that Raj is "the only stable element in the emotional debris of her new world (p.16). The settlement he feels, is the ultimate in exploitation, inflicted on an unresisting, unsuspecting victim". He defectively describes the consent terms as "a sort of Hiroshima" (p.138). He lashes out at the society for it general approval. Raj explains to the ignorant Simrit the legal terms of the document and how it "trapped and Maimed her". Raj makes her realize that the document has let her in for a slow butchery for as long as she lives (p.40). He jolts Simrit out of the crippling passivity. The document infuriates him every time he thinks of it and is "burned" into his brain. Raj's deep concern with her tax problem surprises even Simrit. Raj explains: "And have not you ever known anyone who acted purely out of conviction? ....Without hope of reward, or honour or even understanding?" (p.41).

Raj explains to his mentor and friend Ram Krishan that this sort of "injustice" puts him in "an objective fury" (p.167). Raj is exasperated at the callous indifference of even friendly and god-fearing people like N.N. Shah. Ram Krishan, however, shares Raj's frame of mind and understands Simrit's problem. He explains to Raj:
In matters like this tax problem sentiment and custom have almost as much to say as the Law. The Hindu woman traditional has no rights apart from what her father or her husband choose to bestow her. The law has changed but attitudes have not changed much, which is clear from the husbands' attitude in this case and the court's acceptance of such a document. (p.108)

Even Ram Krishan is "astound by the personality of the man who could dictate such terms and the complexity of motives that could carry a battle so far into the future, far beyond the end of the relationship" (p.178) Ram Krishan wonders that "Even the most ruthless left a way of escape to the enemy" (p.178), but the Consent Terms, he feels were titled finally and fully against Simrit, yoking her till the day she died to a load of tax that would cripple her capacity to earn. Ram Krishan, too feels involved with Simrit's problem:

But the thing had to be caught and nailed down and exposed for what it was, a naked brand of exploitation, all the more shameless because it was taken for granted (p.180).

Ram Krishan exhorts Simrit not to yield and to adopt "non-violence in action" - "The refusal to bend the knee, low the head" (p.181).

Raj Garg, who himself has a tragic experience of unfruitful love, understands Simrit. Raj, in his early youth had been deeply involved with a Hindu girl Shaila for four years. But Shaila's parents chose a husband for her and she unresisting accepted their decision, despite her love for Raj, Shaila "had disowned him utterly" (p.105). Raj had been deeply shocked. His equilibrium had returned with "painful slowness" as his own feeling for her had been "deeper based, fully analysed" (p.106). There after, Raj had diverted himself with a crusaders zeal to politics. After a long time, Raj feels attracted towards Simrit. Both Raj and Simrit, sense that they can be sensitive and intimate companions to each other sharing ideas and values.

The relationship which begins as a friendly companionship, soon blooms into a strong relationship involving both of them deeply. Raj Garg feels that his relationship with Simrit has "to be on a long strong basis" and "no games of any sort (p.159) Simrit too feels that Raj's "attraction" starts from his "mind" his zeal, commitment and involvement and "from there the journey was infinite" (p.160) Raj prefers Simrit, as she appreciates her as "the guardian of a full blown life, lived, scarred and experienced" (p.106). Simrit is fascinated by the "ease and range of movement that came of walking, speaking and living with open naturalness" (p.160). Significantly Raj, values Simrit as an individual not as a possession:

It was Simrit for herself he wanted, Simrit to forsake her shadows and begin to live. (p.167)
Raj encourages Simrit to start living with renewed zest. Ram Krishan too notices "the fatal combine of love and friendship "between Raj and Simrit. (p.187). Ram Krishan’s own wife Vinita had been a remarkable "friend and companion" (p.173). He had "untaught" Vinita, his orthodox bride, the society's concept of wife hood involving merely cooking and housekeeping.

Nayantara Sahgal portrays the physical love of Simrit and Raj frankly and freely. When both Raj and Simrit are sure of the deep bond of intimacy and love, their relationship is consummated : physical love comes naturally and spontaneously with the reassurance "that the bond between them was reliable" (p.184). Simrit feels:

From the beginning they had been in step, lovers from another life lime, forging an intimacy deeper than any she had ever known. (p.206)

Raj, too feels "utter tranquility. (p.207). Confident of their intimacy compatibility and love for each other, Raj and Simrit decide to marry in near future. Som strikes once again as he contacts Simrit for some changes in the consent Terms. Simrit, however is no longer "the unsuspecting unresisting victim" as she sees through the "another form of execution (p.221) and certainly not a reprieve Simrit realizes that "after all these years to find that Som was a man without pity or concern, or even real responsibility". (p.221) Raj proposes marriage to Simrit, knowing it too well that she has hordes of children, a monstrous tax problems. To him Simrit, an uprooted mother of several children is essentially "a woman of culture". (p.122) Raj and Simrit’s plan to get married, reinforces the idea that marriage has not failed as a social institution nor has it out lived its utility. As Ram Krishan watches Raj and Simrit, he happily thinks:

The mild food of friendship was all very well, but tonight there was a live current connecting them, bright lights dancing. The beginning he had watched had come to fruition. And holy matrimony was the true and ancient answer to the holiest of God’s gifts (p.232).

Jasbir Jain, too explains the vision projected through the novel: "Nayantara’s viewpoint appears to be a desire to place marriage in the proper social and emotional perspective. Man-woman relationship whether with in or outside marriage needs to be liberated from conventional approaches to it in order to become a satisfying and fulfilling one. Marriage is neither a system of slavery nor an escape route. It is not even a contract for it is wrong to approach it is that spirit. It is a partnership based on respect and consideration and requiring involvement from both".32 What concerns Nayantara Sahgal most is the need for a mature approach to marriage, the need to nurture it with love and care and candour. The relationship Raj and Simrit is grounded in sympathy and understanding, human communication and friendship, rather than bestial sensuality and
cruel insensitivity, seems to be the world that Nayantara not only wishes to depict but also prescribes as the only sane and sensible alternative to the machinists world of power, atrocities and greed.

*Shadow* is the study of the deadly struggle that accompanies the attempts of an Indian woman to liberate herself from the moral and social pressures that combine with economic dependence to exercise a crippling power over middle women is marked with intense indignation as well as sensitivity and compassion. Clearly, the exploitation she talks of, is not any obvious, recognizable form of physical exploitation against which most people will naturally raise a cry, but a subtle and inhuman form of exploitation a sort of beating where "blood and bruises don't show" (p.187). The indignation of the author at Simrit's helplessness and appalling situation is clear when she says that "divorce for women - nature is like a sin, and in expiation of her share of guilt she stays mute and acquiescent over the settlement, willing to accept it as a part of her Karma. Simrit a symbolic of human race". Simrit herself, is able to transcend the middle class sensibility of Indian women ingrained over time, with great difficulty and introspection and with Raj's tremendous help. Interestingly however, a critic, Irene Gilbert, comments that "perhaps it is only a difference of degree, but many independent women in West would insist their situations were similar". Ultimately, however, Simrit does emerge as an individual asserting her distinct identity but she all realizes the limits of isolated individual efforts in a nefarious social web: "Life was never long enough to overthrow all the tyrants" (p.236). However she hopes: "May be the question would be different in the twenty - first century" (p.6).

In *Shadow* Sahgal also depicts the strain and the conflict suffered by the children of the divorced parent's. Brij, Som and Simrit's eldest son, from the very childhood has been closer to Som, whom he resembles very much. Just like his father, Brij, even though young, he already exercises "an unconscious superiority the ancient male prerogative" (p.69). He desperately wants to measure upto his father's standards as his appreciation of his father is "genuine and whole hearted" (p.69). For Som only his son counts as he satisfies his male ego and his pride of possession: Som does not communicate with him but merely exercises his power by dangling a hope in front of him:

Knowledge of Pa had been gradual, hammered in by specific incidents, buttressed by 'if'. That was how Brij had described it to himself and his friends. "You'll get that gun if--". If he did well in his exams. ... If. "You don't get something for nothing," his father had said and all along it had been prove yourself. Be tough. Be a winner. Be a man. The kind of man who batters his way through opposition - and arrives (p.69).
Though he is full of admiration for his father, yet Brij feels uneasy by the definite distance between him and Pa, 'the little journey to be made each time to acceptance ...' (p.69) Simrit resents this and tries to convince Som that money is no substitute for affection and interest. The younger ones, pay any attention to anything of value - emotions, attachment or involvement - only superficial acts of life engaged their attention Simrit is disappointed. The five children - move out with Simrit. Simrit tries to explain the savage Consent terms, "neutrally, if one could be neutral about crimes" (p.63). Most importantly, Simrit wants to protect both their characters, her son's and her own from "curdling" (p.64). Som lures him with the money of the Shares he is going to inherit. Brij is worried about his mother's burden and wants to talk to his father about the consent terms but it is "too big a risk" and he closet "dare (p.71). Mr Sahgal portrays sensitively the conflict and the pain tormenting the young Brij:

But I will look after her, he decided. I'll do so much for her. I won't let anything hurt her. When I'm older I'll help her out. He staggered the dark thoughts. Stupid people weren't happy because they didn't realize that life had to be lived in compartments father in one, mother in another Two lives, not one, with loyalty to each carefully apportioned, nothing lost - which those ninny sisters of his didn't seem to realize. (p.72)

Moreover, only Som can help him realize his desperate yearning to go abroad. Som, finally promises Brij to send him abroad, but adds that he would like Brij to move in with him. Brij does feel the pain of the broken home, as the happy memories of the happier past haunt him. However he struggles hard to control "that futile agony to undo in imagination what the grown ups had done." (p.216). However the lure of money and prestige proves too strong for the soft, emotional appeal of Simrit and Brij, finally casts his lot with Som: Simrit is hurt by Brij's decision to join Som. Raj helps Simrit to overcome her grief and advices her to "share" Brij's happiness and excitement.

In Situation, the political theme dominates the narrative and dictates the portrayal of the man -woman relationship. The novelist delineates effectively the circumscribed personal life of the politicians living "perpetually in the lime - light (p.52). Hence there is limited but probing portrayal of the personal relationship of the political personalities. At the same time there is a probing and sensitive portrayal of a young couple - Rishad and Skinny Jaipal. The novel also delineates the tension of a mismatched couple - Usman and Nadira, who eventually overcome the gulf separating them.

In Situation, Devi, the widowed sister of the dead P.M. Shivraj is the Education Minister. Devi had been shocked by Ishwar's, her husband, premature death just after a few years
of marriage. After three months Usman, who had been a close family friend, helped her in overcoming her desolation. Devi as a brain, an ability, an attractiveness spontaneously made love to her:

The act of love had never been so simple, fulfilling an unconscious yearning in himself to know her better deeply, as alone a man and a woman can know each other. And he knew beyond any doubt that the feel of her breasts under his hand and his seeking mouth, was in some way setting her free. She would not end her abundant emotional life at Ishwar's pyre. She would live and more. He had helped to restore that lovely pride, the assurance and a aristocracy of her. (p.29).

Devi had shared with Usman her intense grief. However, later "By common consent, their love - making had rarely gone as far as that again" (p.29). Usman became a very dependable and good friend for Devi. Usman clarifies their relationship, years later to his wife Nadira:

I am not Devi's lover. I admire her. Has that really ever come between you and me. (p.136)

Nayantara Sahgal's portrayal of Devi's friendship with Usman is certainly unconventional, as in the widow is condemned to physical and emotional isolation in the Indian society.

Devi reciprocates the love of Michael a British Journalist. They have to meet clandestinely at far off places such as temples and woods and ruins, to avoid the risk of being seen together. A "new principality of need and desire" had swept both of them. In Delhi, the problem of when and where to make love to Devi loomed up as, "In Delhi everybody knew everybody, and Devi was public property, sharing Shivraj's house and perpetually in the limelight" (p.85). Their meetings were tense. Michael, too feels the sensation of his encounter with the "charmed inner circle" (p.85) of Devi, Usman and Shivraj:

Michael senses another factor impeding their relationship: Devi's excessive attachment to her charismatic brother Shivraj: "She seemed all given to her brother, his life, his needs. She had no other life". (p.52). Michael senses incestuous shades of Devi's relationship with Shivraj: "The Pharaohs had married their sisters" (p.52). Devi, herself told Michael of the intimate bond uniting her and Shivraj: "We were twins, born six years apart" (p.51). Devi insisted: May be he was the inside and I was the outside of the same person (p.51). Michael delivered an ultimatum to marry him. Devi, however refuses point - blank as she couldn't do the things other people do" (p.52). She explain to Michael that she had a duty to Shivraj" (p.54). Michael is unable to understand this "duty". Devi explains that being "English" Michael can't "understand". It is a big word
- for us. It is not something chilly and punishing. It's almost religion. Without it, my life would have no meaning. (p.55). Michael realizes "with herself, with Shivraj, it was all the same thing, they were so much flesh of each others' flesh, their very souls mixed." (p.55). But instead of being jealous Michael too grows "to love him instead". He understands Devi after all, "wretched and unwilling" (p.35). Disappointed Michael leaves India, only to return after ten years with two unsuccessful marriages.

Even after ten years of separation Michael feels "the years had done little to free him of her bewildering charm" (p.42). Devi, too confesses the tremendous strain of living alone so long, and finds his presence "therapeutic" (p.86). It is now that Devi tells Michael that even Shivraj had urged her to "be happy" as Shivraj himself "never had a purely personal life and him it was a priceless possession. In some ways he live through me" (p.87). Yet despite regrets she had obeyed some thing deeper". Sahgal highlights the angularities of this inter racial relationships. Michael feels the difference between their outlook and views.

When there were no rules to go by you could only obey yourself. But when he'd first known her it had been a rule - ridden world and he had ignored it for need of her. Love as far as he was concerned, had nothing to do with anything but love. With Devi he'd learned to measure even her emotion against a different older set of values (p.87).

Michael has returned to write a biography of Shivraj. (p.95). Devi joins Michael as they both catch up the events and experiences, of the past ten years. Michael wonders how many men enjoyed a woman so essentially tough and capable. She turned to him and with the insight and extravagance she had always brought to loving made their coming together both epic and simple.

Devi, too accepts that as she has "no ambition left" so she "must be really in love" (p.96). At last their relationship grows into an intimate companionship. Michael appreciates Devi's understanding attitude and knows that "his comings and goings from now on would be their joint concern" (p.164).

Devi, thus, does emerge as an individual in the end, though in the beginning she had been satisfied merely to be the "ghost" of her brother. In the end she does come to Michael, uninhibited by either the demands of the public life or by her "duty" to her brother. The author portrays sensitively Devi's loneliness and isolation after Shivraj's death. On meeting Michael she is able to renew once again their relationship. And this time the relationship is certainly based on the firm ground of intimacy and companionship.
Usman and Nadira in *Situation* are the couple who too are able to overcome the gulf separating them. Usman and Nadira are remarkably different personalities with altogether different expectations from their marriage. Nadira, very beautiful and desirable is preoccupied with her own voluptuousness and languor and for her the relationship remains only "within the ambit of their physical relationship" (p.34). Usman, however, intensely wants his wife to share his intellectual and emotional life too. Usman appreciates intelligence and receptivity to ideas rather than mere physical beauty and desirability of a woman. Usman admires Devi for her intellectual vigour and vitality. Usman's relationship with women as Devi had always transcended the physical level to forge intellectual companionship, but Nadira joins Usman only at the level of physical relationship. Usman is desperate to:

Be with her. Yet she was not with him, in his friendships and loyalties, in the passions of his mind and heart, in his central concerns. When he took a woman he took a mind as well. He had no use for just bodies. Every woman he had intimately known had been incomparably more the him than that. It was the final irony that this had not happened with his own wife. She remained so determinedly remained a body. (p.33)

Nadira mistakes "his loyalties for hot - blooded fantasies, the witchcraft of another woman's spell, the blaze and heat of sexual magnetism - when they were vastly simpler" (p.84). Nadira never joins Usman, Shivraj, Devi and others in the thought - inspiring atmosphere surcharged with intellectual vigour and vitality. She is never present in their gathering, "except as a physical presence" (p.78), sitting detached and speaking nothing at all. Nadira's intellectual frigidity disgusts Usman, who wants her to join him in his intellectual pursuits. Nadira's obscurantist religious ideas too impinge on their relationship. Nadira also resents Devi's influence friendship over Usman. Usman clarifies:

I'am not Devi's lover. I admire her. Has that really ever come between you and me ? (p.136)

As long as their physical relationship are warm and satisfying, Nadira is satisfied with their relationship. Nadira is rather bewildered how could Usman and Devi share such deep a relationship without any physical relationship. She wonders "what bound these people together, even when one of them was dead ? (p.81) Nadira is unable to comprehend the real nature of Devi and Usman's relationship as for Nadira man -woman relationship can exist only in the physical realm and intellectual companionship and friendship, is just beyond her rationale. However even Michael understands Devi
and Usman as "friends. When Usman finally decides to resign as V.C. To lead student's agitation, he wants Nadira's "understanding and support" (p.135). Usman pleads he wants her "stubborn uncompromising heart and mind". (p.136).

Nadira, however insists that it's such a crime to want comfort and security and recognition, though Usman has "very little regard for those things" and is all determined to resign. Nadira suspects Devi's "terrifying influence" of having motivated Usman to resign. Nadira gives no response at all to Usman's frequent plea to join him. Usman knows they have reached and impasse and he would not try "to draw" her into this venture with him again. He realizes this separation is "final and it hurt" (p. 137) and he had underestimated his own vulnerability. However, their relationship is saved by just one gesture of Nadira as she joins Usman at Michael's house. Usman, tremendously relieved:

He felt a whole - hearted admiration for her will to understand, even if understanding wasn't yet there. It showed in his face, in the keen delight he took in her presence (138).

Thus even so diametrically opposite couple as Usman and Nadira too are able to sustain their relationship as there is "a will to understand".

Rich offers a sensitive and probing study of two very interesting and complex facets of the man - woman relationship: inter - racial marriage and polygamy. Sahgal's portrayal is remarkable for pertinent psychological analysis and sensitive delineation. In Rich she deals with the problem of adjustment faced by an English woman Rose married to an Indian Ram. The situation is all the more complex and precarious as Ram is already married to Mona. Sahgal handles the complex situation dexterously, as she captures the dilemma of inter - racial romance and inter - racial marriage as well as the polygamous relationship. At the same time the novel vociferously exposes and condemns the savage custom of burning the wife on husband pyre called Sati. Rich documents the change in the Indian social scene, particularly for women as it chronicles Sonali's great - grand mother's forced immolation in the earlier century and Sonali's decision to go abroad for higher studies, to secure job and finally to stay unmarried. The novel traces the tremendous changes and difference in the life of Sonali as compared to that of her great - grand mother.

In Rich Sahgal illustrates vividly the charm and fascination as well as the strains and the tension of an inter-racial marriage of Ram and Rose. Ram, the only son of a wealthy businessman Lalji, is on a pleasure trip to London. Ram meets Rose, who is a lower middle class girl working as a salesgirl. Attracted by Rose's arresting looks, Ram
soon learns to respect her individuality and sense of self respect. Though already engaged to Freddie, a worker in the bottle factory. Rich, cultured, educated and highly knowledgeable Ram fascinates Rose:

She had entered an emotional labyrinth and she was drawn magnetically on, with Ram doing no more than holding her hand for the entire two weeks before he asked her, a victim of casual thinking sorcery, to marry him. (p.50)

Despite her parent's strong opposition and with full knowledge of Ram's first marriage, Rose decides to marry Ram. Ram happily informs her that his religion lets a man have more than one wife. (p.38). Mysteriously charmed Rose "was as distraught as her mother, as baffled as her father, and she couldn't explain what she was doing. She didn't know herself anymore" (p.39). Only Freddie her fiancee recognizes her "fateful encounter with Ram" and happily sends her off, absorbing her guilt. Rose and Ram sail for India. Rose "holds him off" till they are married. Rose has her own ideas and reasons to guard her virginity as, "It was the only way she could show him she had a mind and feelings of her own", thus she had successfully motivated him "to respect her for the individual she was". (p.40).

Rose is bold enough to cross all racial and class borders, as she decides to marry Ram, an upper class Indian even as India is under the Imperial rule. Rose leaves behind all - her home, her parents, her country, her society and even the familiar structure of love and marriage - to join Ram. In India, Rose is married to Ram, according to the Indian rites, yet she hardly cares about their marriage "not being Christian - legal" (p.40). Rose feels:

The scantily of the hoary tradition had not kept Ram attached to his first wife. (p.40).

As despite all the auspicious planning and religious rituals and sacrament, Ram and Mona's marriage fails, Rose feels no security of the ritualistic marital bonds. Disappointed by the alien structure of marriage, she "anchor (s) her future in what she trusted most, her instincts, and they had not let her down. She had believed in romantic love and it had come true", (p.40), though with a different ceremony and in an alien society. In Ram's house Rose suffers the humiliating rejection by Ram's father Lalaji and his first wife Mona. Mona's presence and bitter resentment make's Rose's adjustment all the more complex and precarious. Mona's loud and vigorous lamentations breed guilt into Rose's troubled conscience Rose understands Mona's hostility a "natural enough reaction to an intruder , a usurper (p.53).
Nayantara Sahgal focuses the spotlight on the extremely complex and precarious nature of Rose's relationship with Ram as well as his first wife Mona. Sahgal delineates, Rose's "rebellious active misery" of the initial days of her adjustment to an entirely alien milieu and social ethos. Rose has to accept the Indian concept of the joint family as Ram rejects at once her suggestion of a separate household as "the Hindu Undivided Family was a legal entity under laws and laws apart, flesh and blood bonds. Could not be broken" (p.53). Though Ram had appeared very cultured and liberated to her in London, but back in India he complacently lives by the orthodox Indian concepts of family and marriage. He cheerfully informs a deeply disturbed Rose:

But there's no divorce. Hindu marriage is not a contract, it's a sacrament (P.54).

For Ram polygamy, too is a natural and common thing as it has religious and mythical sanctions. Christian Rose feels disgusted by the very idea of polygamy, and even more so by the religions sanction. Rose's tart reply exposes Ram's skillful manipulation of the religion and myths to suit his own interests:

... it seems to me, if you want to behave all right, you do, and if you don't want to, you blame it on what your mother made you do, or on the Greeks (p.55)

Despite tremendous strain and tension Rose "survive(s) the first weeks of adjustment" (p.55) Rose's jealousy with Mona, her insatiable curiosity, sense of adventure motivate her to stay. Being a Christian, she accepts her marriage" For better or for worse" (p.56). Moreover, being practical, Rose rejects the idea of her return to the life of strenuous economic and physical hardship in London. Yet she feels the strain of "the endless tug - of - war" with herself as she feels she is "at both the ends pulling" (p.58). Living in the country engulfed by the intense anti-British wave and in alien social milieu, Rose feels the strain of the division of conscience: she finds herself as two people, at home and in exile, ecstatic and wretched, Indian and British, saved and doomed (p.60).

Rose's troubled mental condition has been very dexterously and artistically portrayed through the sensitive imagery of moonlight filtering in the rooms as Rose wanders in the louse at night. Rose's complex situation is all the more complicated by Rose's inability to conceive even after many years of marriage. Rose is terribly hurt by her infertility as she fears that without a child of her own, she "would pass through this family, this frightening unshakeable permanence, having not the shadowiest imprint of her own on it" (p.64). Rose accepts Ram's home as "her home" as well as her "exile". She tries to adjust and even to win over Dev Mona's little son. Though Mona and Lalaji
are rigidly against her, yet every day she gets up "breathing hope, and a painful, problem-filled happiness carried her through the hours." (p.88). The shop which Ram and Rose set up together, brings them closer.

Ram's polygamous nature, shatters Rose's fragile peace of mind. Marcella's stunning beauty, elegance, upper class breeding sophistication and rich cultured talk, leaves Ram spell-bound. Even Rose realizes that Ram and Marcella "matched, fatally without the slightest effort. There was something feasibly horribly right about them." (p.90). Marcella claims Raju's his love, attention, company and time. Ram makes no attempt at subterfuge and his entire affair with Marcella is "open and normal" for him. Rose, feels totally alienated in an alien society. Rose feels helpless as there is hardly any communication between.

What word was there to say? Who was to blame? ... There was nothing, nothing to be done about it. She did not have even everyday words to pick and choose from, much less words to break spells. (p.90)

Sahgal once again brilliantly uses the moon-light imagery to reflect Rose's anguish. (p.94). Moonlight cut her into stripes as she flitted through rooms shuttered against night flying creatures during the nocturnal wanderings. It is now that Rose realizes Mona's grief on being deserted by Ram. "In the utter stillness, the thin sobbing sound of pure grief no one was meant to hear, froze Mona's tears in Rose's eyes" (p.94).

Marcella, however returns to Englands and leaves behind a dazed Ram cocooned in his "mournings for Marcella" and Rose "old and experienced in suffering" (p.94). Rose "resigned to being part of a threesome, even when the third person wasn't there anymore, like Marcella, or didn't matter anymore, like Mona." (p.105). Rose feels alienated as Ram and Marcella behave like "the rightful lovers, making her, Rose, the outsider" (p.105). Rose describes Marcella's attitude brilliantly using political imagery:

She had walked into their life with the effortless, guiltless ease of the ruling class, and occupied it. (p.105)

Ram is reduced to a "dazed jelly" as he sinks deeply into "melancholy" and even ignores his business. However, Marcella's desertion bring Ram back to Rose. As Rose is tormented by the war her country is fighting, he, comforts and consoles Rose. "With the almost feminine intuition Ram could display when it was most needed," (p.112) he sends a long cable to her parents. Rose is surprised that "Out of such war discourses and dry dialogues about Germany's military might is love reborn" (p.113). Rose discovers that love is "touching the oddest subjects with a tender warmth" (p.114). Yet at the same time Ram continues his correspondence with Marcella.
Sahgal explains very sensitively and brilliantly Rose’s travails of alienation and despair to acceptance. In the initial period Rose suffers rejection from Mona and Lalaji and even from Ram during his involvement with Marcella. However Rose, "proves herself quite capable of bridging the inequalities at two levels - the economic inequality where Ram has all the advantages, and the political inequality where she belongs to the race of the rulers. Rose, also bridges the gulf at the personal level as she manages to get accepted by Mona, Ram’s first wife and Ram’s father Lalaji. She is able to do this because she is conscious of herself as an individual and compels others to recognise this.37

Even at the social level, Rose overcomes distances, as evident in her sincere and long lasting relationships with Ram’s friends Zafar, Keshav and later Keshav’s daughter Sonali. Rose is overwhelmed but finally it is Mona’s "act of grace" that absolves her. Rose’s basic human goodness finds expression as she saves Mona from self - immolation. Rose feels miserable as "the guilt" and "responsibility" of her polygamous relationship with Ram pound her basically sensitive and kind soul:

By her own Christian principles, what rights had she here? She and Mona would never have been twinned in anguish but for her, Rose aggressor and tormentor.

Rose confesses her sense of "guilt" to Lalaji. Being a man of high integrity and "the austere morality" he feels rather he himself "owe (s) an apology" for having "judged" her "harshly for no fault of" her (p.139). Mona declares that they are "sisters" and starts sharing with Rose her experience and life with Ram. Finally Rose, Ram, Mona are united as a family - "An odd sort of family but unquestionably one" (p.140) as Rose puts it. Rose feels that without her’ new found confidence" she could not have faced the news of her parent’s death. Mona and Lalaji take the loss of her parents intimately and fiercely as their own personal loss” (p.141) Mona and Rose finally, not only accept each other, but become very intimate and close friends. The portrayal of the complex relationship of Rose and Mona has been portrayed poignantly. Despite life’s harshness: her parents die, there are moments of doubt of being and remaining alien, the country’s tragic partition shift to Delhi, Ram’s illness, all these happenings lake their toll but she is still capable of reaching out to people and extending sympathy and warmth". Rose is able to maintain strike and strong relationship with Sonali and later with Dev’s wife Nishi and the beggar. For Sonali Rose is very dear mother figure and well as much adored friend in whom she can confide and seek solace commented Rose and Sonali are too of a kind an their affinity goes to prove the value of individual strength.38
Nayantara Sahgal also delineates sensitively the insecurity and isolation of a middle-aged wife. After more than twenty years of their marriage Rose feels alienated. Competitive business has Ram by the throat and the social life is overflowing is strange, unknown, people. At middle age, Rose feels lonely:

At a time when she would like to settle down to a comfortable, quiet, unambitious life with Ram, private life seemed to have ended for ever. (p.161).

In Ram's business world of high fashion and sophistication, Rose feels out of place. Philanderous Ram scorns Rose for her overweight. At fifty, low ever, Rose feels that she has "already looked my best" and has gracefully accepted her age. (p.174). The fateful visit to London and Marcella once again separates Rose and Ram. Ram and Marcella look "wreathed in the peace and contentment of every known hunger satisfied", (p.175). Marcella is happily married, as she understands that marriage have "to be made of asbestos cement if they were going to last". (p.176). With acute anguish long past, Rose, now "could admire this gossamer creature who alone in all the world had ever turned Ram upside down and inside out" and yet could be peacefully and happily married with Bryan. Ram, coolly informs her that he is "convinced" that they need to live separately for a time.

Sahgal deplores the deeprooted notions which allow sexual liberties to men as their birthright. Ram treats his wives Mona and Rose - as his possessions and is supremely indifferent to their pain, expectations and individuality. He views every relationship in life in terms of his own advantage. Insensitive to the feelings of his first wife Mona, he brings an English wife Rose, just when she has given birth to their first child. When he is involved with Marcella, and later with the wife of Turkish ambassador, he takes them as "open and normal", supremely indifferent to Rose's grief. Ram, very easily yields to feminine charms and inflicts much emotional grief first to Mona then to Rose. Rose realizes that he wants to keep "himself free so that he and Marcella could evolve the perfect companionship" (p.179) Rose once again is haunted by the chilling prospects of alienation and grief:

his plans for his intellectual love of Marcella placing Rose on the pencil line between high crags again, the void falling away below. (p.80).

Yet despite all the humiliation and grief, Rose confesses to old friends Zafar and his wife, the only thing she could not "bear in any circumstances would be a divorce" and she "could never bear to lose Ram" (p.192). Rose realizes that despite the pain, Ram is "no less magnetic or mysterious than on the day in the chocolate shop". (p.192). After five years, Ram, Suddenly comes to Rose with a blueprint for a house. Rose herself is
not "able to join in the house - building euphoria" as between Ram and herself there had been a five year "spell of amnesia, when, their day - to - day contact cut off, they had moved in unconnected worlds" (p.195).

Sahgal sensitively depicts the trauma of broken relationships and the subsequent grief and loneliness. Rose, suffers tremendously due Ram's selfcentred polygamous nature. He decides his actions, arrivals, departures and plans without any consideration what so ever for Rose. With Mona's death Rose feels all the more lonely. She herself is childless and she is unable to foster any meaningful relationship with Dev - Mona's son. Dev's suppressed hatred of Rose, erupts as he threatens her with dire consequences and forges withdraw's Rose and Ram's money with forged cheques. Rose feels alienated :

The secrecy more than anything told her how much she had irretrievably lost, how alone she was (p.215).

Just as Rose decides to fight for justice, Dev's men throttle her, when she is alone in the tomb near her house. Sonali, is grieved as she knows Rose intimately and "by no stretch of imagination could Rose have taken her own life" (p.233). Sonali realistically realizes that "A murderer protected by the ramparts of political power put it much further beyond the reach of justice". (p.223). Sonali expresses the real quality of Rose's character as she says :

There had to be a special grace and favour reserved for people like her who loved and cherished strangers (p.228).

Sonali rightly feels that "Rose had transcended those things, blood, race, distance" (p.228). Though Rose is immediately forgotten by her own family, yet she lives in the heart of strangers like Sonali and the beggar.

Nayantara Sahgal excels in portrayal of the relationship without marriage as well. In Morning Situation, Storm, Rich and Identity, she explores the man-woman relationship in the Indian society before marriage. Significantly, Sahgal projects the feminine as well as the masculine perspective of human relationships. Portrayal of Nita and Leela (Morning), Saroj (Storm), Raj (Shadow), Priya, Rishad and Madhu (Situation), Sonali (Rich), Bhushan, Sylla, Willie May (Identity) the various dimensions of pre-marital relationships.

Through the character of Nita in Morning Sahgal explores the relationships in the affluent upper-class, prior to marriage. She exposes the hypocrisy of this class where women are allowed to take drinks or to smoke in the name of the freedom and modernity, but are not allowed to independent decision in choosing their life partners. Nita is the young, beautiful daughter of D. Narang who is a queer blend of Eastern and
Western Culture. While their life style imitates the Western culture with clubs, parties, drinks, dances, and bridge, but the outlook of Dr. Narang is typically orthodox. His daughter, Nita, is bound by severe restrictions on her movement, socialising, choice of career, and even her husband. Sahgal refers to the rigid social codes in her first novel, *A Time to Be Happy*, where Sanad, a young officer working in a foreign company, wants to spend his evening with girls like his English officers but dare not do it, because "well brought up young Indian women did not go out with young men unchaperoned. To be seen alone in public with a man would have been a scandal enough for the rigid code of a provincial town" (*Happy*, p. 116). Nita abhors the "Victorian culture" and life style of her mother and yearns to seek an identity of her own. She feels miserable when she finds about her parents' decision to marry her off to a stranger. She seeks Rakesh's intervention to persuade her parents to delay her marriage and let her have a job. However, she herself fails to assert herself in refusing to marry a man of her parent's choice and is engaged. Mr. Narang is certainly a woman who not only subscribes to the conventions herself but also passes them on to her children. Later, Nita is allowed to take up a job, but the criterion is not Nita's choice. Kalyan, a minister, had offered the job, and they simply "didn't have the heart to refuse" (p. 147) a minister's offer. But Nita looks for something more than merely a job; she strives for independence and her individual identity. Feeling stifled in her family circle, Nita is instantly attracted to the charismatic elderly man Kalyan. She finds solace and happiness in his company as he relates to her as a person and not merely as Dr. Narang's daughter. She visits him frequently and expresses her love frankly (p. 152).

Nita's pre-marital involvement is not the result of the Western liberated style: it is an attempt to fulfill her inner desire for love and communication. "With Kalyan Sinha, sex comes naturally to her not because he loves her but because she has unconsciously allowed herself to love and admire him and turn to him in her desperation at being hedged in by convention". Through Nita is engaged emotionally is still dependant on Kalyan. She feels tremendous gratitude as Kalyan "gave me the freedom to be myself. I had never had that before. I'd never have known it but for you" (p. 219). She finally admits: "I've been so happy with you" (p. 220) Nita in fact is the "product of the dichotomies in her upbringing". On the one hand she is brought up in accordance with the liberated life style, but when the time comes to decide about her marriage, her parents decide her future and expect her to silently submit to their decisions.

Another young girl, Leela, pays very heavily for her pre-marital sexual liberty. She belongs to a "modest, unpretentious" (77). Hindu family of Banaras, and is studying in Redcliffe. In America, she gets every freedom which a young girl like Nita cherishes: Lipstick, dancing, going out with young men. She has taken this at first "with the
tremulous flutter of a bird just uncaged, and later with a soaring delight in every aspect of her new freedom" (p.58). As she had led a sheltered life in Banaras, she is unable to adjust in American society. Soon she realizes that she is pregnant and drowns herself in a river. Her pregnancy without marriage had been an "emotional shock" (p.76) and out of her shame and desperation she takes her life. Being an Indian girl, this is a matter of ultimate shame and dishonour for her and she does not even think of ways of escape. Sahgal conveys the disastrous consequences of pre-marital sexual relationship in Storm. In India, pre-marital sexual relationship of a woman are considered to be the highest sin. In the novel, Saroj's miserable plight as his husband Inder comes to know of her pre-marital experience, effectively and graphically conveys the harsh reality. During her college days, Saroj was friendly with one of the college mates, who would visit her house quite often. Out of curiosity she once had sex with him. For her it was only a part of her "growing up" but for Inder it an unpardonable sin. Though he himself had a lot of sexual experience yet he brutally tortures, humiliates and punishes Saroj for her "sin". Sahgal vociferously condemns the double standards:

It always amazes me what is taken for granted in a man is horrifying in a woman. Even in this day and age. Imagine.

Inder's hypocritical chauvinistic notions regarding pre-marital sex cause tremendous grief to Saroj, Vishal, vehemently protests: "A woman was not entitled to a past, not entitled to human hunger, human passion or even human hunger" (p.192).

Madhu in Situation is another innocent victim of the taboo-ridden, hypocritical orthodox society. Despite being the victim of heinous gang-rape by a group of university in the Registrar's office, she finds no sympathy from her parents or from the society. She desperately needed care, love and sympathy of her parents, instead she finds herself isolated and a burden on her parents, who in turn want to get rid of her by marrying her off and consult many astrologers about it. Madhu, however, does not want to marry, as she has not yet come out of her horrible experience. At home, no one pays attention to her emotional needs or shares her grief. She is rather ridiculed for her screaming and told to keep silent. Afraid of scandal and social ostracization, they don't even think of justice, instead they try to suppress the incident. But before they can settle her marriage with a man from incident was known, in her desperation and helplessness, she decides to end her life. Even if she had been married once the incident was known, she would have been condemned to perpetual misery on account of her loss of virginity. This incident of rape, exposes the rigid codes regulating a girl life in Indian society which cannot pardon a stigmatized girl however innocent.
Only unquestioning submission to the role assigned by the society, can bring happiness to women. Pinky, a unthinking type of character is presented as a foil to the girls of substance as Priya and Madhu. Pinky, born in a very wealthy family, willingly accepts the traditional role. "Girls like Pinky lived as their mother and grand mother had" (p.42). Her thinking is limited only to her clothes, beauty parlours and parties. She does not know anything about sex or contraceptives. Her mother thinks, "It's rubbish, this modern business about knowing everything before you marry" (p.41). For her marriage means only fabulous cloths, jewellery, out lugs and she is not at all aware of the obligations involved in this relationship. However Sahgal conveys her disapproval of girls like Pinky through ironic comments and she is only a minor character.

The relationship of Priya and Rishad in Situation is a remarkable study of the adolescent relationship. Rishad, who is "addicted to his and dazzlingly successful in it" (p.60) is also a member of the outlawed Naxalite movement. Rishad, meets her, when he ransacks Swaranpriya's house, as a part of the Naxalite movement's terrorising mission. Surprising she helps Rishad in destroying her own things and pleads him to meet her again. Rishad meets her in the college and she is awestruck by Rishad's political commitment and record - breaking academic achievement. Rishad is impressed by Skinny's intelligence, idealism perception and curiosity and been involvement with studies:

It was a long time since anyone outside the group had remotely roused his respect. (p.170)

Rishad feels isolated with "the loneliness of not enough others to share a belief with. The people in his environment were like tribes and clans walled in by their fixed ideas, reacting in predictable blocks. Swaranpriya, however soon grows into an enthusiastic, girl deeply involved in history, music and dance. Jasbir Jain points out "it is skinny and not Devi who is in direct line to Simrit". She has a passion for the act of living and involves herself fully in whatever she undertakes - in her study of history as a subject, in her learning of dance and music, and also in destroying her own and her dead mother's possessions. She supremely confident and superior on the stage though she feels awestruck, nervous and excited while talking with Rishad. She has the audacity of innocence with which she combines a certain conventionality of behaviour when it comes to taking a lift with Rishad.

With her natural grace and classical beauty Rishad realizes that she looks like "a platinum in a junk shop" (p.141). The mutual respect and intellectual compatibility is consummated as the two unite as lovers. Rishad knows with the power and thrill of prophecy that Priya "would grow and grow, become a strange and wonderful woman,
inside and out” (p.145). Priya intensely feels that she would love Rishad till the day she died. Both are deeply touched by the "joy and discovery" of the might they spend together by the side of road. Sexual relations come naturally and spontaneously as a celebration affirmation of their intense involvement and love. Rishad feels tremendously "peaceful" as at least some of future is "clearer". Priya provides a perspective to his views and helps to resolve some of his conflicts:

He had been mixed up, Priya was right, waiting for that realm to be miraculously revealed to him while he lived his own life in another. Priya had demonstrated the first time he met her that revolution begins with oneself, is not a lesson given to others (p.146).

Rishad decides to make "the only contribution that could matter: a clean break with the life he led, an end to this sterile intellectual participation, and a going over to the other side". Though the exact shape of his future course is still not exactly clear, yet he decides to make some plans with Priya and Naren. However his untimely death kills a budding relationship.

Relationship of Sonali and Ravi in Rich is another in depth study of pre-marital relationship. The portrayal is remarkable for its psychological accuracy and truthfulness. Alternating with the accounts of Rose’s life and thought are Sonali’s account. Sonali is contrasted with Rose. She is an I.A.S officer in a free country and has all the advantages - parental support, an education abroad, and above all a mind of her own. Sonali’s and Ravi’s mothers are very close friends, hence they have practically grown up together. As their mother, decide to marry them as they grow up as "A marriage joined from top to bottom by caste, community and background koftas and mitha bhattas was the best" (p.50). Deeply shocked by the marriage of her friend at a very young age, Sonali however strongly rejects the idea of early marriage and opts for higher studies abroad and a career. At Oxford Sonali, is enthralled with "a sense of new found freedom" (p.97) Sonali and Ravi are constant companions at the Oxford and deeply in love.

Sonali and Ravi, continually share experiences and ideas and feel very close to each other. Sonali and Ravi, hear respond to the "siren song of Marxism". Abandoning their emotional complacency they fall into "an organizing fever" setting up a tiny radical group to discuss Indian problems. Sonali and Ravi’s companionship and close relationship is consummated as they unite physically, though Sonali never expected or even imagined. As she explains, the incestuous nature of their relationship.

Yet the day we lay down together on my bed we were doing little more than rejoining in our long familiarity, our continuing brother - and - sisterhood. (p.102)
Love making for Sonali and Ravi is simply "the enriching of an acquaintance begun from the womb" (p.103). Sonali feels that they have achieved "a perfect relationship", as they "Lay brain to brain as much as body to body, with a completeness of loving old and practised lovers would have envied". (103). However Sonali painfully realizes that "only the perfect relationship can be utterly destroyed the moment one fine hairlike crack appears in the structure" (p.103). Sonali who "has a mind of her own" realizes that marriage with Ravi would be suffocating and suppressing her freedom - loving self:

but he's so rigid, so bossy, so selfish, if I married him I'd have to agree with him all the time. (p.180)

Though she "still" loves him, yet she cautiously decides not to marry Ravi. Sonali remain single as she feels she is "cured" of marriage and dedicates herself to her work. Ravi with "not enough red blood in his veins" (p.181) as Rose puts it, decides to marry the girl his mother has judiciously chosen as she is related to the P.M.'s family.

Sonali and Ravi, come closer, though temporarily, after many years. Sonali appeals to Ravi to help Rose in stopping Dev's forgery. Ravi has to pay for his speaking to Dev, and soon falls from favour of his mentors wisened and denoted, Ravi comes to Sonali and confesses

It's too late now, but if we had our time over again, I'd work it out differently. I spoke to Dev because I loved you dearly. I suppose I always have. (p.230).

"This admission of waste, of years gone and opportunity lost," fills Sonali with a "sweet relief" (p.230). Sonali is stirred by the "wonder of Kachru becoming Ravi again, of friendship resuming of love having been really love and not a mistake he had been trying to forget" (p.230). Sonali, however is matured emotionally thus realizes the futility of Ravi's request to renew their relationship, as she says:

It had been a jewel of time. It belonged in its young and shining setting, in the past. It wasn't mine any more to remake. And I was free of it. Most of all I was free. (p.230).

Though realizing the limitations of the resent Sonali and Ravi feel they can communicate as friends. In their renewed relationship they both nurture a sound friendship based on honesty, truth and communication.

Sahgal portrays the complex relationships of fully mature persons, without marriage in Plans. Anna, Henry and Nicholas, are not young rather they are mature people above thirty with firm ideas and ideals. Anna, is nearly thirty educated and intelligent woman. She is deeply involved with Nicholas a diplomat whose first wife is
dead. Profound influence of the feminist ideology and a staunchly profeminist father, ignites in Anna a deep yearning for self-realization. Her awakened mind refuses to accept the traditional role of wife hood cut out for women:

The order of priorities was fatally clear. Food, drink and the wedding date, followed by life in a jewelled status quo, and at the end of it, Here lies Anna, beloved wife, who died without having made much effort to live, and nobody noticed the difference, since being a beloved wife was supposed to be reward enough, whereas her priority was life and freedom first. (p.62)

Though she love Nicholas dearly, yet she inform him that she wishes to travel first, before setting down. Nicholas, with his clear cut order of priorities is astonished at her "infantile idea, Anna however protests vigorously and explains herself:

It is not silly wonders I am after. But what other way can I break out and be me? (p.135)

Nicholas understands Anna’s yearning for self-realization. A gamine respect for each other’s wishes and expectations, a warm understanding of each other natures a strong relationship between them which they both value tremendously. He senses the depth of their relationship as he acknowledges that they "are meant to love and cherish each other very much" (p.66). Nicholas is "forced to admit it was loving that mattered most (p.66). He appreciates the awakening of consciousness in Anna. He lends his full support to her in her efforts such as the funeral march of Emily Davison and in the activities of the Feminist movement. Nicholas’ cooperation and sincere efforts to understand brings him very close to Anna and evokes sincere love from her. And in keeping with their "new understanding" he helps Anna with plans for her trip to India and happily sends her off.

In India, Anna comes in contact with the English District Magistrate Henry Brewster. Anna is fascinated by the enigmatic personality of Henry. His a strong anti imperial stand and intense grief over his wife Stella’s desertion, particularly appeal to Anna’s romantic sensibilities. She is deeply touched Henry’s plight and she writes to Nicholas:

He is an eye-opener besides being a mold cracker. He is quite nakedly suffering and it is hard to watch him and remain unmoved. (p.88)

Anna confides in Nicholas the "great and growing desire to trespass" the wall of melancholy Henry had erected around himself. Tremendous similarity in ideas outlook and views regarding life, personal as well as political matters, draws them closer. Both Anna and Henry have strong anti-Imperialist ideas and champion humanistic values
such as equality, freedom, justice and honesty. Henry feels "greatly" indebted to Anna for her soothing company which enables him to overcome his intense grief over Stella's desertion. Anna is continually in touch with Nicholas too through long intimate letter. Yet at the same time, Anna feels the strong pull of Henry's attraction, consequently intense conflict disturbs her:

And no language had yet been devised to tell a man you sincerely loved that you had met another extraordinary man whom you were dangerously close to loving. (p.165)

Henry reads Anna's letter in his official duty of censorship. Thus he is well aware of Anna's deep and intimate relationship of Nicholas. He also senses their immense compatibility, and the budding love for each other. He realizes painfully the distance between himself and Anna's plans for her future. Accepting the temporary nature of their relationship he finally has to summon all his "determination" to distance himself from Anna a the "Summer visitors must get on with their lives" (p.30). By a strange twist of circumstance, Anna suspects Henry of Stella's murder. This suspicion causes repulsion and arouses angry disgust in Anna. The outbreak of World War I necessitates her return to England.

A year's separation influences the relationship of Anna and Nicholas. She finds their mutual sensitivity was rusty with disuse" (p.182). They overcome the distance and finally decide to marry. Reunited with Nicholas Anna explains to him the real reason of her separation from Henry. She confides in Nicholas that, "Her instinct had let her down so humiliatingly", (p.191). Anna is "taken completely unawares by the depth of her distress, and the resilient, haunting power of what Henry had done" (p.190). Henry's belated letter, which Anna receives after his depth, expresses the quintessence of "rational love" which "needs the manure of a common cause" (p.192). Henry's death and his belated latter unsettles Anna with a "strange and terrible heaviness of heart" (p.197). Nicholas is surprised to find Anna enveloped in a "mythic silence" and "distant and deal" Nicholas is shocked that through their "eventful" relationship "had be jolted by more than its fair share of surprises but this was the first time he had to deal with paralysis" (p.199). Anna, Nicholas and Henry are drawn into a complex labyrinth of relationship, as Anna is overpowered by her grief over Henry's loss.

Significantly Nicholas not only understands Anna's emotional instability and grief but also lends his full support to her. Nicholas understanding attitude brings the two all more closer chance meeting with Stella clears off Anna's suspicion. Both Anna and Nicholas are relived that they "had misjudged Brewster", and that Anna's "instinct had
not let her down and she'd be able to put the whole thing in its proper perspective" (p.207). Anna too is finally relieved and is able to settle down peacefully with Nicholas. Mature and Stable emotionally, Anna reflects thoughtfully:

The good, satisfying memories that folded peacefully away. The ones that kept alive as string belonged to the lost opportunity, the road one might have taken, for there was no relief from the embrace of thing that never happened (p.207).

Nicholas and Anna lead a happy married life as the two are bound by deep understanding of each other and a genuine love. Respecting each other's individuality, caring each other's sentiments and expectation, the relationship of Anna and Nicholas seems to project Sahgal's vision of man-woman relationship. "...and forever after wards had tried to reach the person in her, the one to talk to when the day's work was done, the friend with whom one could be naked in spirit and to whom one could be naked in spirit and to whom one could give the whole of oneself. The whole self was not heroic. Most of it was ordinary. It was soiled in part, maimed in part. It had lived, and all the signs and scars of living were upon it. But it was all one had to give" (p.71).

Having explored the feminine sensibility in much depth and detail, Sahgal turns her attention to the exploration of the masculine sensibility in her latest novel The Mistaken Identity. In this novel she chooses to focus on the relationships of a young man Bhushan Singh. She explores his adolescence and his youth till he settles down in marriage. In Storm, Shadow Rich the focus is on the marital and extramarital relationship, in Identity the pre-marital relationships of Bhushan occupy the centre stage. In Identity Sahgal traces the growth of princely protagonist Bhushan Singh from a love-struck juvenile to a mature and emotionally stable man. Sahgal incisively probes the impact of intense personal relationships with Razia and Sylla on the expanding, growing mind of Bhushan. Mysterious and hypnotic spell of the adolescent love has appealed to the artists since ages. In Identity Sahgal portrays hypnotic infatuation of Bhushan Singh for a Muslim girl Razia. Razia's face with her Tartar check bones and oval lidded eyes cast a "spell" over Bhushan. This spell of physical charm is nurtured by Razia's "intuitive knowledge" of Bhushan. He is so enamoured by Razia's love that he decides: "i wasn't meant for geography and mathematics I had a vocation. It was this" (p.51). Razia too responds to Bhushan's passionate love as they spontaneously accept each other as lovers.

Sahgal realistically portrays the vehemence even violence with which intercaste relationships are confronted in the Indian Society. Even Bhushan and Razia realize the precarious position of relationship of a Hindu boy and Muslim girl. As they meet for the first time the very knowledge of their names, stops them "dead", as they realize
"These names could not be linked by and" (Identity, p.52). However their simple and passionate love for each other asserts and significantly, Bhushan decides to ignore the identity ascribed to them by the society, - "the names others had given" (p.53) - and assert his natural human right to choose his mate.

Society, however is bogged down by intolerance obscurantism. Discovery of their intercaste relationship sparks off frenzied communal riots. Causing much misery, destruction killing, loot, mutilation in the town. Parents of Bhushan and Razia feel "disgraced" and told them "responsible" for the riots. Even mere suggestion of Bhushan and Razia's marriage outrages and they are kept under strong surveillance. By chance Bhushan overhears that Razia is being hurriedly married off to an imbecile. Infuriated, he strikes a heavy hand to the imbecile and unintentionally kills him. This unintentional murder sparks off yet another communal riots. The two riots supposed to be "instigated" by Bhushan - Razia affair are declared to be "the two most barbaric religious riots" (p.137). Separation from Razia and the communal riots leave a deep imprint over Bhushan psychology. His outlook, his ideas, his plans for future, his emotional condition is immensely influenced by them. Unable to forget Razia, Bhushan decides that the search Razia is the "only vocation" and only aim of his life.

Sahgal excels in portraying the troubled psychological and emotional state of Bhushan. These incidents change Bhushan from a lover-struck adolescent boy to an extremely complex, emotionally crippled and unstable person, indifferent to the world around him. It leaves him a staunch supporter of the Hindu-Muslim marriage. His "clarion call for Hindu-Muslim marriage" in a public meeting outrages the Pandits and ulema and causes Pandemonium. Bhushan emphatically declares:

Fate meant the two of us for love, not war or separation. It meant us to roast our dogmas in the same bonfire. (p.118).

Bhushan obstinately decides that "key" to his future is to search for Razia - his ideal of love. Bhushan's secular outlook and obsession with "life long quest" for Razia influences his relationship with other women who come in his life later.

Exiled to America, Bhushan meets the daughter of a wealthy American - Willie May. Their relationship however remains on the physical level only. While May is a beautiful, healthy teenager obsessed with sex, films, dances and food. Her responses are limited to the physical level only though Bhushan enjoys himself, yet she is unable to desist Bhushan from his "life - long quest". He even spurns a very lucrative offer to act in films and to lead a very luxurious life with Willie May obsessed with his "single minded zeal" (p.102) he returns to India. His relationship with Willie May fails to gain depth and meaning.
Bhushan's relationship with Syila - a modern Parsee girl in Bombay - too is haunted by his obsession with his infantile infatuation with Razia. Sahgal brilliantly expresses Bhushan's emotional and psychological state as he reaches Bombay. After his separation from Razia Bhushan feels he "was a man just off an operating table and the anaesthetic hadn't worn off" (p.75). Syila is "a modern girl, full of enthusiasm" (p.115) "Vitality has always been hard for Bhushan "to resist" because he confesses he has "so little of it" so he is its "natural follower" (p.115). Their relationships takes off as "warm but not intimate friends". (p.115). Bhushan's confession of his obsession with Razia brings them close as Syila assumes the role of his "doctor". (p.120). Their relationship take a strange turn as she treats his "memories of Razia like patches on a lung that rest and a dry climate would cure, and she was confident of a cure. It was a matter of right prescription" (120). Syila becomes deeply involved with Bhushan and their relationship gains depth and meaning.

Gradually she fell in love with my love for my beloved, and we drifted along in a tender close companionship, highly prizing each other's sensibility, (p.120).

However Sylla's companionship too, cannot draw Bhushan out of his spell of Razia's obsession. Sylla too realizes and argues: "you're making a holy of holies out of your monomania. That's what it is, monomania" (p.120). Yet Bhushan is so obsessed that he feels there were days when only his "monomania convinced" him that he was "really alive" (p.120). Sylla is determined to have it out of the way and he to "nurture" it. Sylla and Bhushan relationship becomes intimate as he recalls:

We quarrelled and emerged lovers, but lovers with this insoluble problem between us. And talk about it she did. Constantly. Coolly and rationally, (p.120).

With tremendous patience, sympathy and intelligence Sylla tries to cure Bhushan of his psychological complexes and obsession. Even Bhushan has to acknowledge that "every word, she said was true" (p.121). She is realized that the tremendous jolt to his fine and tender emotions has caused some sort of psychological blockade and has induced a resistance to any effort to seek relief from that pain as he had "come to a stop in 1918". Sylla is able to unravel the exact condition of Bhushan's psychology-as she comments : "You're obsessed with your obsession not with her" (p.121). Bhushan Singh very evocatively expresses his relationship with Sylla:

I opened and closed and live and died over and over again around this wound. My relationship with Sylla had formed a scab over it, but naturally Sylla didn't want to be a scab. She was hurt when she couldn't heal the wound, cure me, make me her kind of normal person. (p.121).
Sylla couldn't accept Bhushan's "only explanation, that loving might be like a vocation like medicine or the priesthood" (p.121).

In keeping with the mock-heroic vein of the narrative, the protagonist Bhushan is not portrayed as a person of heroic strength and stature rather he is a weak and confused person who relies of Sylla for strength and support. He characteristically says:

Men have mistresses and enough has been said on that tired topic, but if anything, I was Sylla's. I was more feminine, more gentle and complaint than her. I was the one who waited at home for her visits. She came when she wanted to, like the independent little green-eyed cat she was. (p.121).

Another peculiar dimension of Bhushan - Sylla’s relationship is the influence of religion. Deeply tormented by his experience of the frenzied communal hatred and violence of the Hindus and Muslims, Bhushan finds tremendous solace with peace-loving Zoroaster - the Parsee Good. Bhushan Singh acknowledges:

This particular affair might not have taken place without him. Women don't realize they are our states of mind Sylla was my peace, my heaven from the furies of Hinduism and Islam, because she was a Parsee. With her I was never afraid of being swept off my feet, driven out of my mind. I was safe where I stood... Peace be with you, all religious say. Only Sylla's means it. (pp 121-122)

Though this issue has little significance for Sylla, but for Bhushan, the issue is of paramount significance as he carries with him the tremendously guilt and mental trauma of communal hatred and intolerance. Bhushan and Sylla try to sort out "what love and in-love meant" (p.122). Bhushan has very forth right ideas:

I genuinely believe that lovers should enjoy what they can of each other, the one - fifth they can willingly surrender without haggling. (p.122).

They take "turns being aggressor or pacifier, flirting with the idea of marriage not wanting it, wanting it" (p.122).

Sahgal portrays Bhushan's complex psychological condition and "emotional attitude" with remarkable precision and sensitivity using artistic and figurative language. Sylla tries to wean Bhushan out of his obsession. She argues "if there's only one destined love in every life, and it is perfect, omnipotent and omnipresent" and "If every other love was a fudged copy of the one, she was sick and tired and fed up to the teeth of being a fudged copy". (p.125). Bhushan Singh mental and emotional state however renders him unfit to respond to what he acknowledges as "Valid points". He himself realizes his precarious condition which had distanced him from reason and had wrapped him up in his obsession:
Valid points. I viewed them from a towering height where mist transformed them into fields of meadowflowers, or on days of sharp clarity into humps of grazing moving cattle. A Vijaygarh trick, or habit, never to meet a question head on. (p.125).

Sylla warns Bhushan that he has "made a cult out of nympholepsy" (p.126). She issues the ultimatum to make up his mind and snap out of it. Bhushan however knows his own emotional lacunae: "Try telling a contemporary foetus to snap out of the womb. How could I be matter-of-fact, recant start leading a life of Reason while I fought to free myself of torturing possibilities, each worse than alternative" (p.126). Bhushan Singh feels either way he is in "a trap" as he "dreaded finding her" and even "dreaded abandoning all hope of finding her" (p.126). His "profoundest instinct" tell him that there is "no simple solution for mysteries rooted in magic" (p.126).

Moreover several other factors effect Sylla and Bhushan's relationship. Sylla is unable to understand and share Bhushan's grief over his mother's pain on being deserted by his father. Sylla know: only too well that she can never adjust to the feudal atmosphere of Vijaynagar, Bhushan's home-state. Bhushan can never even dream of settling down permanently in Bombay Bhushan's midnight brothel cruising to search for Razia are discovered by Sylla domineering grandmother. Sylla understands Bhushan that its all a part of his "nymholepsy" and he is not "lascivious old lecher" (p.140), but grandmother can't be expected to understand it. Moreover, as Bhushan is totally engrossed in his obsession with Razia that he is unable to settle in any profession or lead a normal social life either in Vijaygarh or in Bombay. Sylla pleads with him to overcome his psychological complexes and lead a normal life she rightly points out "You are odd, You know" (p.140). Bhushan searches an answer for his "oddness" and finds "it must the environment" he had grown up in, "its low level of oxygen - or aspiration - same thing" (p.140). Bhushan bemoans the psychological conditioning of young minds by their parents:

Its funny how the universe for people of Sylla's straight forwardness, is made up of their papas and mamas multiplied a millionfold, and then there's the occasional odd bud. (p.141).

Sylla herself loves Bhushan as he is "a round - the - clock - Lover" yet their relationship fails to progress further and Bhushan sets off to another voyage to America. He returns to Bombay and to Sylla after many years. He finds they "were diplomats in the dark" (p.4) not revealing their exact feelings to eachother. Bhushan confesses to Sylla that he will "never grow to maturity without" her (p.5).
Bhushan’s vision is clouded by his delusions regarding his infantile infatuation. Moment of Bhushan’s enlightenment dawns upon him confronts the truth of a much-happily married and cherished Razia. Razia had completely wiped his memory and was heading a very contended life with his wealthy affectionate and cultured husband. Bhushan realizes "A monstrous trick of fate" as he "had gone in search of a victim and events had revealed a goddess of surpassing splendour" (p.168). Moreover he deeply regrets. "My despair, my sense of inner death that came of realizing that my life’s most dedicated act had been useless, utterly worthless. I had well and truly taken for a ride. (p.168). Even the imbecile’s murder too was irrelevant as he had nothing to do with Razia. Finally he overcomes the limitations and delusions, of his mind and emotions. The seclusion of jail-as he is arrested mistaken as a terrorist-offers an excellent opportunity to re-examine his entire life, emotion, perspective, values and ideas. Bhushan Singh puts his own self under the microscope, by reliving his life as he narrates his story to his cell-mates. He breaks through a distorted and false sense of himself which neglected everything else in the world only to concentrate on Razia with his "soul’s concentration". (P.168). He moves towards discovering his true identity as a normal and considerate human being after overcoming his obsession and mistaken identity as Razia’s lover only. He begins to come out of self-imposed shell and starts responding and relating to the events and people around himself. Shaking off indifference he takes interest in the nation’s freedom struggle and its devotees such a Bhaiji and the comrades.

Bhushan meets Sylla after spending years in jail. Bhushan’s relationship with Sylla remains "inexplicably unjelled" (p.184). His old complexes, obsession and questions have disappeared as he has discovered the ironic trick of faith. He regrets : "why wasn’t love born full - blown from the start? Why hadn’t we spared eachother agonies of misunderstanding? Why had we thrown away so many years" (p.185). He proposes to Sylla but Sylla cannot accept the proposal. Despite his repeated request and passionate appeals for "mercy" Sylla doesn’t relent as she has found a much better man in Nauzer. Even Bhushan has to acknowledge Nauzer is a sensitive, intelligent and civilized and a very successful man. Bhushan realizes :

And perfect love stayed out of reach. So men and women worshipped stones and clay instead, and other smashed these with as perfect love (p.186).

He is able to overcome the emotional shock by Sylla’s rejection and is inspired to begin writing all over again. However, the change in Bhushan is not drastic. Even now he can only lend material and moral support only, to the freedom struggle and cannot himself actively join, as he had earlier confessed that he lacked enthusiasm for politics moreover
even now he is unable "to resist a woman's beauty or the culture of Islam" (p.193) and he marries his Muslim comrade Yusuf's daughter. He has matured emotionally and has finally settled to a peaceful domestic life: "I'm a quite, home-loving man. I'm at home writing for hours everyday, and she has all of Vijaygarh to organize" (p.193). Thus Mistaken Identity graphically and sensitively maps out the psychological and emotional travails and trauma of young prince suffering from infantile infatuation and growing up to maturity.

Sahgal presents in her eight novels, an exhaustive and sensitive portrayal of the theme of man-woman relationship. She explores the theme from various angels and dimension various angels and dimension-marital, extramarital, premarital and interracial-depicting sensitively their complex labyrinth. She reveals, in her novels, the emphatic influence of the cultural and traditional upheaval in India on man-woman relationship. However, she limits her portrayals to the urban elite and middle class, leaving the rural milieu untouched. Yet this is both her limitation and strength, as her first hand knowledge of the milieu she portrays guarantees a measure of authenticity. The complexity of the man-woman relationship withdrawal, alienation, incompatibly, lack of communication, disharmony disruption as well as the tender love, harmony, understanding and compassion - is sensitively and authentically portrayed. Her women want to establish a new order with changed standards where women can be their true selves, where there is no need for hypocrisy and where character is judged by the purity of heart and not chastity of body. The awakened conscience and changed perceptions and ideals, induce changes in the pattern of man-woman relationship, as they cause enstrangement in the couples with discordant views.

At the same time some understanding and compassionate men are committed to preserving the values of justice and moderation. Such sensitive men, not only have a humane and liberated attitudes themselves, but even inspire and genuine by help the women, in their quest for love equality and identity. They offer moral strength to smash the taboos and assert their identity to live a meaningful life. Sahgal succeeds eminently in impressing her plea for frank and friendly communication, and a compassionate approach to the issue of man-woman relationship. She envisions and projects through her work a harmonious coexistence for man and woman cherishing the eternal human values such as love, freedom and equality.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. K Thomas, "The Hindu Ethos - A Novelist's Perspectives", *Religion and Society* XX, 4 (December 1973), p.60. He found *Storm in Chandigarh* to be primarily, "a story of broken homes and changed relations".


8. Ibid. p.33.

9. Ibid. p.38.


11. Ibid. p.169.


19. Ibid. p.133.

30. Ibid. p.130.
32. Ibid. p.68.
33. The Situation portrayed by Sahgal is authentic. Referring to the divorced Indian Woman Tara Ali Baig comments. "life for the woman who has been deserted or divorced is far more grim.... In many cases they have problems, however for this is a society that seems to resent the single woman. Tara Ali Baig, *India's Woman Power*. (New Delhi : S. Chand, 1976) pp. 130-31.
36. Jasbir Jain however insists, "Devi does not come to life inspite of the writer's repeated attempts to give her vitality". *Nayantara Sahgal* op.cit. p.61.
38. Ibid. p.153.