CHAPTER II

The Colonial Struggle and the Theme of Resistance

Before diving deep into the colonial struggle, let us throw some light on the deep roots of the British Raj in India. Poets like William Cowper and Ernest Jones put for the first time a question mark on the territorial and dictatorial attitude of the East India Company and supported the cause of India's freedom. Cowper said in the “The Task”

"Is India free? And does she wear her plum'd
And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still?"

or, Ernest Jones in The Revolt of Hindostan observed:

"Then flies the huxtering judge, the pandering peer,
The English Pauper, grown a nabob here!
Counting house tyranny: and pedlar-pride,
Whilet blasts of freedom sweep the country wide!

Thus, Cowper questioned the right of the East India Company to usurp the freedom of India. He meant to say that the East India Company was absolutely in the wrong to usurp the freedom of India and 'grind' her. Ernest Jones, a nineteenth century chartist poet, who described the scene of English officials, running helter-skelter in the wake of the revolt in India is against the East India Company. It may sound strange that many enlightened Englishmen took up the course of India's freedom. In the pages that follow, it is relevant here to give a brief account of the East India Company, which was basically a trading company but turned out to be a colonizing company. Rather a
ruling company by violating the character, there was absolutely no justification for the 'territorial' conquest of India by the company. It was a travesty of law, justice and morality that 'crows became swans' and 'pigs became princes' and merchants became rulers. However it gives us some consolation that a number of liberal English thinkers, besides the Indian fighters for freedom, rose to the occasion by criticizing and condemning the wicked and vicious role played by the East India Company in its sinister plan to conquer India.

The East India Company was formally formed in 1600. Queen Elizabeth granted the charter to the "Company of Merchants of London trading with East Indies". At that time Akbar was the Emperor of India. In 1613, his successor, Jahangir, granted the company the permission to set up permanent trading stations on the Indian coast of Bombay. Sir Thomas Roe, the first Merchant Ambassador of King James I and the company's agent, presented himself at the Mughal court. The policy that was laid down for the guidance of the company reads as follows:

"A war and traffic are incompatible. Let this be received as a rule that if you will profit, seek it at sea, and in quiet trade; for without controversy it is an error to affect garrisons and landwars in India."

It was an unthought and unexpected turn of events that in course of time, the East India Company, finding the colonial colour and the political milieu favourable, flouted the policy of trade and entered upon the adventure of "garrisons and landwars" in India. It was outrageous indeed that the East India company men who came to India as merchants started planning to conquer and rule India. It is an irony of fate that they succeed in their crooked and evil designs. The policy of conquest and 'divide and rule', on the pretext of restoring order and peace and preventing political tumult and turmoil, was honed to a political philosophy which was to be known as "A Race Destined to Govern and Rule." But in truth, the so called 'Policy' was nothing more than a camouflage. Thus, the East India Company men undertook to carry on the "quiet trade" quietly, cunningly and clandestinely as well as the "land-wars" overtly. They indulged in unscrupulous trade, amassed fabulous wealth by deceitful and

fraudulent which means and moved relentlessly, if not ruthlessly, towards the goal of 'empire building' and colonization. A renowned historian J.H. Plumb rightly remarks, "Clive (Robert) has become an empire-builder by accident, Hastings (Warren) was an empire-builder by design." ⁴

In this context, it would be relevant to mention here the colossal amount of money the East India Company men amassed and dispatched it to England. W.E.H. Lecky points out that "Clive himself had gone out a penniless clerk; when he returned to England at thirty-four, he had acquired a fortune of more than $ 40,000 a year, besides giving $ 50,000 to his relatives." ⁵ T.B. Macaulay describes the scene when Mir Jaffir was restored to the throne of Bengal by Clive. It was fantastic indeed as "the showers of wealth now copiously feel on the company and its servants. A sum of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling, in coined silver, was sent down the river from Morshedabad to Fort William. The fleet conveyed the treasure consisting of more than a hundred boats and performed its triumphed voyage with flags flying and music playing .... As to Clive, there was no limit to his acquisitions but his own "moderation". The treasury of Bengal was thrown open to him .... Clived walked between heaps of gold and silver, crowned with rubies and diamonds and was at liberty to help himself.... In fact, nowhere in England, nowhere in Europe, nowhere its, perhaps in the world, were large fortunes so easily amasses." ⁶

To top it all, the penniless clerk and vagabond that Robert Clive was (whom Perceval Spear Calls "robber baron") ⁷ remitted more than a hundred and eighty thousand pounds through the English company. He had invested large sums in "Jewels" and his purchases of diamonds, at Madras alone, amounted to twenty thousand pounds, besides his Indian estate, valued by himself at twenty seven thousand pounds a year ... He remitted ten thousand pounds to his sisters, bestowed as

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much more on other poor friends and relatives, ordered his agent to pay eight hundred pounds a year on his old Commander Lawrence."\(^8\)

According to WEH Lecky, the East India Company men amassed so much wealth that they came to be known as "Indian nabobs", or Indian adventures, who had returned in great numbers laden with the spoils of Hindostan."\(^9\) As for Clive, apart from amassing huge wealth, he played with the political system (democracy) of England by purchasing "boroughs" (a town that sent representatives to Parliament – equivalent to a Parliamentary constituency in India). Thus the "Indian nabobs" – plunderers of Indian wealth – polluted politics and the political atmosphere in England with "the spoils of Hindostan". It goes to the credit of William Cowper, the English poet, who ventured to call the East India Company a "Corporation of plunderers."

It is funny to note that when Clive was questioned about his misdeeds and cruelties in India by the Commons in England, he assumed a sanctimonious innocence and submitted: "By God, Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand amazed at my own moderation". That is, he was at full liberty to take as much as he liked. But he was declared discreet enough to exercise "moderation". What a wonderful plea! And the Commons pardoned him. J.H. Plumb, the English historian questions the validity of the East India Company in exploiting and oppressing the poor people of India: "By what right had these 'nabobs' to export such riches from the simple peasantry of India?"\(^10\) William Massey affirms that "The servants of the Company went out to India to make their own fortunes and then to swell the dividends of their employers. Territories and colonies were added to the dominions of the Company by fraud and violence. Money was obtained from the helpless natives by falsehood and fraud ...."\(^11\)

In fact, there are no answers to these questions except the unabashed assertion that the East India Company was seeking to create order and peace. The proven fact is that the East India Company resorted to unbridled and brazen loot of India without any qualms of conscience. All this finds a free flow of narration in the Indian novelists who have written in English. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Chiman Nahal's

Azadi and The Crown and the Loin Cloth, Nayantara's Storm in Chandigarh are the offshoots of the slavery, colonialism and struggle against it.

Now after this historical perspective of India's slavery, we come to throw some light on Imperialism and Colonialism which were the offshoots of the East India Company and the British Raj. Both are interchangeable terms. In the modern context, "they symbolize, convey, suggest and underline the fact of the physical, intellectual and cultural domination of the Western capitalist countries over those of Asia, Africa and Latin America." The Oxford English Dictionary defines Imperialism as 'a policy and attempt of one particular country which helps it in extending its power and influence over other countries through colonization, through use of military force or by any other means.'

Like 'imperialism', the term 'colonialism' has been defined differently by different scholars. The Russian dictionary defines colonialism as a system in which a powerful country subjugates the weaker country through economic or military means. Scholars like Palmers and Parkinsons have defined it by saying that when a country establishes a relationship of domination and control with a weaker country through political and economic control, the situation which arises constitutes colonialism. The Oxford English Dictionary also defines it in the similar sense. It says that colonialism denotes a policy or political behaviour of a country which establishes full or partial control over the other country.

During the nineteenth century, Britain expanded their areas of colonial occupation in a big way and emerged as a big colonial power. Britain succeeded in occupying the bulk of the Indian territories.

Colonial struggle started. India and the Indian leaders were in the fore-front of the anti-colonial movement. In fact, the Indian National Congress ever since its inception in 1885 was leading the anti-colonial movement in its own way. Such slogans and concepts as swadeshi, swaraj, boycott and national education had been popularized on a very large scale. Moving back still earlier, a number of revolts and rebellions had taken place in India as a part of anti-colonial movement which

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ultimately resulted in the great Indian Rebellion of 1857. Mahatma Gandhi's movement and struggle against colonialism in South Africa was also a part of the anti-colonial movement, though its primary purpose was not the end of the British rule in South Africa. But after coming back to India in 1915, Mahatma Gandhi gradually involved himself in the National Movement and in fact became its undisputed leader. Then came the Second World War which also boosted the anti-colonial movement in its own way. It was in the midst of the war that India launched the Quit India Movement of 1945. With the independence of India in 1947, the colonial struggle and the process of decolonization gathered new momentum. Thus, by the middle of 1960's, a large number of colonies of Asia and Africa became independent and a lot of good literature based on the theme of colonial struggle and freedom was brought out and Nayantara was a pioneer woman novelist to deal with this theme adequately and appreciably in her novels, which we will deal in detail later.

Resistance is both a moral and intellectual pursuit. It is also a stance which is continuously and constantly challenged by hegemonic and authoritarian structures, which often result in exile, censorship, persecution and even subversion and silence. Putting its full faith and total trust in its own courage of conviction and a sense of integrity, resist all internal and external temptations of social, political, cultural, economic and individual forces, and intellectual dissent sets itself the task of awakening the conscience of a community.

The Advance Learner’s Dictionary defines the term 'resistance' thus: 'power of resisting (something); to resist to the enemy's advance; passive resistance; effort made by groups of unconquered people to resist the invaders; antagonism; desire to oppose.”

It is not easy to define the term ‘resistance’ as a theory as it has several shades and shapes of meaning such as non-conformism, protest, antagonism, propaganda, concern, commitment, criticism etc. It works in different ways for different people. It has indirectly the relationship between resistance and creativity as well as the interaction between intellect, imagination and experience. In this the role of the

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individual is also marked in socio-cultural contexts. Nayantara Sahgal explores the morality of a society that could push a woman to her death as 'sati', and finds a similar brutality in the ethical compromises which men make in search of power as in *Rich Like Us*.

Resistance as a form of art indicates that society is developing day by day; it is not deteriorating and dying. There is an incessant struggle and resistance to keep it alive and active. It acts like a fresh flow of blood and whiff of oxygen to revive and restore the society as Jasbir Jain aptly observes:

[Society is] like a constant reminder that in this sea of change, the one constant force has to be the human and all the abstractions we have pursued since our consciousness register their values – the values of freedom, of emotion, of beauty, of love. That leads us to consider the creative and the aesthetic aspects.  

One of the major aspects of the theory of resistance is women's resistance. It has been highlighted in fiction written by women novelists. Women's resistance rises mainly because of injustice imposed on womankind. In any form, injustice is a universal phenomenon. It can be marked in the works of fiction in the form of class, caste, creed, community, cult, colour, religion, regionalism, gender, sex, language and ideology. As regards injustice inflicted on woman, it can be seen in several ways as woman is victimized in several ways. She is more exploited and oppressed than man. In the novels of Nayantara and others, we shall try to understand woman's resistance against injustice as presented and portrayed by them.

Resistance is not merely protect and defiance. It is also individualistic self-assertion, the quest for identity, the question of 'control' over sexuality and society. Mahatma Gandhi spoke of the Satyagraha (passive resistance) as a powerful weapon against all kinds of injustice. It is a powerful kind of resistance for injustice. Resistance moulds the social order by its non-confrontational, non-violent action. In the course of time, it becomes the dreaded 'weapon' of the weak. Resistance brings the marginalized into the main stream. It is a social and behavioural strategy which has

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the potential to dislodge the dominant structure. It is a part of the dynamics of social life. This is one aspect of resistance as it is variable, complex and multivalent. Representation of resistance in women's fictional narrative articulates both the existence of the dominant power structure and the female desire to defy that structure.

Today, theories of resistance and resistance literature are a universal phenomenon. It could be because of colonial struggle, democratic and secular governments, socialism, Marxism and the feminist movement. In other words, it can be said, "Post modernism is an anti-authoritarian movement; post-structuralism is a critique of historicism with its emphasis on the injustice towards the marginalized; post-colonialism represents a heightened awareness of power relations between the erstwhile imperial power and the colonial subject, and post-feminism shifts its focus to the terrain of culture to resolve women's issues. In fact, resistance is the basis for all kinds of change and change is a continuous and universal process. Resistance is a projection of alternative truth\textsuperscript{15} Foucault calls resistance a 'reverse discourse.

A popular critic, Usha Bande makes a clear difference between two kinds of resistance: 'resistance literature and 'literary resistance'. To quote her:

Resistance literature stands for definitive texts, which examine the relationship between literature, and Third World liberation movements whereas 'literary resistance' is contestatory in nature and it is used for a genre of oppositional writing, a writing meant not only to protect but also to materially and conceptually change the existing situation to allow for empowerment.\textsuperscript{16}

As already stated earlier, resistance already started early in the eighteenth century even by British poets and sensible thinkers and by the Indians at the time of the Revolution of 1857. Now it started in India during the Indian freedom struggle against the colonizers, the British. This wave of freedom movement is vividly and beautifully reflected in Indian writing written in English. Works like A Situation in New Delhi of Nayantara Sahgal, Train to Pakistan (1956) of Khushwant Singh and


Many Indian women belonging to the rich or educated class came forward to resisting against the male dominating society and its injustice and oppression perpetrated on them. These were their actions of resistance. Ramabai's motto for woman was 'self reliance and participation in public life'. Her firm conviction was that an oppressive society could not progress. Kamala Markandaya's novels, *Silence of Desire* (1960) and *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) show woman's resistance. Attia Hossain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) shows how the protagonist Laila protests, resists and challenges the patriarchal power structure of a male dominated society, breaks the age old rules and creates her own space. Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1991), Dina Mehta's *And Some Take a Lover* (1992) and Nasrin's *Lajja* (1993) show the resistance powerfully. The novels of Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande depict woman's resistance. Personal freedom even at the cost of divorce is the ultimate aim in woman's assertion of the self and search of identity in Sahgal's early novels. The resistance for the part of Sonali in *Rich Like Us* is remarkable. For example, Anita Desai's heroines take drastic steps either to resist or to turn away from the vicissitudes of life. Maya commits suicide, Sita quits her home for a while and Nanda Kaul withdraws to the hills, Bim rebels. Deshpande's heroines draw their inner vision to achieve autonomy. Her novels show how resistance can be used for bending rather than for breaking, for making rather for marring and this for human well being and social transformation.

Other examples of Indian English novels showing resistance can be *Paro* (1984) of Namita Gokhale. Shobha De presents an outrageous picture of perversions as resistance. Some renowned Indian diasporic novelists show resistance in still many more ways. The heroine, Dimple in the novel, wife of Bharati Mukherjee is far removed from her later heroines who resist being hyphenated Americans. The
heroine, Jasmine in the novel of the same name, *Jasmine* seems to resist her native culture at every step of her life and with every bold assertion but all her moves and thoughts border on fantasy. This is further supported by the novelist's claim that her novel is a 'fantasy' but fantasy itself in the Postmodern sense itself is a mode of resistance. Resistance may be of several types. It may be internal and external, closed or open, silent or violent. Resistance can be lived privately or practised publicly, as Clara Rice observes.

> Resistance can be "open and confrontational, or quietly subversive; it can be humorous and playful or serious and painful; it can be individually motivational or socially organized in group action."¹⁷

The theory of resistance depends more or less on the law of probability. It is generally said, "Resistance in fiction falls in the category of the possible rather than real, the fantasy rather than the fact and it may not affect the community of women as such immediately but in the hands of discerning readers – men or women – the fictionalized account may become an agent of change."

Like politics, feminism plays a crucial role in resistance. Feminist literary theory and feminism provide us tools to recognize literary resistance and determine its history. But there is no feminist literary tradition or history. Understanding feminism is simply to understand what it means to be a woman. Feminist critics like Elaine Showalter, Gilbert and Gubar deal with it in detail. Showalter's book, *A Literature of their Own* (1977) is an account of woman's fiction as a subculture recording female experience. She considers women's writing in terms of 'feminine', 'feminist' and 'female'. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) is a detailed analysis of Victorian women writers in which the authors discuss women's resistance to individual, social and literary constraints in terms of a theory of anxiety of patriarchal influential dominance. Rosemary Jackson is of the view that subversion is one such kind of resistance.

Indian feminism is different from Western feminism. It is related to the Indian social structure and cultural constructs of creed, cult, caste, community, gender,

region and religion. The Indian woman mostly looks to the image of Sita and Savitri. She is caged and confined to the cell of self complacency of Sita-Savitri type. Modern Indian woman is progressive. She is prepared to come out of the cell of this traditional image. The image and emergence of this type of Indian woman can be seen in the new Indian woman writings which show woman's resistance for change. Again, to quote Usha Bande:

Representation, resistance and resolution are broad areas of contestation that need to be addressed with cultural framework in mind. Strategies for social change lie at the heart of many of women's works.

Socially, after resistance to patriarchal dominance, woman resistance to others, is against patriarchy. This agent indirectly acts on behalf of the patriarch and oppresses woman in many ways. Matriarch oppresses daughters and daughter-in-law. She becomes a female leader in a system in which power passes from the mother to the daughters. In this context, Nancy Friday says:

When a woman, as an agent of patriarchal norms, acts with oppressive power politics and represses her daughter or daughter-in-law. She is (resisted) and resented and feared as a matriarch.

Situations crop up in Indian society and also in literature in India when the negative motherly role is resisted, resented, opposed and hated.

Socio-culturally in our country, mother's role is godlessly and divine; she is the deity. She is the first teacher in the family. She is a friend, philosopher and guide. She plays a powerful part in all kinds of myths and literature. But during the second half of the twentieth century, the shift changed when women became creative writers

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and started redefining the parameters of motherhood and matriarchy. It was a process of cultural chaotic changes, in the name of modernity and progressiveness.

"The new woman is assertive and self-willed, searching to discover true self.".\(^{21}\)

The new woman has gained and got her identity. There is the crisis of identity also. She struggles hard and resists a lot to achieve the identity.

At the traditional level, in the past woman maintained her identity in various positions and places. Woman sought her identity in the relations of as a wife, mother and daughter. She accepted this identity happily and willingly. But today she rejects even this traditional view. She thinks that this is imposed on her by society in order to control her free movements.

As regards resistance, the woman today revolts and resists against the age old taboos. Today woman is not the 'other'. She is not an appendix to man. She is capable of finding her own path of progress. Thus the new women with new ideas resist to play in the hands of traditional society. She has become the symbol of the emergence of a new type of woman in Indian society. Thus, for gaining her identity, her freedom and her emancipation, new women reject the help of men by rejecting them as:

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\text{Are you the Lord God that you should rule every widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems.}^{22}\]

Nayantara Sahgal has revealed a figure of a new type of women’s resistance to age old taboos and traditions, male dominance, takes social ties and the relationships that are central to women. She portrays in her novels that her new woman is struggling hard to find a new place and position in society. She strongly asserts that these women are those who have the guts to resist and raise their voice against it and create awareness and awakening for other women. In fact, these characters of Sahgal are a replica of their own emotional disturbances which they resist to overcome and find new space for them. Lakshmi Sinha rightly remarks 'Nayantara Sahgal has taken


up the two images (of woman) – Able and Shakti\textsuperscript{23} of conventional Indian women and forms the images of Sabla in the character of Sonali and Skinny Jaipal.

In Nayantara Sahgal’s essay "Women Persons or Possessions", Sahgal does not support such attitudes which regard woman simply as 'commodity' or 'property' and discourage individuality or independent thinking in them. She says:

> When I heard someone remark, We never allow our daughter to go out or “I can’t do that, my husband would not like it”, it sounded a very peculiar, alien jargon as if I thought, women were properties, not persons.\textsuperscript{24}

This clearly shows that Sahgal is deeply committed to woman's identity. With the help of resistance, she should make efforts to search for her 'self' or identity.

The women characters in her novels are concerned with the lot of women. These characters show resistance at every step and symbolically or metaphorically deal with the themes of suffering, exploitation, dominance, urge for love and companionship. Her novels almost all from A Time to be Happy to Mistaken Identity show her deep concern with the various shades of women's mind and shades of states and status of women in the Indian male dominated family or society. Her women from her heroine, Maya to the mother figure Renee in Mistaken Identity strongly show resistance and stand up against the stultifying and suffocating culture which hampers and hinders women's progress and prosperity. They resist, rebel and revolt against all age old social systems. The third phase is the most mature phase in Sahgal's career. The women belonging to this phase are strong-willed, and emotionally independent women who stand the true test of times and resist everything, determined not to bow low before the undue hold of men, right from the beginning. They give full of indomitable courage. Commendable credit goes to such women characters as Anna Hansen, Sonali, Rose, the Rani of Vijaygarh, Simvit and Sylla for holding their head high as new type of women.

\textsuperscript{24} Nayantara Sahgal, "Women: Persons or Possessions". The Hindustan Times – Sunday 19 July, 1970, P. 68.
Woman has to play varied roles in society as a beloved, mother, daughter, and an equal participant in domestic duties. In this connection, Jasbir Jain rightly remarks: "Women need to look at themselves.... as the norm itself."25 The choice is between the traditional woman as a home maker and woman as a professional. Helene Deutsch also says: "Only exceptionally talented girls can carry a surplus of intellect without injuring their affective lives."26 This is true in case of Sonali in the novel, Rich Like Us.

Sonali is such a remarkable character who resists corruption. She is the embodiment of professional career. The novelist has suggested new patterns of resistance, feminine identity, more attuned to ‘citizenship, politics, professionalism and social ethos’.

The character of Sonali is singular and distinct in Indian English fiction. She is totally different from the traditional women characters found in other Indian English novels. Her problem is not frustration in love affairs, nor marital disharmony and discordance or male domination. Her problem is how to cope with a society which is double-dealer and hypocrite, red-tape and corrupt that have stealthily crawled into the Indian Administrative Service. Unlike Ravi, she strongly resists the temptation of taking hush money. She is sharp and intelligent, intellectually independent and emotionally stern not to yield to earthly lures and worldly pleasures. She is wholeheartedly committed to communal good and well-being. She is uncompromisingly conscientious and idealistic. In the wake of Emergency, she refuses to interpret rules to the benefit of her political bosses. With the result, as it happens practically in our country, she is transferred without warning or showing any reason thereof, demoted and punished. He can note a revolt or a feeling of resistance in her against the authoritarianism of the ruling government which has already been burning in her heart. Now it becomes an uncontrollable Shalleyan fury and she raises her voice against it. She then decides that she can no longer be a party to the

widespread malpractices and the conspiracy of silence that is bureaucracy or Civil Service.

The resistance is revealed through, not violent measures but through the silent mode of passive resistance, which is the Satyagraha to opt out of the exploitive and oppressive corrupt practices of administration and politics. Politics and politicians pollute everything, she know it very well. In this way, we can say that Sonali is a different woman from the stereo type image of a silent, subdued and docile Hindu 'woman'.

In another novel under study, A Situation in New Delhi, the relationship between Usman and Nadira follows almost a similar pattern of Uma and Leela, but with one basic difference. Unlike Uma and Leela, Nadira is in love with her husband and wants to reach him and the failure of their relationship is not due to any contrary pulls and pushes but due to the limitations of their individual nature. Nadira is both beautiful and desirable, but Usman needs a different kind of woman with intelligence, receptivity to new ideas and resistance. Nadira is preoccupied with her own voluptuousness and langour. She is concerned more with the physical side of marriage than with the exchange of ideas. Usman had however always gone beyond the merely physical in his relationship. It appears to him to be the "final irony that this had not happened with his wife, who remained so determinedly a body."27 Usman blames himself and says:

Wherever he might here succeeded, with Nadira he had failed. May be she had erected an Islamic fortress around her, imprisoned herself, a princess in a tower. But he had failed to reach her and the failure was his.28

Their relationship is saved by first one bold gesture of Nadira’s; she joins him at Michael's house after having initially stayed away. They can continue to care for each other because she is a new type of woman and has the "Will to understand, even if understanding was not yet there."29 This will to understand had earlier saved Sanad

28 Ibid., P. 131.
29 Ibid., P. 138.
and Kusum's relationships and also of Jit and Mara's. The relationships collapsed because of lack of resistance and mutual understanding. The willingness to sustain the beautiful relationship seems to be absent from them as in the case of Som and Inder.

Other victims of society are young girls like Leela in *This Time of Morning* and Madhu in *A Situation in New Delhi*. They resist hard but suffer injustice more at the hands of society than at the hands of any particular individual. Leela, coming as she does from Benares "the heartland of Hindu civilization, the ancient, sacred city on the banks of the Ganges, the city of changeless antiquity still in the strange hold of the past", finds her confrontation with modernity to be a disastrous one. Unable to seek any help from others when she becomes pregnant in America, she commits suicide."^30^ While Madhu, in *A Situation in New Delhi* is a victim of violence both physical and emotional. Before she is able to recover from and sustain the shock of having been raped, her family is engaged in seeking a suitable husband for her and is more concerned with the public opinion than with her individual emotions and feelings. Madhu, who had been in terror of meeting her tormentors, again, is now far more afraid of "the unknown face and hands of the marriage to which they would deliver her."^31^ When her family refuses to listen to her, she fails to resist and sustain and seeks refuge in death. Another kind of such unresisting passive victim is Mrs. Narang in *This Time of Morning*. She has had no opportunity to realize what she wants from life and therefore there is no question of resistance or defiance or rebellion on her part. In her case, it is the sense of resignation, not the subject of resistance and Rakesh finds her tense and unhappy when he visits the Narangs. She has long ceased to be a person in her own right and has become a puppet trying to fulfil the role conferred upon her.

But conventionality need not be stifling too hard in itself. Mir in the same novel is able to find happiness within the conventional framework of life through the strength of her character. She is able to break away from her engagement to Ravi Krishen. In fact, the strength of an individual character has nothing to do with conventionality or modernity. The women who have strong, resisting, well-developed

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^30^ Ibid., P. 77-78.

^31^ Ibid., P. 61.
characters defy both and they are able to overcome their timidity or coyness. Women like Devika and Lalita (Happy) are not modern in the real sense of the word. They have merely adopted the facade of modernity without any corresponding change in their viewpoint on any of the significant issues in life. Uma Mitra and Leela Dubey likewise are not truly liberated; they merely conform to a different pattern of behaviour. It is the women like Saroj and Simrit, who are unable to conform to any pattern and are possessed by a searing need to be honest with their own selves and those around them. The educational and social opportunities available to women in post independent India are in no way a guarantee in themselves of individual growth and liberation. The initiative in the final instance has ultimately come from the personality and character of the individual concerned. Nita moves towards self-awareness and self-assertion through uncertainty and bewilderment while Rashmi moves to it through suffering and self-questioning. Another person whose move towards self-awareness is significant is the heroine of *The Day in Shadow*. She is different from the majority of the women characters of Nayantara Sahgal. She is a working girl without the support and security of an affluent family background and when she decides to terminate her relationship with Sumer Singh, she has to weigh it against her need for a job and a roof over her head. She resists male domination and she is vulnerable to the power which man like Sumer Singh wield. Her decision to break away is thus an act of unusual courage fulfilling a real need for self-assertion and self-realization.

Nayantara Sahgal differentiates between the trappings and the essence of freedom. She believes that resistance to any unjust and intolerable thing should be an inherent quality in a woman because it will bring her liberation. Nayantara believes that liberation should come from within with the help of resistance. Freedom is a mental attitude as Abdul Rahman, the aged Governor of U.P. tells the young students of the Vidya College in the novel, *This Time of Morning* and as such it has to come from within. Freedom, like resistance, may be expressed as defiance of convention but it is at heart a refusal or resistance to tolerate any kind of injustice or oppression. And self-assertion and self-awareness on the part of woman automatically changes the basis of a man-woman relationship making it a more equal one. The women characters of Nayantara Sahgal in their search for self-expression and freedom do not
turn sexual instead they transform sex into a multi-dimensional relationship in order to maintain woman's power and prestige.