Chapter Two

Political Ambivalence and Postcolonial Identity

“The job is to build bridges – not of stone or girders, for that would prove the permanence of the objective, but like the rope bridges in the Himalayas, you build temporary suspensions over green and gurgling space.”

– Raja Rao, The Serpent and the Rope

The achievement of political independence may be considered to be the most significant event in the history of any nation which has experienced foreign political domination, which, in Sahgal’s words, “reduced a country to penury and a psyche to fracture” (“Puzzle” 80). Such a fractured psyche is visible in the fictional works of Nayantara Sahgal, who, apart from being a representative writer of pre and post independent India, has the unique personal background of belonging to a family deeply involved in the rise of nationalism, political upheaval and the struggle for freedom. Sahgal notes:

I am a novelist and a political journalist. My novels have a political background or political ambience. I didn’t plan it that way . . . . Political and social forces shape our lives. How can we be unaware of them? I believe there is a “poetics of engagement” where commitment and aesthetics meet and give each other beauty or power. (qtd. in Narayan para 2 and 4)
However, Sahgal’s political consciousness is fraught with an ambivalence, prompted by the crisis of ideology in Indian politics, an oscillation between Gandhian humanism and Nehruvian socialism. Gandhi was a staunch critic of western civilization based on technology, while Nehru was enamoured of western science and technology. Sahgal held a great respect for Gandhian values, but her western education had made her more of a rationalist thinker. The alliance between nationalism and colonialism brought an ambivalence among the rationalist intelligentsia, as they vacillated between loyalty to the British and Gandhian politics.

Gandhi’s popularity and his dominance on the national scene suggested an indigenous mode of governance, which he envisioned in his ‘Hind Swaraj’. Jawaharlal Nehru understood his mentor’s ethical imperatives, but he was also influenced by the socialist model, and favoured partial state control of economy. He tried to harmonize modernization with the Gandhian principles of a welfare state.

Sahgal, who came under both influences, took a mid-stance, not professing any specific political ideology, nor favouring any political movement. In “Passion Called India”, she writes:

Politics was, of course my background, and my environment, and it became my natural material. I grew up at a time when literature and politics went hand in hand and helped to illumine and interpret each other . . . . But I am not a political animal myself and my political philosophy is very simple. I do not believe in kings,
queens or political dynasties. I have no ideology. I’ve never belonged to a political party. (244)

However, though Sahgal objected to her being labelled as a postcolonial writer, she could not shake off her colonial heritage. She acknowledges in her essay “Some Thoughts on the Puzzle of Identity”,

The vocabulary of colonial discourse was stocked with heavy, rock-solid phrases such as “the subject races” and words like “heathen” which assumed a perfectly natural division of the world into rulers and ruled, and took for granted the power relationships of the time, of class, of colour and of race . . . . Let’s take the East-West encounter, as this collision of cultures, this seizure of land and resources, and establishment of hegemony, and deprival of dignity is called. It is still a fact of life, our politics, our character, our literature, as anything that happens to one continues to be. We are indelibly shaped by it. We are still maimed and scarred by it, aroused to anger, admiration or imitation by it. It remains an ineradicable experience, and our most recent frame of reference. (82-84)

She goes on to say that “it is through this deepening, expanding, metamorphosing consciousness that identity takes a beating, or blossoms, and is perpetually renewed and reshaped” (91).

Colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods. It is not merely the expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards but it aims at
restructuring of non-capitalist economies in order to fuel European capitalism. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the word ‘colonialism’ comes from the Roman ‘colonia’ which meant ‘farm’ or ‘settlement’. It means “a settlement in a new country, . . . a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state” (Loomba 7). This definition doesn’t imply the encounter between the settlers and indigenous people of the land, accepting the settlement as an expansion to a new geographical location. In fact expansion of various countries has been a recurrent feature of human history. The expansion of the great Roman Empire in the second century A.D, the Mangols’ conquest of the Middle East and China in the thirteenth century, the control of southern India in the fifteenth century by the Vijayanagar Empire, the extension of Ottoman Empire over most of Asia Minor and the Balkans and the Mughals’ rule in India are some of the wars of conquest that happened before the expansion of European powers. The vast stretch of distant unknown land, preconceived as a romantic place of exotic being with rich natural resources and spices, the legends of the fabled wealth of the east etc., fuelled the imagination of the European travellers. They ushered in a new kind of colonial practice, a different power relationship which altered the entire global set up.

Colonialism is sometimes used interchangeably with imperialism though it means different things. Childs and Williams define imperialism as “the extension and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal and military controls” (227). Colonialism is a practice that results from imperialism which concerns with the settlement of one group of people in a new location. The seizing of foreign lands for settlement was in fact motivated by the
desire to create and control markets for western goods as well as securing natural resources and labour power at the lowest possible cost. In fact colonialism was a lucrative commercial operation that brought incredible wealth to the mother country by economic exploitation of the colonized. Colonialism is over today whereas imperialism continues even today without any formal colony or settlement as America’s imperial acts which continue to secure wealth through economic exploitation of other nations. Denis Judd remarks in his book Empire! The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present, “no one can doubt that the desire for profitable trade, plunder and enrichment was the primary force that led to the establishment of imperial structure” (3). Greed for money and power was the main guiding principle behind colonialism whatever mission it proposed to have.

Though colonialism was a commercial operation, it was not monolithic. As a critic points out,

Colonialism was not an identical process in different parts of the world but everywhere it locked the original inhabitants and the new-comers into the most complex and traumatic relationship in human history . . . . The process of forming a community in the new land necessarily meant un-forming or re-forming the communities that existed there already and involved a wide range of practices including trade, plunder, negotiations, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions. (Loomba 7-8)

There is a significant difference in the history and culture of the different colonies colonized such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada which were settled by
British and other European groups over a period of two hundred years and which now have a relatively small indigenous population should not be grouped together with other colonies like India, Jamaica, Kenya, Caribbean etc, where historically a small group of Europeans dominated the majority native population and where after achievement of political independence, indigenous people took over the reins. As far as Canada, Australia and America are concerned, it is more appropriate to classify them as “colonial” than “post-colonial”. As an island settled and governed by the British since the twelfth century, Ireland is seen by some to have a dual status as a post-colonial state in the south, while remaining a British colony in the north.

There was a vast difference in the state of settler colonies and colonies of exploitation which were governed by the British directly from London through the agency of civil servants, police and soldiers sent not as permanent settlers occupying the land but as administrators and peace keepers to enforce the British laws and regulations. The Indian sub-continent which was formerly a series of states was transformed into British India for administrative purpose and it was during this time the enlightened values clashed with a thousand year old social order and deeply rooted beliefs of India. The influence of British colonialism education, religion, social structures, politics and economy gave a new face lift to the Indian sub-continent. The British colonisers’ mode of interacting with the local population was different from that of the Spanish in America and the Portuguese in India. The Portuguese adapted to the local-manners, blurring the racial difference by marrying the fair and beautiful Indian women. But British colonial masters derided such practices and maintained their distance and
hegemonic relationship intact. The colonial discourses about India and Africa prove that the British were obsessed with racist feelings of the natives, colour, nakedness, their custom, culture and religion which provided an ideological justification for different kinds of exploitation of the colonised. Frank Fanon aptly comments on the racist feelings of the British in his *Black Skin, White Masks* thus:

> Every colonised people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonised is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country’s cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (9)

The Indian sub-continent was structured on hierarchical order, emphasizing on social groups belonging to high and low status. The distinction of castes introducing innumerable divisions and sub-divisions led to many practices that were considered savage and backward by the colonial masters. They understood they would lose their everything, including their gentle behaviour adjusting more and more to the Indian ways. As a first step of their civilising mission, they were “bent on the supposedly impossible task of washing black people white” (Loomba 99). The British Raj understood that the evils of caste system had its roots in the Hindu religion and took efforts to convert the Indians. As colonialism advanced, missionary activities expanded, converting many
“good” Indians to Christianity. Lack of education too made the Indians follow innumerable practices marked by constraint, credulity, status, authority bigotry and blind fatalism. It was necessary to create a social climate for modernization so that all the abusive practices of the Indian society would vanish. Many reformers tried their best to put an end to such cruel practices. “Raja Ram Mohan Roy, demonstrated that ‘Sati’ had no religious sanction, Vidyasagar did not take up his pen in defence of widow marriage without being convinced about scriptural support and Dayanand based his anti-casticism on Vedic authority” (Chandra 85). The educated Indian reformers were struggling to bring a change in the traditional customs and beliefs which made the Indian society backward and stagnant.

The British colonialism thrived well in India. For almost two centuries, the British were able to rule two-thirds of the sub-continent directly and exercise considerable leverage over the princely states that accounted for the remaining one-third. While the strategy of divide and conquer was used most effectively, the western educated Indian elite were artfully tutored into becoming model British subjects. This English educated Indian elite assimilated the values and ideals of the Britishers. The liberal education taught them to look at their own culture as something inferior. Many Indian elites began to question some of the superstitious practices prevalent in Indian society including the condition of women.

As the architect of colonial Britain’s Educational Policy in India, Thomas Macaulay was to set the tone for what educated Indians were going to learn about themselves, their civilization and their view of Britain and the world around
them. Lord Macaulay in his famous speech, ‘Minute on Indian Education’ articulates the goal of British colonialism clearly. “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (Macaulay 375). This education made the Indians believe that British occupation of India would further the progress of the nation and transform India into a westernized nation.

“The British conquest and the consequent dissemination of colonial culture and ideology had led to an inevitable introspection about the strengths and weaknesses of indigenous culture but the need to reform social and religious life was a commonly shared conviction” (Chandra 82) of the Indian intellectuals. The spirit of reform embraced almost the whole of India beginning with the effort of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal leading to the formation of Brahmo Samaj in 1828. In the name of reform, the Indian society did not reject the tradition on the whole but tried to bring about modernization rather than westernization. Faced with the challenge of intrusion of colonial culture and ideology, an attempt to reinvigorate traditional institutions developed with a defence of indigenous culture. This was evident in

the cultivation of vernacular languages, the creation of an alternate system of education, the efforts to regenerate Indian art and literature, the emphasis on Indian dress and food, the defence of religion and the attempts to revitalize the Indian system of medicine, the attempts to probe the potentialities of the pre
colonial technology and to reconstruct traditional knowledge were some of the expressions of this concern. (Chandra 89)

The encounter with the British culture led India towards a favourable progress, modernising the traditional practices but not aping the western culture.

The reformers stood for the abolition of caste system. The discrimination meted out to the untouchables and “shudras” was condemned by the colonial masters. But the British empire itself was not without any fault. The racist ideology followed by the European colonialism was similar to the caste system. Racist ideology identified different sections of people as intrinsically or biologically suited for particular tasks. Aime Cesaire quotes with anger, Ernest Renan on this point:

Nature has made a race of workers, the Chinese race, who have wonderful manual dexterity and almost no sense of honour; govern them with justice, levying from them, in return for the blessing of such a government, an ample allowance for the conquering race, and they will be satisfied; a race of tillers of the soil, the Negro . . .; a race of masters and soldiers, the European race. Reduce this noble race to working in the ergastullum like Negroes and Chinese, and they rebel . . . But the life at which our workers rebel would make a Chinese or a fellah happy as they are not military creatures in the least. Let each one do what he is made for, and all will be well. (16)

However, such a general well-being implies the superiority of the white race to whom the black men must forever remain cheap slaves. The colonised
people were forced to enter the labour force which would eliminate idleness and ‘vice’ among the local population. The colonised believed in the ‘interpellation’ which had a damaging effect on his sense of identity. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson explain: “Colonialism (like its counterpart, racism) then is an operation of discourse and as an operation of discourse it interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation” (Tiffin & Lawson 3). The relative difference between people of dissimilar culture led to popular assumption about the colonised who were represented as inferior race in the colonial discourse and the racial ideology maintained the hegemonic relationship. As Rex. J. remarks,

When the social order could no longer be buttressed by legal sanctions it had to depend upon the inculcation in the minds of both exploiters and exploited of a belief in the superiority of the exploiters and the inferiority of the exploited. Thus it can be argued that the doctrine of equality of economic opportunity and that of racial superiority and inferiority are complements of one another. Racism serves to bridge the gap between theory and practice. (131)

Thus colonial attitude towards the colonised was based on racism, an ancient form of behaviour that is found worldwide and similar to the caste distinction in India. Racism is a manifestation of hatred or contempt for individuals whose physical characteristics are different from one’s own. It also indicates pride in its own lineage which produces narrow nationalistic feelings as in the case of Nazism. However, modern scientists have proved that the
difference in genetic character, blood composition, skeletal system and epidermis is individual wise and not racial wise. In “Race and Racism” Tzvetan Todorov says,

We can produce a map of the ‘races’ if we measure genetic characteristics, a second if we analyse blood composition, a third if we use skeletal system, a fourth if we look at the epidermis. In the second place within each of the group thus constituted, we find greater distance between one individual and another. For these reasons, contemporary biology while it has not stopped studying variations among human beings across the planet, no longer uses the concept of race. (214)

Whatever the scientists say has no influence on the common man who believes in the superficial difference that is visible like skin colour, body hair, facial configuration, height etc. A racist confirms the superiority of his race and feels himself privileged to be a member of that race, the “Anglo-Saxon race” which gives him the right to make universal judgement and judge “others” with Eurocentric yardsticks. Racism, as a counterpart of colonialism, is responsible for the oppressive treatment and exploitation of the colonized.

The representation of the non-European in the literary texts of the European goes a long way in establishing a dichotomy between the European and the “others”, a dichotomy which helped to extend European hegemony over other lands. The culturally biased knowledge about the colonised was the reason for such prejudiced representation in the colonial discourses. The study of colonial discourses reveals how power works through language and literature and reveals
a magnified image of the European in opposition to the diminishing non-western image. Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism* shows how opposition is crucial to European self-conception if colonised people are irrational, Europeans are rational; if the former are barbaric, sensual and lazy, Europe is civilization itself with its sensual appetites under control and its dominant ethic that of hard work; if the orient is static, Europe can be seen as developing and marching ahead; the orient has to be feminine so that Europe can be masculine. This dialectic between self and other derived in part from deconstructions has been hugely influential in subsequent studies of colonial discourses in other places. (qtd. in Loomba 45)

The representation of non-European people in a series of negative terms depicts the racial superiority of the coloniser.

The construct of the racial stereotypes of the colonised as inferior, allowed decent men and women from the western nation to accept the notion that distant territories and the native people should be subjugated and it was the obligation of the western powers to protect and rule the sub-ordinate or less advanced people. The durability of the empire was sustained on both sides – that of the rulers and that of the ruled. According to D.K. Fieldhouse, “The basis of imperial authority was the mental attitude of the colonist. His acceptance of subordination – whether through a positive sense of common interest with the parent state or through inability to conceive of any alternative – made empire durable” (103). The colonial discourses thus justify the imperial authority of the coloniser, reveal the dominant ideology, and encode tensions, complexities and
nuances within colonial culture. The colonial discourses supported the civilizing mission of colonialism, professed social justice for the underprivileged, and propagated Eurocentric values/views as universal ideology.

The colonised had to deconstruct the popular notion of colonialism. They had to write back to the Empire to reveal their anti-colonial stance. It was imperative to know the colonial master’s language and the elite section of the Indian society was encouraged to pursue the western liberal education for serving under the British Empire. The liberal education broadened the horizon of learning in India, and transformed the traditionalists into men of modern scientific temper. The western educated Indian elite understood the need for a change in the society, to resist the oppressive British rule and to question the double standard of the British who professed themselves as champions of liberty and social justice. Literature written during pre-independence period reveal the resistance of the educated elites to colonialism. However those who had a close encounter with the English were greatly influenced by their manners, language, cultures etc. If the Englishman’s education made a conscious impact on the Indian minds to resist colonialism, the English man’s gentle behaviour and culture made an unconscious impact in the elite Indian’s mind. Fiction written by these elite Indians embody their conscious anti-colonial resistance and unconscious colonial influence of the English culture in their lives. The native intellectuals of colonized India were the “hybridized” products of Macaulay’s education system. Frank Fanon in “On National Culture” opines that, educated in the western liberal system the elites were in danger of identifying themselves with the western bourgeoisie of the colonizer. In the process of unqualified assimilation of foreign
culture they become “mimic” men trying to copy the dominant trends of the west. One looks at oneself through the eyes of the “other” and there is a desire to adopt what is handed out madly trusting in the other’s superiority and in one’s own inferiority. In the second stage the native intellectuals become dissatisfied copying the coloniser and become immersed in the cultural history of their own people. In this phase he turns backwards and champions all things indigenous. He tries to find a new way of mobilising actively the inherited culture. Thus in the third phase, the fighting phase, the native intellectual becomes directly involved in the people’s anti-colonial struggle. Instead of sticking to the past, the native intellectual learns from the people to modify, reinterpret and reform traditions. No more is he ashamed of his native culture.

As George Lamming once remarked,

Over three quarters of the contemporary world has been directly and profoundly affected by imperialism and colonialism . . . . Process of artistic and literary decolonisation have involved a radical dismantling of European codes and post-colonial subversion and appropriation of the dominant European discourses. This has frequently been accompanied by the demand for an entirely new or wholly recovered ‘reality’ free of all colonial taint. (qtd. in Tiffin 99)

With the dismantling of the British Empire came the establishment of the British Commonwealth, a structure grouping together most of the former British colonies. Since the 1960’s, the term “Commonwealth Literature” has been used as the comprehensive label for all English writing from erstwhile British colonies
and a global association known as “Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies” has been formed to encourage study and research in the area. However the term “Commonwealth Literature” is not approved by Salman Rushdie. In his essay “Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist” Rushdie upbraids “the new and badly made umbrella” (61) under which disparate non-British literatures are forced to huddle without any regard for their difference. He feels that “non-western literature is being ghettoized, contained and relegated to the margins, in what might be considered as a racially segregationist move” (qtd. in Bahri 64). However, during the past decades in particular the term “postcolonial” has gained prominence. Meenakshi Mukherjee draws our attention to the step taken by Routledge:

... the massive Routledge Encyclopaedia project that began nearly a decade ago as ‘The Encyclopaedia of Commonwealth Literature’ just before publication altered its name to become ‘The Encyclopaedia of Post-colonial Literatures in English’... [the] new term ‘post-colonial’ foregrounding the political dimension of both the text and context of this literature is being used more often slowly pushing out the old and seemingly apolitical name “common wealth literature”. The new title of the just published monumental Routledge volumes perhaps puts a seal of authority on this new term, knocking in the last nails on the coffin of the Anglocentric old label. (5)

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in their introduction to The Empire Writes Back prefer the richly meaningful term “post-colonial”: 
The semantic basis of the term ‘post colonial’ might seem to suggest a concern only with the national culture after the departure of the imperial power . . . . We use the term post-colonial, however, to cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is continuity of preoccupation throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. We also suggest that it is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years . . . [it] is concerned with the world as it exists during and after the period of European imperial domination and the effects of this on contemporary literature. (1-2)

Post-colonialism refers specifically to the period after a country, state or people cease to be governed by a colonial power such as Britain or France and take administrative power into their own hands. “Post colonialism” is defined in the second edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary* as “of relating to, or being the time following the establishment of independence in a colony (“postcolonialism”, def. 968). Thus India and Pakistan gained their political independence in 1947 and so became historically “post-colonial” after Aug 15, 1947. But it is not right to consider the works produced after the formal end of colonialism as post colonial. But within the area of “post-colonial studies” which tends to embrace literary and cultural studies, the term is often used to refer to the consequence of colonialism from the time the area was first colonized. Such studies are generally concerned with the subsequent interaction between the
culture of the colonial power including its language and the culture and tradition of the colonized people. As Elleke Boehmer remarks:

The term post-colonialism addresses itself to the historical, political, cultural and textual ramifications of the colonial encounter between the west and the non-west dating from the sixteenth century to the present day. It considers how this encounter shaped all those who were party to it: the colonizer as well as the colonized. In particular studies of postcolonial cultures, texts and politics are interested in response to colonial oppression. (Boehmer 340)

Post-colonial studies analyse the importance of power relations in that cultural exchange, the degree to which the colonizer imposes a language, a culture and a set of attitude and the degree to which the colonized people are able to resist, adapt to or subvert that imposition.

Post-colonialism as a literary theory gained currency with the arrival of the trinity, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha into the field, who have gained international readers by their groundbreaking theoretical works. Edward Said’s monumental work Orientalism paved the way for post-colonial studies by forcing academics in the West to re-think the relationship between the occident and orient. Said’s orientalist discourse argues that the image of the orientalist is a “fabricated” reality or a “construct” by the west and the representation of the orient in colonial discourse is based on the constructed image. This representation legitimized the political domination of the British empire. If the occident was rational, sensible, familiar, civilized, normal and
progressive, the orient was irrational, insensible, extra ordinary, abnormal
inferior, barbaric and static. This general negative representation of the
orientalist helped to buttress the West’s sense of racial superiority.

Edward Said sees contemporary criticism as an institution for publicly
affirming the values of culture, as understood in a Eurocentric, dominative and
elite sense.

Following Foucault, Said sees culture as that which fixes the
range of meanings of “home”, “belonging” and “community”; beyond this is anarchy and homelessness. It is within this
outright opposition that Said, as he had already hinted in
Beginning wishes to carve out a space within civil society for
intellectual and critic, a space of in-betweenness. (746) . . . .

“Bhabha takes some of the foregoing ideas from Derrida; from
Mikhail Bakhtin he draws the notion of the “dialogic”
(indicating the mutuality of a relationship) in order to
characterize the connection between colonizer and colonized; he
draws also on Frantz Fanon’s revolutionary work on colonialism
as well as on the concepts of “nation” as defined in Benedict
Anderson’s book Imagined Communities (1983). (Habib 746,
750)

The Indian born U.S. based critic Gayatri Spivak’s most crucial
intervention has been to argue for the “heterogeneity” of colonial oppression.
She is concerned with the “differences” which separate and divide the colonized.
She emphasizes how different forms of othering exist among the oppressed and
her concern is with the “subaltern” – the tribals the untouchables and women. Her celebrated essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988) shows her intention to retrieve the voices of such “silenced” groups. In broad terms, Spivak sees the project of colonialism as characterized by what Foucault had called “epistemic violence” (31). Spivak’s point is that epistemic violence enshrined in the imperialist legal project is equally enshrined in the project of cultural imposition. However, for Spivak, colonialism and its operations had been heterogeneous and she rejects any possibility of an outright opposition between colonizer and colonized, oppressor and victim. The intellectuals are tempted to view the “other” as the projection or shadow of one self. She affirms that the intellectuals recognize the importance of economic sphere but without investing it with any kind of absolute or ultimate explanatory power Spivak feels that the subaltern should be encouraged to participate in the political process. Access to citizenship and becoming a voter will help to mobilize the subaltern on the long road to hegemony.

Homi Bhabha’s contribution to post-colonialism has been to theorize “ambivalence” as operating within the apparently binary or dichotomous colonial system itself. Bhabha’s usage of the concept of hybridity is both influential and controversial. According to him colonial identities are always a matter of flux and agony. “It is not the colonialist ‘self’ or the colonised ‘other’ but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness – ‘the Whiteman’s artifice inscribed on the Blackman’s body’” (qtd. in Loomba 148). For Bhabha”, “the hybrid image of black skin and white mask evokes an ambivalence that indicates not just the trauma of the colonial subject but also the
workings of colonial authority as well as the dynamics of resistance. The colonial presence is always ambivalent, split, between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference” (Loomba 149). Hybridity expresses a state of “in-betweenness”, as in a person who stands between two cultures, as expressed in Bhabha’s own life and from the lives of many intellectuals of colonial nations who have been raised in western institutions.

According to Bhabha, the continued power relation of the West is evident in its new “neo-imperialist” phase, with a total disregard for the independence and autonomy of the people and places in the Third World. He tacitly questions the West:

Are the interests of “Western” theory necessarily collusive with the hegemonic role of the west as a power bloc? Is the language of theory merely another power ploy of the culturally privileged western elite to produce a discourse of the ‘other’ that reinforces its own power knowledge equation? (Location 30-31)

Bhabha’s recommendation is international culture based on “culture’s hybridity” It is the “in-between space . . . that carries the burden of meaning of culture . . . And by exploring this third space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves” (Location 56). Based on Derrida’s notion of difference, Bhabha’s argument is abstract yet the central valuable insight is that political endeavours cannot be fully theorized in advance because they must always be adapted to local conditions and possibilities.
Historically, colonialism has ended long back in India (1947) but till this date a national post-colonial identity without “colonial taint” has not been established. Hybridity has become the post-colonial identity of the ex-colonised peoples for the colonial impact has left an indelible impression in the psyche of the colonised, forcing them to look at the world in the Eurocentric ways.

Hybridity in post-colonial theory challenges the extreme right vocabulary of the westerners. One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it needs both to civilise its “others” and fix them into perpetual “otherness”. As Frantz Fanon remarks in *The Wretched of the Earth*, “as if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation, the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil” (32). To be good and civilised means to follow the wealth of western values. The colonised can mimic the coloniser but never reproduce the western values exactly and the gap between them ensures the need to subject the other.

Postcolonial literature challenged the colonial order of things, re-examining the received assumptions, overturning the dominant ways of seeing the world and representing reality in ways which do not replicate colonial values. Colonialism was not monolithic as it colonized countries with different pre-colonial histories. The western way of thinking about the world usually reduces the ex-colonized peoples, their cultures and their countries into a homogeneous whole, such as “The Third World” which comprises Africa, most of Asia, Latin America and Oceania. Post-colonial studies analyse and criticise such an over inclusive term, as “the Third world” is composed of heterogeneous peoples and cultures who cannot be reduced to a homogeneous stereotypes.
The label post-colonial literature tends to downplay the differences between and within, various former colonies, as pointed out by Arun Mukherjee:

The postcolonial theorists’ generalisations about ‘all post colonial people’ suggest that Third Worldism and/or nationalism bind the people of these societies in conflictless brotherhood, that the inequalities of caste and class do not exist in these societies and that their literary works are only about resisting or subverting colonizer’s discourses. (27)

Whatever the critics feel with regard to the term “postcolonialism”, it has become a relevant term in the present literary studies.

The critical purpose of postcolonial studies is to combat the residual effects of colonialism upon the cultures of the people who had been ruled and exploited by the mother country. It resisted the western representation of the non-western culture. It covers the cultural interaction between colonized powers and the societies they colonized. However, the more popular usage of the term as Gauri Vishwanathan suggests is “to signify more or less an attitude or position from which the decentring of Eurocentrism may ensue” (qtd. in Bahri 52).

The postcolonial literature had a very important task of constructing a new national identity without a colonial taint. Historically, the ending of colonialism meant a new hopeful beginning for the ex-colonised people. The process of creating a nation-state building a new nation, an independent civil society is not an easy task in the postcolonial context. Nation building cannot be created by law and bureaucracy alone. It requires a sense of unity, shared references and strong bonds between individuals. The necessity to fight for
independence had created a consensual unity among the Indians which disappeared on the attainment of freedom. Post-independent government seldom represented the interests of the people. Different cultures, different languages and different religions have kept the rival groups apart in India, both before the arrival of the British and after they left. There was no pure, pre-colonial culture to be retrieved after independence. The postcolonial world was a world of ambivalent legacies as the postcolonial nation state took over in to the structures of authority of the colonial state, which rarely had any relation to the cultural and socio-religious practices of the people named as citizens of the independent nation. Class hierarchies were retained intact from the colonial period, the main difference being that of an aggressively chauvinistic, culturally impoverished native bourgeoisie had now taken over from the white colonial elite. Moreover, except in the situation of partition, the independent state boundaries were usually unchanged from the old colonial borders, facing the same problems when widely different cultural grouping are forced to live together as one nation. The post-colonial nation in fact operated as a politically independent nation yet economically dependent “new” colony, as the postcolonial nations were economically dependent on the west for their development loans. The formal colonialism gave way to neo-colonialism, making the post colonial nations economically dependent on the west. Neo-colonial practices in India have led to economic development and progress undoubtedly but the ruling government has abandoned all concern for human being. There is a general unrest prevalent in the country, due to the economic disparities, corruption and social inequalities.
Many writers of post-independent India portray the changing face of India in their fiction including Nayantara Sahgal.

Fiction was written in English chiefly by the Indian elite circle educated abroad, questioning the established social norms with their liberal outlook. Nayantara Sahgal belongs to Nehru’s “political dynasty” and she has not been uncomfortable with the title and privileges that this line bestows upon her. Shyam M. Asani writes in “Contemporary Politics: Its Portrayal in the Novels of Nayantara Sahgal”, “Politics can be called her ‘primordial predilection’, the central point of whatever she writes. That’s why almost all the major characters of her novels are drawn irresistibly to and deeply involved in the vortex of politics” (109). Though Sahgal doesn’t prefer her works to be categorised as colonial/postcolonial, her own “non-message that Europe is not the centre of the world” (108) proves her postcolonial identity. Sahgal’s protagonists too belong to the same westernised elite class, hence they too inherit the same identity, and “hybridity” becomes their puzzling self identity. Because of her birth and upbringing, Sahgal makes an ideal spokesman for the western educated Indian who finds it difficult to come to terms with India. Sahgal falls in line with Jawaharlal Nehru, her uncle, in this issue, who had articulated the same problem when he wrote in his Autobiography “I have become a queer mixture of the East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere. Perhaps my thoughts and approach to life are more akin to what is called Western than Eastern, but India clings to me as she does to all her children, in innumerable ways” (qtd. in Moraes 47). This realization leads to a passionate concern with Indian heritage and its
meaning in the modern age; all of Sahgal’s novels are concerned with the present
decadence of India and how creative use can be made of its past.

The British in India needed to create a class of Indians capable of taking
on English opinions, moral and intellect. Colonialism had trained the natives in
anglicised ways, groomed to behave and think as the Britishers did mainly for
administrative purpose. These anglicised Indians remained as “outsiders” to the
indigenous masses and to the ruling British. The anglicised Indians were used by
the British but not accepted as equals in their clubs. Though the British
considered the Indians as “lesser breeds” the admiration of the growing class of
rich Indians for the British was total. Nayantara Sahgal portrays this type of
Indians in her novel *A Time to Be Happy* in the character of Girish and Harish
who ape the British ways unabashedly. The novel portrays a clear dichotomy
between the anti-colonial majority and the pro-colonial minority characters.

The novel *A Time to Be Happy* is located in a period immediately
following the freedom of the country but its narrative space is dominated by pre-
independent times. The locale is Sharanpur, a small textile mill town. The story
is told in the first person by a Gandhian bachelor who belongs to a mill owning
family of Sharanpur. The narrator is a close friend of Govind Narayan Shivpal, a
rich land lord who “is still living in the era of Nawabs” (*Happy* 42) and considers
“all changes as his personal enemy plundering his peace” (*Happy* 3). Govind
Narayan’s brother Harish is a deputy collector of the British government, an
anglicised Indian to the core. Govind Narayan’s elder son Girish is the youngest
director of James Mc Dermot and his brother Sanad, the protagonist of the novel,
is employed in Selkirk & Lowe. Harish and Girish are more than comfortable in
the British society whereas Sanad who moves closely with the narrator, a Gandhian, finds himself a misfit in the British society, though brought up in the western tradition. The novel is peopled with many anglicized Indians like Harish, Girish, the Chatterjis, Harilal Mathur and Vir Das, who are indifferent to the anti-colonial struggles.

The British ways of the anglicised Indians in the novel evoke amusement in several places. Harish’s British ways is a standing joke between the narrator and Harish’s brother Govind Narayan. They laugh whenever he utters “My dear fellow, to tell you the truth, I’m more at home in Paris or Rome; than in South” (Happy 16). All their laughter and teasing do not alter Harish’s unshakable faith in the foreign label, advice and opinion. Harish advises the narrator to support the British rulers: “The best thing to do with the situation is to adapt yourself to it. It is no good trying to identify with the congress Wallas” (Happy 21). Harish becomes a total stranger to his own mother “a replica of the Englishman”. Amaji feels he is “one of the most successful creations of the British Raj” (Happy 17). She objects to the colonial impact: “ ‘The Raj’ she echoes scornfully, ‘it does not concern me, I’m merely marvelling at the alchemy by which it transforms my children and grand children into strangers’ ” (Happy 17).

Such is the colonial impact on a small cross section of the elite Indians who were anglicized to the core. Sahgal is critical about men like Harish and Girish. They take no interest to know about their country, the crops which grow in their father’s land but are eager to know more about the colonizer’s ways and their country. They talk in English and are ready to dance to the English tunes forgetting their own roots. The colonial views are also given in the novel through
English characters. According to Tom Grange, Gandhiji an oddly dressed man couldn’t be a threat to the British empire. Tom Grange felt “He did not represent any threat to the British Raj and nobody in his right mind regarded him or his ideas as dangerous” (Happy 11). Tom Grange’s idea proved to be wrong for it was Gandhiji’s leadership which won India its freedom ultimately dismantling the Empire providing dangerous in the end.

Even among the elite Indians, there was a vast difference in the levels of living and thinking as portrayed by Sahgal in A Time to Be Happy. The elite responded differently to the British encounter; Sanad’s father Govind Shivpal continued to live his “nawab style” of life undisturbed whereas men like the narrator gave up their rich and prosperous life to follow the footsteps of Gandhiji participating in the social and political programme of the freedom struggle.

Govind’s brothers Harish and his elder son Girish chose to follow the British blindly because they believed that copying the coloniser led them on an effective road to success. The novelist disapproves of such “a replica of a bara sahib” or “a mimic men”, a pattern of adoption that would make them ignorant of their country and its tradition. Sahgal accepts that all westernised elites were not touched by the British encounter to imitate them:

Of these, some related to the East-West encounter by discarding their Indianness to become brown carriers of white culture they admired and adopted. But nationalism produced another breed of westernized Indian for whom his plural culture meant a bewildering reckoning with himself, a balancing act, where the
priorities, were never in doubt, but where ‘who am I?’ remained an on-going search and question. (“Schizo” 94) This conflict of Sahgal and puzzle of identity becomes a dominant trend in the protagonists of her novels.

Writing in a tradition which is not one’s own and in a language which is one’s own by acquisition or education constitutes the colonial self in its ‘twoness’ in its ambivalence which forms the core themes of Nayantara Sahgal’s select-novels. Sahgal writing in this tradition, is able to project powerfully the hybridity and ambivalence in Sanad’s portrayal. Though Sanad is brought up in the western tradition, from his childhood, he maintains a close tie with the narrator. When the narrator adopts the “modus operandi” of Gandhiji to serve the poor and oppressed, Sanad looks upon him as an idealist: Sanad himself unlike other anglicised Indians, is able to feel for the poor. In the party hosted by Ronu and Lalita Chatterjee he is disturbed by the sight of a beggar girl with a child in the street. By the time he comes out of the party to help her, the watchmen had chased her away. They inform Sanad, that the girl was carrying a corpse and not a child. Sanad is astonished and pained to see the difference between the “haves” and “have nots”.

Sahgal is critical of men like Harish and Girish who are ready to dance to the English tunes forgetting their own roots. They neither belonged with the English nor with the Indian masses. Sanad though an anglicised Indian realises that he is a marginal man par excellence, a creature of two worlds and of none in particular, when he is denied entrance to the club in Sharanpur with Marion his English girl friend. He feels “that his parents had gone to a great deal of trouble
and expenses moulding him to be a figure that would never have any reality” 
(Happy 123). Moreover “He did not feel that he belongs to in either the British 
on the Indian set of Sharanpur. He did not associate himself with Indians of a 
lower social rung than himself and he certainly did not belong with the English. 
With them there were boundaries beyond which he was not socially acceptable” 
(Happy 123). Sanad realises that he is an outsider in both the worlds and this 
develops his alineation.

As an anglicized Indian, Sanad is able to identify a split within, which his 
brother Girish is unable to experience. As Bhabha puts it in Of Mimicry and Man 
“to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English” (87). Sanad is not against 
everything in British culture but to the blind adherence to it. “Take our clothes, 
our mannerisms, our speech. Take us. What are we? I’m not saying it’s not 
good thing to borrow from another culture but to take it over lock, stock and 
barrel and become an imitation of it” (Happy 93). The real “mimic” men as 
Sanad are not the disempowered slavish individuals required by the British India. 
Bhabha argues that the real mimic men are invested with the power to “menace” 
the colonizer by the western education and the English language which they 
learnt from the colonizer. There is a “worrying threat of resemblance” between 
the colonized and colonizer and the ambivalent position of the colonized “mimic” 
men in relation to the colonizers become challenging to the entire structure of 
colonialism.

Sanad meets Kusum Sahai in the police station where he goes to rescue 
Raghubir his office staff. Kusum with her Hindi flair and cultural insight remains 
a personification of what was missing in him. He falls in love with her. Sanad
marries Kusum in February 1947 and the same year India is declared independent in August. Sanad’s marriage to Kusum intensifies his alienation but later with her help he overcomes his struggle, when the firm decides to send him to England, he refuses telling “I don’t want to feel like a stranger among my own people” (Happy 132). According to him, his problem is “My body is in India but my brain doesn’t belong here I might as well be an Englishman except for the colour of my skin” (Happy 232).

Sanad and Kusum are determined to make their marriage work out inspite of the initial conflicts. Sanad seeks to fit his hybrid identity into new free India. As the first step he decides to establish his Indianness by learning to use the charkha in the village industries fair from Sohan Bhai: The narrator is surprised to see him struggling to spin and Weatherby is angry to see his employee learning to spin in an open space. Sanad has to renew his contract with the British firm and he is not sure if he wishes to work there. The narrator feels Sanad might resign his job but to his surprise, Sanad renews his contract with Mr. Trent. Sanad says “I told him about my desire to discover my country a little before I went abroad. I told him Kusum was teaching me Hindi and that I was learning to spin” (Happy 267). When Mr. Trent asked him why he found all these suddenly necessary, Sanad “tried to tell him that all the people in our country who during the past hundred years had sweated and struggled to become nearly English would soon find it had been a hollow race and that there was no larger prize at the end of it” (Happy 269).

The idea of McIvor the British employer of Sanad regarding the anglicized Indian as “a link” to connect India and the rest of English speaking
world is powerfully expressed in his words “The world is in need of a universal culture, a universal language, if not in literal terms at least in terms of thought and values” (Happy 148). Sanad’s own view regarding his identity crisis as an anglicized Indian is different. “You know Mr. McIvor, it is a strange feeling to be midway between two worlds . . . . My education, my upbringing and my sense of values have all combined to make me unIndian” (Happy 147). Both the views are powerfully expressed in the novel as Nayantara Sahgal is able to sympathize with both, an ambivalent position she herself felt as an Indian novelist writing in English. The author herself was brought up in the western tradition till the Nehrus came under the magic of Gandhiji and moving in both the worlds of the British and that of freedom fighters, western by virtue of English medium education and Indian by blood and consciousness she is able to sympathize with the plural voices each with its own perspective which itself is a hybrid quality.

Nayantara Sahgal’s second novel This Time of Morning (1965) is an artistic creation, setting the individual consciousness against the backdrop of amoral politics of power. Sahgal describes the challenges faced by the newly independent country, projecting the hopes, ideals and fears of the people after independence. The rosy picture depicted in the pre-independent times was wearing off, as the country was staggering under the weight of the socio-political issues. There was a general feeling of disillusionment as Gandhiji’s dream of “Rama Rajya” was dis-integrating giving way to aggressive neo-colonial practices. Independent India suddenly faced a number of problems. The administrative system still functioned through a colonial framework and India found itself burdened by an alien system of values and education. Rakesh the
IFS officer listens to the P.M’s speech in *This Time of Morning* “We are not experienced in diplomacy. We do not have qualified men. We have had to build a foreign service from scratch . . . we have our problems” (*Morning* 70). The problem was inadequacy and weakness of human material.

Impatient for progress and intolerant of suffering, the new group of political leaders had placed self interest before nation’s progress. Somnath, the new rising leader, is of the view that the Congress was on the cross-roads after independence and it needed people to run the government not to lead a freedom struggle. Kailas a Gandhian was not ready to sacrifice dedication or support the erosion of moral values. Nation building needed dedicated human beings like Kailas and Prakash Shukhla an M.P from U.P, and close associate of Gandhi. But the new breed of politicians like Somnath, Hari Mohan, and Kalyan considered them not suitable for the political arena. Hari says “When all the old crusading zealots like Prakash are out of picture, the Congress will be a political party like any other. It is that now, if it will face the fact. Haloes went out with the Mahatma” (*Morning* 117). The new political masters were similar to the colonial rulers in looting the nation’s wealth. The cabinet minister for industry, Hari Mohan was proud of the industries he had established in U.P. since independence. Capitalistic projects, economic plans and factories were enough for the nation’s progress and his own. Hari Mohan goes to any extent to ascend the political ladder. When he is denied seat in the congress, he creates a communal unrest in Motigunj a village occupied by Muslim population with his power and money. Moreover, politics becomes a means to reach power and money. With more and more unscrupulous people flocking to politics, it
becomes “a dirty game”. As Kailas affirms, “Any game was a dirty game when dirty people played it” (Morning 257).

Located in the post-independent India, This Time of Morning contains a good part of pre-independence past of the country too. The most significant feature of the novel is that it deals elaborately with the various facts of the lives of civil service officers who had an influential bearing on the political and administrative structure of India. They had worked under the Britishers before independence and the colonial influence was internalised by this generation who couldn’t accept the “dhotiwallas” whom they had imprisoned and driven to prison, as their new masters. The novelist records:

But freedom had launched its own quota of problems, not the least of them, the new political masters . . . . There were men among them of little education, little imagination, men with the limitation of narrow, peasant upbringing, between the old and men who had spent years in prison and lost touch with the world outside, men who had never set foot outside India and would not acknowledge that a wider vision counted. (Morning 121-22)

The dirty game of power politics includes the highly placed and influential bureaucrats too, for they needed the support of the ministers to get posting in their favourite countries. Officers on the Indian Foreign Service prefer to be posted in the European countries and America. These diplomatic corps “had all acquired polish and poise. They had become conditioned to the tempestuousness of Arab politics, the museums and art galleries of Europe, the impact of America . . . . Their wives . . . even the most sheltered among them had obtained driving licences, taken tennis lessons, learned to make a cocktail and to entertain with
ease” (*Morning* 5). They preferred European and American postings, though they followed the colonial life style even in India.

The Indian I.C.S. officers were trained by the colonial rulers to assist the British Empire’s administration. They were loyal to the British empire even when the country faced peaceful revolutions under Gandhiji. The Indians in the administrative service and in the military of the British empire were used to control the freedom struggle of their own brother. Indians arrested the Indian freedom fighters, “An Indian who believed he was doing his duty. That was the final irony . . . . There were Indian soldiers to fight British wars, Indian civilians to administer British law, Indian in every walk of life, scrambling to please, . . . eager for recognition and prestige, for a pat on the back from their British masters. Good dog” (*Morning* 55). Colonialism had created a handful of bureaucrats who were blind to the struggles of their own country and remained as loyal watch dogs to the colonial masters. In the independent India, some of these bureaucrats became corrupt as the politicians who helped each other to hoard wealth in an illegal manner. Dhiraj Singh the Additional Secretary in External Affairs was one such officer who followed corrupt practices to loot money and enjoyed a brief affair with the Turkish First Secretary’s beautiful wife. Such officers with no moral scruples, fulfill their selfish ends for their political advancement. When he is posted to Burma, he decides to seek the help of Kalyan, the minister of his own kind, to get a posting to an European country.

As her other novels, Nayantara Sahgal’s *This Time of Morning* also contains a European character, the Danish architect who had come to India to build the peace institute of Mahatma Gandhiji. Rashmi is drawn towards him and
they have a brief affair. He feels people should not be emotional about “labels” and “nationality”. He supports “people living as they like”. Rakesh feels “A European remark, he added to himself, typical of a man who obviously had no roots or ties on allegiance” (Morning 147). Neil is contented with temporary relationship. “Neil did not understand the fuss people made about nationality, about their origins, their culture, their destiny” (Morning 124). He was European by blood and temperament but the boundaries that made for definition were fast disappearing. Everything he experienced in India was of European life style. “His breakfast tray in Delhi held eggs, toast and coffee just as it would have anywhere else. He was vaguely disappointed it had not been yogurt, papaya and jasmine tea” (Morning 127). When he went to meet the minister Kalyan Sinha, he was surprised to note the minister’s English was not merely good or fluent. It was at least as familiar to him as his own tongue. Though the minister wore Indian clothes, his manners and language had the colonial impact.

Feroza Jussawala has commented upon the juxtaposition of a form of order belonging to the west, with the disorder prevalent in India in This Time of Morning. This juxtaposing does not have any nostalgic craving about it. Instead it focuses attention on the need for balance – neither of the two is desirable in itself: order with ruthless efficiency or disorder with its sprawling and slow procedure in every walk of life. Rakesh who notices the disorder in his country also notices in it the signs of progress. He feels that for their generation “the muddle was both inevitable and right. They had hated English rule and loved English things” (Morning 163). And while the English rule had robbed them of pride in their own heritage, the other had opened new possibilities of
development. He realises that now in a free country the time has come to find an identity of their own, an identity not based on severance with tradition but on re-interpreting and modernising it. Human beings and their progress is important as Kailas states, in the changing world.

In all my dealings with human beings, I discovered no magic formula for change not as long as you consider the human mind and its willing co-operation necessary to your task . . . we have made the human being the unit and measure of progress, so we can never at any stage abandon our concern with him. (Morning 276)

Gandhiji “had taught that central consideration to any problem has the man who faced it.” (Morning 258) and Kailas had followed these words throughout his life.

Gandhiji brought revolutionary changes in the values of the people and gave a new character to the struggle for independence, by making it into a “quest for truth”. He himself gave up the western way of dressing and life style and adopted the Indian peasant’s simple life. He wanted free India, free from all colonial influences, exploitation, social political issues and religio-cultural conflicts. But Gandhian dream of a new India remains an illusion till today.

The Gandhians resisted the neo-colonial political governance of the non-Gandhians after independence. Sahgal symbolises Gandhian and non-Gandhian in the persona of politicians like Kailas and Kalyan Sinha who are men with strong convictions. Kailas strongly believes in the perennial relevance of Gandhian thoughts because Gandhi rescued people from “the spirit of stagnation, from the crippling malady of resignation, because non-cooperation was a courageous and determined resistance to evil” (Morning 62). People in
power discarded Gandhian ideals because it prevented their social and political advancement. Kalyan criticized Gandhian ideology because it gave him a rational excuse to support unscrupulous leaders like Hari Mohan and Somnath. Kalyan thinks Gandhiji was a saint, who didn’t fit into politics. He feels Gandhi “emasculated us . . . . If a saint is indeed what he was, then saintliness was an intolerable intrusion into everyday life” (Morning 184). Sahgal sees the rise of leaders like Kalyan as a part of general degradation. Kalyan Singh had no faith in Gandhi’s method of fighting the British and had championed India’s cause of freedom in the American soil. He was not ready to suffer, take part in the freedom struggle, spend long years in the prison and lead a very simple life. When freedom was won in Gandhian mode, he didn’t hesitate to taste the fruits of freedom enjoying the prestigious position of a minister in post-independent India. Such leaders are totally out of tune with the needs of the country who created new centres of power and monetary values which flourished in free India.

The first two novels of Sahgal deal mainly with the effect of the colonial encounter on the pre-and post-independent India through institutional structures which the British had established in the country. Leaders and bureaucrats who were running the political administration of free India, felt the colonial life and administration as superior, whereas Gandhians like Kailas felt the relevance of Gandhism was more needed to unite the Indians and administer the country through the framework propounded by Gandhi. Although in the action of the novel This Time of Morning Gandhism triumphs, the novelist makes it clear that its influence is on the decline.
The novel too records the storm over the language issue as something serious in the post-independent-India. These people who packed off the British empire from the country were unable to force out the English. In the Lok Sabha, there was a growing agitation “Two rival groups demonstrations stood facing each other. On one side placard, some of them in English announced ‘Down with English’, ‘Hindi is our mother Tongue’ and ‘Are we still slaves?’. The other procession demanded a stop to the tyranny of Hindi” (Morning 154). The language conflicts continues even today. India has many states, and languages spoken in the different states compete with each other. Though Hindi is considered as the national language, it is not used throughout India especially in the southern states. So the supremacy of English continues to reign the country among the elite section.

Sahgal is aware of the “colonial hangover” that continues to prevail in India after independence in the social, political and administrative structures inherited from the Britishers. Independence had broken the continuity, had created a cultural uncertainty and failure of sincerity among the bureaucracy. These ideas are heightened in her novel Storm in Chandigarh. Beginning with Vishal Dubey of the diplomatic service entering Chandigarh to solve a crisis, the author unfolds the shrewd political forces, the planners and manipulators exploiting the situation with divisive forces like caste, religion, regional and linguistic differences. The development of internal divisions based on religions, languages and castes testify to the fact that colonialism and its impact on the colonised is a continuing process. Colonialism named the different states and provinces into a homogeneous British India for administrative purpose though it kept the Indians divided to exploit and control them; the present politicians of
India too heightened the “differences” among the people to fulfill their narrow political aims.

Gayan Singh in *Storm in Chandigarh*, the chief minister of Punjab is one such power hungry politician, ruthless in attitude with little concern for human beings. Gayan’s strong sense of “self” regards his own brethren of Haryana as the “other”, as the quarrel over boundaries, water and electric power between Punjab and the newly created Haryana intensifies. Harpal the Chief Minister of Haryana, a Gandhian refuses to concede to the threat of strike from Gayan Singh. Gayan Singh’s words resurrecting and glorifying the Punjabi identity is similar to colonial racist theory. The rise of linguistic states in India can be traced to the revivalist fever among several sections of Indians, which was actually a cover for their lust and power. In the secular India, Gayan Singh goes to the extent of teaching Sikh scriptures in the school as it is an integral part of Punjabi culture. He becomes an undisputed leader due to his narrow vision. He “described himself as a simple man fired with a simple purpose: to call his soil his own in the language of his fore fathers” (*Storm* 127). The Britishers exploited and looted India to make their mother country prosperous whereas Gayan Singh was ready to threaten and exploit his own country to make his state Punjab a well developed one.

If Gayan Singh is colonial in his attitude, Harpal Singh is a Gandhian and is more concerned with human beings. His personal loss during the partition in 1947 had left a deep scar in his sensitive mind. It had made him more humane, determined to serve the suffering lot. From the beginning he was against the partition of Punjab, for dividing people who had been living together for
centuries together. Harpal feels “there was something sinister at the root of the partition mentality and those who upheld it. Mankind’s journey was towards integration, not the breaking up of what already existed” (Storm 21). Vishal Dubey is able to understand Harpal’s vision of integrated India in the changing veins of its culture, for Vishal feels that in India several cultural strains had blended without producing anything different.

In colonial India, the bureaucracy was competent as the British severely penalized the incompetence. They had to depend on the efficiency of the bureaucracy to govern the entire nation and hence the ICS officers of colonial India were sincere, intelligent, hardworking and honest. Many of them were loyal to the Britishers. Sahgal portrays Trivedi in Storm in Chandigarh as a sincere, competent ICS officer who had taught all the intricacies of administration to Vishal Dubey during his training period. Trivedi’s love for the British is seen in his words, “The British . . . are the only people on earth who could sustain an unwritten constitution. Any other people would have served each other’s entrails up for breakfast and dissolved into miserable confusion by this time” (Storm 67). The bureaucracy of post-independent India were insincere and corrupt though they served their own people. They were not loyal to the land.

The novel Storm in Chandigarh clarifies that fall in the standards of political morality was not confined to the states, it was in the centre too, in its political set-up and bureaucracy. The central leaders who were supposed to make the vision of integrated India into a viable and purposeful reality without compromising on values failed to do so, because they were solely guided by the
consideration of perpetuating themselves in power. The top bureaucratic officials
too had ceased to be humane, cultivated and broadminded; like politicians they
had learnt to keep themselves in power by playing safe. The India that emerges
in *Storm in Chandigarh* is no more a comforting place. Politicians played on the
sentiments of people and segmented the country. During the British reign, the
Indians were united with a patriotic fervour to win freedom for their motherland
from the alien forces. But the present crisis of character, lack of commitment,
wrong kind of values coming to the forefront etc., mark the confusion of
post-independence India which is the result of the average Indian’s inability to
outgrow colonial consciousness. India is unable to come out of the quagmire of
colonial experience, political and social events are completely divorced from
moral consideration

*Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow* have been considered by
critics as autobiographical works dealing with complex marital problems. But
the novels are political novels where the marital problems help to underline the
political problems. Marriage to Inder and Som imply an imperial control of their
women Saroj and Simrit and to Saroj and Simrit marriage is a relationship of
equality. Inder’s and Som’s masculine spirits of possession clash with Saroj’s
and Simrit’s sense of personal freedom. The desire to control, suppress and
dominate portray the men as colonizers, exploiting the colonized for their selfish
purpose of maintaining a family in the society with no love for their partners.
Inder’s and Som’s desire to control their women and their inability to act, creates
a marital discord and so is Gayan Singh’s desire to dominate and control and
Harpal’s Singh’s passivity causes the political disaster. In the personal and
political level, Visual Dubey champions the cause of the suppressed and supports Harpal to take a stand against Gayan’s threats and encourages Saroj to walk out of her disastrous marriage. Smirit too comes out of the nightmare of her marriage with the assistance of Raj.

The postcolonial identity that emerges in _Storm in Chandigarh_ and _The Day in Shadow_ is anti-Gandhian and neo-colonial. The novels portray brutal calculated violence which has become routine and expected and given different names such as indiscipline, unrest and disorder. People’s commitment to duty and public causes was dwindling. Words like dedication, sacrifice, and austerity had lost their meaning. Indians had lost sight of the “big vision” after independence and the country had lapsed into a welter of separate, sensitive identities. It is the result of the selfish ambition of politicians. No leaders emerged but only election gambit like Sumer Singh. According to Sahgal, this mentality of Indians, to seek refuge in smaller sub-national identities would ruin the multiculturalist policy of India. Sahgal knew the emerging trend was not healthy to the development of India. She feels in _Some Thoughts on Puzzle of Identity_ “...having been brought up to the view that a politics or an economics, a private or a public life motivated solely by self-interest and self-satisfaction was one that could only degenerate into greed, grab and lunacy” (87). Not only _Storm in Chandigarh_ but all her novels portray this degeneration, as she says in the same work, “My own novels are about how the idealism of an emergent nation has withered and rotted in corruption and decay” (87).

In _The Day in Shadow_, through the character of Sumer Singh, the author continues the picture she has depicted in _Storm in Chandigarh_. The minister of
oil portfolio, Sardar Sahib was a close friend of the Prime Minister during the independence struggle who had been schooled mostly in hardships. With the invincibility and planning they had created a new dawn when free India was placed in their hands. Sardar Sahib had made the impossible work possible beginning the oil era in India with his meticulous planning and getting the equipment and training from Soviet Union. Sardar Sahib was upset when he was struck with a grave illness. His deputy Sumer Singh, a son of a Zamindar had other narrow vision than serving the nation. Sardar Sahib felt “A man of Sumer Singh’s calibre in the Government was an indication of how Sardar Sahib and his generation had failed. They had built up no trained dedicated cadre in the party to take over” (Shadow 126). The same theme is developed in her next novel A Situation in New Delhi the problems faced by India due to the lack of proper leadership.

A Situation in New Delhi is a finely crafted book with its neatly and carefully structured action in sixteen chapters. The chosen time of action is early sixties and the Prime Minister under the guise of Shivraj is Jawaherlal Nehru. Sahgal weaves the narrative around Devi, the Prime Minister’s sister, her son Rishad a young college boy and a member of Naxalite group, Usman the admirer of Shivraj’s policies, and vice-chancellor of Delhi University, Michael Calvert an old acquaintance of Shivraj and Devi who comes to India from England to write Shivraj’s biography. Sahgal highlights the sacrifice of Nehruvian idealism for the convenience of a few people in power. Shivraj’s death had led to a void in the political area, nothing hopeful or encouraging happening in the political situation.
The novel estimates the dead leader’s personal qualities, his approach to nation-building and his power to influence the lives of the people. Based on this, the contrast between the times of Shivraj and that after his death is analysed. The post-Shivraj’s India stands for a steady erosion of all that he had stood for; robust and healthy democratic fervour, value oriented thinking and a purposeful drive towards future advancement. In *A Situation in New Delhi* we find the remarkable exposure of politics and society in India complete with sham, hypocrisy, meanness, corruption and manipulations, the intrigues and humbug. The widespread corruption, political interference in restricted areas and manipulated violence have become the order of the day. The unrest in the political field is reflected in the indiscipline in the universities, senseless, conspicuous consumption of the rich business class and insecurity and unease among the middle class and the poor.

Sahgal attempts to analyse the tense situation in the novel. There is a decline in the quality of leadership, with leaders of muddled and confused thinking misleading the country. The students are rudderless and they go berserk in the attempt for a positive change. The faulty education policy causes aberration in student’s life. The educated youths become hopeless when they find themselves jobless. According to Usman, degrees should be delinked from jobs: “Universities can’t be scattered like birdseed. It isn’t possible to deal in ideas until we become much more selective and we can’t do that if every job requires a degree” (*Situation* 22). Usman who is nurtured in the free atmosphere of Shivraj era, is much respected by the students community. “A scholar, humorous, patient, compassionate, having all the qualities that had once been
considered enough to preside successfully over a student community” (Situation 23), finds himself a misfit in the new order of things. The education system introduced by Macaulay in colonial period to train a group of Indians to carry out the Raj’s work cannot be considered as relevant in the post-independent India. Any effort taken by academicians to bring a suitable change according to the demand of time and situation is denied approval by the narrow minded politicians under the cause of “social justice” and “progress of the nation”.

Sahgal highlights the vast contrast that exists among the leaders in the colonial and postcolonial India. The intellectuals who led the freedom struggle had made some peculiarly personal contribution to the nation. The intellectuals who supported Shivraj were of another breed. They had occupied important position after Shivraj’s death in the cabinet but they didn’t have a mind of their own and they were “trying to make a revolution by the rules of a book” (Situation 14) instigating a class war with their “good rabble-rousing speeches and lavish promises” (Situation 14) and had no notion to control those class wars they themselves instigated. Shivraj had kept these intellectuals at bay but after his death they had taken an upper hand and the country faced a great deterioration. They were a complete antithesis of Shivraj. Usman ruminates “Leadership did not join the ferment, scream with the mob leadership led. Funny, it was not Shivraj’s enemies who were undoing what he had done. It was his friends, his followers, those who had written paens of praise to him” (Situation 29). The new breed of leaders are like sheep and goats with no individuality or “one good sound sensible programme to put before the country” (Situation 147). Sahgal is not against the ordinary, common people holding ministership in the government
but they lack the ability of their predecessors and they are inefficient in running
the country. Such leaders would introduce militant populism into the political
culture of the country and corrupt the entire political administration.

Lack of good leaders brings about a drastic change. Young intelligent
students like Naren and Rishad become terrorists, secretly operating to bring a
social change. They are well aware in the context of opportunistic politics
persued in New Delhi, the social change they desire would never materialise.
The majority of students are hopeless as the unemployment problem looms large
in their mind and the plight of jobless future threatens them to indulge in
violence. Moreover, the younger generation does not possess patience which is
the main stay of non-violence. They are attracted towards violence because they
wish to bring a social change overnight for the marginalised of the society. They
don’t realise that violence is self-destructive and creates only fear and mistrust.
Rishad justifies the violence of the terrorists – the Naxalites. “This was the
violence of the sane with a passion for justice. To build a new world, the old one
had to be razed to the ground” (Situation 64). The new world they dreamt of was
an Indian Utopia for the poor and downtrodden. Sahgal clearly points out that the
change they dreamt of is impossible through violence. Non-violence is the only
way. Usman says to Devi, “There never was another way. Besides, do you
realise its the only way most people in this country understand and will give their
allegiance to?” (Situation 132).

Usman, as the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University, is well aware of the
unrest simmering among the students. He wishes to bring a change through a
new concept of education but he is unable to get the parliament approval over his
education reform as Usman is estranged from those in power. The change desired by the students and the academicians is not approved by the narrow minded politicians. Their attention is to keep themselves in powerful position in politics. When the students’ energies are not properly channelized, they indulge in atrocities and violence. One such violent act is committed on Madhu who is raped by three students in the campus. Usman expels the three students. Though he has taken the right step, he is puzzled to see students gathering against him, opposing the expulsion of the students and indulging in the violent-act of demolition. He himself is assaulted by a group of students in his office.

It is quite surprising that Sahgal’s strong feelings and sentiments are hardly expressed for the rape victim. Madhu’s victimization is not dealt with in detail or any solution reached. Devi’s visit to her home is merely an official visit and though she is angry against the “barbaric act” of her attackers, literally she does nothing to alleviate the mental trauma of the poor victim. Madhu’s family only wishes to get rid of her by marrying her off. Her fellow students are not outraged for the barbaric act of her molesters but for expelling those students. Nobody cares about the mental agony of the helpless girl including the nurse in the hospital who tries to silence the screams of agony and fear from Madhu. The readers are hardly surprised when Madhu commits suicide to escape the thorny barbs of criticism from the society. Suicide is not the last resort for rape victims. A burning problem in the present situation is rape victimization and child molestation of which every civilized society should be ashamed of.

The strong divisive forces that ruin the unity of free India are caste and linguistic issues, communalism, provincialism etc which operate within the socio-
religious framework of India. The influence of caste is evident in the preparation of Pinky’s marriage. According to Rishad it is “an organised rape” (*Situation 25*). According to him, India is “caught between the ancient myth and industrial present” (*Situation 17*). The technological changes brought about by Nehru and the assimilation of socialist principles cannot eradicate the three thousand years of belief in Varnashrama. The politicians thrive in the sectarian and caste differences of the society. They are like the “colonial masters” who had followed the policy “divide and rule”. According to Rishad, the present politicians “. . . would never banish the contrasts, never in ten thousand years build an equal society. How could they, when they were products of the rot themselves, of caste, of vested interests and stinking old ideas?” (*Situation 74*). Usman too points out Shivraj’s “pedigree”, his Brahmin caste which must have influenced his every political act. Usman tells Devi, that unconsciously the caste superiority is embedded in her mind too. “His grey eyes looked disdainful as he studied Devi, ‘Deep down this poor, misguided woman believes – oh undoubtedly she believes – her blood is purer than someone else’s because of the accident of her caste” (*Situation 22*). The belief in caste has taken deep root in Indian society.

The novel also presents graphically the indifference of the western countries to a nascent democracy. Taking it for granted, that the democratic experiment would fail in the poly-religious, multicultural and pluralistic society in India, they “led the chorus prophesying chaos instead of supporting . . . (her) Herculean labours” (*Situation 5-6*). The colonial attitude is obvious in the seemingly wise comments. “It is an Asian country. We can’t apply our yardsticks here” (*Situation 107*). Sir Humphrey feels that India needs a strong
leader to keep the illiterate masses under his iron grip. Sahgal eulogises India through Michael a British character thus, “It’s a colossal store house some of it evil and repellent and some of it as fine as the world has produced and very relevant to modern times . . . . They have got five thousand years of tradition to dip into. And nowhere does it come with intolerance” (Situation 122). What Sahgal tries to highlight is that India would crossover the barriers that exist in the present-age like students unrest, terrorism, lack of good leaders and narrow selfish mentality of politicians.

*Rich Like Us* is a daring novel about the emergency period (1975-77). Sahgal with her firm commitment to socialist ideal for India, openly disagrees with her cousin Indira Gandhi’s emergency regime. As her interest in politics was influenced by her uncle Jawaharlal Nehru’s socialist ideals, she writes against the capitalistic invasion in India. Moreover, brought up in the western liberal tradition, Sahgal opposes the stifling emergency regime when the freedom and equality of democracy was made meaningless.

Democracy as a western idea of administration was welcomed by Gandhiji whole heartedly. When India attained freedom on Aug. 15, 1947, a democratic form of government was formed as it ensured freedom and equal rights to every citizen of India. It was the gift of the colonial masters to India when the voiceless marginalised could claim their rights and freedom. According to Gandhiji, democracy was the apt form of government in India but Gandhiji feared “The greater the institution, the greater the chances of abuse. Democracy is a great institution and therefore it is liable to be greatly abused. The remedy, therefore, is not avoidance of democracy but reduction of possibility of abuse to a
minimum” (Gandhi 20). Corruption and hypocrisy would be the inevitable products of democracy as feared by Gandhiji. During the national emergency declared by Indira Gandhi, many of Gandhiji’s fears were proved right. Indian democracy. As Saghal remarks in her novel This Time of Morning “The framework of democracy we have today is from the British but humanity we learned from the Mahatma” (Morning 256). Gandhian humanity vanished into thin air during the dictatorial regime of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

After independence, Nehru dominated the political scene in India and he saw socialism as the only way to fight back imperialism and poverty. According to Nehru, any foreign investment was considered a betrayal to national profit. The unity in opposing the British colonialism and the patriotic fervour was slowly disintegrating as politics became a dirty game played by selfish politicians for personal gain. When Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister, parting with her father’s socialist views, she began to encourage foreign investment. On June 12th 1975, Indira Gandhi was found guilty of charge of campaign malpractice by Allahabad High Court. She was prevented from holding any electoral office for a period of six years. Politicians and news papers demanded her to give up her post as the Prime Minister, organising a huge demonstration against her on June twenty fifth. On the same day, the opposition leaders were arrested and national emergency was proclaimed suspending the basic civil rights and imposing a tight censorship over the press. Many were arrested and Indira Gandhi revealed herself as a dictator and democracy was reduced to a tin-pot dictatorship.

The national emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi can be compared to “Home colonialism”. Emergency was brutally repressive as colonial domination.
As in colonial times, the climate of fear and subservience prevailed. Favour and nepotism replaced normal democratic procedure, caste aristocracies and regional identities took precedence over citizens’ rights and freedom. As in colonial regime, violence was let loose on political prisoners and all opposition was removed through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. Colonial hegemony worked through harsh “coercion” and partly with the “consent” of a certain native groups, while excluding the others from civil society. Indira Gandhi’s emergency had the “consent” of certain groups, the corrupt political elites, and retained the harsh “coercion” with the majority common men. Colonialism was based on narrow nationalistic ideals for it made its mother country rich exploiting the “other” but emergency was anti-nationalistic as it was based on the ideology of material profit. The ruling class, a handful of a few, to be rich like the west, sacrificed the rest of India.

Sahgal’s *Rich Like Us* is her critique of capitalism where she argues against the unmonitored foreign investment. Emergency is good for the new capitalist entrepreneurs who could hoard illegal money. As Devikins the villain of the story reveals to the European businessmen,

This emergency is just what we needed. The trouble makers are in jail. An opposition is something we never needed. The way the country’s being run now, with one person giving the orders, and no one being allowed to make fuss about it in the cabinet or in Parliament, means things can go full steam without delays and weighing pros and cons forever. Strikes are banned. It’s going to be very good for business. (*Rich 2*)
Devikins, the new Indian partner of the foreign business establishment is for Emergency. To the foreigner Mr. Neuman, Emergency had made things easier. “The welcome to foreign firms hasn’t been exactly enthusiastic in the past . . . . They’re touchy about their resources and terms for collaboration. Applications take forever to process, even joint-venture proposals” (Rich 3).

But Emergency had changed the scene in favour of the foreign investment. India as a densely populated country attracts foreign business men, for they know “there’s a vast consumer marked out there. If even two out of one hundred Indians use what we manufacture that’s the biggest market” (Rich 4). Foreign investment of emergency regime and their perspective is in no way different from colonialism.

Colonialism in India was sustained and propagated by racial superiority of the British Empire. Though India was administrated with the help of Indians, many of the important posts were held only by Britishers in colonial India. Similarly during emergency regime, aristocratic Kashmiri Brahmins were gaining precedence to other castes. Though Sahgal belongs to the high caste community, she remarks in her novel that the Kashmiri Brahmin community as exaggerated snobs, were proud of their lineage. Sonali feels,

It must have been a high caste-all Kashmiri Hindus are Brahmans and their usefulness as administrators to the marauders, that saved them from slaughter or conversion by the Afghan invaders of Kashmir . . . . and gave one of the world’s oldest aristocracies its air of regal condescension towards the inhabitants of the Indian plains. And then Kashmiris had ruled India since independence,
so they, I mean ‘we’ were entitled to feel smug and special.

(Rich 56)

Sonali, the protagonist of the novel is the alter ego of Sahgal and the feeling of “special” is shared by Saghal too but it doesn’t prevent her from being highly critical of the methods adopted to protect the caste aristocracies. According to Sahgal, the pride in one’s own community prevents the development of a stronger sense of commitment to the Indian nation and to socialism. Under the emergency, it was made clear that being a Kashmiri Brahmin means to be entitled to rule the state, making the nation a privileged property of this aristocratic community. The caste superiority of the Kashmiri Brahmans was similar to the racial superiority of the colonial masters.

Sonali, the Joint-Secretary of the Ministry of Industry is demoted when she rejects the proposal to build a factory that produces a “fizzy drink called Happyola” (Rich 24). Sonali doesn’t know that the factory was a cover up to store the car parts required to manufacture the Indian car promised by the Prime Ministers’ son. Sonali is shocked and ends up in physical sickness which makes her bed ridden for several days. It is Rose, the English wife of Ram and stepmother of Devikins, who shares her doubt with Sonali regarding the shady business of Dev. Both Sonali and Rose understand the atrocities that happen in the family and in the society. But they are powerless to oppose the oppressive regime. Sahgal represents the emergency as a faceless, omnipresent power that inspires fear and awe like colonialism. The elite intellectuals during the colonial rule had shown resistance to it but the degree of resistance has reduced dangerously during the emergency. The elite intellectuals like the professors, the
editor and the lawyer who come to the party hosted by Kiran, Sonali’s sister, raise no criticism against emergency. Their conversation is artificial and empty. Sahgal leaves the reader wondering if India is reverting to a sort of colonised state, exploited for the advantage of a few, who exchange allegiance to foreign powers for personal wealth and privilege.

The depiction of Rose, the second wife of Ram in the novel is noteworthy. Being a British woman, Rose finds it difficult to live in the same house with her husband Ram’s first wife Mona. But later, after years of rivalry their female bonding results in friendship. Mona calls her as sister and their joint-search for a bride for Dev, Mona mourning over Rose’s parents death and Rose herself nursing Mona before her death (due to cancer) illustrate the depth of their bond. Unlike many English characters that appear in Sahgal’s novels, Rose makes a permanent mark in the readers’ mind with her adaptation and integration in the multicultural foreign land and by her helpless submission to the murder arranged by her stepson Dev. Rose develops a hybrid identity in India, assimilating the culture of her husband’s native land and family. She comes to know of Ramayana and Mahabaratha from Mona, feels sad for the plight of Sita, remains a faithful wife to Ram even when he has an affair with another woman and dies helplessly in the end. Sahgal has portrayed that hybrid identity need not be the result of Indians assimilating the western culture; even English women like Rose assimilate Indian culture thus snubbing the racial superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Sahgal is very well aware how the western educated Indian elites feel alienated and exiled in their own homeland. The cultural renaissance of the
twentieth century in India, a by-product of the western education was challenged by Gandhiji in his *Hind Swaraj*. He advised the Indians to uphold the best in the tradition and to have an honourable compromise with modernity. Nehru in his *Discovery of India* stresses a distinct identity for India. At the same time he couldn’t deny the influence of the western philosophy and its ideals in the development of India. The influence of the western education made many of the Indian elites politically ambivalent, resulting in a hybrid identity, who are not at home anywhere, in Britain as in India. Sahgal has portrayed this dilemma which she herself experienced in her life. The freedom she enjoyed in her childhood and the education she received in U.S.A. in the formative years of her life, lent her a broad perspective. She says in “Turning Point”:

I grew up in India that was not free. But all round me at home, freedom – personal, political, spiritual – was a prime value, a necessity. No breath of authoritarianism ever touched my growing years. I was conscious of being continually stretched in mind and spirit of being encouraged to be venturesome, of doing the daring rather than the timid thing, of taking risks rather than playing safe and I was keenly aware of the joy of being myself, like every other unique human being. (28)

The freedom which Sahgal nourished was doing things she believed to be right even if they were against accepted social values. It is her cross-cultural vision which has given her a craving for emancipation from the earlier assigned role to her gender but the impact of tradition remained influential in its role too. According to Jasbir Jain, “There is much in tradition which she values and a great
deal in modernity which she rejects” (33). And that’s why a desire to strive for a reconciliation between the tradition and modernity becomes a dominant tract of her consciousness – the ambivalent state. Her characters “learn to live with ambivalence while striving for perfection” (Jain 13). Their willingness to be rooted in the tradition, at the same time questioning those values which are unsuitable, irrelevant and over glorified lend her characters an ambivalent state which Sahgal herself experienced. At the same time Sahgal also presents a group of the elite who were greatly influenced by the British in her novels.

The next chapter, “Women at Crossroads: Gender Identity in a Cross-Cultural Context” will deal with the peculiar status of women placed between tradition and modernity, as portrayed skilfully by Sahgal in her fictional works.