Chapter I

The Dialectic of Postcolonialism

*The 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves'*

Hamza Bhabha.

Developed under certain specific historical and political contexts, modern colonisation gave birth to a particular kind of economy and a particular kind of culture. The complex social formation effected by colonisation shaped new forms of dominance and novel patterns of confrontations in its economy and culture. As the term colonisation has been used invariably to refer to some of the invasions of precapitalist period as well, I think it necessary to distinguish between modern colonisation and the invasions of the past. Modern colonisation developed with the rise of capitalism in Europe and the global expansion of trade and conquest by the European powers, triggered by the capitalist demand for wider market and resources. It resulted in political subjugation, economic plunder and in the restructuration of the native society. Differentiating the pre-capitalist invasions from the modern colonisation Hamza Alavi observes:
The object of precapitalist colonialism was direct extraction of tribute from subjugated peoples and its essential mechanisms were those of political control. By contrast, in the case of the new-colonialism, associated with the rise of capitalism, the objectives and mechanisms were essentially economic--direct political control was not essential, though sometimes advantageous. The emphasis was on a search for raw materials and, especially after the industrial revolution in Britain, for markets. (Bottomore, 81)

So unlike precapitalist invasions, modern colonisation effected restructuration of the economy and culture of the colonised society establishing new structures necessary for the development of capitalist society. This resulted in a new social formation and a new social order shaping new classes, new power structure, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. The domination of the coloniser over the colonised was all pervading, involving all realms of life. Disrupting the life of the native, negating his cultural identity and exploiting men and women, the colonialists established their domination over the colonised using power and violence.

Discourses for and against colonialism began long ago within the political and intellectual cultures of colonised countries. The early debates were all about the political and economic aspects of the colonial relationship. However, an interdisciplinary approach, embracing psychological, cultural, sociological and economic methods of interpretation, in understanding the cluster of problems associated with
colonisation is adopted by theoreticians like Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. Fanon found the economic theories inadequate to explain the complexity of colonial experience. According to Fanon, economic exploitation is only one aspect of colonial oppression. Fanon's psychological therapeutic approach interrogates the existing assumptions and reorients the study of the process of colonisation and decolonisation along psychological lines giving necessary space for the processes of consciousness and the psychic traumas produced by colonialism. His method of interpretation is a combination of sociological, psychological and Marxian concepts. He incorporates racial, cultural and psychological phenomena into the discourse of colonialism. Fanon traces the close links between colonial war and mental disorders. The question of the national culture and the necessity of revolutionary violence to reach socialism, are the major concerns of his book, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). The psychological and cultural dimensions of white racism against the black under colonialism is discussed in yet another book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). The colonial situation is viewed along similar lines by writers like Albert Memmi, Jean Paul Sartre and Georges Balandier.

Edward Said has made significant theoretical explorations of the colonial experience. His famous work *Orientalism* (1978) portrays how European culture was able to produce the Orient politically, sociologically and culturally. Analysing the role of the cultural text in preparing the ground for cultural and political supremacy of imperialism, Said explores the ways in which Orientalism conditions the Orient. The Orient that appears in Orientalism "is a system of representations framed by a whole
set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire" (Said, Orientalism 202-203). He believes that the various texts of Orientalism dealing with art, politics, ethnography and literature play a vital role in constructing the Orient and in controlling it culturally.

In his recent work Culture and Imperialism (1993), Said expands his arguments to provide a pattern of relationships between the modern West and the overseas territory. Referring to a wide variety of cultural texts, Said traces the general world wide pattern of imperial culture, the historical experience of resistance against empire and its cultural implications in this book.

The publication of Europe and its Others in 1984 introduced critics like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha. According to Bhabha, problems of cultural and racial difference cannot be fully comprehended using the signs of social authority produced in the analysis of class and gender differentiation. He assigns an autonomous position to the colonial within the confines of hegemonic discourse through recovering how the master discourse was interrogated by the natives in their own accents. According to him the object of colonial discourse is to show the colonised as a racially degenerate population in order to justify conquest and rule. It is at the margins of colonial discourse that the practice of colonial authority displays its ambivalence, "in double duty bound" at once a civilising mission and a violent subjugating force. Ambivalence works as a discursive and psychical strategy of
discriminatory power. Bhabha writes: "it is the force of ambivalence that
gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in
changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of
individuation and marginalisation; produces that effect of probabilistic
truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in
excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed" (Location 66). The native subject is 'commodified' by the colonialist
discourse into a stereotyped object as a resource for colonialist fiction.
Bereft of subjectivity, individuality and originality this stereotyped object
is reduced to its exchange value in the colonialist signifying system, the
force of ambivalence giving it currency.

Bhabha introduces mimicry both as a strategy of colonial
subjection through reform, regulation and discipline, which "appropriate"
the "other" and the native inappropriate imitations of this discourse
which has the effect of menacing colonial authority. He writes: "colonial
mimicry is the desire of a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a
difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the
discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be
effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its
difference" (Location 86). Being a repetition, imitation or a partial
representation, mimicry lacks authenticity and originality. This double
vision that is inherent in mimicry discloses the ambivalence of colonial
discourse and disrupts its authority.
The discriminatory nature of colonial authority refers to a process of splitting as the condition of subjection. Bhabha envisions this condition as "hybridity" which according to him is the "revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects" (Location 112). Bhabha's concept of hybridity marks a significant deviation from the accepted notions of colonial authority. It reverses the effects of the colonialist repudiation so that the denied knowledge enters upon the dominant discourse and intervenes in the exercise of authority producing a crisis in the colonial authority. Bhabha refers to this transformation as the displacement from symbol to sign. According to him hybridity "displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (Location 112). So he feels that colonial power produces hybridization and reveals the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses. It turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is one of the most prominent of the postcolonial critics. Though she teaches in America, Spivak originally belongs to India. A non-white radical feminist with marxist sympathies, Spivak uses poststructuralist theories like deconstruction to formulate a postcolonial theoretical perspective.

Identifying the power relationship in the new global scenario Spivak presents a critique of current Western efforts to problematise the third world subject. Revealing the connection between Western
intellectual production and its international economic interests in her famous article, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak analyses the Western discourses and visualises the possibility of speaking of the subaltern woman (271). Identifying the absence of a text that can answer the colonialist back in her study of Master Discourse / Native Informant, Spivak seeks to develop a strategy of reading that can speak to the historically muted native subject, predominantly referred in Spivak's writing as the non elite or "subaltern woman". She uncovers a doubly oppressed native woman, caught between the domination of a native patriarchy and a foreign masculinist-imperialist ideology. According to her, imperialism has positioned the native female identity who has no history and who cannot speak, "more deeply in shadow" (287) than the subaltern male. Spivak explicates this point using the ancient Hindu custom of sati. The debate over sati bracketed the subaltern woman as it was centred over issues whether tradition sanctioned sati or not and whether the woman self-immolated willingly or not. The woman is left no space from which she can speak. Spivak writes, "the subject of exploitation cannot know and speak the text of female exploitation, even if the absurdity of the nonrepresenting intellectual making space for her to speak is achieved. The woman is doubly in shadow" (288). It is impossible to retrieve the woman's voice when she is not given a subject-position. Spivak considers this to be one of the limits of traditional historical understanding which bases itself on the tradition versus modernization story.
The first volume of *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* appeared in New Delhi in 1982. The publication of these texts along with a host of others dealing with issues of race, colony, empire and nationhood indicated the shifting attention and interest in the intellectual production. Challenging the existing historiography as elitist, the *Subaltern Studies* group uses the perspective of the subaltern to combat fiercely the continuance of the colonialist knowledge in nationalist and mode of production narrative. The subaltern is not an eternal category. It is a historical construct that resists the appropriations of colonial and nationalist elites. Gyan Prakash in his essay, "Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography" writes: "The subaltern is a figure produced by historical discourses of domination, but it nevertheless provides a mode of reading history different from those inscribed in elite accounts" (88). The *Subaltern Studies* aims to recover the peasant from elite projects and positivist historiography.

The anticolonial critique of the past was centred around the dualism of coloniser and colonised. It treated the dualism as an emancipatory power. However postcolonial theory problematises both colonialism and nationalism and tries to analyse the "link between structures of knowledge and the forms of oppression of the last two hundred years" (Young, 2). Nationalism while displacing the colonial authority shares the ideology of modernity and the "Enlightenment notions of freedom and democracy" (Mongia, 5). Thus it is true that nationalism depends on the very structures that it tries to dismantle. Though considered to be a sign of modernity, the nation inscribes the
changing social reality. Benedict Anderson comments on the origin of nationalism in his *Imagined Communities*: "Nationalism has to be understood, by aligning it not with selfconsciously held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it out of which -- as well as against which it came into being" (19). He points to the ambivalent emergence of the nation as a system of cultural signification moving in-between different cultural traditions. Thus postcolonialism rejects not only the "Western imperium but also the nationalist project" (Appiah, 353) and seeks an alternative method of resisting colonial containment. It dismantles not only the political, economic or cultural domination but the very terms by which knowledge is constructed.

So the origin and development of postcolonial theory can be traced back to the inadequacies of the existing anticolonial discourses and the socio-historical pressures emanating out of the new awareness about the operations of colonial powers at various sites including that of knowledge production. Its central task is the critique of Eurocentrism and the repudiation of the narrative of modernity. Aiming at the reformulation of the knowledge and identities authorised by colonialism, the postcolonial intellectual goes beyond nationalism "to undo the Eurocentrism produced by the institution of the West's trajectory, its appropriation of the other as History" (Prakash, 87). The Western ideology that postcolonialism confronts, operates not just through the Eurocentric discourses but has penetrated into the national body politic affecting both the public and private realms. As the imperial discourse "operates through its authorization and deployment by the nation-state" (Prakash, 89) during
the post independence period, the confrontation is more intimate, occurring within the national body politic, within the psyche. The intimacy of the "self and the other", the coloniser and the colonised and the discourses of domination and resistance suggest that postcolonial criticism "occupies a space that is neither inside nor outside the history of Western domination but in a tangential relation to it" (Prakash, 87).

Postcolonial criticism developed in accordance with these issues posed by the new historical context goes beyond other political concepts that resist colonialism while sharing many of their concerns. Padmini Mongia elaborates on them:

The political concepts that have shaped modern history--democracy, the citizen, nationalism--no longer seem adequate for coping with contemporary realities. The rise of new social movements around such issues as race, gender and ethnicity, have revealed the limits of older conceptions of community, individual and nation. Profound changes such as decolonization, the movement of peoples on a hitherto unmatched scale, and new distributions of global power, have led to instabilities which have revealed that the old narratives of progress and reason are inadequate for addressing contemporary realities and the numerous fractures that attend them. Postcolonial theory has been formed as a response to these pressures even as it offers a means of speaking of them. (5)

Originating in the new global scenario, postcolonial discourse addresses the contemporary issues relating itself to and at the same time distancing itself from all oppositional discourses that try to subvert the imperial authority.
The postcolonial period witnesses a transition in the nature of colonial authority and the state. If the metropolitan bourgeoisie has domination over the state during the colonial period, the post-independence period presents a more fluid situation where the national bourgeoisie, land owners and metropolitan bourgeoisie compete with each other for domination over the state. Hamza Alavi's observation on postcolonialism in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* is relevant here. According to him, these oppositional forces operate within a "single peripheral capitalist mode of production in which the various classes are all located, the metropolitan bourgeoisies having a structural presence in these societies" (83). So the postcolonial societies reveal a structural similarity brought about by the common experience of colonialism though differences do exist between individual nations. This similarity originates from the common experience of colonialism. Helen Tiffin in her article "Postcolonialism, Postmodernism and the Rehabilitation of Postcolonial History" defines postcolonial as a term, which is "used to describe writing and reading practices grounded in some form of colonial experience occurring outside Europe but as a consequence of European expansion into and exploitation of "the other" worlds" (170). Tiffin without doubt relates postcolonial writings to the historical experiences like the European expansion and exploitation of 'the other' worlds.

Reiterating the interrelationship between the historical experience of colonialism and postcolonial writings, Tiffin identifies the rudimentary dialectic of colonialism that stratifies the colonised world into two, the coloniser and the colonised. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin refer to this
homogeneity in the postcolonial societies, in their famous work, *Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures*, when they observe that "they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization" and that they "asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power" (2). It is true that the tension between the imperial power and the colonised is a continuous process that runs throughout the postcolonial period.

Analysing the Indian situation, it is true to say that the social transformations that formulated a postcolonial society in India began to appear in the early period of colonial rule. It created structural transformation within the society forming new classes, new forms of oppression and new social formation with certain classes or groups dominating over others. The Industrial bourgeoisie and the substantial peasants acquired dominance in India during the Raj. Heterogeneous in nature, these classes included various types. The landowning class included those who cultivated substantial holdings on "capitalistic" lines with hired wage labour and those who continued "feudalistic" production with tenancy. The industrial bourgeoisie comprised small urban businessmen in control of single industries, monopoly business establishments with interests spread throughout the country and an educated middle class made up of various professional elites, including lawyers, doctors, and the civil service personnels. The natural subordinates to these classes were landless labourers, petty traders, the urban work force and other unemployed or scarcely employed classes. Referring to the essential multiplicity of these classes R.Sudarshan in an
article, "The Political Consequences of Constitutional Discourse" writes: "These classes were in themselves heterogeneous" (60). The heterogeneity of the different classes in confrontation make the dialectical struggle a complex phenomenon.

The colonial state in India can be differentiated from the metropolitan capitalist state, as the former has been established by external forces while the capitalism in Europe emerged from internal contradictions within an earlier mode of production. Preserving the pre-colonial social formation and integrating the economy with the world capitalist system, colonialism in India heavily retarded the growth of Indian economy. The nationalist movement brought together various groups with conflicting interests against colonial rule. The movement itself was a site of struggle between different classes for control over it. Entering into a series of alliances between the bourgeoisie and other dominant classes and mobilising the subordinate classes under its leadership the nationalist project aimed at the reorganisation of the political order. But the effort was moderated in two quite fundamental ways. Partha Chatterjee writes:

On the one hand, it does not attempt to break up or transform in any radical way the institutional structures of "rational" authority set up in the period of colonial rule. On the other hand, it also does not undertake a full-scale assault on all precapitalist dominant classes; rather, it seeks to limit their former power, neutralize them where necessary, attack them only selectively, and in general bring them round to a position of subsidiary allies within a reformed state structure. (Nation 212)
The ambivalent attitude of the nationalist movement is shared by the independent state. The post-independence period indicates a shift in the power structure with the emergence of a complex power centre, where various forces contend for supremacy while compromising on sharing power. While indicating a political shift from colonialism to national democracy, the transfer of power failed to materialise the aims of the national movement. During the post-independence period, the state continued the legacy of the colonial state though with certain shifts. Though the national bourgeoisie was able to establish its dominance, the post-independence state was the site of various confrontations. Kalpana Wilson comments on the nature of this transition thus:

. . . the structure and apparatuses of the state remained largely identical with those of the colonial state which had been used to reshape the Indian social formation according to the needs of metropolitan capital. And the same alliance with the rural dominant classes which had enabled the bourgeoisie to dominate the independence movement now proved to be a major constraint upon capitalist transformation. The state thus became the focal point for a number of different contradictions whose strength varied over time: contradictions between different sections of the dominant classes, between the interests of imperialist and indigenous capital, as well as between the producing classes and those who appropriated their surplus. (249-250)

Tracing the confrontations between various classes for hegemony over the state during the post-independence period Kalpana Wilson points towards the continuance of the colonial power structure and the
change that the colonial agenda undergoes during pre-independence and post-independence periods.

Abdul R. Jan Mohamed in his article, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature", perceives two phases of colonialism; dominant and hegemonic. The dominant phase is characterised by the subjugation and violent oppression of the native by the colonialist material practices and the oppressive state apparatus. In this phase, "Colonialist discursive practices, particularly its literature, are not very useful in controlling the conquered group" (62). Many factors contribute to the formation of the hegemonic phase, though the most important one is the ritualised acceptance of the Western form of parliamentary government after independence. During this phase colonial oppression used discursive practices to subjugate the psyche of the native who "accept a version of the colonizers' entire system of values, attitudes, morality, institutions, and, more important, mode of production" (Jan Mohamed, 62). Jan Mohamed's differentiation of the colonial experience into two phases--dominant and hegemonic--help in analysing the difference between the colonial and post-independence periods. According to him the society undergoes fundamental structural transformation with the acceptance of the Western social structure and its value system. The hegemonic phase begins with this internalisation of the colonial values and its social structure. Jan Mohamed's division of the process of colonialism into dominant and hegemonic phases takes into account the internal structural changes that the society has undergone as a result of colonial expansion.
Edward Said in his famous work, *Culture and Imperialism* attempts yet another categorisation. He writes: "In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism, as we shall see, lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices" (8). Said assigns new meanings to the terms "colonialism" and "imperialism" by connecting them with specific social structures. According to him they are not simple acquisitions but are impelled by ideological formation. These terms refer to two different stages in the history of formerly colonised nations. But it is true that these different stages while different from each other establish a continuity of concerns. While breaking away from the colonial political domination, nationalism continues to bear its legacy in the socio-cultural realms. Aspiration towards modernity, rationality and democratic social order is clearly evident in the Indian nationalist movement. Moreover the administrative, educational and legal systems overlap to a great extent effecting the continuance of the power structure. Satish Saberwal in his essay, "Democratic Political Structures" speaks about the Western influence on Indian institutions. He writes: "The political structures launched by the Constitution of 1950 relied heavily on Western institutional styles which stood in sharp contrast to the political styles which had prevailed in India historically" (15). The Western institutions denied normal growth of Indian economy and administrative system and was blind to the real problems and needs of the society.
The imperial regime has affected every area of modern Indian life, like economy, society, politics, administrative structure and the culture. Regarding this overall influence Bipanchandra writes:

A whole world was lost, an entire social fabric was dissolved, and a new social framework came into being that was stagnant and decaying even as it was being born. To turn around a well known phrase, India underwent a thorough going colonial 'cultural revolution.' (*Nationalism 7*)

The abrogation of the internal structure affected various realms of Indian society such as the social, political, administrative, economic and the cultural. The transformation which resulted in the evolution of a new social framework occurred as an "integral part of the development of colonialism" (Chandra, *Nationalism* 6). The overlapping of concerns and structures in the colonial and post-independence periods give more authenticity to the term "postcolonial" to refer to the period from the moment of colonisation to the present day. Regarding the continuance of the colonial structure in various systems of governance in India, Partha Chatterjee writes: "The postcolonial state in India has after all only expanded and transformed the basic institutional arrangements of colonial law and administration, of the courts, the bureaucracy, the police, the army, and the various technical services of government" (*Nation* 15). He observes a continuity from the colonial period to the post-independence period involving structural as well as ideological factors.
Commenting on the popular use of the term "post" meaning "after" or "anti" in jargons like postmodernity, postcoloniality and postfeminism in his book *Location of Culture* Homi Bhabha writes: "These terms that insistently gesture to the beyond, only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment" (4). Not only the colonised nations but even the colonisers have to confront its postcolonial history "as an indigenous or native narrative *internal to its national identity*" (6) because of postwar migration and the flood of refugees. So, widely different in nature, postcoloniality developed into a global experience crossing the boundaries of the nation. So even while possessing a global status postcoloniality is divergently placed in multiple cultural locations revealing histories of oppression and strategies of resistance. The traditional concepts of homogenous national culture are giving way to a transnational hybrid culture. Nation is a contested term today and the idea of a pure national identity can be achieved only through the destruction of the borders of the modern nation (Bhabha, 5). The transnational hybrid culture does not indicate transnational homogenous culture, instead the uniformity relies in the hybridity rather than in the elements that produce hybridity.

In part, cultural variety is prevalent even within the national boundaries. The continuing confrontation and the dialectical relationship between nations, cultures and concepts provide an "in-between", hybrid space. Homi Bhabha writes:
Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed. These spheres of life are linked through an 'in-between' temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history. (13)

Informed by this hybridisation of culture, postcolonialism responds to the continuing confrontations in the society at various sites; culture, sex, race, migrancy, history, economy and politics. Intimately associated with the contemporary social praxis, postcolonialism cannot delink itself from anti-colonial and anti-neocolonial discourses and practices. According to Bhabha "Postcoloniality, for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent 'neo-colonial' relations within the 'new' world order and the multinational division of labour". Such a perspective which connects the postcolonial theory with contemporary reality enables the "authentication of histories of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance" (6). So postcolonial theory cannot be dissociated from the contemporary struggle against colonial and neo-colonial practices.

The heterogeneity and unity of postcoloniality is resident in this pattern of oppression and resistance. The repetition of this pattern of exploitation and resistance ensures uniformity. The heterogeneity of postcolonial discourses and practices originate from the divergent forms of exploitation instituted by the coloniser and the multiple forms of resistance to it. As Gyan Prakash puts it, "the functioning of colonial
power was heterogeneous with its founding oppositions" (96). This heterogeneity originates from the fact that colonial discourse operated as the structure of writing and that the structure of their enunciation remained heterogeneous with the binary oppositions that order the discursive field. According G.N.Devy in this "elaborate pattern of collaboration and confrontation" (92) the terms "coloniser" and "colonised" are not fixed unchanging entities as they undergo semantic transformation during various stages of social development. This process is experienced in the cultural, ideological and psychological fields as well. They always undergo reconstitution and refiguration.

The operation of postcolonial criticism in these complex directions make it an ambivalent practice. Colonisation in India has to be studied in this direction giving adequate significance to the heterogeneous concerns that influence the postcolonial society. It won't be right to study colonialism in India wholly in terms of capitalism. When we give foundational status to capitalism we ignore other concerns. Those who try to rearticulate discourses other than capitalism neglect the story of capitalist exploitation. We have to be cautious enough to avoid both these mistakes. Accepting capitalism as the foundational theme in studying Indian history will show our adherence to capitalist homogeneity. Gyan Prakash explains, "making capitalism the foundational theme amounts to homogenizing the histories that remain heterogenous with it" (93). If capitalism is made the foundational theme in studying Indian history the difference between the metropolitan proletariat and the colonised subaltern will have to be effaced. This may
reduce colonialism into the history of development of capitalism in India. Gyan Prakash believes that social identities like, class, race, caste, gender, nation, ethnicity and religion are not equal categories. Woman as a social identity is different from a worker, an uppercaste Hindu is not equal to a citizen of India. The peculiar kind of relationship between these social identities cannot be explained through the concept of multiple selves, incorporating a variety of social identities. On the other hand Prakash feels:

... we have to think of the speciality of colonial difference as class overwriting race and gender, of nation overinscribing class, ethnicity and religion, and so forth--an imbalanced process, but nevertheless a process that can be rearticulated differently. This is the concept of heterogeneity and cultural difference as it emerges from postcoloniality. (95)

It is true that various cultural forms coexist in confrontation and compromise in the postcolonial Indian society. But it is also true that certain cultural forms predominate over others. The colonial ideology plays a dominant role during the postcolonial period. Nationalist historians assigned a prominent role to colonialism in shaping the economy, politics and culture of modern India. They argued that capitalist development began in Indian society along with colonialism. But the benefits of capitalism was denied to India as the colonial rulers compromised on key issues for their own sustenance and more profit. Thus colonialism developed "the under development" in India. The new frame work came into being dissolving the economic and political basis of
the old society and the precapitalist mode of production. Colonisation of India was completed by integrating Indian economy with world capitalist economy.

Hamza Alavi in his essay, "India: The Transition to Colonial Capitalism" also differentiates between the European capitalism and the version of capitalism practiced in the colonised nations. According to him, "the colonial impact brought about a specific, colonial type of 'bourgeois revolution' in the colonies, establishing a structure of specifically colonial capitalism" (1). Speedy industrialisation and the destruction of the feudal structure, the twin functions of a bourgeois revolution did not take place in India. Moreover "the pattern of production was progressively lop-sided, geared to the requirements of the metropolitan economy, (i.e. exports) and also providing market for the products of metropolitan industry" (Alavi, 66). Thus the colonialists successfully implemented an economic policy that helped the development of their economy while "developing under development" in India.

But revisionist history challenges the assumption that colonial rule represented a fundamental break in Indian history. Historians like Christopher Bayly, David Washbrook and Frank Perlin argue that the capitalist development began in the precolonial period itself. The economic institutions like commodity production, trading, banking, accounting, educated expertise and industrial entrepreneurs emerged in the pre-colonial period. So the transition from precapitalist to capitalist
society can be seen as the natural outcome of the peculiar history of "Indian capitalism". Partha Chatterjee rightly suspects that the revisionist historians attempt "to take the sting out of anticolonial politics . . ." by situating the origins of colonialism in India's own precolonial history. Even if we agree with the revisionist historians, regarding the origin of capitalism in India we cannot be blind to the role of colonialism in supporting and directing the development of capitalism in India. So it is true that Indian capitalism was not allowed to develop freely because of the interventions by the colonial regime that protected its own economic interests, hampering the growth of Indian economy.

If economic exploitation was one of the foremost crimes that the colonialists committed, the most important area of its domination was the psyche of the colonised. Intervening in the cultural life of the native, the colonialists were able to reshape their perception about themselves and their relationship with the world. Ngugi wa Thiongo observes: "Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self definition in relationship to others" (16). Cultural supremacy is attained through a deliberate undervaluing of the culture of the colonised and establishing the superiority of the culture and language of the colonised. The imposition of colonial culture on various precolonial formations inserted into colonial societies widely different, social formations. In a country like India where the divisions of religion, caste, creed, region and culture prevail, colonialism produces divergent reactions. Commenting on the cultural balance that prevailed in India in
the past, Marx and Engels observed that the invaders were conquered by the superior civilisation of India. But the British were the first conquerors superior and so inaccessible to Hindu civilisation (81-82). As a result of various invasions, the languages, cultures and religions of the invaders became part of Indian tradition enriching the cultural framework. This inner urge towards synthesis, derived essentially from the Indian philosophic outlook was the dominant feature of Indian cultural and even racial development, according to Nehru (6). It is believed that Indian culture has the ability to convert into its own strength the challenges raised against it. Nehru writes:

Each incursion of foreign elements was a challenge to this culture, but it was met successfully by a new synthesis and a process of absorption. This was also a process of rejuvenation and new blooms of culture arose out of it, the background and essential basis, however, remaining much the same. (6)

This remarkable talent for adjusting to new situations broadened the base of traditional Indian culture and rejuvenated it on various occasions. It was on this cultural milieu that Europeans exerted their influence. Different from the previous invaders, the Europeans had no plan to settle down in India. Moreover they were reluctant to penetrate deep into the land and society of India. Comparing the British with the previous invaders, Nehru comments:

Every previous ruling class, whether it had originally come from outside or was indigenous, had accepted the structural
unity of India's social and economic life and tried to fit into it. It had become Indianised and had struck roots in the soil of the country. The new rulers were entirely different, with their base elsewhere, and between them and the average Indian there was a vast and unbridgeable gulf -- a difference in tradition, in outlook, in income, and ways of living. (302-303)

The inability of the new rulers to identify with the Indian race can be explained not only in terms of the race and class differences but also in view of their exploitative politics. While the previous invaders settled and mixed with Indian races making India their home, the British colonialists abstained from such identification. So instead of assimilating themselves with the dominantly feudal Indian society the British utilised the Indian wealth for the development of British capitalism. But in this process Britain acted -- quoting Marx's famous phrase -- as the 'unconscious tool of history' in connecting the stagnant Indian economy with the growing world capitalist economy. The economic consequences of British colonisation, "the drain of wealth and the destruction of handicrafts" (Panikkar, 6) deepened the gulf between the ruler and the ruled.

Bourgeois liberal ideology and scientific temperament of the West inspired the English educated Indians to reshape and reform the traditional Indian institutions. Inscriptions of this bourgeois liberal ideology is visible not only in social activists like Rammohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Debendranath Tagore and the like but even in the religious reformists like Swami Vivekananda and Dayananda Saraswathi. While
the pre-colonial religious movements like Buddhism mainly confined to the spiritual concerns like the means of salvation, the religious reform movements in the postcolonial India was not indifferent to the problems of material existence (Panikkar, 97). Signs of such bourgeois perspective is visible in the sphere of economy and society as well. According to K.N. Panikkar:

The basic assumption of economic thinking, even when anchored on opposition to colonial exploitation, was the development of a capitalist order. The critique of the revenue administration and the system of inheritance which facilitated fragmentation of property and hence hampered accumulation of capital, the emphasis on import of capital and technology, the opposition to drain of wealth and export of raw material, and a passionate commitment to industrialization were all part of a bourgeois vision. (96)

Thus the bourgeois liberalism which is considered to be a logical outcome of British rule played a major role in the production of the nationalist ideology and its eventual hegemony. The power struggle between the nationalist ideology and the colonial one continues throughout the postcolonial period. But the nationalist ideology reveals its ambivalence. Revealing its duality Partha Chatterjee writes: "Nationalist thought, in agreeing to become 'modern', accepts the claim to universality of this 'modern' framework of knowledge. Yet it also asserts the autonomous identity of a national culture. It thus simultaneously rejects and accepts the dominance, both epistemic and moral, of an alien culture" (Nationalist 11). Thus its attitude towards colonial dominance
remains ambivalent as it collaborates with the dominant colonial ideology sharing the concepts of modernity while confronting colonialism's political dominance. So a clear division between the coloniser and the colonised becomes impossible in the postcolonial period. This cultural fluidity is further deepened by the hybridity of the colonial power itself.

Bhabha terms this an "in between" position as it occupies a space that is neither inside nor outside the colonial ideology. The writers of *The Empire Writes Back* explore this complex relationship thus:

In order to maintain authority over the Other in a colonial situation, imperial discourse strives to delineate the Other as radically different from the self, yet at the same time it must maintain sufficient identity with the Other to valorize control over it. The Other can, of course, only be constructed out of the archive of 'the self', yet the self must also articulate the Other as inescapably different. Otherness can thus only be produced by a continual process of what Bhabha calls 'repetition and displacement' and this instigates an ambivalence at the very site of imperial authority and control. (103)

The interrelationship between the "self" and the "other" "coloniser" and the "colonised" reveal the complexity of colonial discourse, the hybridity of the colonial authority and the ambivalence of resistance. According to Partha Chatterjee, the "bourgeois opposition to imperialism was always ambiguous" (*Nationalist* 25).
This ambiguity can be traced back to its origin in the dominant colonial discourse itself. Nationalism, the emancipatory power has two important trajectories: "the dismantling of the colonial apparatus and the construction, in its place of a new social order" (Chatterjee, Nationalist 25). While constructing a new social order corresponding to the class interest of the political group that led the anticolonial struggle it formulates its own hegemonic project in opposition to colonialism displacing the existing pluralities, of the indigenous society (Ahmad, 133). Thus nationalism in effect becomes the site for the construction of a new hegemonic discourse, "which replicated the old colonial structures in new terms" (Said, Culture 269).

Nationalism originated in India within the complex matrix of political and cultural confrontation. Combining bourgeois liberalism and humanism of the West and orthodox cultural chauvinism of the East, nationalism constructed its own ideological position against the colonial domination and the control of tradition.

Ideologies inherently opposed to each other co-exist within the nationalist ideology under the broad aim of anticolonialism, creating inner fragmentation. This sort of a broad alliance between national bourgeoisie and the other dominant classes weakens the revolutionary fetishism and forces it to stick to a moderate compromise formula. Commenting on this duplication of bourgeois nationalism, Partha Chatterjee writes:
On the one hand, it does not attempt to break up or transform in any radical ways the institutional structures of ‘rational’ authority set up in the period of colonial rule, whether in the domain of administration and law or in the realm of economic institutions or in the structure of education, scientific research and cultural organisation. On the other hand it also does not undertake a full scale assault on all pre-capitalist dominant classes, rather it seeks to limit their former power, neutralise them where necessary, attack them only selectively, and in general to bring them round to a position of subsidiary allies within a reformed state structure. (Nationalist 49)

The ambivalent attitude resident in the nationalist project has its origin in the confused ideological structure of postcolonial society. Though it welcomed the modern, rational ideas and tried to modernise the customs and attitudes, it compromises with the orthodox feudal forces as well as with various dominant structures revealing its ambivalence. Thus in India the bourgeois revolution was partial and lacked the revolutionary mission of a progressive bourgeoisie trying to create a nation in its own image.

The ambivalence of the nationalist project delineates the complexities involved in the construction of the nationalist movement. A confluence of various classes, interests and ideologies, the nationalist movement combined multivalent ideological positions making the resistance movement a complex amalgam of opposing tendencies. In order to trace the dialectic that operates at various sites within the
postcolonial society it is necessary to identify the opposing movements both in the social or rather institutional and discursive fields.

Colonialism has very little in common with the precolonial institutions and discourses as it is a violent imposition rather than the product of an internal socio-political confrontation. But the precolonial forms set necessary links with postcolonial social formation by setting a proper socio-political situation suitable for the colonial invasion and subsequent take over of the state. Establishing a central authority displacing the earlier irregular, multiple ruling structures the colonial state began reorienting traditional Indian society using European discourses of modernity, enlightenment, individualism, rationalism and freedom. Often termed by the colonial as well as nationalist historians as the confrontation between medieval and modern, this tradition/modern dialectic has set the proper background for the emergence of the nationalist movement.

The socio-cultural confrontations unsettle the notions of tradition and modernity and as a result traditional culture becomes non-traditional and the imported Western modernity undergoes transformation. So it is right to ascertain that the two concepts, tradition and modernity underwent semantic transformation through confrontation and compromise, precipitating a discursive space in which nationalist ideals are flushed and shaped.
The "neo-socio-political novel" of Nayantara Sahgal thus engage in a confrontation with and traces a progression of contemporary Indian society. Her novels are characterised by their blending of political ideology and fiction. Her profession as a political columnist seems to have intruded into her personality as a novelist. The complexity and diversity of Sahgal's novelistic project takes shape from the traumatic ambivalence and the political disjunctions within the postcolonial Indian society. Her novels, viewed in its entirety, try to react to the socio-political situation in India expressing her hopes, aspirations, disillusionments and also the contradictions in her vision. The search for a humane and just moral order based on individual freedom and mutual trust and the absence of it in the real social practice jostle with each other in Nayantara's novelistic vision. Thus the romantic idealism of the novelist and the brutal realities of postcolonial Indian life are mediated in her fiction.

If Sahgal's novels originate from these tragic contradictions in the postcolonial Indian society what characterises her fiction is a liberal humanist approach and her adherence to the nationalist ideology. Though Sahgal deals with the life of upper class people in the metropolitan cities; their intense love and extreme hatred, boundless desires and deep despair, the displacement of traditional moral standards and the sheer absence of true religious fervour; the central preoccupation of Sahgal's novels is the ideological confrontation in postcolonial India. Power filters into the familial realm conditioning even the interpersonal relationships. So the inner world of Sahgal's fiction portray the operations of power and the confrontations between the dominant
ideology and a resistance to it. The dormant bourgeois capitalist
tendencies in the precolonial Indian society, rejuvenated and reshaped by
the colonial regime eventually become the dominant ideological pattern
in postcolonial India. As we have already seen, this dominant pattern
generated directly or indirectly two divergent movements, one against
the decadent traditional order and the other against its own exploitative
politics.

But the bourgeois liberal opposition to the traditional value system
and the colonial exploitation remained ambivalent as the liberal
movement occupied a space that overlapped the traditional as well as
modern realms. Analysing the cultural-ideological struggles occurring in
the postcolonial India, K.N.Panikkar writes, "while traditional culture
appeared inadequate to meet the challenge posed by the west, colonial
hegemonization tended to destroy the tradition itself. Hence a struggle
ensued against both which shaped the intellectual situation in colonial
India" (86). Undermining the retrogressive tendencies of tradition and
the exploitative politics of Western colonialism, imbibing the unifying
spirit of traditional vedic culture and the revolutionary scientific outlook
of Western modernity, the nationalist movement revealed its ambivalent
position. This dual character of the cultural confrontation propelled by
the colonial cultural invasion resulted in the construction of "a vision
fully incorporating either the bourgeois ideology or traditional culture"
(Panikkar, 107).
Constructing a new hegemonic discourse in opposition to colonialism, nationalism assumes the role of old colonial masters after independence. Growing authoritarianism is once again resisted by forces against the centre headed by liberal humanism. This continuing confrontation between the centre and the periphery that effect structuration and restructuration and a constant revision of social formation in the postcolonial Indian society, becomes the focal point of Sahgal’s novelistic project. In an interview with V. Mohini the writer points towards the continuing concerns in her novels thus:

In the early novels after independence, when there was still this euphoria about freedom that the country had won, it was the intense feeling in what sense one can measure upto the ideals of the National Movement. Then there was a gradual sense of cynicism and decay as people did not measure upto the ideals. The vision of non-violence and the application of ethical standards to political behaviour as was advocated by Mahatma Gandhi had been of a very high level. But more often than not, after any sort of revolution, there is always a decline and that happened with us. The decline and the despair and the gathering clouds after freedom, the build-up of the totalitarianism which finally led to the climax of emergency, was the vision of the later novels upto *Rich Like Us*. That was a sort of chronological development at every stage reflecting the hopes and fears of Indians. Then came emergency and that was the worst that could happen. It was there, I took off in time and my next novel was set in 1914 and the latest in 1929. (63)

Here in this passage we confront a writer who shows a deep sense of commitment to contemporary Indian society with an extraordinary
grasp of the directions through which the society progresses and an intense awareness of the ideological struggle resident in it. Sahgal's novels present these ideological confrontations not as bare discourses but as "literary realisations". The texts produced by Nayantara Sahgal present the historical, political and moral confrontations in the postcolonial Indian society, in the form of soluble imaginary contradictions. So these ideological conflicts remain resolved within the text while it fails to do so in the real ideological practice. Such imaginary resolutions are made to retain the logic of the text. Thus the historical, political and moral conflicts portrayed in the text become representations of these ideological confrontations.

Sahgal adopts a chronological pattern by fixing her novels in specific historical situations from the pre-independence period to the emergency period. While the first six novels trace the period from the time just before independence (1932) to the Emergency period (1977) the last two novels go back to the pre-independence period (1914-1929).

The first novel A Time to be Happy, covering the period from 1932 to 1948, is set in the turbulent period of India's freedom struggle and the attainment of freedom. Located at Sharanpur, a commercial city, the story traces the radical changes that the society undergoes because of the two opposing movements prevalent in that society. One is the cultural and political oppression instituted by the imperial rulers and the other is the nationalist movement headed by Mahatma Gandhi. Traces of these two opposing movements are evident in the narrative. The narrator, the
only son of a very rich businessman jumps into the freedom movement infatuated by Mahatma Gandhi. When he writes, "Gandhi's national movement was nearly as young as I was in those days" (TH 7) the narrator is not only suggesting his identification with the Gandhian movement but is also positioning himself on the side of nationalism in this ideological struggle. Kunti Behen, Maya, Sohan Bhai and Kusum are some of the characters having active association with the freedom movement. There is another group of characters who are more attached to tradition. This group includes Govind Narayan, his wife Lakshmi and Ammaji. But even they are not beyond the influence of Western modernity. Ammaji's concern for the alienated new generation expressed in these words, "Do they live in England that they know nothing of what goes on in their own country?" (TH 24) reveals the two sides of her personality, her attachment to tradition and her growing awareness of the changes in the opposite direction occurring in the contemporary society.

Mr. Trent, an Englishman and the manager of a British firm; Girish, an Anglicised Indian, the youngest director of James Mc Dermott company and Sanad, son of Govind Narayan and an employee of Selkirk and Lowe give us certain intimations about the oppressive colonial ideology. Commenting on the general attitude of the public, the narrator writes : "The "Englishness" had been a matter for pride and prestige" (TH 1). The kind of conditioning imposed by the colonial ideology is evident in this comment. Ammaji's awful exhortation, "I am merely marvelling at the alchemy by which it transforms my children and
grandchildren into strangers" (TH 17), is one of the instances in which the appalling nature of colonial subjugation is evident. Numerous such passages lie scattered throughout the novel intimating the presence of totalitarian power structure.

The confrontation between the East and West results in hybridity which is evident even in the items of furniture in a house. In Govind Narayan's house the "furnishings . . . combined the best of both European and Indian worlds", which reveal the fact that a "happy compromise was the key to Govind Narayan's character" (TH 16). Referring to the hybrid constructions of the mind and the material objects, the narrator reveals the deep influence of cultural confrontation on all aspects of life. Sanad, Govind Narayan's son who looked like a "nearly English young man . . . puzzled and uncertain about his future" (TH 2), in the early part of the novel, learns Hindi and spinning and aspires to become familiar with India after coming under the influence of Kusum. She leads him towards self-revelation and an awareness about his own nation. Sanad's evolution can be juxtaposed with the evolution of the Indian society to political maturity.

His father Govind Narayan "is still living in the era of the Nawabs" (TH 2). Brought up in the traditionally conservative mould, he is suspicious of all change. Mr. Trent, the manager of the British firm where Sanad is employed, is irritated by Sanad's transformation and advises him to go back to his original western manners. But Sanad moves forward with his strong decision to familiarise himself with his
own country in an effort to discover it. His marriage to Kusum coincides with the advent of Indian independence in 1947. After marriage, Sanad's inner conflict connected with his sense of rootlessness resurfaces and is resolved in his open commitment to the Indian way of life. Sanad's transformation suggests a shift in the power relationship in favour of nationalism and reveals the very texture of nationalist culture which is essentially a hybrid one.

The continuance of the coloniser-colonised dialectic in a different garb in the postindependence period explains the fluidity of the cultural situation further. The nationalist government constituted after independence reveals the contradictions resident in the nationalist project. Being a precarious amalgam of conflicting class positions, cultures and ideologies the nationalist government becomes a site of the struggle between various ideologies for hegemony over the state. The continuance of the colonial power structure, the bureaucratic set up, law and administrative machinery reinvigorate the dormant colonial attitudes and replicates the old colonial structure in new terms (Said, *Culture* 269). The new rulers strike similar cords to that of the colonial ones in their policies and attitudes. Kalyan Sinha, a Minister without a portfolio in *This Time of Morning* (1965) is presented as an inhuman, rude power monger who is not reluctant to use any method to establish his authority.

However, Kailas, a leader in the Gandhian mould and Rakesh an IFS officer are opposed to the autocratic, rude Kalyan. Still it is easy for
Kalyan to put them under control using his political power and also because of their inhibitions fostered by the long colonial rule. A ruthless politician, Kalyan's personality is moulded in the Western modernity. Individualistic, rational and inhuman, Kalyan represents the new generation of Indian rulers who have inherited the colonial style of functioning. They ensure the reenactment of the colonial system of governance. Ashis Nandy explains the psychological implications of such a repetition. He writes, "... non-synergic systems, driven by zero-sum competition and search for power, control and masculinity, forced the victims to internalise the norms of the system, so that when they displaced their exploiters, they built a system which was either an exact replica of the old one or a tragi-comic version of it" (Traditions 34). A similar tragi-comic version of the colonial master is evident in rulers like Kalyan, who was formerly the president of the "India Centre", that fought for Indian freedom at Boston.

The conflict within the ruling party between leaders like Kalyan and old guards like Kailas function as a sign of the ideological confrontation raging within the society. Kailas, a true Gandhian and the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, is replaced by the corrupt, autocratic Somnath. This points towards a shift in the value system. Here, honesty, simplicity, sincerity, nonviolence and humanity in public life; the noble pillars of Gandhian political philosophy are replaced by, ruthlessness, corruption, violence, opportunism and muscle power. A clear division emerging within the political realm with corrupt, autocratic politicians hand in hand with big business on the one side and the liberal,
humanist politicians on the other is portrayed in the novel *This Time of Morning*. The dialectical struggle between the two is realised in the text as a recreation of the real confrontation that goes on within the society.

Yet another aspect of the confrontation in the postcolonial Indian society is explored in the novel, *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969). The Union Home Minister assigns the task of bringing about a compromise between Gyan Singh and Harpal Singh, the Chief Minister of Punjab and Haryana respectively, to Visal Dubey, a young I.A.S. Officer. While Gyan Singh advocates violence and achieves success through crooked methods, Harpal always counsels caution. The clash between the two is raised to the dimension of a clash between the violent decadent politics and the non-violent, just politics.

References to violence both in public and private lives lie scattered throughout the novel. The very first sentence in *Storm in Chandigarh* is; "Violence lies very close to the surface in the Punjab", and in the second page, "Violence had become routine and expected". The references to violence both state sponsored and mob centered, indicate the growing oppressiveness of the society. The very concept of leadership has changed. During a conversation with Dubey a stranger remarks: "Those people talking about leadership mean strength. And there's only one kind of strength that's understood here. Force. Authority" (SC 51). Politics has degenerated to a race for power and in place of humanism and idealism, power is the only motivation for their participation in politics. The narrator's question, "What motivated the men in politics today, merely
power?" (SC 149) refers to the reemergence of authoritarianism in politics. So the very atmosphere of the novel is constructed in such a way as to reveal the totalitarian tendencies developing in the society as a whole.

The division of Punjab along linguistic lines propels violent confrontation between the two states, Punjab and Haryana. Linguistic and regional divisions emerging within the nation are utilised by the opportunistic political leaders as an easy way to capture power. Regional and linguistic separatism is triggered by various reasons including the imbalance in the developmental activities and the nationalist government's effort to promote a homogeneous culture rejecting the regional and linguistic pluralities. The exit of the Gandhian values from politics and from the larger social life is metaphorically represented in the novel *Storm in Chandigarh* through the death of the Union Home Minister. According to the narrator, it "would mark the end of an era known as Gandhian" (241) and suggests the beginning of another era dominated by corrupt autocratic politicians like Gyan Singh, Kalyan Sinha and Sumer Singh. As the society develops through confrontation, authoritarianism overpowers liberal humanist values.

In the next three novels Sahgal traces the deteriorating socio-political situation which finally ends up in the Emergency. In *The Day in Shadow*, corrupt politicians like Sumer Singh and authoritarian husbands like Som are manifestations of the oppressive power. Victims of this socio-political set up, Simrit, Raj and Sardar Sahib try to resist
this blind system. Sardar Sahib, a politician in the Gandhian mould with his idealism, is bedridden. He has a strange dream in which he sees the rivers burning. The burning rivers seem to suggest the drying up of the old idealism that sustained the indigenous tradition. Sumer Singh, the new glamorous politician openly expresses his aversion for Gandhian humanism thus: "It was time it happened here--time to throw away sentiment, the weak, worn-out liberalism of the past, time to bury Gandhi and write a new page of Indian history" (DS 186). The shift in the political culture leads to the strengthening of the authoritarian, inhuman, colonial attitude and the weakening of the humane democratic tradition. The death of Shivraj an eminent nationalist figure and the Prime Minister of India, in the novel A Situation in New Delhi is presented as another turning point in the changing history of political cultures in India.

The transformations in Indian society after the death of Shivraj is perceived by Devi, Shivraj's sister and the present Minister of Education, Michael, a writer and Usman Ali, the Vice Chancellor of Delhi University. The rape of a girl in the University doesn't shock the conscience of the students, instead a section of the students support the culprits. The hunger and terrible inequality, corruption and total indifference to social well being, all mark this era. The narrator seems to have lost faith in the democratic political process itself. The present situation has to be corrected through construction and destruction. She writes: "It would take the young to build, and to do that they had to pledge themselves to sober, calculated destruction" (SND 67). The
decadent politics ousts people of calibre and moral strength -- Usman resigns his post, Devi resigns from the cabinet and Rishad, Devi's son joins a revolutionary group and dies in a bomb blast.

If the novel *A Situation in New Delhi* describes the steady growth of authoritarianism and the decline of moral standards in politics, *Rich Like Us* portrays its logical culmination in the declaration of Emergency; Authoritarianism and state oppression is in the very atmosphere of this novel. The whole nation comes under the spell of Emergency, "In the hour or so since the radio had told us about the declaration of an emergency, our voices had automatically sunk to whispers" (RLU 156). Removing the mask of liberalism the nationalist government reveals its oppressiveness through the brutal suffocation of the very democratic institutions and moral principles that nationalism cherished to uphold. Sonali Ranade, an IAS officer, who resigns her post; Mona the first wife of Ram, Rose the second wife of Ram are all victims of this oppressive system in one way or the other. All the three are thrown out of the system to which they belong. Sonali is kept out of the civil service, Mona is practically ousted from her marital relationship with the coming of Rose, Rose is dispossessed by her stepson, Dev, as her husband, Ram, falls seriously ill. The supporters of this system like Dev and Ravi use this as an opportunity to attain their goal.

Just what we needed. The trouble makers are in jail. An opposition is something we never needed. The way the country is being run now, with one person giving the orders, and no one being allowed to make a fuss about it in
the cabinet or in parliament, means things can go full steam ahead without delays and weighing pros and cons for ever. Strikes are banned. (RLU 7)

The seeds of resistance is inbuilt in the hegemonic system though it is not expressed forcefully in the materiality of the text. Dissenting voices emanate from Sonali, Rose and Mona though in widely different ways. The domineering power of authoritarianism finds itself locked in a dialectic with the liberal humanist resistance.

The novels from *A Time to Be Happy* to *Rich Like Us* form a structured whole tracing the developments in the Indian political and cultural milieu from the glorious moment of independence to the dark depths of the Emergency. Fed up with the vulgarities of the contemporary Indian life she moves back to the pre-independence period in the next two novels, *Plans for Departure* (1986) and *Mistaken Identity* (1988). Regarding this sudden transition Nayantara comments in an interview with Minoli Salgado:

In retrospect the novels I wrote before *Rich Like Us* seem to chart a chronological progression of India, reflecting the contemporary hopes and fears. Then it seemed that things were getting increasingly worse in India. Idealism had degenerated to the point where there was almost nothing left of the old dreams that nationalists had for India. Then came the Emergency and dictatorship. After that there was no further to go in that chronological progression. We'd hit bottom. I went into the past because I didn't see a way ahead. (47)
Sahgal's preoccupation with the past in these two novels has its own socio-political significance. It suggests a continuation of the mood of Sonali in *Rich Like Us*. The past thus recreated appears to be a solace and an inspiration long lost to the Indian community. In other words, it is an escape from the repressiveness of the present and at the same time a resistance to it. The novel *Plans for Departure* focuses its action on a Danish lady, Anna Hansen, who is appointed as the assistant of Sir. Nitin Basu, a scientist. He stays at Himapur, a remote hill station to do his research work.

Deeply humane and sincere, Anna had studied Indian history at Adayar and had become an admirer of Tilak and the freedom struggle headed by this firebrand political leader. Though a foreigner she almost identifies herself with India. Once, Madhav Rao, a shopkeeper and an admirer of Tilak, describes the 1908 trial of Tilak, in which he argued his own case and the way he has been taken away through the back door to prevent demonstrations. Hearing this she imagines herself to be one among the many who were standing in front of the court. After three months' stay at Himapur she returns to England and marries Nicholas, a diplomat and later becomes a parliament member. Fate turns full circle when Anna returns to India half a century later because of her granddaughter Gayatri whose mother is an Indian. Anna's association with India; its culture, its people and its landscape is a clear sign of her desire to identify with the suppressed people of India. Anna's nationalism is rooted in the deep faith in the spirit of humaneness. Her identification with the natives and her reluctance to participate in the Christian
religious ceremonies explain the psychic pull within her. Anna's love for India originates in part from her sympathy for the oppressed.

Anna's dream of a united world where the "impenetrable barriers" (PD 209) are absent naturally is antithetical to the suppressive, discriminative tendencies of the colonial power structure. The "humane" (201) Anna in *Plans for Departure* responds to the problems of freedom and inequality and she becomes the central consciousness of this novel. The political confrontation between the colonial authority and the freedom movement reveals itself in Anna Hansen's views. Newspaper reports, Madhav Rao's memories and conversations are also used to present political conflict.

The crisis of identity experienced in an authoritarian system, the meaninglessness of racial and religious identities, the ongoing struggle for new identity and man-woman relationship are all part of the central concern in the novel *Mistaken Identity*, the latest novel published by
Nayantara Sahgal. But the principal contradiction of this novel is the one between authoritarian colonial rule and the struggle against it. The diversity of the resistance is clearly demarcated here, the Congress led bourgeois liberal opposition on the one side and the Communist resistance on the other.

The story centres around Bhushan, a young prince of Vijaygarh, a princely state in the pre-independent India. The novel depicts Bhushan's half serious, half comic adventures that finally direct him to his real identity.

Bhushan's love for a Muslim girl, Razia results in a Hindu-Muslim riot. Many die during the riot and Razia and her family leave Vijaygarh. Bhushan is first sent to Bombay and then to USA to keep him away from the wrath of the rioters. He gets acquainted with a highly fashionable Parsee girl, Sylla, in Bombay during his short stay there before he leaves for USA. He meets Sylla again on his return from USA and is forced to act in a drama directed by her. He is arrested in the train on charges of conspiracy during his journey back to Vijaygarh.

In the jail, Bhushan meets his "fellow conspirators", Bhaiji, a Congress leader and Communist leaders like Comrade Iyer, Comrade Dey and Comrade Yusuf. It is his first meeting with them. In the midst of political leaders Bhushan stands bewildered and he explains his position: "I had no position because I had no politics" (MI 31). What unites this group of widely different individuals is the resistance to colonial authority and its inhuman power structure.
Nauzer Vacha, a friend of his, pursues the case and finally Bhushan and his comrades are released. But by then Sen and Bhaiji had already died. Released from prison Bhushan plans to marry Sylla, but unfortunately Sylla was already engaged to Nauzer Vacha. He returns to Vijaygarh only to find his mother frustrated by his father's third marriage. Yusuf visits Vijaygarh to organise people against the British Raj. A procession is conducted and the police strike hard on the participators. Many people are injured and shops and houses are destroyed. In the midst of this turmoil Bhushan meets Yusuf, who appeals to him to take care of his daughter who has broken her arm. The relationship develops into a love affair and finally ends in their marriage. Bhushan's marriage with Yusuf's daughter is a proper culmination to the transformation he has been undergoing. He finally fixes his position on the side of freedom.

Bhushan's mother, the illiterate Ranee, marries Yusuf, though she has no idea about the ideology of Communism. What matters is love and not politics. With this escapade she puts an end to her frustrating married life with the King and shares the platform of freedom fighters though she is not aware of the magnitude of her action.

At the outset the novel seems to concentrate on Bhushan and his turbulent experiences, but all the characters and themes in this novel are associated with the central confrontation within the society. Though the overt signs of an authoritarian regime are limited to the references to police, law courts and prison the presence of such a domineering power is
felt throughout the novel. The novelist uses such parallelism on various occasions. Referring to the magistrate the narrator comments: "the sovereign power turned out to be a ginger-haired magistrate new to the district" (MI 25). The text in its critique of the totalitarian system operates to create an anti-totalitarian political space. By creating such a space the novelist is trying to affirm the liberal values as against the totalitarian colonial value system.

Each of Sahgal's novels, indeed, is alive with such a subversive negation of the totalitarian structure. Ideological confrontations emerge in Sahgal's novels in the calculative organisation of the interlacing patterns of values represented most often by characters. The turbulent psychic contradictions in Sanad in A Time To Be Happy, the strong convictions and extreme patience of Rakesh in This Time of Morning, the brooding passivity of Simrit in A Day in Shadow, deep humaneness of Visal Dubey in Storm in Chandigarh, sincerity and commitment of Usman and Devi in A Situation in New Delhi, the haunting sense of freedom in the self-willed Sonali in Rich Like Us, an inner urge for universal love and brotherhood in Anna Hansen in Plans for Departure and the revolutionary spirit of Yusuf and the saintly devotion of Bhaiji in the novel Mistaken Identity, reveal the manifold faces of this anticolonial space constructed by Sahgal in her novels. It is in this subversive space that the relation of her novels to its ideological context is laid bare.

The complex range of concerns emphasise the plurality of contradictions resident in any evolving society. The corruption, violence
and decadence growing within the postcolonial India, the failure of the federal set up to accommodate the differences, the total insensitivity of the civil administration and legal system to the problems of the oppressed and the transformation of the nationalist politics from a revolutionary force to an authoritarian power, portrayed in Nayantara Sahgal's novels reveal the tragic consequences of the existence of a social system that fail to cater to the demand of a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual society like India. The economic and political interventions of the multinational corporations and neocolonial powers ensures the continuance of the dependency syndrome, while the blind imitation of the Western institutions and the acceptance of the Western norms provide the setting. The dialectical interactions within this social system results in the reproduction of the colonial ideology. The deteriorating social situation portrayed in Sahgal's novels exposes this bleak picture of postcolonial India.

The liberal nationalist resistance is opposed to and at the same time a product of the colonial ideology. Though liberal nationalism is the source of resistance, in one sense it is the same force that represses the formation of real resistance which could alter the whole social structure. So its ambivalent position is evident in its dual identity, both as a subversive power and as a power that suppresses a total structural transformation. The ideological tussle between colonial ideology and the liberal nationalist ideology reproduces the colonial ideology and ensures its extension as the participants in this dialectical interaction operate from the same ideological position.