Chapter II

The Ideology of Resistance

*Struggle, struggle makes history. Struggle makes us. In struggle is our history, our language and our being. That struggle begins wherever we are; in whatever we do: then we become part of those millions ... sleeping not to dream but dreaming to change the world.*

*Ngugi Wa Thiongo*

Nayantara Sahgal is a political novelist for whom the personal is the political. Her eight novels provide ample evidence of Sahgal's preoccupation with the presentation of the personal and the political realms and their dialectical interaction. Sahgal was born and brought up in an extremely politicised family during a period of turbulent political struggle. In an interview with Minoli Salgado published in *Wasafiri* entitled "My Continuing Character is India" Sahgal observes:

I would say that my continuing character is India. It is this, that I am considering and translating into people's experiences, men's and women's through the political and social scene and the implications of politics on character. (44)
Presenting Indian history from the pre-independence period to the Emergency, projecting a critical view of the colonial rule as well as the post-independence governments that inherited the colonial power structure and attitude, Sahgal's novels refer to the basic contradictions that exist in postcolonial Indian society. This conflict forms the central axis on which Sahgal's novels revolve and is realised in the text in the form of personal and social confrontations. In *A Situation in New Delhi* the liberal minded leaders like Devi and Usman are in conflict with the authoritarian power structure even as the "great and growing power of the state threatens to engulf" (SND 80) them. Reiterating the inevitability of resistance Sahgal writes: "A country under foreign bayonets is perpetually at war with the government" (MI 169). This conflict between the liberal nationalist forces and the colonial powerstructure is central to Sahgal's novels.

For a writer, who lives and writes in postcolonial India and who experiences in her blood the struggle for freedom before and after independence, it is natural to be obsessed with this confrontation that has been flushed and shaped in the social contradiction. As the society influences the consciousness of individuals, the social contradiction can be traced to the individual psyche as well. Sahgal's awareness of the division that contemporary society and history create in the individual psyche is evident in one of her addresses, "The Schizophrenic Imagination." In it she refers to the fundamental duality of a postcolonial subject thus: "We are all somewhat divided selves, but I am referring to the divisions that history and circumstances impose on the complex
creatures we already are" (*From Commonwealth* 30). Experiencing the division imposed by history and circumstances on her own self, Nayantara Sahgal focuses on a socio-cultural perspective.

Nayantara Sahgal's concerns and strategies have been shaped by the politics and culture of contemporary India -- the chief events during this period being the independence struggle and the attainment of freedom in 1947. Intimately associated with these political movements, Sahgal's visions and aspirations have been moulded by the socio-political context of the nationalist colonial confrontation.

Imbibing the spirit of romantic idealism and liberalism from the nationalist movement, it is a resistance to the colonial authority that plays a chief role in shaping her attitude during the pre-independence period. Disillusioned and disenchanted by the corruption and authoritarianism that characterise the nationalist government, Sahgal ironically depicts the power-structures implicit in the nationalist bourgeois regime that had inherited the colonial power structure. The failure of the new rulers unnerves old guards like Sardar Sahib. For his generation the "goal was nothing less than the continuation of Indian history. . . ." But in "the hands of the new Government it seemed to him endangered" (*DS* 120). The failure of the new Government and the emergence of the decadent culture need not be associated merely with the colonial influence. Numerous influences, other than the colonial; especially those of race, sex, caste, class, religion and education are entwined in the construction of the power structure in a postcolonial
nation. But the central position can be given to the colonial influence that generated capitalist bourgeois transformation and instituted cultural domination in Indian society. My attempt here is to highlight these issues.

To a great extent the nationalist opposition to colonialism is a colonial construct. We know that nationalism with its totalising concept of the various strata of society makes the coloniser move towards a homogenization of the colonized. But it will be an error to be blind to the effort of the natives to come together under the banner of nationalism, sideling the differences, against colonial oppression. According to Partha Chatterjee, "nationalism is wholly a European export to the rest of the world" (Nationalist 7). Referring to its European origin, Chatterjee suggests the ambivalence resident in it.

The dialectical relationship between the nationalists and colonialists did not permit the nationalist bourgeoisie to fall into exclusive categories of either collaborators or opponents of colonialism (Sen, 25). Thus the "bourgeois opposition to imperialism was always ambiguous" (Nationalist 25). The ambiguity of the bourgeois opposition to imperialism refers to the ambivalence of the nationalist project itself.

This ambiguity is shared, like all other nationalists, by Nayantara Sahgal as well. Moreover, while opposing the corrupt and authoritarian nationalist Government, Sahgal places herself at the very same ideological position of nationalism. This contradiction is integral to
Sahgal's existence as a writer in postcolonial India. Though ambiguously placed, Sahgal's position as a writer is characterised by her insistence on idealism and a liberal fascination for freedom and the rejection of all sorts of repressive authoritarian tendencies integral to the colonial power structure in the postcolonial period. Sahgal's position on the side of freedom refers to the ideological conflict within the postcolonial society which can be identified as the rudimentary dialectic between imperialism and decolonisation.

Considering literature as an "effect of ideological contradiction" (Balibar & Macherey, 42). Sahgal's novels can be seen as an effect of such a confrontation that exists in the postcolonial Indian society. But a bare discussion of the ideological position is not possible in a literary text. According to Balibar and Macherey:

... for these ideological positions can only be formed in the materiality of the literary text. That is, they can only appear in a form which provides their imaginary solution, or better still, which displaces them by substituting imaginary contradictions soluble within the ideological practice of religion, politics, morality, aesthetics and psychology. (43)

So the material practices in the text can be traced back to the ideological contradictions within the society. These ideological contradictions appear in the text in the form of soluble imaginary contradictions as they cannot be solved within the ideology. So politics,
history, morality, violence, alienation and such themes that appear in Sahgal's novels can be treated as the material practices present in the text. These material practices refer back to the ideological project in which Sahgal takes an anti-authoritarian, liberal, idealistic stance. Sahgal's negation of all hegemonic systems of suppression reveals the inner reality of her fictional world, i.e., the resistance to all forms of oppression. In order to trace this inner world of Sahgal's fiction one has to begin from the overtly historical and political matrix.

Critical attention has for the most part been confined to the political and historical events and the feminist overtones apparent in Sahgal's novels, severely bracketing the inner realities of resistance and the cultural critique that is resident in them. Thus despite all the variety of viewpoints expressed, majority of the critics avoid an analysis of the theme of resistance to hegemonic structures, inherent in Sahgal's fictional space.

The menacing presence of an authoritarian power structure pervades the fictional space of Nayantara Sahgal, revealing the writer's insistence on resistance and her near obsession with freedom. This unflinching preoccupation with freedom is inculcated in her by the oppressiveness of the present and the organicist tradition of nationalist movement, a lasting influence on the sensitive Indians of Sahgal's generation. The deep desire for freedom, the awareness of and attachment to her own culture, the humane attitude, the mutual trust and friendly co-operation, the commitment to her society, self respect,
communal harmony and a sense of the multiplicity of cultural values, bound her to the committed leaders of the freedom movement.

Her characters share these concerns and react vehemently to the constraints inflicted by the authoritarian social system. Thus Sahgal's fictional world is a realm of confrontation which throws into embarrassing exposure the discrepancy between the liberal idealism of Sahgal and various ramifications of sordid authoritarianism in the material practices within the text. The novels from *A Time to Be Happy* to *Mistaken Identity* project this confrontation with the ruling authoritarian power structure and its variants on one side and the social movements, individuals and ideals that distances itself from it and resist its domineering presence on the other. In the novel *A Time to Be Happy*, the narrator, Kunti Behan, Sohan Bhai, Nootan, Maya, Kusum and to a certain extent Ammaji distance themselves from the ruling ideology. Learning Hindi and wearing *Khadi*, are considered to be signs of native resistance. Gandhi, the embodiment of Indian resistance to colonialism "made symbols of the lowliest commodities" like "salt and cloth" (TH 7). Maya who works in the village and gets "mixed up in the Congress programme" (TH 32), wearing *'Pyjama-Kurta'*, confronts not only with the colonial regime and its cultural and ideological bindings but with her "flamboyant" fully Westernised husband; Harish, another power centre. Sanad's marriage with Kusum Sahai in February 1947, who taught him Hindi and how to spin helps him to "become familiar with" (TH 269) his own country.
Sanad's alienation from the Indian milieu has got its own socio-political roots. He is a child of colonial India who has been alienated from his own land because of his English education and the complete break from Indian tradition and culture. In his own words: "My body is in India, but my brain doesn't belong here" (TH 232). Sanad's very awareness of estrangement is the first step towards his search for the self. His association with the Gandhian movement and the consequent changes in his attitude, dress and manners refer to a realisation of his Indian self. Finally his meeting with Kusum, whose flair for Hindi and for the traditional Indian feminine virtues, prompts him to discover his Indian self. Sanad familiarises himself with the landscape and spirit of the nation through his marriage with Kusum "a girl who has come from a family with a nationalist background". According to Meera Bai, "Kusum's entry into his life helps him to come to terms with himself" (192). Sanad's internalisation of the Indian self grows in proportion to the slow rejection of the Western self. The setting for this transmigration is not a yogic exercise but a real, material socio-political action, the independence struggle.

Sanad's experience is that of a postcolonial individual. Colonial domination disrupts the cultural life of conquered people by negating the national identity, legal systems and by banishing their customs and tradition. They establish a dominance which develop beyond the socio-political field to the realm of culture and affects the very psyche of the subject race. This all pervading nature of the colonial dominance itself guarantees a resistance to the hegemonic system as "there is a kind of
built-in resistance in the construction of any dominant discourse - and opposition is an almost inevitable effect of its construction of cultural difference" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, Empire 103). It is this innate tendency to resist colonial dominance that results in the emergence of reform movements and the formation of nationalist parties.

The very formation of the nationalist movement is in a way a colonial construct which has its own implicit limitations. Susie Tharu in her essay, "Thinking the Nation Out . . ." writes: "Human kind was already irreversibly committed to industrial society when nationalism came on the scene. Its task, then, was 'merely to create' the cultural homogeneity that an industrial society requires. The long battle against colonialism or the winning of a national culture both slip between the cracks of liberal theory" (86). According to Susie Tharu the nationalist ideology, stressing more on the homogenisation of our culture fails in identifying the plurality of the Indian national culture and slips away from its twin aims of the continuance of anticolonial struggle and the evolution of a national culture. As a result the nation becomes the site of the construction of a new hegemonic system which displaces, the pluralities of indigenous society. Sanad's new found nationalist consciousness is conditioned by this sort of nationalist ideology which enables him to "discover" his country by learning Hindi and how to spin. Hindi and spinning are to be considered only as indicators of Sanad's growing concern for his native land and its culture.
The dialectical confrontation in the society is translated through the characters. It is in Sanad that this contrary pull is clearly seen. Alienated from his native surroundings Sanad deliberately tries to come in touch with his Indianness. The cultural confrontation between the East and the West gives positive results in Sanad. He "desires to discover" (TH 267) his country in order to become "familiar" (TH 269) with it. His brother Girish and their uncle Harish can be grouped together as they stick to their "englishness" even after independence, resisting the influence of their native tradition. Ammaji's rejection of the West originates from her awareness of and involvement with the West. Behind Govind Narayan's traditional appearance, neutral stand and practical compromise, his trust in the bourgeois values is visible. His profit motive gives him the appearance of both a traditionalist and a modern: "Life had to be lived, daughters suitably wedded, and sons established in good jobs. These goals could best be achieved by taking a sensible view of the situation, accepting the Raj, and using it to one's own advantage. Govind Narayan, for all his air of detachment from the humdrum, was an intensely practical person" (TH 15). The failure of nationalism -- which is considered to be the dialectical opposite of colonialism -- in identifying a new self shows its innate inability in evolving a method of emancipation. Commenting on the class character of nationalism, Aijaz Ahmad, remarks in his essay, "Third World Literature and Nationalist Idéology":

For the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, which arose within the colonial context, the 'nation' was a convenient
site at which to construct their own hegemonic projects, in opposition to colonialism but also to displace the preceding and existing pluralities of the indigenous society . . . . (133)

Thus nationalist ideology that emerged as a force of resistance to colonialism in turn gains a hegemonic position, marginalising the minority cultures. Nationalist ideology establishes its hegemony after independence and the government constituted by the national bourgeoisie and their specialised elites was basically a "class-based and ultimately exploitative one, which replicated the old colonial structures in new terms" (Said, Culture 269). The new role of nationalism reveals its ambivalence, the liberative power that it claims to be and the exploitative power that it ultimately becomes.

A ruthless politician Kalyan Sinha in This Time of Morning represents the new generation of Indian rulers who have inherited the colonial style of functioning. Least "conventional" (TTM 77) in his attitude Kalyan preferred "ideas" in place of "emotion" (TTM 69). Having lost connection with the masses, Kalyan lacks an essential humaneness and love. Rakesh refers to Kalyan in these words: "There were men who exulted in their power over women and others who must hold in their hands the destiny of a country, but this man needed the blind loyalty of others in order to discover his own significance" (TTM 136). Though inhuman and rude, Kalyan was ruthlessly efficient and advocated violent action for the country's development. But his belief in violent action which dilutes the humane values is opposed to the Gandhian humanism. Rakesh's words highlight this again: "A group
was individuals. What was needed was not the burial of the self but its rebirth and celebration, for surely the only hope of people anywhere was that they should recognise and foster each other's humanity as individuals" (TTM 136).

Self centred and autocratic, Kalyan did not believe in mutual trust and co-operation. He wanted to rule others through the magnetism of his personality rather than through reason and debate. What he desires from others is "blind loyalty". The tussle within the ruling party between two individuals or attitudes clearly foregrounds the growing tension between the two streams of thought to be actualised later. The individualistic, autocratic Kalyan who carries the credo of his colonial masters is finally tamed by Nita's love and Rakesh's humanism and surrenders his colonial method to "Discussions" which "always serves a purpose" (TTM 221). "Discussion" in contrast to the "blind loyalty" that he demanded previously is more democratic as it ensures the active participation of all who are associated with it. This marks the transformation in the attitude of Kalyan.

The coming together of Somnath and Harimohan, two corrupt politicians as against Kailas and Abdul Rahman, leaders in the Gandhian mould, and their capture of power in Uttar Pradesh suggests the growing influence of corruption and money upon the ruling party. Kailas, who was inspired by the "fire, the dedication and singlemindedness" (TTM 14) of Mahatma Gandhi, is replaced by Somnath a "down-to-earth" (TTM 98) practical politician as Chief
Minister of Uttar Pradesh. This points towards a change in the value system. It shows the re-emergence of the autocratic tendencies of the colonial value system which poses a threat to the idealistic and liberal values of the nationalist movement. Kailas, who "belonged to the generation that has succumbed to the magic of Gandhi" (TTM 14) resists these developments, supported by Rakesh, a dynamic IFS officer. For Kailas the attainment of political independence is not enough. It is just a beginning and the struggle should continue for real freedom at different realms of life. Regarding the transformations taking place in the Indian society, Kailas reflects:

Already there was change at every level, political, domestic and social, and it conveyed a sense of perpetual crisis. Some even interpreted it as a threat to old established values, a kind of impending doom. But doom signified an end, and this, in essence, was a beginning. It was a torrential release from ancient grooves and bonds, ancient pain and suppression. The attainment of independence had been its starting point, but the human being's struggle for freedom, and recognition in every facet of his life and environment went on. (TTM 214)

Projecting the perpetuity of this confrontation, Kailas who has "maddening, imperturbable faith in . . .the people" (TTM 46) refers to the need for an enduring struggle against all forms of oppression. Resisting the individualistic, autocratic tendencies emerging within the ruling class, Kailas and Rakesh ensure the repeatability of this resistance and indirectly suggest the prevalence of colonial values within the new ruling
community. This binary opposition which is part of the colonial heritage continues during the period of nationalist hegemony. When Rakesh rejects Kalyan, who demands "loyalty" (TTM 136) from others, it is not one individual opposing another but one value system resisting another. The ruthless, disintegrative individualism, a product of Western modernity, still controls Kalyan. Affirming human solidarity Rakesh resists individualism and rests his hopes on people who could "recognize and foster each other's humanity as individuals" (TTM 136). This faith in the community, and in the united effort of the people, is the essence of Sahgal's humanism.

Presenting the conflict in opinions and attitudes, Sahgal is trying to show the central confrontation in postcolonial Indian society. The linguistic bifurcation of Punjab, twenty years after independence and the confrontation between Gyan Singh and Harpal Singh the Chief Ministers of Punjab and Haryana respectively form the political background of *Storm in Chandigarh*. If individualism and authoritarianism, two aspects of the colonial value system defines Kalyan's character, violence is the focal point of Gyan Singh's personality. Violence fills the atmosphere of the novel. The division of Punjab into two separate states, Punjab and Haryana unleashes a host of problems and disputes over boundary, water, electricity and the common capital, Chandigarh. Sahgal uses this political situation to ponder over the emergence of narrow nationalism on linguistic lines in India and the abuse of it by politicians for selfish political ends. But the prevalence of violence, commemorative of the colonial period is what characterises the political
culture of this period. Indicative of the continuity of the colonial cultural preoccupations, violence which "lies close to the surface everywhere" (SC 21) filters into the personal relationships as well. The violent politics practised by Gyan Singh is negated by Harpal, the Chief Minister of Hariyana who cherishes Gandhian values. The differences between Gyan and Harpal amounts to "a battle of philosophies" (SC 122) rather than a mere political struggle. In the end Harpal, injured in an attempt on his life, is hospitalised. The Union Home Minister, the embodiment of Gandhian tradition dies and Gyan Singh calls off the strike. The opportunistic practices and policies of the new political leaders which bring about disintegration is juxtaposed with disintegration of family ties. The play of violence on the political front operates on the personal level as well. Saroj is afraid of her husband Inder, who in turn is jealous of her. Inder who "belongs to the he-man school" (SC 162) ill-treats Saroj for her premarital affair with a young man. But he finds nothing wrong in his extramarital affair with Mara, the wife of Jit. After years of suffering, she gathers strength and finally rebels against Inder learning the value of freedom from Dubey who accepts her. Mara has a brief affair with Inder but she escapes from this relationship just in time to rescue her marriage.

Lack of communication and mutual understanding torment the lives of Leela and Dubey and their life turns out to be a "vanishing search for communication" (SC 25). Saroj and Inder, Mara and Jit also lead broken married lives with little understanding of each other's personality. The shocking nature of this inability to communicate is
expressed in Visal's opinion: "We don't indulge in pointless conversations with people, yet we go in for pointless sex experiences, contact without communion, without rhyme or reason" (SC 226). This inability to communicate with others expresses their disillusionment with the contemporary life with its intriguing inner divisions. So, their alienation from contemporary life naturally sends them back to the past.

Sahgal often shows a preoccupation with the past. Most of the ills of present day India, according to the novelist seem to be the result of its break with the past. Dubey says: "We seem to be in the grip of impotence, stuck for answers, because the most effective part of our inheritance is not brought into play and made to provide the answer in ways that would best suit our temperament" (SC 13). The longing for the past emerges out of the disappointment with the present. It is the outcome of an awareness of the divided self of the postcolonial Indian which desperately yearns for an identity that is rooted in native tradition.

The search for identity is a means of resistance to the Imperialist ideology. The resistance takes the shape of decolonisation when it tries to evolve an alternative way of conceiving human history, scholarship and imagination. The dialectical interplay of this subjugation and resistance is pictured through the intermeshing of the day and the shadow in Nayantara Sahgal's novel, *The Day in Shadow*, which concentrates on the socio-political situation of post-independence India. The emerging corrupt politicians who lack moral standards, experience
and commitment like Sumer Singh, the Minister of State for Petroleum, are images of the decadent political culture. His only qualification is his photogenic face. The "toughest of freedom fighters" (DS 117) Sardar Sahib, a true servant of the people and a Gandhian is bedridden. This is clearly suggestive of the plight of the old idealism. Sumer Singh who accepts the Congress ticket as, "the ruling Party's attention had been flattering" and also because "politics had opened up possibilities that films would not have done" (DS 112-113), is never an able administrator and has illegal relationships with rich businessmen. Sardar wonders, "but how had such a future arisen out of such a past?" (DS 125). The failure of Sardar Sahib and his generation to create a new generation of politicians, true to the people and committed to their work, is a problem pondered over by the writer. Sumer Singh of the second generation is a man associated with the ruling power structure which inherits the colonial system to a great extent. Being a "leader" who gate-crashed into politics and who is never part of the national movement, Sumer Singh lacks an internal defensive mechanism to resist the blindness of the power structure and is open to the influence of the ruling class ideology where his actions, opinions and attitudes are flushed and shaped.

Raj, an independent Member of Parliament and a man of intellectual independence, functions as a possible alternative to the kind of value systems practiced by Sumer Singh. During one of his reveries Raj thinks: "One mass is not like another," . . . "Ours, for instance, has built well under restraint leadership, under good men. It can again. We don't need other people's solutions" (DS 155). Raj visualises an
alternative to the present decadence which is typically Indian, a theory of liberation rooted in Indian tradition.

The transformation of the ruling party which still bears the label "Gandhian" is well presented through an emotional outburst of Raj, "The Gandhi image sat farcically on the ruling party . . . but it had to be kept there, because no one could yet capture and hold the masses without it" (DS 10). The rulers have moved far away from Gandhi and his principles, even though they still erect his statues and exploit the layman's faith in Gandhi for their own ends. Democracy becomes a deception here. Raj predicts the emergence of an autocratic system and a second revolution of the "jobless and the hungry" against the system of oppression.

Simrit is alienated in a society of corrupt politicians and hypocritical men and women. Her marriage to Som, a rich businessman and an uncompromising, autocratic personality, turns out to be a fruitless one. She longs for real love and affection which he never gives her. Som's ruthlessness is visible in the Consent Terms produced after his divorce. Simrit is not free from her husband or the traditional conception of constancy in marriage, even after her divorce. Simrit feels: "In a curious way nothing had either changed or ended. We've ended it, but it's going on with an uncanny persistence of its own" (DS 220). It took time for her to adjust to the new situation and is able to gain confidence with the help of Raj. Her "bleak" look at the reception described in the first chapter is replaced by a "wonderful" look at the party mentioned in the
last chapter which coincides with her decision to marry Raj. Simrit is discontent with the contemporary society which is soulless, barren and cruel like Som. She hates "the whole mess of human affairs" (DS 35) as "it is barbaric . . . full of rotten, elastic standards and the worship of money" (DS 34-35). So she feels alienated in the company of others.

Simrit's awareness of her rights springs out of her hard experiences with Som, who "Trapped and maimed" (DS 39) her with the Consent Terms. She had always wanted to love and to be loved. But Som denies her love, pushing her to "the unresponsive dark feeling as if she had been pitched into an indifferent outer nothingness cut ooff from light and sound" (DS 98) as his only interest is in making money. Simrit's deep desire for companionship that remained unfulfilled is evident in these lines: "A weekend with Som, somewhere remote, where she would methodically break down his dividing lines, melt one gesture into another, make them soft, searching children with each other. But Som didn't feel the need" (DS 27). Som's inability to understand her simple feelings and his ruthless attitude creates in her the desire for an independent life. But the Consent Terms of the divorce, which "were a sort of Hiroshima" (DS 138), trap her even after divorce. It forces her to pay a huge amount as tax leading her to real financial trouble and mental torture, "the only stable element in the emotional debris of her new world" (DS 16). With the help of Raj, Simrit tries to stabilize her financial and psychological problems and decides to live with him. Simrit's association with Raj, an independent parliament member who fights corruption and autocracy enables her to shake off her passive
defeatist approach and come out courageously to resist the trappings of the patriarchal society and also to join hands with the political forces that resist the colonial agenda. The transformation that Simrit undergoes is beautifully pictured in these lines: "Before she'd met Raj she had been part of a frieze, one of those elaborate wooden ones in old temples with figures minutely carved in them. Raj had uncarved her" (DS 11). The coming together of Raj and Simrit suggests the inevitable union of the oppressed against a system that denies justice and equality.

Som, Simrit's former husband belongs to the world of big business. His "spiralling mania for affluence" intrudes into his personal life. Som's slow alienation from his wife and the Consent Terms of the divorce mark him out to belong to the group of Sumer Singh. Sumer Singh's oil deal resembles Som's Consent Terms in which Som places large amounts of money in investment which his son will inherit when he attains the age of eighteen, but the tax on which is to be paid by Simrit.

Both are atrocities committed by corrupt politics and big business which form part of the same power structure. Simrit living in the "Defence Colony" tries to defend these with the help of Raj. In this novel, the names Sumer Singh and Som, Simrit and Raj refer back to the opposing forces of tension that form the world of the text. Simrit regains her confidence in the company of Raj who will not allow her to sit on the sidelines in this relationship (DS 231) and both join hands to work for their ideals.
The conflict that is present in the text can be seen as the "literary realisations" of the conflicting ideological positions in the society as "these ideological positions can only be formed in the materiality of the literary text" (Balibar and Macherey, 43). But the textual realisations can never be the real contradictions. The personal and political conflicts that appear in *The Day in Shadow* do not "reflect" the real ideological conflict within the society but are only imaginary representations of the real contradictions. The real contradictions are substituted by imaginary contradictions soluble within the text, though they remain irreconcilable in the real ideological practice. Thus the ideological contradictions presented in Sahgal's novels are more relevant than the imaginary resolutions that she arrives at. Reading her novels one finds that the confrontation develops from novel to novel, resistance being an inevitable participant in this confrontation.

With the passing away of nationalist leaders, the colonial attitude gains more currency which makes the ideological resistance all the more important. Such a situation is described in Sahgal's novel, *A Situation in New Delhi*. The death of Shivraj an eminent nationalist leader and Prime Minister marks the end of a value system, the basis of which is the anti-colonial struggle. Nayantara has created Shivraj in the image of Nehru. Shivraj belongs to a generation that had internalised the world view of the nationalist struggle against colonialism.

The "world view" of the freedom struggle is not fully Eastern. The nationalist movement emerges from a cultural space which assimilates
and rejects Eastern and Western values according to the needs of the emerging society. It is a crucible where various cultural practices melt. Nationalism lost its sting once independence was achieved. So the death of Shivraj may be a metaphorical presentation of the waning of nationalist culture and the slow regression to the colonial culture which is resident in it. According to Raj the freedom movement and the Nationalist government failed because it "didn't involve enough people deeply enough or long enough". As a result it produced "terror and a rigid system" (DS 230). During the early phase of post independence period the moral power of the rulers were strong enough to identify the colonial nature of the state apparatus. But with Shivraj's death that phase is over.

Devi Shivraj's sister, Michael a writer, admirer and the biographer of Shivraj, and Usman Ali the Vice Chancellor of Delhi University, perceive the transformation in Delhi after the death of Shivraj. All of them had been drawn towards Shivraj who had the ability to put "things in perspective" (SND 28) and in turn they had been influenced by his idealism. Devi becomes the Minister for Education after Shivraj's death. The rape of a girl in the Delhi University Campus results in the expulsion of three students. A section of the students resist the Vice Chancellor's decision and protesting against the expulsion seriously hurt Usman Ali. Usman submits a lengthy paper to the government outlining the urgent reforms to be immediately effected to contain the struggle. Devi visits the University Campus and is shocked to see the deteriorating situation. Following the Cabinet's rejection of his proposed reforms
Usman resigns from his post and participates in protest rallies. Devi decides to quit the Cabinet, as she feels the absence of "the sense of values Shivraj had planted like roses with his two hands" (SND 42). Rishad, Devi's son, who is "already half in tomorrow" (SND 42) is a representative of rebellion, joins a student group which believes in violent revolution to overthrow the government and dies in a bomb blast.

The situation in New Delhi deteriorates. It moves from bad to worse. The novel ends on a disappointing note predicting a bleak future. It portrays two types of movements. One is the degeneration of the ruling party and its cherished ideals. Usman's words suggest this decay: "Funny, it was not Shivraj's enemies who were undoing what he had done. It was his friends, his following, those who had written paeans of praise to him" (SND 28). In this regression those who still carry the flame of idealism are sidelined. Devi feels alienated in the company of the new leaders as she "did not belong with this new aristocracy, these new privileged around the Cabinet table" (SND 130). The other movement is the one which is against the degeneration of politics and the criminalisation of the government machinery. It takes different shapes. One is by invoking the past, in the tradition of the non-violent nationalist movement followed by Usman, Devi and their friends; the other is the one advocated by Rishad; a violent revolution. Rishad's movement collapses and the writer seems to advocate a non-violent struggle to bring back India to the idealism of the past.
The novel, *A Situation in New Delhi*, discusses various possibilities of resistance, signifying its inevitability in the contemporary Indian context. This return confirms the growth of authoritarianism and the colonial pattern of political administration that finally leads to the Emergency: "a thinly disguised masquerade, preparing the stage for family rule" (RLU 25). *Rich Like Us* deals with this crisis in the Indian society, the isolation and helplessness it inflicts upon the people and the steady decline of moral standards in politics. The idealistic tradition of the nationalist independence movement and the noble values associated with it have been completely overpowered by the autocratic corrupt government with its "unmistakable apparatus of modern authoritarianism" (RLU 23-24). The gulf between the growing authoritarianism and the nationalistic ideals of freedom and justice widens in *Rich Like Us*.

Sonali Ranade, a middle aged IAS officer in the Ministry of Industries refuses to sanction a foreign collaboration project, which has the support of the Government, during Emergency. For this she is punished with a demotion. She passes through several experiences. She finds her former friend and a young Marxist, Ravi, dwindling into an ambitious bureaucrat and "the right hand and left leg of the Prime Minister and her household" (RLU 28), losing all commitment to work. Dev, a rich businessman who has been transformed from a "Petty criminal and dunce to VIP" (RLU 198), supports Emergency from the
point of view of his business. It is clear that Emergency, the worst form of state oppression, is instituted by the alliance of the three, the ruler, the bureaucrat, and the big businessman. This evil alliance, which forms part of the power structure, uses political power for exploitation and suppression, brutally suffocating democratic principles and moral and liberal principles of nationalist movement. There are references to the counter movements to Emergency headed by J.P.

Sonali becomes more conscious of India's past after she is thrown out of her post. The references to Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Gandhi and J.P who were the embodiments of cultural resistance in postcolonial India during specific historical occasions juxtapose the colonial rule and Emergency in the mind of the reader. The victims of such an oppressive system, people like Sonali, Mona and Rose are by and large helpless, knowing that they "were up against a power" which they "couldn't handle, individually or collectively" (RLU 25). It may be sheer chance that most of them turn out to be women. The condition of men is not different. They have been silenced and paralysed like Ram. Jasbir Jain makes an interesting parallel when she writes: "Ram's paralytic condition is only one of the indications of things having gone wrong. It is almost as if all the men have been emasculated, paralysed or rendered impotent. Ram is helpless. So was Sonali's father, Kesav Ranade -- helpless and inefficient" (Nayantara 135). Ram's paralysis and Kesav's helplessness allegorically presents the horrible suppression and control instituted by the autocratic regime during Emergency and the total inability of the masses who are "blind from birth, born of parents blind from birth" (RLU 25), to resist this domineering power.
The female characters experience suppression from their male counterparts in one way or the other. In *Rich Like Us*, Mona, the first wife of Ram is abandoned with her child when he brings an English girl, Rose, as his second wife. Rose is disillusioned because of the class and cultural differences between them. Nishi has to watch helplessly when her husband allows his garment business to go to ruins. The novel suggests no solution and consciously creates a sense of flux during the Emergency phase. Tracing the line of thought in the novels from *This Time of Morning* to *Rich Like Us* we can identify a steady development of the oppressiveness of the state power and its expansion into various realms of social life including the personal relationships and the waning of nationalist, liberal and Gandhian ideals. As an inevitable consequence, there is an emergence of resistance.

Even after the attainment of political independence the colonial power structure continues to exist. Sahgal comments: "the world's largest democracy was looking like nothing so much as one of the two-bit dictatorships we had loftly looked down upon" (RLU 26). The new Government is instituted on the very same foundation. Edward Said points to this in his famous book *Culture and Imperialism*: "The nations of contemporary Asia, Latin America and Africa are politically independent but in many ways are as dominated and dependent as they were when ruled directly by European powers" (20). The domination continues to exist in economical, political and cultural fields. The dominance of the colonial ideology continues not just through an external control or through economic pressures instituted from the outside but
through the State Apparatus that survives the bourgeois revolution. This idea can be explained further, invoking Althusser. In his famous article, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" he writes:

We know that the state apparatus may survive, as is proved by bourgeois "revolutions" in nineteenth century France by collapses of the state ... or by the political rise of the petty bourgeoisie ... without the state apparatus being affected or modified, it may survive political events which affect the possession of state power. (14)

Using Althusser's concept of Ideology and State it can be said that the transfer of power from the colonial bourgeoisie to the nationalist bourgeoisie was only a transference of the state power. The change in the state power need not affect the State Apparatus which follows the colonial model.

A chronological analysis of Sahgal's novels shows a gradual progression of the repressive nature of the state, during the post-independence period. An enquiry towards the cause of this may unravel the fact that the early phase of post-independence India was ruled by leaders like Shivraj: "a symbol of the fight against colonial rule" (SND 6), who internalised the spirit of national freedom struggle. They were able to give a human face to the administration. Moreover charismatic leaders who had deep influence upon the mind of the people represented power and dissent at one and the same time. Ashis Nandy points to this traditional relationship between authority and dissent in India when he writes:
Charismatic leaders are expected to represent not only the majority of people, but all people. Thus, the antiestablishment, too, must be reflected by the legitimate wielders of power. Nehru and the early Indira Gandhi symbolised something more than the axial authority; they also represented the opposition in their fight against what they and others saw as the retrograde pillars of the establishment within the government. (At the Edge 52)

But in the later years with the disappearance of nationalistic leaders the dormant repressiveness grew and became uncontrolled as one sees in Rich Like Us. Written with the background of the Emergency period, Rich Like Us reveals the extent to which authoritarianism stifles and muffles the life of individuals. Sonali Ranade resigns her job in the civil service as it is difficult for her to adjust with its mode of functioning. Sonali's resignation itself is a form of resistance to the authoritarian functioning of the Government and a protest against the "conspiracy of silence" (RLU 25) engaged in by the liberal opposition. Emergency has upset the very foundation of the democratic tradition built up in India. Sonali ponders over the present condition: "The emergency had given all kinds of new twists and turns to policy" (RLU 6). At another occasion Sonali asks, "power had changed hands but what else had changed ...?" The transformation that occurred is referred to as a journey from "Mahatma to Madam". Jasbir Jain observes that "Emergency is a reversal of all that the past has stood for" and is "an act of discontinuity, abandoning all earlier norms" (New Indian 27). This reversal is not so sudden as it appears to be, but the result of a long and gradual process. It can be seen as the result of an inner confrontation occurring within the
society between authoritarian powers and democratic liberal forces for hegemony. Emergency indicates the victory, though transitory, of authoritarianism and in another sense its defeat.

The Civil Service which remained a puppet in the hands of the Government, the vulgar party politics which aims only at the manipulation of power, the use of regional, casteist and religious sentiments as a stepping stone to power, the lack of will and commitment for the overall development of the nation and after all the use of politics and power as a source of exploitation as inscribed in the fictional space of Nayantara Sahgal, underline the very nature of the ruling ideology and justifies the resistance to it.

It is resistance to this ideology that is fictionalised by Sahgal in her novels. In fact writing itself is an instrument of resistance for Nayantara. Art being a symbol of "the supreme autonomy of a personal imagination free from repressive rules" (Eagleton, 249), Nayantara produces her fiction as a means of resistance to the oppressive system, liberating herself from its ideological control.

The pattern of subjugation and resistance is evident in personal relationships as well. Rose and Mona in widely different ways are victims of the patriarchal control. While Mona, the first wife of Ram, registers her silent protest through prayers. Rose, his second wife is cruelly murdered by her step son, Dev, for resisting his criminal ways. Rich Like Us also presents an occasion for the writer to be more sceptical
of the liberal idealism that she upheld. In an introspective mood, Sonali becomes highly self critical:

And how naive the cast-iron idealism I had been brought up with, believing we were moderate, tolerant people, steeped in civilized ways. I should have been differently taught, told how casual we are about cruelty, depravity. I had grown to adulthood nourished on monumental lies. By the end of my illness I had sloughed off my upbringing, the orgy of idealism I had been fed, the second skin of it I wore. (RLU 30)

Having lost faith in the power of liberalism and nonviolence as emancipatory ideologies to resist autocracy Sonali ironically comments, "If all the mice in the world stopped running away and stood their ground, cats would stop killing them" (RLU 115). The hegemony of authoritarianism, and the total failure of long cherished ideals of nonviolence and liberalism to thwart the state-sponsored terrorism and the violence prevalent in interpersonal relationships, create a vacuum in her, a vacuum that shatters the very foundation of her trust in the philosophy of liberal humanism. The penchant irony and sarcasm in Rich Like Us and Mistaken Identity originates from this deep despair. Negating the growing menace of authoritarianism and the shameful submission of the liberal opposition (without much resistance), who "walked mutely into captivity" (RLU 136); Sahgal resists contemporary defeatist political activity and remarks with contempt: "Politicians are such bullshitters . . ." (RLU 187). Distancing herself from the contemporary Indian life Sahgal goes back to the late eighteenth century
to narrate the experiences of a group of people who arrive at Himapur, a remote Hill Station, in the novel *Plans for Departure*. Sir Nitin Basu, a scientist stays there to plan his research. Anna Hansen, a Danish lady has been appointed as his assistant for three months.

Anna is deeply humane and sincere. She never rides in a rickshaw which is dragged by human beings. Her zest for freedom is evident in her very movement, the "way she set her feet squarely upon the ground," and "the distance she covered in a single stride" (PD 16). Even though a European, her sympathies are with Indians and India's struggle for freedom. She studied Indian history at Adyar and is interested in Hindu doctrines. It shows that "in religious matters" she may be "a freethinker" (PD 18). Anna admires Tilak and his fiery speeches. When Madhav Rao, a shopkeeper and an admirer of Tilak describes how Tilak argued his own case in the 1908 trial and how he was taken away through the back door to prevent demonstrations, Anna identifies herself with the people standing in front of the court waiting for Tilak. The narrator writes: "Madhav relapsed into silence while Anna stood outside the Bombay High Court in the monsoon downpour with the thousands who waited in vain for Tilak while he was taken stealthily away" (PD 58). 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 signifies her desire to identify with the suppressed and reiterates her belief in the utter
impossibility of "impenetrable barriers" (PD 209). Unlike many other Europeans living in Himapur, she mingles easily with the natives and treads the hilly areas on foot. Being a humanist and a liberal, Anna naturally aligns herself with the anti-imperialist side and even sits on the opposite side of her husband Nicholas as a member of parliament. India becomes an arena where Anna fulfils her convictions and Sir Nitin Babu in a way provides the opportunity. Sir Nitin is doing research on the "Unity of life". His thesis is that:

\[
\ldots \text{plants react to time just as animals do, or we ourselves. Leaves change their position by day and night, even when light and dark are artificially regulated. And sea anemones have a way of expanding and contracting to the rhythm of tides} \ldots . \quad (PD 34)
\]

Sir Nitin's concept of the unity of life may have an allegorical significance here. In the cultural space of pre-independence India, which is divided on the basis of race, colour and religion, the unity of human race itself was a subject of dispute. In this context Sir Nitin's proposition negates all boundary lines that divide living beings and allegorically suggests the unity of all living things. Anna also shares a similar view. Nicholas's comment on Anna that she "thinks every country should sink into total insignificance as fast as possible" (PD 205), clearly shows her belief in a universe where all kinds of division evaporates.

Though a natural outsider, Anna internalises Indian culture and philosophy and has a life long obsession for India. It is this obsession
that brings her back to India. Deeply aware of the cultural tradition of India she reflects: "The struggle for self-mastery was all that was really real" (PD 47). The struggle of the body to master the self runs parallel to the struggle of the margins to conquer the centre. In Anna's character and attitudes there is a great deal of sympathy for and comradeship with the marginalised. So this inner struggle can be considered as an allegorical version of the larger social confrontation for power over the centre.

Anna wanders through the hilly terrains of Himapur, socialises with the ordinary natives who call her "Tantanna". shows no interest to participate in the Christian religious ceremonies and tries to transform herself to be a natural insider. It is part of the inner struggle that goes on in Anna between the Western cultural milieu in which she was brought up and the Indian philosophy of life to which she is lured. Anna's love for India can be explained in terms of her love for the age old tradition in India as well as her psychic identification with the suppressed. She goes out without "raincoat or umbrella" whereas an "Indian Christian would have carried both" (PD 18). She finds little difference between the landscape of Europe and Himapur. For Anna "it was confusing to find so much of Europe here, the trees most familiar of all, pines, oaks, spruce, chestnuts." It is so similar that "she had to close her eyes to remember she was in India, open them she was in the Alps" (PD 20). Anna's theory of the essential unity of human beings naturally rejects the forces of division such as those of race, colour, class, caste, religion and so on. Anna has the vision of a universe bereft of racial, religious and colour prejudices. So Anna resists all binding ideologies
like colonialism, and nationalism; divisive structures like race, colour, religion, language and culture and hopes for a boundaryless universe. Her dream of universal cooperation and brotherhood, though idealistic and utopian in its character, originates from a deep awareness of the growing imbalances in the global power relationship. In this sense, Anna's vision, with all its weaknesses, resists the existing global order constructed on the foundations of racial and cultural prejudice and an exploitative economic order.

By presenting a character like Anna Hansen -- Danish in origin, settled in England and deeply interested and learned in Indian culture-- as the central character in *Plans for Departure*, Nayantara reveals the limitations of the nationalist project and crosses the boundaries of the national politics to advocate global co-operation and love, once again expressive of her liberal humanist leanings.

The endeavour to release oneself from the Ideological containment and the attempt to reveal one's true identity is a complex process. The ongoing struggle for one's own self in a hybridised postcolonial cultural space is a political action involving the configurations of power. *Mistaken Identity*, the latest novel published by Nayantara Sahgal, deals with the cultural confusion that an individual faces in the postcolonial India which ultimately leads to the awareness of his true identity.

The novel is set in 1929, the period in which the colonial regime was facing stiff resistance from diverse political groups, such as
communists, inspired by Russian revolution, Gandhi's followers and various terrorist groups. The position of British Raj was quiet uncomfortable and the Government suspected conspiracies against it. It is in this background that Sahgal tells the story of Bhushan Singh, a young prince of Vijaygarh, a princely state in India. Bhushans' love for a Muslim girl Razia unleashes a Hindu-Muslim riot, killing many on both sides. Razia leaves Vijaygarh and Bhushan is transported to United States to escape the wrath of the two communities. His quest for Razia, arrest and imprisonment for political conspiracy of which he had no knowledge, release from prison and his marriage with comrade Yusuf's daughter are all part of the half humorous, half serious narrative. But Mistaken Identity cannot be seen merely as the story of Bhushan. Sahgal's own comment on her novel will be useful here.

It's also about an India struggling for freedom, and the kind of lifelong commitment all kinds of people gave to this fight. And it is about a belief in an India where there is no Hindu and no Muslim, only a shared tradition created and enriched by a fabulous joint culture, by people who have lived as good neighbours side by side for centuries. This broad universal approach is in fact the meaning of being Indian, for India is a many faceted diamond reflecting all the light and splendour that has come her way. (PV 50-51)

Reading this novel in the background of the growing menace of religious fundamentalism in the post-emergency period, I think its contemporary relevance will reveal itself. Negating the fundamentalist assumptions of the purity of any particular culture Nayantara Sahgal
affirms the essential impurity and hybridity of Indian culture. The lawyer asks Bhushan in the court, "What are you, a Hindu Muslim?" (MI 155). Half humorously he replies, "My diet, and therefore my digestion, are mostly Muslim, but my blood seems to circulate in Hindu fashion, and my heart beats alternately to each" (MI 156). So the novel taken as a whole is about the mistaken identity of India; its original identity of a multicultural, multiracial, multilingual society and the fundamentalist efforts to give it a monocultural identity. Thus *Mistaken Identity* resists the growing threat of religious fundamentalism and the efforts to suppress minority culture obliterating India's essential diversity.

Bhushan's marriage with Yusuf's daughter can be seen as an affirmation of the traditional Indian habit of peaceful coexistence. Bhushan later ponders about the cause of their mutual attraction.

Many married years later whenever she and I went back to our beginning to discover what it was that had attracted us to each other, we got it all wrong. My wife insisted she saw political commitment writ large on my face. I, on my part, said I'd never been able to resist a woman's beauty or the culture of Islam. The truth is, her heart went out to a frightened poet, and mine was bewitched by a sign of the times. (MI 205)

Though Bhushan is not sure about the exact reason of their attraction, he is successful in exposing the futility of dividing human beings, assigning labels. By doing this he affirms the fundamental humanity that transcends all boundaries.
Bhushan Singh's adventures lead him through several experiences and he reaches a stage when Yusuf's daughter sees "political commitment" write large on his face. It is Bhushan's awareness of the material conditions of his existence that creates transformation in him from a man ignorant of politics to one of political commitment. His life in the jail, life outside, and life at home; all contribute to this transformation. Moreover his association with Yusuf helped him to develop a sense of direction. When "Yusuf had descended" on him "like a compass" he came to know "where north was again" (MI 201). His marriage with Yusuf's daughter can be termed as a political act because such a marriage brings together two people belonging to different religions. By this very act Bhushan resists the discrimination and establishes a unity. The marriage leads him to the group which organises political resistance movements against the dominant colonial power. It is an act against the established connections and the colonial policy of creating intolerance among various religions and so Bhushan's marriage in one way moves along with the forces of resistance.

Bhushan's mother, the illiterate ranee who was "sentenced to that greenish light of unfulfilled desire" (MI 206), marries Yusuf. It is her long suppression within the family that prompts her to resist her husband's autocratic methods through another marriage. It has nothing to do with party politics. Sahgal ends the novel with an interesting comment on the ranee: "She knows nothing about communism but she knows a man when she embraces one. This winter they'll be in Leningrad where she'll see falling snow" (MI 206). What matters to the illiterate ranee is love
not Communism, though both possess extreme revolutionary potential. Once again Sahgal places humaneness over race, religion and politics.

Yusuf offers the ranee love, which her former husband had failed to give her. So her escape with Yusuf is an act born out of the constraints of her married life and can be considered as a response to her experiences as a woman within the rigid social set up. Jasbir Jain identifies the dynamic personality of the middle-aged "ranee" when she observes: "In her own way, she has always been a rebel . . . ." (New Indian 263). Through this rebellious action -- her escapade with Yusuf -- the ranee, though unknowingly, challenges the dominant power structure that operates within the familial realm. The presence of authoritarian power and its operation both in the social and familial realms is realised in this novel, Mistaken Identity, through the social and personal confrontations inscribed in it. But the real social confrontations are displaced by the imaginary ones in the text. The mistaking of identities, resistance to religious fundamentalism, the Raja's violence towards the ranee, the violence of prison life, and the resistance of the freedom fighters can all be traced back to the complex patterns of subjugation and resistance that run through Sahgal's novels.

It may be true to say that Sahgal fictionalises contemporary Indian history. Since fiction is different from the real, fictionalised history may be different from the real history. So it will be improper to search for real incidents and characters (political or non-political) in Nayantara Sahgal's fictional world. However some of her characters are
modelled on real political figures. For example Shivraj in *A Situation in New Delhi* is based on Jawaharlal Nehru, Kalyan Sinha in *This Time of Morning* is modelled on V.K.Krishna Menon, Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* shares a lot with the author herself and Devi in *A Situation in New Delhi* has much in common with her mother Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit.

Apparently enough Sahgal is not interested just in tracing the contemporary political events and personalities of India. She concentrates more on the portrayal of social contradictions. In this sense Sahgal fictionalises the contemporary historical confrontations of India, which offer an analysis of the deeper structures of dominance and resistance in the postcolonial space.

Analysing the ideological contradictions in the postcolonial Indian society, we can observe the continuance of the colonial power structure throughout the postcolonial period. Moreover the metropolitan bourgeoisie continue to influence the State Apparatus. During this period the state power is not located in a single class but on a "single peripheral capitalist mode of production in which the various classes are all located . . ." (*Dictionary of Marxist 83*). Apart from its influence upon the state power the colonial bourgeoisie's predominance is still experienced in the cultural life of the native; in the educational, legal political systems and even in the very attitudes and prejudices of the people. Thus the power that operates in the socio-political space filters into the familial space as well. Since resistance is inbuilt in any
hegemonic system, the oppressive postcolonial system also generates resistance. This naturally results in confrontation. Thus the political and personal confrontations in Nayantara Sahgal's novels can be considered as the imaginary portrayal of this real ideological confrontation that runs throughout the postcolonial society.

The diversity of interests, the variety of themes and linguistic techniques in Nayantara Sahgal's novels do not hide the essential unity and continuity of her eight novels and the rudimentary ideological confrontation from which these novels originate. Various critics have already identified the unity of Sahgal's fictional project. According to Syamala A Narayan, "Sahgal's novels are concerned with the present decadence of India" (270). A.V. Krishna Rao feels that Sahgal's novels "sum up the saga of India's struggle for freedom and the changes it has brought about in the traditional social set up in India" (42-43).

It is true that Sahgal's novels have a strong preoccupation with the history and politics of India. But the portrayal of ideological confrontation in the postcolonial Indian society can be traced behind the political and personal confrontations. The ideological confrontations appear in various ways such as individual conflicts, conflicts between political leaders, groups, religions, genders, parties and confrontation between viewpoints, in various novels. In *This Time of Morning*, the conflicts between Rakesh and Kalyan, Kailas and Harimohan form part of the conflicts that are finally resolved in the text through discussion. Vishal brings peace in Chandigarh where two chief Ministers Gyan and
Harpal are in conflict. *Storm in Chandigrah* portrays the conflicts between Jit and Mara, Saroj and Inder, Visal and Leela besides the central political one. In *The Day in Shadow* Simrit finds satisfaction and a happy solution of her problems in her second marriage with Raj. So Sahgal's success as a writer lies in her ability to present the ideological confrontation, that is central to postcolonial Indian society, in fictional terms. The decadence, corruption and the desire for power prevalent in the new rulers are resisted by individuals and groups believing in liberal humanism and idealism. Raj, Rakesh, Vishal, Sonali, Devi and Usman, who are opposed to the decay, corruption and authoritarianism, belong to this group. Judging by their attitudes and opinions their resistance is not to the whole social structure but only to the decadence that affects the system. In other words the novelist upholds the noble values of liberal humanism while being opposed to the corrupt capitalist system that functions within the colonial power structure. But their resistance to the evil tendencies of the socio-political system does not hide their fundamental association with the same system. In other words, Sahgal is opposed to the evil effects of the postcolonial system though not fully opposed to the very system that produces such effects. This keeps Sahgal's fictional project at an ambivalent position.

The absence of a mass movement that demands a total transformation or her unwillingness to trust the credibility of such a movement can be cited as reasons for her inability to provide an alternative. At another level the ambivalence can be connected with the class character of the resistance portrayed in Sahgal's novels. While
sharing the bourgeoisie capitalist politics Sahgal's characters resist the operations of authoritarian power and decadence that form part of the hegemonic system, upholding a virtuous, liberal humanist stance. Such a liberal ideology resists the decadence while being blind to the fact that the decadence is a product of the bourgeois system itself. This can be considered as the weakness as well as the strength of Sahgal's resistance ideology.

By tracing the history of Indian society and by describing its landscape, its people its politics, its culture and its long struggle for a self of its own, Nayantara Sahgal is trying to reinvent the nation and its history. So her novels attempt to discover the nation afresh. The effort to discover the national history and culture through writing is a way of resisting the colonial oppression that disrupted the culture, economy and the very identity of the nation. Commenting on this constructive use of resistance Edward Said writes, "... resistance, far from being merely a reaction to imperialism, is an alternative way of conceiving human history" (Culture 260). Sahgal realises the necessity to trace contemporary Indian history from an Indian perspective.

Nayantara Saigal writes to formulate an alternative method of looking at Indian history and culture. Inherent in her attitude is the desire to see the nation through her own eyes. So for a writer like Nayantara Sahgal, whose "continuing character is India" the very act of writing itself becomes a method of resistance and her novels become part of a resistance ideology.