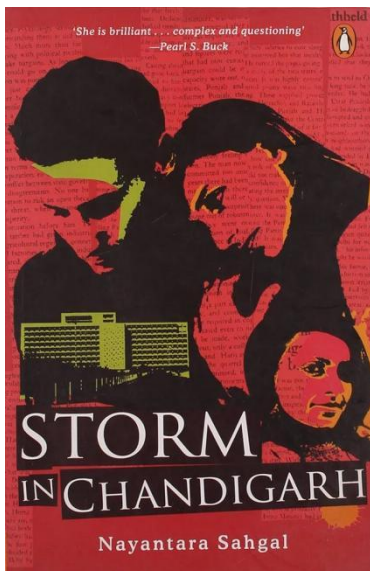


Review of *Storm in Chandigarh* by Nayanthara Sahgal

V. Janisha*  



Publisher : Penguin India

Date of Publication : 19 November 2008

Language : English

Paperback : 232 pages

ISBN : 978-0143102762

Link : <https://www.amazon.in/Storm-Chandigarh-Nayantara-Sahgal/dp/0143102761>

Keywords: Political Turmoil, Societal Transformation, Chandigarh, Political Fiction

Submitted: 12.03.2024

Accepted: 27.03.2024

Published 30.03.2024

*V. Janisha, MA English, Lady Doak College, Madurai-625002, Tamil Nadu, India.

©2024 V. Janisha. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction, provided the original author and source are credited.

Nayanthara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh* is an erudite masterpiece that delves into the intricate layers of post-independent India, using the background of Chandigarh to weave a compelling narrative about identity, power, and societal change. Through rich characterizations, suggestive descriptions, and a keen understanding of literal and artistic surroundings, Sahgal creates a novel that not only entertains but also provokes deep soul-searching and critical reflection.

Before probing into the intricate details of the novel, it's essential to understand the author, Nayanthara Sahgal, and her significance in the sovereign country, India. She belongs to a distinguished political family, where her uncle Jawaharlal Nehru served as India's first Prime Minister. Consequently, Sahgal possesses a unique perspective on India, shaped by her experiences.

Published in 1969, *Storm in Chandigarh* marks a vital moment in Sahgal's career, showcasing her capability to blend particular narratives with broader socio-political themes. The novel is set in Chandigarh, a megacity emblematic of India's bourne for fustiness and progress, designed by the famed mastermind Le Corbusier. This setting serves as an exemplification through which Sahgal explores the complications of Indian society, culture, and politics during a period of transition and bouleversement.

At the heart of *Storm in Chandigarh* are several recreating themes that reverberate throughout the narrative, inviting compendiums to consider over abecedarian questions about society and mortal actuality. One of the central themes is the clash between tradition and fustiness, embodied through the characters' struggles to attune traditional values with the rapid-fire changes brought about by urbanisation and ultramodern cultures. The character of Ranvir Singh, a primogenitor embedded in traditional beliefs and customs, serves as an antipode to the youngish generation represented by Raka and others who worry about autonomy and tone-expression. Sahgal adroitly portrays the pressures and dilemmas faced by individualities caught between the pull of tradition and the appeal of fustiness, pressing the generational peak and artistic shifts of current post-independence India. Identity conformation and tone discovery crop up as vital motifs in the novel, particularly in the peregrinations of protagonists like Raka, Aditya, and Balraj. Raka's hunt for particular freedom and independence, Aditya's hunt for moral integrity within a regulatory system, and Balraj's ideological struggle for social justice each contribute to a nuanced disquisition of identity politics and the complications of individual agency.

Power dynamics, both at the macro level of political manoeuvring and the exemplification of interpersonal connections, are intricately woven into the fabric of the narrative. Sahgal exposes the mechanisms of power and honour that govern society, revealing the nuances of influence, corruption, and resistance that shape mortal relations and societal structures.

One of the novel's topmost strengths lies in its plushly developed characters, each with their own provocations, excrescences, and complications. Aditya, as the

Deputy Commissioner of Chandigarh, embodies the struggle to maintain integrity and ethical conduct within a regulatory system replete with corruption and political pressures. His internal conflicts and moral dilemmas reverberate, with compendiums scuffling with analogous challenges in navigating ethical pathways in their own lives. Raka, Aditya's bastard, represents the voice of immature rebellion and soul-searching. Her journey from sheltered parenting to questioning societal morals and asserting her autonomy reflects the broader theme of women's commission and agency. Sahgal portrays Raka's elaboration with perceptiveness and depth, highlighting the nuances of her inner fermentation and external challenges. Balraj, the attractive revolutionary driven by ideological vehemence, adds another subset of complexity to the narrative. His relations with Aditya and Raka showcase the interplay between idealism and pragmatism, pressing the dilemmas faced by those committed to social change amidst harsh realities and negotiations.

Supporting characters such as Ranvir Singh, Mrs. Dhanoa, and others contribute to the shade of the story, offering different perspectives and perceptivity into Chandigarh's social fabric. Sahgal's attention to detail in character development makes each individual come alive on the run, engaging the anthology in multiple situations of empathy, understanding, and observation. Sahgal's narrative unfolds with a flawless mix of multiple perspectives, shifting seamlessly between characters and plotlines to produce a cohesive and immersive reading experience. The interspersing shoes give depth and environment, allowing compendiums to see events unfold from different angles and understand the complications of connections and provocations. The author's jotting style is both elegant and suggestive, characterised by pictorial descriptions, lyrical prose, and incisive dialogue. Sahgal's use of imagery brings Chandigarh to life, landing its architectural splendour, artistic sprightliness, and the underpinning pressures stewing beneath the face. Whether depicting the serene beauty of Sukhna Lake or the bustling requests of Sector 17, Sahgal's descriptive prowess evokes sensitive gestures that transport compendiums into the heart of the narrative.

The novel's pacing is another aspect worth noting, as Sahgal maintains a delicate balance between moments of soul-searching and scenes of dramatic pressure. The gradational figure up to the apocalyptic "storm" in the narrative serves as a conceit for the brewing conflicts and undetermined pressures stewing within the characters and the society they inhabit. Deeply embedded in its literal and artistic environment, *Storm in Chandigarh* provides compendiums of India's post-independence period, characterized by political paroxysms, social metamorphoses, and the legacy of colonialism. Sahgal adroitly integrates literal events, such as the Punjab Reorganisation Act and the rise of indigenous political movements, into the fabric of the story, adding layers of authenticity and applicability. The novel also grapples with dateless issues that transcend specific literal moments, such as the struggle for individual freedom, the hunt for social justice, and the pressures between tradition and progress. Sahgal's disquisition about these themes resonates with compendiums across generations, inviting them to reflect on the enduring

challenges and burdens that shape mortal societies.

Storm in Chandigarh has garnered critical acclaim for its erudite graces, thematic depth, and socio-political perceptivity. Critics and scholars alike have lauded Sahgal's ability to blend particular narratives with broader literal currents, positioning the novel as a seminal work in post-independence Indian literature. From a feminist perspective, the novel holds particular significance in its depiction of women's agency and commission. Raka's character, in particular, represents a departure from traditional gender roles, challenging patriarchal morals and asserting her right to tone-deflection. Sahgal's sensitive running of gender dynamics and womanish gestures adds layers of complexity to the narrative, making it a compelling read for feminist scholars and compendiums interested in gender studies. In terms of its impact on Indian literature, *Storm in Chandigarh* occupies a prominent place in the canon of postcolonial fabrication. Sahgal's disquisition of identity, power, and societal change resonates with broader dialogues on social patrimonies, public identity, and artistic nature.

Reference

Sahgal, Nayanthara. *A Storm in Chandigarh*. Penguin Books, 1969.