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Political Upheaval and Its Socia-Cultural Repercussions in the Selected Novels of Nayantara Sahgal

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ABSTRACT: This article explores political turmoil as a corruptive influence degrading the social order of certain postcolonial fictions in its disruptive, transformative erosion of stabilized socio-cultural structures. Through the fictional narrative of state-sponsored authoritarianism, regional disintegration and leadership vacuum, the fictions depict politics as not just a failure of governance but an existential rupture that smashes familial relations eats away at ethical moorings and allows dehumanizing policies to let rip on already vulnerable people. There are three crises of the political, in executive excess, social schism and bureaucratic cravenness, from which there are few safe retreats: public and private life shatter along lines that mirror official divisions, moral beings bend to power's contingent will, hierarchies by gender chafe against modernity's jagged demands. The study finds characters working their way through personal humiliations among collective traumas sterilizations that reduce citizens to chattel, demolitions that give the lie to community, petty squabbles that pass for ideological debate. These convulsions cause a cultural vertigo, where Gandhi an ideal of empathy gets swept away by survivalist pragmatism and professional integrity gives way to authoritarian caprice. At base, these works form a warning dialectic that declares social and cultural destruction as inevitable outcome to rampant political predation, forcing readers to grapple with the insecurity of communal peace when power dominates principle. On a secondary level, this investigation shines light on literature's capacity to diagnose; the way mass convulsions of nationhood reverberate through private lives in order to draw a stark portrait of modernity's unintentional tyrannies.

KEYWORDS: Political upheaval, socio-cultural repercussions, postcolonial fragmentation, authoritarian erosion, ethical dissolution, familial rupture, gender reconfiguration.

I. INTRODUCTION

Political rot in post-independence India transpires not as a series of disrupted governance incidents, but rather systematic eruptions that elicit the frailty of fledgling democratic scaffolds to epic at powers. These disruptions of authoritarian overreach, regional fragmentation, power vacuums are not confined within the walls of institutions but seep into the very grain of social being and cultural persistence. The upheavals under consideration are those that crystallize in these chosen novels as narrative fulcrums, where state and individual forms of actions intersect with each other to produce a series of social-cultural fallout that result in the reconfiguration of community affiliations, moral inclinations, and constitutive identities. Political turbulence is presented in this paper as the primary tremor from which is produced dynastic breakdown, moral collapse and gender re-negotiation, to finally result in a dystopian image of ideological betrayal.

This framework is based on the precariousness of democracy, where constitutional tenets are replaced by presidential decisions and punishment for some becomes a random matter. The evidence is clear from one character's description of a shock demotion agreed in the course of a casual phone call, with no reason given and no appeal. Bureaucracy

becomes a weapon, derailing careers with hidden political gripes in this moment. More than that, “The emergency had finished my career, but suddenly did not want a career in the crumbling unprofessionalism that bowed and scraped to a bogus Emergency.” Individual ambition is suppressed by the rot in the system, industry norms become sycophancy and flattery a broader cultural surrender to authoritarian idiosyncrasy.

Government power further deepens disorder through degrading policies that treat citizens as disposable crowds. A disturbing picture emerges: “The same silent push that landed me in the ditch had dragged thousands off to prison, swept hundreds more out of view to distant ‘settlements’ to live, and driven as many like cattle to sterilization camps.” This Image of a creeping, cold force highlights the acceptance of mass imprisonment, forced displacements, and sterilization programs that not only crush personal dignity but spread suffering collectively, comparing human communities to herded animals. The social and cultural fallout appears in territorial and bodily harm: upper-class beautification schemes involve “sterilizing the lower classes, demolishing old buildings and scattering slum residents,” breaking down class bonds and city structures. These actions expose the ruling power’s exploitative reasoning, where ideals of beauty and order justify social removal, wearing away the very diversity that post-independence dreams once promised.

These multiple direct references in the novels add up to an incontrovertible evidence of upheavals twinned path: dealing with contemporary political machinations which imagine the enduring socio-cultural splits. It’s democratic instability that produces drowning professionals cast adrift in unmoored institutions; the movement of power is about bodies and communities sucked out of their places; a protracted ideological contest shows pity to be spent, cooked, used up as a category related to power. The stories they choose thus serve as diagnostic lenses, illuminating the ways that national fault lines reverberate through individual destinies marriages fracturing like warring states, ethics breaking down when tested by the demands of survival, women asserting their autonomy in patriarchal vacuums. This mold anchors the main argument: a process once unleashed, irreversibly leads political turmoil to socio-cultural meltdown-the novels are thus offered as prophetic laments for the dying ideals of a democratic humanism. In looking at these continuities and behavior without resorting to a reductive historicism, the book shows literature’s power of anatomizing the tyrannical undercurrents of modernity, pushing through toward engagement with what Mkhedize terms “the corrosive edifice of strength.”

Nayantara Sahgal’s place, indeed her centrality in the continuum of Indian political fiction, where democratic utopianism encounters its inevitable degeneration into power’s rotting flesh. Her work goes beyond mere chronicle, and represents a disciplined examination of the ethical scaffolding underpinning nationalism as it is fractured by partisan imperatives and authoritarian impulses. As discourse of political writing, Sahgal is narrative as scalpel: the knife that flays bare the chasm between pretended Gandhian humanism and its undermining via realpolitik. Hugely attuned to the duality of what she once called state power’s “double or Janus face” liberatory as well as oppressive these novels become spaces where ideological hopefulness meets increasingly disillusioning material realities. This vantage point lifts her from chronicler to moral cartographer, plotting the lands where public tumult irreversibly alters private moralities and communal fabrics”.

Central to Sahgal’s vision lies an unwavering engagement with Gandhian philosophy, positing self-sacrifice, compassion, and peace as bedrock for political maturity. This foundational ethic permeates her reflections on nationalism’s formative ethos:

"Our growing up was India's growing up into political maturity a different kind of political maturity from any the world had seen before based on an ideology inspired by self-sacrifice, compassion and peace" (Nayantara Sahgal, Prison and Chocolate Cake, p. 15).

The passage suggests a national-and-personal symbiotic development, in which the collective desire to have and understand each other in governing reflects individual growth. But this optimism is also brittle at the mercy of being worn thin when kindness gives way to convenience, a motif that recurs in many of her political murals. For the pacifism of Gandhi is now understood as “praxis,” transformative praxis, its power that of a cataclysmic intrusion:

"Gandhi's non-violence had worked like a streak of forked lightning" (Nayantara Sahgal, Rich Like Us, p. 122).

This striking image captures the movement’s powerful break against colonial stagnation, revealing lightning’s double nature bringing both clarity and destruction. In Sahgal’s telling, it highlights non-violence’s historic victory while hinting at its later corruption under modern authoritarianism, where divided roads lead toward state-driven cruelty. The

image gives a human face to political thinking, turning abstract ideas into raw, felt energy that resonates with readers who recognize similar betrayals in broken democracies. Equally striking in Sahgal's push for ideological renewal, presenting Gandhian language as a living, growing story:

"This was the language of a new epic, invented by Gandhi. The men had used his brains and what we needed now was a like inventiveness to suit our condition" (Nayantara sahal , Rich Like Us, p. 125).

Here language is political relic, with Gandhi's rhetorical innovation issuing a call to imitate the action of reiterating in the face of new crises. The call for "like inventiveness" is recognition that obsolescence has been claimed in ethical minds which are so much waste-paper where the moral climate demands innovation. Limitlessly citational, this is Sahgal's democratic imagination: politics as creative, ethical improvisation in which past wisdom powers future resistance to the distortions of power.

These references together strengthen Sahgal's standing as apolitical novelist, weaving Gandhian ideas into rich works of criticism. They present her not as a backward-looking keeper of memory but as a forward-seeing voice, diagnosing nationalism's moral legacy amid its present-day decay. Early hope "political maturity...self-sacrifice, compassion" meets non-violence's striking power, ending in a call for reinvention, forming a three-part movement ideal beginning, historical proof, and proof, and urgent adaptation. Through this view, her stories break down the structure of turmoil state policies driving masses "like animals", careers collapsing under "bogus" obedience yet hold on to a healing faith in creative kindness. Sahgal's thinking thus breathes new life into Indian political writing, insisting that literature reclaim ethical politics from tyranny's grip, where the social and cultural wounds of power demand alert, Gandhian-rooted resistance.

The political intelligence of her novels lies in this fusion: Gandhian idealism as a bulwark against democratic entropy. The regional tiffs that replace issues and the emergency demotions of the meritorious and sterilizations turned into the sale of bodies all moralize against lack in authority. But citations salt the broth with hope, a claim that inventiveness provides an antidote and ensures her voice blazes on as beacon through the muck of upheaval. In this way, Sahgal's body of work upholds national ethics by imprinting personal anecdotes upon the universal as warnings against power's cultural depredation.

The novels in questions are stark depictions of political crisis as physical decay of democratic flesh, with the viscera of the state turning from protective organs to instruments of arbitrary rule. Authoritarian deformations take the form of explicit policy deformation and stealth bureaucratic distortion that render constitutional defenses an empty shell of dictatorial fancy. This representational strategy exposes crisis not as abstract governance failure but corporeal violation careers destroyed, policies weaponized, democracy degraded to "two-bit dictatorship" imitation. Three strains of upheaval interweave in the narratives: executive fiat replacing legislative deliberation, regional cleavages degenerating into communal vendettas, and leadership vacuums unleashing insurgent chaos every one of them a marker of democracy's susceptibility to personalized power. At the heart of this portrayal is the grotesque mock democracy of the Emergency, in which policy bows to autocratic whim.

"The Emergency had given all kinds of new twists and turns to policy, and the world's largest democracy was looking like nothing so much as one of the two-bit dictatorships we had loftily looked down upon" (Nayantara sahal , Rich Like Us, p. 64).

In this slicing commentary: The whole of inversion there, famous global democratic standard staked down to ignominious model once quite scorned. "Twists and turns" echo serpentine duplicity, empirical plasticity in the service not of public weal but of regime suzerainty, while "loftily looked down upon" emphasizes ironic humiliation: former moral arbiter now interchangeable with despotic barbarians. The sting of the simile is in the betrayal of familiarity, fissuring catastrophe into a perceptual rupture where national self-image shatters against the despot's mirror. In addition to the load of institutional satire, personal arcs explode beneath the wheels of an impersonal regime's millstone an extreme expression of which is wailed outright in:

"The emergency had finished my career, but suddenly I did not want a career in the crumbling unprofessionalism that bowed and scraped to a bogus Emergency" (Nayantara sahal , Rich Like Us, p. 32).

Here, professional annihilation turns to epiphanic rejection "finished my career" telegraphing sudden cancellation as "crumbling unprofessionalism" diagnoses institutional gangrene values in decay, deference ritualized. "Bowed and scraped" archaic-speak for genuflection, a grimly corporeal image of bodily contrition reflecting moral submission to

“bogus Emergency,” whose phoniness convicts the surrendering of legitimacy. This dualistic dichotomy crumbled clarity humanizes catastrophe victimhood into character, by principled disassociation, but reiterates the emotional expenditure: when meritocracy morphed into sycophancy; individual authority crushed by communal cowardice.

These passages combine to outline a political crisis’s representational anatomy: Emergency as policy perversion breeding personal ruination, both amplifying democracy’s hollowing. The first is a globalize of shame, the second an interioriser of it: both cooperate to draw us in outline the wider collapse institutions which hide behind a masquerade of legitimacy and grind its citizens to dust. Parallel crises serve to embolden that pattern: territorial squabbling in Chandigarh turns principled statecraft into “squabbles,” post-leadership vacuums give birth to Nasality furies, each echoing Emergency’s signal distortion. In so doing, representation achieves diagnostic acuity, exposing crisis as contagion from policy confoundment radiating into ethical vacuum, professional identities liquescent, democratic idealism deracinated.

By way of such pitiless portraiture, the novels insist on coming to grips with the mechanics of upheaval: not farsighted machinations but close-up desecrations, where “two-bit dictatorships” consume the marrow of largest democracy. The analysis in this section uncovers representational genius quotations operating as prisms diffracting innumerable devastations of the crisis, from the institutional mimicry to an existential repudiation, shaping a narrative indictment surrounding power’s unbounded metastasization.

It is these figures of officialdom that in the selected novels come to serve as labyrinthine bureaucracies weaponized for whimsical retribution, authority reduced via its hierarchy to vehicles of random degradation and institutional decay. This chapter examines bureaucratic manipulation as a funnel for ethical decay, describing how tenured machinery leaches professional worth away and deposits political dispensability. Penalty is more than enforced sanction, invading honor through inscrutable blinding that turns discomfiture into verdict on life. Ethical corruption does not present itself in the form of grand betrayals but rather a death by a thousand ethical cuts language evacuated, ideals exchanged for tokens, virtue flung onto power’s pyre. These are the dynamics that reveal upheaval’s corrosive genius: state mechanisms, intended for the fair governing of society, operate to ensure and reproduce a history of submission and humiliation. The abuse of power becomes chillingly banal in one unannounced phone call:

"Ten minutes later a phone call informed me I was to go back to a posting to my state... I had been demoted, punished and humiliated, and I had no inkling why" (Nayantara sahgal , Rich Like Us, p. 31).

The vignette is an essence of bureaucratic terror ten minutes is all it takes to unhinge career trajectories, the elipsis evoking open-jawed shared silence that has a sudden moment of realisation. "Demoted, punished, humiliated" further escalates triad of transgressions: professional demotion, juridical punishment, existential humiliation all three exacerbated by causal emptiness "no inkling why" highlights arbitrariness; capriciousness of authority impervious to accountability. The sense of the narrative voice’s bafflement makes systemic cruelty human, converting abstract power to personal betrayal in which officials of the state use telephones as guillotines.

Parallel to this, political discourse’s moral emptiness crystallizes in stark reductionism:

"No issues are left, only squabbles" (Nayantara sahgal , Storm in Chandigarh, p. 24).

The moral barrenness in the aphoristic terseness of "issues," policy disputes that were ferried off stage by pejorative squabbles and petty, personalized sniping. This semantic deflation reflects institutional debasement: principled statecraft into factional snarls, a reordering of the region into communal spite. "No... left" is the sign of an unsalvageable loss, ethical structure crumbled until discourse it is even the casualty. The spectacle is damning of reduction ad absurdum structures of power where complexity bows to the infantile, presaging a more dystopic civilizational decay.

These whispers of citation coalesce to reveal the twin predations of power: bureaucratic phone calls arranging personal devastation, discursive hollowing mass deliberation. They anatomize ethical collapse arbitrary authority giving birth to debased functionalities, moral vacuum creating governors paralysed by power. The degradation of institutions proceeds inexorably: meritocracies militarized against merit, deliberation weaponized for division. Upheaval thus exposes what power structures’ true telos is: not public service but self-perpetuation through knowing debasement, where “humiliated” professionals and even the “squabbling” elites maintain hierarchies eating one another alive.

In this mimetic exactitude, the novels accuse: what has become of the collapse in ethics that the bearing of power always brings bureaucratic terror sanctioning arbitrary punishment, decayed discourse legitimating perpetual argument. This dialectic reveals the genius of upheaval for moral alchemy how it could convert democratic promise to authoritarian dregs.

Political turmoil metastasizes existing social stratifications, weaponizing government policy to solidify elite hegemony and grind subaltern communities into dispensable under classes. These authoritarian regimes are managing class contradictions through violent dispossession and suppression, displacement of violence in the form of displacement, incarceration, sterilization that is disproportionately dispossessing urban poor and those at the receiving end of coercive agrarian systems. In the novels under study, this mechanism reveals itself as a prepared and strategic type of predation: arrangements of power maintain advantage by engineering precarious situations for subaltern elements, shattering solidarities, and escalating hierarchical crevasses. Far from being a mere happenstance, class antagonism appears as a calculated policy, in which political turbulence reproduces stratification through the corporeal and spatial domination of those who can be overpowered.

The panoramic brutality of Emergency policies attains visceral horror through a single, insidious mechanism:

"The same soundless nudge that landed me in the ditch had carted thousands off to jail, swept hundreds more out of sight distant 'colonies' to live, herded as many like animals to sterilization center" (Nayantara sahgal, Rich Like Us, p. 28).

This masterstroke citation cascades barbarity in unmoved development private fall scales to mass imprisonment, forced exile, Climactic in dehumanizing corralling, "Soundless nudge" suggest bureaucratic banality, non-personal effort Standardizing genocidal efficiency; the animalistic simile strips humanity, reduction citizens to livestock for regime's eugenic fantasies. Class calculus sparkers through: narrator's particularly fall foreshadows combine devastation, elite vantage proof subaltern annihilation. State-sponsored sound against urban poor crystallizes with surgical precision, modify beautification into class warfare:

"Madam's son had, vasectomizing the lower classes, blowing up tenements and scattering slum dwellers to beautify Delhi" (Nayantara sahgal, Rich Like Us, p. 100).

The participial ferocity "vasectomizings," "blowing up," "scattering" connotes assembly-line savagery, elite offspring using state as a scalpel against underclass anatomy. "Lower classes" taxonomic bluntness bares stratified calculus, as "beautify Delhi" inverts urban planning into aesthetic pogrom slum clearance as cosmetic violence, tenement detonations for skyline enhancement at human cost. Spatial reordering turns into existential annihilation: dispersed dwellers incarnate placeless precarity, political turmoil weaponizing architecture against habitation.

These citations reveal the anatomy of a class struggle on the move: machinic pushes engineering mass depersonalization, exotic elision rationalizing point blank extermination. As prisons and colonies and camps and rubble are subjected to a different order of brutality; those who draw the lines of power do so from aseptic heights. Violence's asymmetry ossifies social stratification: the subaltern body commodified the urban poor spatially unmoored, class solidarities pulped into survivalist atomization. Political instability therefore shows its telos: not reform of governance but reassertion of hierarchy, where Emergency measures constitute state predation.

Politics: Redundant nigh, yet the tyranny of Marx moved to deconstruct even gendered realms at the bud where women's agency resists autocratic imposition precariously. The chosen novels reveal this intersection as a battleground: the long arm of state power not only rends governance but invades intimate autonomies, obliging women to carve out rooms for survival in shattered homes and predatory streets. Emergencism ruptures traditional patriarchies and imposes new oppressions, giving birth to female subjectivities that swing between victimization and insurgency. This gendered aspect of upheaval unveils the wholesale public crises reverberating through private spaces: Marital loyalties erode; maternal imperatives collide with political terror; and women's bodies are described as contested terrains where resistance battles oppression.

The Emergency penetrates personal lives, as a savage assault on body and mind, individual freedom becoming just another victim of the regime. Women don't take all of this sitting down we don't even passively allow it to happen; we are actively fighting the gendered brutality of it all forced sterilizations that destroy their ability to have children, home demolitions that tear through family spaces, and random arrests that separate providers from the people who rely on

them. They also create a double alienation: isolated from community safety nets and control over their bodies, propelling women to re-imagine femininity under siege. The political tempest provokes a reconfiguration of gender roles: Wives become breadwinners; daughters are wrenched by old family dogmas into asserting them; mothers embrace quiet defiance as a disguise in an effort to evade the prying eye. True agency takes time to build, forged in the heat of crisis, where familiar roles are stripped away and hard-won, on-the-fly capacity shines through.

"If all the mice in the world stopped running away and stood their ground, cats would stop killing them" (Nayantara sahal, Rich Like Us, p. 142).

This fable condenses sexed resistance's paradox mice's shared inertia reversal of predator prey math making fleeing a joy. "Stopped running away" suggests an abandoned instinct, a strategic yielding up of vulnerability; "stood their ground" implies grounded agency, corporeal declamation against annihilation. The killing of cats means the precariousness of power, predators rendered helpless without prey's surrender. The universalizing "all the mice in the world" carries gendered motley: marginalized, symbolically empowered women within authoritarian cages sterilization victims, displaced matriarchs, silenced spouses. It is simple but not easy, and the starkness of that resistance, as ontological no, collective stasis unravelling hierarchical violence.

This metaphor illuminates gendered aspect across novels' upheavals. In regional schisms, female like whiskey-defying Saroj embody mice-like boldness, status among marital storms reflect state partitions. Director vacuums proof women protagonists arranging Naxalite shadows, their down-to-earth conserve familial coherence opposite insurgent chaos. Importantly apotheosis amplifies part protagonists internalizing mice's session, avoiding flight from "soundless nudges" herding thousands. Collective enabling resonates through convey predicaments: lower-class female sterilized en masse identify the symbolic solidarity in stasis, upper class spouses spurning "bowed and scraped" submission. The citation thus elements as gendered manifesto legislative officer invasion provoking not paralysis but paradigmatic shift, where women autonomy reclaims space along principled immobility.

Gendered consequences of Upheaval also include ethical re-negotiations: women facing paternalistic state as patriarchy surrogacy, their defiance reflecting wider-socio-cultural resistance. Marital breakdowns shadow partitioned states, but female protagonists are the narrative lynchpins suffering humiliation and imagining creativity post-Gandhi's blockbuster. This passage reveals the shrewdness of novels: Political crisis is a gendered crucible, shaping agency out of oppression's residue. The mice-cats parable of this dialectic Emergency: terror that evokes a transformative stasis; women left standing under the debris of institutions, their groundedness serving as premonition for moral renaissance versus feline politics.

Please note that there follows a revolutionary situation, a great cultural breakdown where in an entrenched values system collapses into expediency and the pragmatism of necessity and in time relativises whatever moral code that feeds aspirations at some degrees of collective life. The novels in question follow this effacing erosion as unhaltable development: Gandhian ethical idealism anchored on selfless self-sacrifice, compassion and non-violent ingenuity is replaced by authoritarian pressure on the all-out stifling of culture ethos from mutual freedom to its very reverse individuate and shadowed-group survival. This section inquires into the mechanics of that transition, showing how 'revolt' leads to principled language transformed into moral blankness; traditional hierarchies transforming themselves, opportunistically, in relations of alliance; and humanist aspirations degrading themselves as controls on humanity. Cultural crisis does not take the form of a sudden break, but of slow surrender; values that have been the support of an identity dissolve under the ongoing erosion of power.

This Gandhian reconstitution of political morality alluded to above, sets a moral bottom line: non-violence "striking like a streak of forked lightning," giving birth to "language of a new epic" that calls for "like inventiveness to fit our situation". These formulas set culture as explosive ethical laboratory, self-sacrifice feeding merciful governance. But upheaval breeds bitter decline idealistic maturity coming to "crumbling unprofessionalism that bowed and scraped to a bogus Emergency". The phrase convicts cultural capitulation: to professional standards, ethical compass, social trust all reduced to cringing obeisance. "Bowed and scraped" triggers gut-level revulsion, physical stand-in for moral groveling; "bogus Emergency" reveals fakery, cultural assent cloaking fake authority. The reversal that results is a symptom of the inversion of values: compassion turned tyrannical, inventiveness turned conformist.

This moral void multiplies through a debasing of discourse, shorn of content: "No issues remain, just quarrels. This reductionism represents the ideological emptiness of desolation cultural battles, which were the kind of thing that could

once inspire a community of purpose, have been brought down to squabbling over nothingness that is little more than regional differences. "Squabbles" implies an infantile petulance, a cultural reduction from epic creativity to childish argumentation, values hierarchy collapsing into relativistic quarreling. Political instability is unethical entropy: Gandhian sacrifice to self-interest, compassionate maturity to coercive pragmatism, epic language to squabbling cacophony.

Yet such authoritarian practicality whittles down cultural norms through thoughts inhumane, as shocking neared the end: "It was the same soundless shove that had dumped me in the ditch had carried off thousands to jail pushed hundreds out of sight into far colonies to live had driven by the droves to sterilizing places. Cultural crisis becomes corporal horror bodies of citizens reduced to "animals" funneled to eugenic ends, self-sacrifice contorted into state predation. That's a banalization of mass atrocity, the normalization of cultural desensitization to where human dignity no longer matters. These break the back of community ethic - which supersedes faith and religion - replacing Gandhian compassion with clinical control. The first is spatial exile to "remote colonies", the second is bodily violation by sterilization. The corruption is made loud by elite complicity: "vasectomizing the lower classes, blowing up tenements and scattering slum dwellers to beautify Delhi," aesthetic imperatives that lend cultural violence its "beauty fix," values of equality swamped by tiered comeliness.

This shift from ethical idealism to pragmatic coercion also unsettles intimate spheres, the familial fissuring as microcosms of national malaise. Divorces, like the partitioning of kingdoms; Professional humiliations for "being "reduced," punished and humiliated" with no reason associated to resemble randomness of culture. The illuminating power of Gandhian lightning fades into emergency darkness, epic inventiveness to survivalist stasis. But a glow clings on: the mice that stand up to the cats half prefigure cultural struggles against oppression, and the collective groundedness of all those feet saps some agency back from the coercion.

Cultural Revolution as the deepest of all the casualties' values lost in upheavals when self-sacrifice becomes self-interest and compassion unspools into control, epic vision turns to ethical vacuum. Novels diagnose the alchemy without blinking: political instability testing and changing forever cultural DNA, Gandhian humanism succumbing to an authoritarian realpolitik, communal harmony to hierarchical predation. The crisis that results it is the imperative to hold onto literature as moral salvage, to dig into what values can be saved from the rubble of tyranny.

The chosen novels come together as a powerful accusation of political turmoil's sweeping and destructive force, where state crises spread into wide-ranging social and cultural transformation. This study has carefully shown how authoritarian distortions seen through emergency purges, regional divisions, and leadership gaps operate not as separate events but as deep disruptors, reshaping social structures from the ground up. Political awareness rises as a repeated theme across the narratives, with direct textual evidence providing undeniable proof: bureaucratic phone calls delivering unexplained demotions. These scenes together expose the workings of upheaval unchecked authority crushing professional dignity, policy twists giving cover to mass degradation, and regional "quarrels" hollowing out meaningful ideological discussion.

Socio-cultural critique reaches depths in this dialectic that cements political maneuverings with inexorable ethical collapse and cultural transformation. Class stratifications congeal in organized violence "vasectomizing the lower tier, blowing tenements" revealing authoritarian pragmatism's class calculus, whereby elite beautification justifies subaltern erasure. Gendered dimensions demonstrate how women have a tenuous agency during invaded autonomies, the analogy of mice-cats "If all the mice... stood their ground" representing collective immobility as resistance model against feline predation. Familial breaks reflect state divisions, moral orders collapse into "crumbling unprofessionalism," the epic inventiveness of Gandhian lightning cedes to coercive banalities. Every crisis Chandigarh's territorial venom, post-leadership insurgencies, Emergency totalitarianism triggers complementary social convulsions proving the fractal replication of upheaval at all scales.

This threshold documents a political consciousness as diagnosing salvation: novels that turn personal testimonies into universal warnings. The careerist's epiphany in the midst of "bogus Emergency" prostration, protagonist's confusion at unreasoned disgrace, "people who were pushed into a herd as though they'd been herded," made it all human; put terror and horror in readers' faces. Ethical frames collapse not as a function of philosophical abstraction, but from the embodied kind ("bowed and scraped"), cultural identities splinter through modes of spatial emigration and corporeal violation, class animosities squared by means of aesthetic pogroms. Gandhian compassion as archaic "self-sacrifice,

compassion and peace” give way to survivalist pragmatism at value crisis’s apex, but resistance metaphors suggest dormant renewal.

Eventually, the novels place sociological review as moral obligation, political upheaval enlightening democratic instability when ethical moorings erode. Social organization range across strategic instability, class division militarize into dominance hierarchy, ethnic identity atomize into survival scraps. This revolutionary make soundless nudges engineering mass trauma, squabbling discourses hollowing deliberation, mice-like defiance reclaiming agency renders fiction predictive mapping, mapping power's caustic pathways. *Sahgal's* output thus support as layered warnings: political consciousness not only describing fragmentation but found moral defiance, where literature recover human-centered potential from authoritarian remains, reasserting narrative's saving power against upheaval's intrusive darkness.

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