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DELHI AND DEMOCRACY IN NAYANTARA SAHGAL'S *THIS TIME OF MORNING*

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ABSTRACT
There are umpteen "novels" which figure in the "must read" lists of books on the city of Delhi- among which Nayantara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* occupies a pre-eminent position. It belongs to the period of the birth of the nation India and yet another re-birth of the city of Delhi as its capital. Marked by violence and dislocation of the partition on the one hand, and establishment of government machinery and national culture on the other, study of this period is indispensible to any exploration of Delhi's foundations and culture. Government Delhi of Sahgal's novel is characterized by the nexus of political expedience, British Raj converting to Minister Raj, power culture of self validation and self preservation performed by state machinery, buildings, ceremonies, employees and cults and clubs. Many conflicts come to be embedded in this new culture: idealism vs. pragmatism, Indian culture vs. global culture, gemeinschaft vs. gesellschaft. While Twilight recurs as metaphor for city as "work in progress", morning signifies the synchronous birth of the nation and the capital. Thus, the paper through the study of *This Time of Morning*, traces the emergence of the democratic experiment as the most spectacular monument that comes to dominate the cultural arena of the city during this period.

Keywords*:* Delhi, Delhi Culture, Government Delhi, Delhi Novel, Nayantara Sahgal

There are Delhi novels that occupy prime space on the bookshelves not only of bookstores around the world today, but also of avid readers and city enthusiasts interested in journeys to cities as well as journeys of cities. Nayantara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* occupies a pre-eminent position among Delhi novels. It belongs to the period of the birth of the nation India and yet another re-birth of the city of Delhi as its capital. Marked by violence and dislocation of the partition on the one hand, and establishment of government machinery and national culture on the other, study of this period is indispensible to any exploration of Delhi's foundations and culture. While some of the people and practices of the culturescape of this novel survive to date in Delhi's iconography, some have been overwritten by the later date tidal waves of liberalization, globalization and postmodernity. It is a rewarding experience to trace in this novel the continuities and new beginnings from the imperial capital to the Nehruvian capital.

George V announced shifting of the capital to Delhi in 1911 darbar (Raman and Agrawal, 2012) for a mixture of political and imperial reasons (Frykenberg, 1986/ 2002). New showcase capital, New Delhi, remained under construction from 1912 when Raisina Hill was identified as the building site till 1931 when it was formally inaugurated. Guided by the symbolism of power, built from scratch, not integrated with rest of settlement, it emulated the grand design of absolutist capitals with hierarchical plan of concentric circles. Built for 65000 people on

an astounding budget of Rs. 115 million, by the time it was completed it was known to all that India was on its way to independence. Lord Hardinge, Viceroy; Edwin Lutyens, chief architect; Geoffrey de Montmorency, secretary Imperial Delhi Committte and Malcolm Hailey, chairman, Imperial Committee; Herbert baker, Lutyens' associate- all contributed to the emergence of the "grand manner". Edwin Lutyens tempered his strong classicist sensibility with Mughal and Rajput elements, Baker brought his experience in South Africa to North and South blocs, Robert Tor Russel, head of CPWD, created Connaught Place while architects like Walter Sykes George, Medd, Arthur Gordon Shoosmith also added iconic structures to the part classicist, part modernist visual grammar of New Delhi. New Delhi had to accommodate 4,95,391 people post partition. Ministry of rehabilitation had its job cut out to provide housing and employment to not only the partition refugees, but also the hordes of migrant job-seekers and government and bureaucratic officers who now landed in Delhi. Refugee camps, government developed colonies, private builders- all put together- could barely hold the influx. The uprooted educated and industrious Punjabi partition refugee population took little time to come into its own dominating business and land in no time (Dutta, 1986/ 2002). Post independence and partition, apart from metamorphosed demographic and cultural profile of the city, architectural profile also began to shift as mammoth government and bureaucratic machinery bearing Nehruvian stamp of modernity and progress made its presence felt (Khanna and Parhawk, 2007) .

The 'Bungalow' came up not just as the ubiquitous form of official accommodation but also as the predominant paradigm for all the furious building activity in post-independence Delhi (King, 2006). Its associations with power, progress and privacy drove all private housing also to become similarly cut-off-from-the-street islands with neatly manicured, segregated and furnished recesses. Earlier it was the 'streamline modern' or the 'Delhi style' which dominated the façades but 80s onwards, the eclectic mix of styles produced a baffling variety which is variously seen as philistinism of the *nouveau riche* or the typical pluralism of the global urban populace (Sengupta, 2007: 62). Delhi saw the emergence of Group Housing in the late '70s owing to the cost and space demands of plotted housing and also to avoid the seclusion it produced. Raj Rewal designed Asiad Village, Charles Correa designed Tara Apartments and M N Ashish Ganju designed Press Enclave were all path-breaking in attempting to create a new canvas of closer to nature and neighbor living. Government Delhi was officially engendered in 1931 itself but post-independence it reached its pinnacle and enjoyed four decades of unbroken glory till the liberalizing and globalizing forces displaced Delhi's predominantly political function by steamrolling the industrial, commercial and service sector giants into its economy. Post-independence, colonies like Bapa Nagar, Rabindra Nagar, Bharati Nagar, Pandara Road, Pandara Park, R K Puram and Shahjahan Road were constructed to house the gargantuan state machinery. Official residential quarters, 65,000 in all, came to fall in eight 'Types' from Type 1 to Type 8. Type 8 comprises of Bungalows in the Imperial zone reserved for the topmost echelons while the rest are post-independence constructions by CPWD dubbed 'monotonous' by some and 'modern' by others but still in great demand by the Parliamentarians and Bureaucracy for subsidized costs, sumptuous facilities and status symbol quality. Junior level housing got spread over Sarojini Nagar, Laxmibai Nagar, Naoroji Nagar, Andrews Ganj, Moti Bagh, Nanakpura, R K Puram, Munirka etc. The 'government' colonies had a recognizable look and were complemented by three other types of 'colony' in Delhi life- the private colony, the DDA colony and the group housing society. While earlier community life consisted of living in extended family or caste groups, with the building of New Delhi, it increasingly got fractured by affluent families moving to areas like Barakhamba Road, Sikandra Road, Bhagwan Das Road, Prithviraj Road, Ferozshah Road and Curzon Road. Post-independence, the earliest 'colonies' or "plotted residentially demarcated neighbourhoods" sprang up in Jorbagh, Sundarnagar and Golf Links (Sengupta, 2007, p. 111). These 'colonies', developed on auctioned plots to meet the spiraling demand for private homes, had the same aspirational premise of achieving the

lustrous lifestyle of American suburbia or British garden cities or nearer home, New Delhi bungalows, the blueprint for which was already available in Lahore's Model Town. Developed by Sir Ganga Ram and Diwan Khem Chand, Lahore's Model Town was the first settlement to have adapted Ebenzer Howard's concept of garden cities to Indian conditions. Model Town easily became the precursor of 'colony settlements' in Delhi (Reeta Grewal, 1991, p. 180). Hauz Khas, Green Park, South Extension, the Kailashes were the colonies developed by private developers and in keeping with the market and the times, all fitted firmly into this new urban ethos. Next came the co-operative group housing of Vasant Vihar, Westend, Santiniketan, Panchsheel Park, Pamposh, Chittranjan Park etc. in which people from same professions or regions constructed a gated community. '70s onwards the thrust shifted to outer regions like East Delhi, Dwarka, Rohini etc. when co-operative group housing became apartment oriented instead of *'kothi'* oriented. DDA joined the bandwagon with Saket and went on to build LIG, MIG and Self Financing Flats. These were the dominant forms of middle class living which were a far cry from old city patterns but the difference became subsumed in the overarching discourse of development and in the developing nation, the developing city reflected the developing nexus between urban living and human choices. The dominant forms all remain today in the post-liberalization scenario but the inhabitants have changed. The self important government official of the Nehruvian era evaporated with the Emergency. Instead of his progeny which started seeking more global professions, in due course migrants from small towns replaced them in the Civil Services. While the post-independence swish set have become ministers, refugees have become industrialists living in farmhouses, government officers have become retired owners of kothis and flats, migrants have become government officers, bureaucrats, and practitioners of virtually all trades on the global firmament inhabiting the bourgeois universe of flats and apartments. Post-independence Delhi developed on the lines of Canberra being the seat of Government and little else, to go on to become Washington with installation of showpiece Indian Culture. It has not stopped there. Post-liberalization it transformed itself to New York resonating with mobility and plurality of a teeming commercial and cultural megapolis.

This Time of Morning (1965) by Nayantara Sahgal chronicles the upheavals which follow the tumultuous birth of the new nation. The democratic republic engenders a new political breed and creed. New missions and visions rise on the horizon and many people and philosophies lose their relevance to more exigent imperatives. The most defining change in the political climate of self governance is that the Congress party finds itself transformed from a revolutionary party to a political party. The Nehruvian idealism itself gets mitigated by a frenzy to get things done. The ends gain primacy over the means and thus the scrupulosity of men like Kailas Vrind, Abdul Rehman and Prakash Shukla becomes an encumbrance to be jettisoned for men of action like Kalyan or men of acquiescence like Arjun Mitra. This new breed is backed by an overworked Prime Minister who is losing patience in the face of interminable delays and paperwork and this, in turn, breeds and feeds the money mafia, which is on the prowl to seize new opportunities of profiteering in the post-independence political economy. The unholy nexus developing between political expedience, incompetent politicos accessing power through money and the unbroken lineage of servility in government service where British Raj quietly gets replaced by Minister Raj forms the backdrop of clashing ideals and aspirations in the India immediately after independence which the novel presents.

Nayantara Sahgal is distinguished by her proximity to the inner circle of power politics and documents the developments perceptively and incisively with almost an oracular quality. About her first book *Prison and Chocolate Cake*, she says that while she wrote it in 1952-3 out of her memories of childhood and upbringing for private circulation to recapture the magical atmosphere of the Gandhian struggle, it turned out to be a much reprinted "minor classic" perhaps, she surmises, because "it was a look at India no one had taken before" (Sahgal, 2003, p.43). This look which readers found

so engrossing and rewarding in *Prison and Chocolate Cake* is in fact the look which has continued to constitute the creative idiom of Sahgal where personal translates to political through both empathetic as well as critical intervention in the events around her but more importantly, through a belief she has inherited from her family that personal and political are indeed one. Responding to a question in an interview about coalescing of the personal and the political in her works, she says in an interview to Ritu Menon, her biographer,

> "I approach fiction that way," she told me in 2008. "To write a sort of apolitical novel wouldn't have come naturally to me. The thing is, whether I wrote fiction or non-fiction, my connection with politics was my emotional mainspring, not an event happening out there. I have been profoundly affected by it, one's laughter and tears, everything was connected with it, and there was no getting away from the emotional element in politics … I've never grown a hard shell about that". (Sahgal, 2008/ 2014)

Thus, the political consciousness which M K Bhatnagar describes as an "interest in the organisational and institutional aspects of society and in the manner in which they condition the parameters within which the individual is free to realise himself" expresses itself in a narrative which is historical, social, political and autobiographical at the same time (Bhatnagar, 1991). *This Time of Morning* intertwines all of the above as Ritu Menon elaborates in Nayantara Sehgal's biography, *Out of Line*:

> … the characters in *This Time of Morning* mirror many familiar personalities. Kalyan Sinha is clearly the magnetic Krishna Menon, who aroused strong feelings in all those who came in contact with, but enjoyed the trust and confidence of Nehru-The PM in the novel. Kailas is Nayantara"s mother, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, whose differences with Krishna Menon are well documented… Sir Arjun Mitra is based on Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, India's first Secretary General in the ministry of External Affairs… (Menon, 2014, p.91)

The narrative has journalistic commentaries on political events but it also places lives within the framework of these events to show how politics affects people and how people affect politics. While she mostly writes about politics with capital P, yet very often her narratives have characters that are political with a small p, for they are not practitioners at a professional level but they exercise choices at a personal level. As these protagonists are more often than not women, hence this accounts for a strong streak of feminism in her novels. For her, the domestic and the political are not mutually exclusive categories because the power question is common to both. She herself goes through divorce as she feels fettered in the claustrophobic marital relationship and hence, the issue of freedom and fulfillment is very close to her both as individual and as writer. Similarly, her family loyalty and political honesty clash in her relationship with her cousin, Indira Gandhi, who fails to cower her into submission and she emerges to be the staunchest critic of her absolutist and dynastic ambitions. She has to endure financial hardships, professional prosecution, political oblivion and exile like isolation but she chooses to remain true to the democratic dream of India rather than acquiesce to her ruthless cousin.

In a creative endeavour which has both Politics with a capital P and politics with small p at its core, it is only natural that quite a few novels in Sahgal's oeuvre are geographically located in New Delhi. New Delhi, as the capital of independent India, has urban culture and political culture inextricably intertwined. While the showcase imperial capital changes demographically and cartographically in the aftermath of independence and partition, yet the paraphernalia of power remain its predominant characteristic. When Rakesh, an IFS officer, returns to Delhi after a gap of six years on a foreign posting, he takes a drive around Delhi. He maps the iconic power corridors extending from Palam Airport down Chanakyapuri with new embassy buildings coming up, past the new hotel, The Ashok, the India Gate, the Secretariat buildings into the bustle of Connaught

Place. This is Lutyen's Delhi, now transcribed to "*sarkari*" Delhi, as Sahgal says, "India struggled to squeeze a revolution into the bureaucratic mould" (Sahgal, 1965, p. 3). Wherever Delhi is referred to in the novel, it is referred to mostly as the national capital or the bureaucratic capital. People from all over India converge in the capital and find that Delhi now signifies what Kailas calls "the pulse of his external world" (Sahgal, 1965, p. 15). The world of ambition, promotion, appreciation, self validation, even self preservation, of people hailing from different parts of the world and taking different routes but ultimately striving for success gets concentrated in the essence of Delhi. The Prime Minister, Kailas, Rakesh and Jeevan from Allahabad, Arjun Mitra from Bengal, Saleem and the Narangs from Lahore, Sally the ex-Rani of Mirpur, and Kalyan from some place near Patna where he was found by his foster parents who rescued him from being starved to death- all sink their quests and destinies in the new identity of Delhi to derive a renewed and redefined sense of self. Location in Delhi and location within Delhi become now the touchstones of success or failure of past beliefs and endeavours. As Kalyan stands surrounded by the "planned precision of New Delhi ... now the heart of the young republic", he is overwhelmed by the realisation that "it no longer mattered so much who he was or where he had come from for he stood at the heart of Delhi" (Sahgal, 1965, p. 182-3). While Delhi's identity gets crafted around political and bureaucratic regimes operating from its folds, its culture becomes primarily governmental culture linked to the political climate and diplomatic policy. Nayantara Sahgal invests the name of Delhi throughout the novel with the aura of political power. On Kalyan's appointment as Adviser on foreign affairs, "Delhi was electric with the brittle false calm that preceded a storm that would continue to threaten but never rage, as was the way of government storms in Delhi" (Sahgal, 1965, p. 6). Delhi's winters are "the visiting season ... with Delhi playing host to international celebrities". (Sahgal, 1965, p. 6) While celebrities like Eisenhower, Bulganin and Khrushchev came and went, "Delhi preserved its delicate balance" (Sahgal, 1965, p. 7). Kailas realises that "Delhi was not a place for a politician in enforced retirement" as power obsessed circles of Delhi never fail to deliver daily sadistic reminders of luck run out (Sahgal, 1965, p. 23). Saleem feels that "we need a Delhi oracle" because goings on in Delhi are becoming extremely enigmatic (Sahgal, 1965, p. 172). Thus, not only does Delhi reappropriate the tactile pink sandstone power for adequate and desired effect, it is also successful in embedding a subtext of power culture which is not lost on the sentient new masters as well as masses.

This subtext of power culture is highlighted quite glaringly by the bureaucratic associates of the legislators and executors of Parliamentary democracy. The bureaucracy is a part of the legacy bequeathed to India by the colonial administrative structure which India retrieved even when it ousted the colonizers. While its Weberian civil service came to us in the package deal, the Indian Foreign Service was an original creation established after independence to meet the manifold demands of a world split in power blocs. Bureaucracy, as this class of non-elected government servants was called nineteenth century onwards on the European continent, was deemed to be a necessary evil as it was arguably the only efficient way of governing large and varied populations. Weber attributed its infallible strengths to its formal hierarchical structure, management by rules, organisational principles based on functional speciality, up-focussed and in-focussed operations, purposefully impersonal nature and recruitment based on technical expertise (Johnston, 1993). The bureaucratic form has invited much criticism but has continued to endure in public administration. Weber himself was conscious of its dehumanising effects trapping individuals in the "iron cage" of excessive application of rules and reason (Weber, 1967). Marx critiqued the bureaucracy's attempt to posture as civil society and John Stuart Mill cautioned against the bureaucracy's supposed experience and expertise dissipating into snobbish pedantocracy (1843; 1848). Ludwig von Mises and Robert K Merton have also highlighted the dystopic aspects of bureaucracy like excessive observation of hierarchies, rules, formality and impersonality due to which bureaucrats come across as apathetic,

amoral and myopic (1944; 1940). Merton also notes that overdependence on routines and protocols makes them resistant to change and also easy access to power translates more into the protection of self interest than the interest of the organisation or the society as a whole.

The mammoth of bureaucracy looms large on the horizon of New Delhi and contributes in its own way in flaunting the trimmings and trappings of power. Rakesh, Saleem, Arjun Mitra, Dhiraj Singh are all members of the elite club of bureaucracy with its typical perks and pitfalls. These men and their wives are from provincial backgrounds and their nomadic lives make them into "a nationality of (their) own" not really belonging anywhere, much less to Delhi. Delhi, however, remains a sought after stop-go capital because it affords a respite from incessant "collision with cultures" which they are subjected to: "The world had to wait a little while they got their bearings again" (Sahgal, 1965, p. 5). Once that urge has passed, they are again raring to go as in Delhi allowances as well as accommodation is in short supply. They develop a cult mentality forged by their commonality. Despite orthodox families and arranged marriages, the couples learn the tricks of the trade like etiquettes, English language, housekeeping outside India without domestic helps, learning how to drive or play tennis, entertaining and making cocktails with ease. Delhi is witness to this cult culture. Work spills over to after-work hours and Rakesh notices how one is always talking politics and policies even on social or family occasions. Delhi's cocktail parties, highly competitive entertainment, drawing rooms full of artifacts and artifice, free flow of food and wine are some of the features of this cult culture. Participation of women as hosts and companions is evident and the glimpses we get of their own individuality are played out behind the curtains of these socially expected and accepted functions. They are said to be partly responsible for the officers eyeing choice postings. While Mira is a wife with quiet dignity born out of her trials and tribulations as a freedom fighter's wife, Uma is her antithesis who has not been able to adapt to the life of seclusion thrust upon her by her husband's profession. Saira is not content with the repute and respect her husband's profession brings as she is piqued by the sparse material comforts in her life. The cult culture, however, is fundamentally male culture which fixes women in the roles demanded of them by their husband's white collared professions. A rebellious Uma is as much a discredit to her husband as is a covetous Saira. This cult culture is a distinctive component of the governmental aura. Work and play intermix to create this impression of a charmed circle, but a lot of its charm also comes from the investments made into it by the government for whom the more charmed the circle of its operative wing, the more would be the enhancement in its lore and glory. These investments come in the form of the dignified grandeur and sobriety of offices, vehicles, accommodations, entertainments and assignments and the human counterpart of these physical flag posts lies in the conduct, propriety, conversation, inward looking lifestyles and loyalties of its officers. Women are invisible or at best ornamental partners who are supposed to help the officers maintain this veneer of prestige and privilege reflecting also Sahgal's own discontentment in being reduced to the high flying corporate professional Gautam Sahgal's wife in her own angst ridden marriage.

Through the IFS brigade in the novel, Nayantara Sahgal not only brings alive the cultural milieu of the early years of Indian self-governance but she also sheds light on the inner contradictions with which it grappled. In the dawn of independence, IFS is a patriotic choice by the promising youth of the country. Rakesh says, "... in the years after independence the Foreign Service was not merely a career. It was, he told his father, the restoration of national opportunity. He was acutely conscious that those who represent India abroad would be the first to project the image of a new nation (Sahgal, 1965, p. 68). The prime Minister in his send off speech for the new batch of recruits also reiterates the pride in the profession by saying, "What does independence mean? Basically it means foreign relations ..." (Sahgal, 1965, p. 69). The ideal of public service held up by the Prime Minister and espoused by Rakesh, however, turns out to be fraught with human and practical limitations in its nitty gritty. Dhiraj Singh is outraged by his posting to Rangoon as he sees it as a slur on his potential and

reputation. Rakesh wants a posting in Delhi as a breather from a six years stint abroad. Arjun Mitra does not want to retire because his office is his home. Saleem's beautiful wife, Saira, feels discontent and deprived in her humble PWD dwellings and limited means when she compares them to the opulence of her friend Sally's luxuries. Rakesh and Saleem know Arjun Mitra to have perfected the art of being non-committal. Saleem calls the Ministry of External affairs the Ministry of Eternal affairs as decisions go pending and work is endless. Kailas very aptly summarises the "yawning gap" between the job so passionately sought by Rakesh and the "job (that) had not been done":

> Foreign policy hung by a myriad tenuous strands, each one vital, said Kailas. But did every interpreter of it think so, and for what paltry reasons they sometimes failed? For want of a nail, a kingdom was lost .... The ambassador who dreaded an Asian assignment or who bluntly refused it because Europe was more comfortable, the diplomat whose faulty assessment cost his country years of effort, the host of junior and senior representatives who failed to establish rapport with the people of Ceylon, Indonesia or Nepal because they would rather have been in New York, Brussels and Geneva. Yet all these conveyed the lie in varying degree that they were doing their job ... The years were showing dismal yawning gaps where the job had not been done. (Sahgal, 1965, p. 174)

The Prime Minister upsets Kailas and generally bypasses his Cabinet in appointing Kalyan as Minister without Portfolio and then adviser on Foreign Affairs as the red tapism of bureaucracy impedes his business. He expects men like Kalyan who do not care for "routine, ponderous, bureaucratic manner" and "shed all non-essentials and go directly to the heart of the matter" to cut short the delivery time of his schemes and programmes (Sahgal, 1965, p. 18). Kalyan's methods are deemed to be dubious by veteran bureaucrats like Arjun Mitra who feel unmitigated hostility towards Kalyan for the reasons expressed thus:

> What it meant, thought Arjun, was that Kalyan wanted to scrap rules and put his own men in important posts. His determination to ignore protocol and bypass routine would go too far one of these days. (Sahgal, 1965, p. 123)

Rakesh is also perturbed by Kalyan's forceful extraction of loyalty from people around him, not through consent but through his mesmerising personality. He treated human beings not as individuals whose choices are based on reason but as collectibles whose fealty was a measure of his own sway and significance. Rakesh always finds something missing in the intense discussions held by Kalyan in Boston as well as Delhi and eventually he realises that

> It was the assurance that every man counts, that life is a sum total of moments, that the human being through the exercise of his reason is the instrument of all progress. (Sahgal, 1965, p. 188)

Prakash Shukla voices the same opinion and thinks that people like Kalyan who have a disdain for humanity and who cannot tolerate equals may deal with inanimate objects but they should not be allowed to deal with humanity (Sahgal, 1965, p. 256).

The "polite tension" between the old and the new exists not only in the motley group thrown together by the project of governance, but also by diverse urban cultures brought together in post-imperialist Delhi. Homogenization in dress, language, lifestyle and demeanour from western urban contact is visible at first glance and is the simplest example of what Meera calls the "tasteless parody of a transplanted modernity" (Sahgal, 1965: 203). The crowd outside Gaylords restaurant in Connaught Place has men sporting Elvis Presley trousers and women high bouffant. Rakesh notes how everyone from New York to New Delhi has started looking the same with hardly any difference in appearance. He wonders why everyone is always speaking English and regrets that Mrs Narang's robust Punjabi spirit has been enervated by the homogenizing English. Berenson, the architect of The Peace Institute from Denmark, also notices how greetings and other gestures have becoming

identical globally. Berenson is disappointed to find the ubiquitous eggs, toast and coffee breakfast at The Ashok. Berenson is a good example of the advent of metropolitan cultural pluralism in Delhi and the tensions inherent within it. Despite the facade of outer homogeneity, there remains an element of "otherness" on both sides. Berenson feels discomfited by subtle differences in the cultural connotations of how people are addressed in different places. He is the typical twentieth century globetrotter who has the libertine abandon of the Scandinavian culture and following his heart and profession, he has become a thoroughbred practitioner of urban purposefulness delinked from community or identity. The characteristic urban passion for liberating anonymity and noncommittal individuality is all the more deep seated as he has constantly been on the move from one city of work to another. Berenson is a seasoned and hardened inmate of *gesellschaft* social order as he lives by the emancipated credo of personal beliefs, ethics, interests and achievements. Belonging to one of the earliest parts of the world to be industrialised and urbanised and having lived in other urbanised communities also where close, enduring social relations have long been eroded by fleeting, temporary commercial ones, interacting with individuals for satisfying mutual needs is a norm for him and not a monstrous aberration. Delhi, however, he thinks is like nothing else he has encountered before. This is perhaps because the residents of Delhi immediately after independence have not yet fully evolved as urbanised citizens and are somewhere in the transit zone between the *gemeinschaft* worlds of rural communities and the *gesellschaft* nature of urban communities.

The friction between Rashmi and Berenson is not merely temperamental, it is cultural. Hailing from a small town, Allahabad, Rashmi is the product of a culture where an individual is a summation primarily of family, religion, region and gender. As it is impossible for Rashmi to envisage an existence cut free from the *gemeinschaft* ideals of lineage, tradition, responsibility and belonging, she cuts short her relationship with Berenson in whose *gesellschaft* conditioning, these things are meaningless hurdles to his need for unfettered self realisation and expression. Rashmi is not able to understand or accept the footloose nature of Berenson. She is inquisitive about his long estranged wife, Marta, and children who live in Denmark and motivates him to reconnect with them. This is her effort to locate his self and identity in a matrix of his past but Berenson lives remorselessly in the present. She wants to know more about him and craves for the same interest from Berenson but Berenson's individualistic approach to life, career and relationships leaves her feeling empty and dissatisfied. The *gemeinschaft* of small town world of Allahabad is also visible in the way Rakesh, as a neighbour's son, is like a family member. The feel of family which Rakesh misses in his home where he is being brought up by his widower doctor father is experienced by him through Rashmi's parents, Kailas and Mira. Even though Rakesh goes on to study in America and is posted in places like Beirut and Cairo as Indian Foreign Service officer, yet he is elated to be in India and Delhi. He is happy to forego a coveted posting in Bonn to be able to live in Delhi. The homing instinct is alive in Rakesh despite his calling as an IFS officer. Back in Delhi, Rakesh is like a family member in his erstwhile landlady, Mrs. Narang's house and his fellow officer, Saleem and his wife, Saira's house. Rashmi marries Dilip, much to the agony of Rakesh who is secretly in love with her, but the two continue to have unbreakable ties. Despite Rashmi's failed marriage and relationship with Berenson, it is eventually the strong claims of the *gemeinschaft* community which prevail over Rakesh and Rashmi who realise that perhaps their best chance at a fulfilling relationship lies in formalising their *gemeinschaft* ties.

It is interesting to note that "twilight" is a common metaphor in descriptions of Delhi. As Rakesh drives past the spectacle of Indian governmental grandeur, he notes, "It was the turning point of the day, when the sky drenched in colour, glowed lavishly above the sweep and expanse of the avenue of India Gate" (Sahgal, 1965, p. 2). The metaphor of the grey area of an incomplete transition is extended through a reference to the cycle of seasons when he says, "The blue haze of near-winter smudged the high, black, wrought iron beauty of the gates leading to

Rashtrapati Bhavan ..." (Sahgal, 1965, p. 3). The metaphor of transition-in-progress is certainly apt to capture the nuances of successive power transitions forever happening in Delhi, but it also connects to the urban transition as Delhi has always been in the making. The introduction of a western urban idiom, the enthusiastic espousal of the modernist idiom, the eventual arrival of the postmodern and post-Fordist global idiom have informed the city's figurative construction and mass exodus of refugees post-partition, of people in search of jobs and people involved in the massive exercise of running the country have necessitated its physical construction. While Delhi is literally under perpetual construction, theoretical tenets of urban sociology also corroborate the fact that in terms of the relationship of people to a city's spaces and to each other, a city is always a work-in-progress. Rashmi visits the site of the construction of the Peace Institute as her "special place" from where all the city lights were visible but now the construction of the Peace Institute has transformed her relationship with that place (Sahgal, 1965, p. 24). It becomes the place where she meets Neil Berenson with whom she later enters in a relationship. It is also a place where the architectural idiom of Neil Berenson will define the complex concept of 'peace'. Ironically, there is a lot of conflict behind this 'peace'. The Peace Institute project becomes the microcosm of the tug of war between the old and the new, the moral and the expedient, going on in every sphere of the fledgling democracy. Though construction is rampant in Delhi and Delhi is being built over in every style and size, the Peace Institute is celebrated as an iconic project. In the manner of Nehruvian governmental buildings, carrying the stamp of his idealism and modernism, this building is meant to be the face of the Indian Republic. Thus, Rashmi, Neil Berenson, Kailas, the Prime Minister, Kalyan, Dhiraj Singh, Hari Mohan- all have individual relationship with the place which, however, shall be overwritten by the overarching, privileged, nationalist metatext of the project. Neil likes places like Delhi and the Peace Institute which are in the making but Delhi is in the making in another sense also. When asked by Neil Berenson whether Delhi was her home, Rashmi replies,

> It's hardly anybody's home. It's a stopping place for most people, diplomats, Members of Parliament and the armed forces. Though people are beginning to build their own homes here now. I suppose in another twenty years or so it will develop more of a personality. (Sahgal, 1965, p. 24)

Mrs Narang echoes the same idea when she says that, "we have begun to think of Delhi as home but it will never be like Lahore" (Sahgal, 1965, p. 39). Delhi is so far just Delhi as Saleem says, even after a couple of decades of independence. While London is England and Paris is France, Delhi was struggling to acquire sufficient national and urban character (Sahgal, 1965, p. 142). Both are in the making. Kalyan is reminded by the "haunting twilit prelude to night" of the past emptiness as well as the tortures of loneliness which are to come and eventually, death (Sahgal, 1965, p.183). This time of the day is a reminder of passing time and despite knowing that he has achieved a lot in the past, he becomes anguished at this time because what all lies unachieved belittles that sense of achievement in this time bound existence. Twilight, thus, is symbolic also of human beings, their identities and their ambitions and endeavours in progress.

Delhi mirrors in every sense the "upheaval in the fabric of Indian life" in the years immediately after independence (Sahgal, 1965, p. 299). These years, Kailas summarises at the end of the novel,

> represented the birth pangs of a new civilisation. 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 was its starting point, but the human being's struggle for freedom and recognition in every facet of his life and environment went on (Sahgal, 1965, p. 299).

Birth is the 'dawn' counterpart of 'twilight'. India picks itself up in 1947 from centuries of slavery and

nation building starts from scratch. Similarly, post-partition Delhi starts from scratch. The nation and the city begin their journey together hoping to get it right someday through trial and error. In the years immediately after the independence, the democratic experiment becomes the biggest and the most spectacular monument in Delhi and this is what we see in the novel. Saleem says that vicissitudes of this mammoth machinery constituted the quintessential magic of Delhi.

> ... in the phenomenon of that strangely assorted band of legislators who journeyed here three times a year from near and far-flung regions where some of them did not know an electric fan or bus. They, to Saleem, were the essence of Delhi, and through it, of India, making it an almost solitary oasis in Asia. (Sahgal, 1965, p. 142)

It is not a coincidence that Rakesh loves the city exactly for the same reason he loves the nation. Believing unshakably in the democratic spirit, he asserts that "every man counts" and it was this spirit which he hopes will prevail in the city:

> Driving home through the dimly lit streets, he thought that this Delhi to which he belonged and which was his home between foreign assignments, could claim his loyalty only as long it held to this value ... Till now Delhi had held him, for it had been through the terror of Partition and emerged unembittered. With its welter of problems it had nevertheless clung to the rule of consent. It was a decision that took continuing courage, individual courage, just as it took individual sacrifice and pain to create a nation. (Sahgal, 1965, p. 189)

Thus, Nayantara Sehgal's *This Time of Morning* (1965) affords a glimpse into the cultural odyssey of the city of Delhi in the eventful years just after the birth of the nation- a time when the nation as well as the entire world hungrily lapped up whatever came out in the form of an evaluation of India's "tryst with destiny"- and *This Time of Morning* was no superficial view. Government Delhi of Sahgal's novel comes to patronize unholy nexus of political expedience, incompetent politicos buying power through money and uninterrupted bureaucratic servility where British Raj takes new avatar in the shape of Minister Raj. Urban culture gets inextricably intertwined with power culture: culture of ambition, promotion, self validation and self preservation. Power culture is visibly performed by state machinery comprising of state buildings, state ceremonies, state employees and their appearance and aura cults and clubs. Bureaucracy especially thrives on spectacle of power. Many conflicts come to be embedded in this new culture: idealism vs. pragmatism, Indian culture vs. global culture, gemeinschaft vs. geselleschaft. Twilight recurs as metaphor for the city as the city emerges as a "work in progress". Unfinished human endeavors, developing relationships of people with spaces and each other, gradually emerging as 'home' for a dislocated generation, struggle to acquire national character and compete at global level- the city of Delhi is the quintessential modern city forever under construction spatially and conceptually. Morning, at the other end of the symbolic code, signifies the synchronous birth of the nation and the capital, the democratic experiment following which, becomes the most spectacular monument to dominate the cultural arena of the city.

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