

**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NAYANTRA SAHGAL'S A TIME TO BE HAPPY
AND ANITE DESAI'S CRY, THE PEACOCK**

Firdose Kouser

Research Scholar

Barkatullah University Bhopal,India

Abstract

Anita Desai is an Indian novelist. Anita Desai's works open a period of forty years and her earlier works mostly explore tensions between the family members and the alienation of the middle-class women. On the other hand, Nayantra Sahgal has undoubtedly emerged as one of the celebrated Indo-English fiction writers of the recent times. In my research paper, I have made a comparative study of some works of Nayantra Sahgal and Anita Desai. Both these writers are feminist. But Anita Desai's works are different from Nayantra Sehgal. Nayantra Sahgal is mainly concerned with the politics, east-west encounter and social theme. But Desai is more concerned with the Psychic life of her characters. Both these writers highlight the women's problems in the society and present them largely as victims in a patriarchal society. They mainly portrayed the tyrannies, torture, and violence faced by women in Indian society but their approach to addressing the problems and issues is different.

Keywords: Loneliness, Self-identity, marital discord, Insanity, Societal pressure, Torture.

This paper investigates how Nayantra Sahgal's "A Time to be Happy" and Anita Desai's "Cry, The Peacock" shows how both of the writers are similar in their attempt to portray the sufferings and humiliation of women in India. M. Selvanayki writes: "Sahgal seems to expose conventional narrow-minded Indian society through the character of Nita. In Indian society, the parents arrange for the two young souls to live happily ever after. Sahgal strongly attacks this social convention and names this kind of marriage "just organized Rape" (qtd: 274). Usha Bande observes: Anita Desai disowns all social concerns and asserts more than once that she is interested in individual and not in social issues. Social issues intrude only where they affect the character (Bende 12).

The truth is that Desai's heroines are the traditional un-intellectual women who depend on their husbands for subsistence. She depicts the exploration of the disturbed psyche of the Indian women laying emphasis on the factors of loneliness and alienation. Most of her women characters lack the spirit of viewing life with optimism and fail to overcome their existing trauma and torture. Whereas Sehgal shows women suffering in marriage life and then deciding to come out of the suffering bondage by preferring for divorce. Her women characters leave their husbands or break marriage which does not allow them to be free from the suffering and agony of an unhappy or unjust relationship.

Anita Desai is not interested in politics and social life. She is interested in peculiar and eccentric characters rather than every day, average ones. She presents the plight of introspective, hypersensitive women in her novels. Her each work is an accelerating exploration of the psyche self.

On the other hand, Sehgal's fiction is all about women's struggle for freedom from the world of male domination but her fiction has political aspects also. She belongs to well prominent Indian political family (Nehru family). Almost every novel of Sahgal has a political setting. Due to all these factors, her concern for moral values in politics and social life goaded her to use politics as background for her writing. Mrs. Desai discovers its principle suitable to her themes "aspects of existentialism" are in the evidence in the total framework of her stories. She lays stress on the alienation of men from an absurd world, his following from normal society and his recognition of the world as negative and meaningless- presents the sensitive, individual, fragmented and the spiritually destroyed picture of the particular social conditions of life.

Whereas Nayantra Sahgal has different views about society. She does not want the separate world of women. She wants a world in which men and women are living together with mutual trust and love. Because happiness of both depends upon each other. She is not only a feminist but also a humanist who speaks of the need for a universal culture and universal

experience as A. V. Krishna Rao observes in Nayantra Sahgal: A study of her fiction and non-fiction "Nayantra Sehgal is perhaps one of our best socio-political novelists today." Similarly, Jasbir Jain in his book Nayantra Sahgal says "All around them, political and moral ideas were being discussed and formulated and the girl was a part of it. If it is Nehru's idealism which has influenced her political stance, whereas it is her own father's gentleness and courage which has influenced her moral stance.

When we compare the two novels "Cry, the Peacock" (Anita Desai) and "A Time to be Happy" (Nayantra Sahgal), the protagonists of these two novels have same conditions and are suffering from isolation, marital dilemma discord, self Identity, the quest for love and respect. Being alone in the family she is extremely loved by his father. Excessive love from her father she desires to have similar attention from her husband Gautama.

But her husband fails to satisfy her intense longing for love and life, she is left to the solitude and silence of the house which preys upon her. (Cry, the peacock, 88) She realizes that she could never sleep in peace. She is caught in the net of inescapable. "God, now I was caught in the net of inescapable and where lay the possibility of mercy, of release? Was this net no hallucination? no..... Am I gone insane? Father, Husband! Who is my savior? I am in need of one. Lack of communication between Maya and Gautama was the chief cause of suffering and her mental illness. In the end, Maya pushes Gautam off the parapet of their house. Thus she murders her husband in a fit of insanity and commits suicide.

In "A time to be happy" by Nayantra Sahgal, the protagonist Maya is not comfortable in her relationship with her husband. In order to want peace in her life, she was always busy with social work and relation. Maya experiences loneliness, frustration, and complaints of marriage. Like Maya in "Cry the Peacock" Maya in "A time to be happy" (Nayantra Sahgal), there is a lack of communication between husband and wife. Her husband did not understand the psyche of his wife. Instead, he demands that Maya should be submissive and traditional women. But Maya only wants equal respect response and existence in her own house. His concern was with God and hers with God in him (A time to be happy-153).

For Maya marriage was doomed from the beginning, there is a lot of difference between their personalities. "She had the cool purity of eucalyptus, as compared with his extra vagrant Gulmohar. She was the mirror-smooth lake to his rushing water full" (A time to be happy, 42). Maya remains frustrated in her relationship and ultimately their marriage becomes fragile. The marital agreement is maintained only because of the social conventions and the mortal fear of the society. Though they are not soul mates to each other and however wrong their match may be, the women in this novel do not dare to come out of their homes or to break their marriage ties.

Conclusion:- Nayantra Sahgal and Anita Desai both are the well prominent feminist writer. Both have the same views but in some cases, Nayantra's approach is different from Anita Desai. Anita Desai is the staunch supporter of feminism. But Nayantra Sahgal did not agree with this. She shows a balanced approach. She does not hold men absolutely responsible for the pathetic condition of women, instead, she blames the system itself. According to this system, she blames not only men's cruel thought but also women's unwillingness and passivity. And she is never in favor to create a separate world for women. She wants to create a common world in which men and women live happily.

Anita Desai's themes are mainly isolation, loneliness, alienation and marital discord whereas Nayantra Sahgal's themes are the man-woman relationship, political, economic and social rights for women, democratic and humanistic values in Indian politics. But both these writers were struggling for the emancipation of women in this male-dominated society. Their works become all about a women's courage to fight societal pressures, her independent spirit and willpower to take the decision as an individual.

References:

- Desai, Anita. 2006. Cry, the Peacock. Delhi! orient paperbacks.
- Sharma, R. S 1981 Anita Desai. Arnold-Heinemann, New Delhi.
- Kumar, Narendra. N "Introduction" Fits and mists: A study of Anita Desai Protagonist. Bareilly Prakash book Deptt, 1995.
- Kohli, Suresh "Indian women written in English". Times weekly, 8 Nov.1970.
- Bande, Usha. The novels of Anita Desai. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1988.
- Jasbir Jain, Nayantra Sahgal Michigan: Printwell, 1994. P.12. Print.
- Rao, A. U. Krishna. "Historical consciousness in the novels of Nayantra Sahgal". The Journal of Indian writing in English 18. 2 (July 1990). Print
- Sahgal, Nayantra. A time to be happy. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1975. Print.