

Unmasking The Realities: A Dystopian Reading Of Nayantara Sahgal's When The Moon Shines By Day

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Abstract

Even though dystopia has been emerging in writing, it is currently such tragic and heart rending fiction that has become particularly famous. The argument of this paper is to examine how contemporary Indian fiction exhibits the barbarity of contemporary Indian religious beliefs conditioning the society, specifically the arrangements upheld by an Indian state where custom and immaculateness are esteemed above multiculturalism, discourse, and equity, this paper centers around an acclaimed book, to be specific, Nayantara Sahgal's **When the Moon Shines by Day** (2017). In various manners, the work depicts the dystopian world picture of dubious occasions in contemporary India. The work additionally cautions against the risks of the fundamentalist variant of religion and social restriction, simultaneously as they draw out into the open to harm that a prevailing minority. The present paper substantiates the characteristics of a dystopian world modelled by Nayantara Sahgal, who tries to show the harsh reality of contemporary Indian society.

Keywords:- Dystopia, Contemporary Indian fiction, Socio-religious divide, Barbarity, Restriction, Totalitarianism

I Introduction

Dystopian world writing germinated at a wide spectrum in the domain of fiction and it is frequently used to portray genuine social issues concerning religion, politics, society, identity, etc. Earlier, dystopian fiction turned into the handiest associated with science and industrial establishment over nature and human lives. But with the upward surge in denial of justice and oppression performed by way of different authoritarian ends -- legal, political or social, dystopian now as modern fiction offers with every element of repression carried out in present society.

To understand the term dystopia completely, it is vital to notice and understand the term Utopia first. Utopia is interpreted as an imaginative ideal place or the world, dreamed by the critic or author. The word 'Utopia' originated from the Greek word 'outopia', i.e. ou meaning no, and topos meaning place, adding the suffix ia indicating a place. The word means No-where land. The place or society people dreamed of living and enjoying.

The term was first brought into literature through the paintings of Plato in Republic. He believes that society will now not face any destruction or catastrophe if all society or human being do their work with responsibility, loyalty and honesty. The utopian imagination was revived via the work Utopia by Thomas Moore in 1516. Through this work, theorizing has taken the form of literature. In English, the word Eutopia manner 'Good place'. The world is the evil-free, in which humans/citizen leads happy lives. Dystopian literature is a style of fictional writing that explores the social and political shape of a dark, oppressed world. Dystopian literature is characterized by dehumanization, totalitarian government, environmental catastrophe, or different characteristics associated with bestiality.

Critic, Martin Parker describes utopia with social theory. He depicts the social structure of the ideal state and how new principles are needed to overshadow the old principles. His definition of utopia is "systematic investigation of alternative principles of an organization relies on a reformulation of the principles of social order" (Parker, 47).

Critics like Patrick Reedy (2002) and Tom (2000) believed that within the twentieth century, while world wars took place, those changed the environment and notion of each man or woman of the global. The chaos and destruction done by wars make people see the sudden fall of false utopian imagination and start believing in the coming oppressed future. People felt

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the whole degradation of humanity. The falling of socialism within the Soviet Union labored as fuel to the fire. Peter Ruppert pens down the scenario in his way: "The failure of socialism in the Soviet Union, once thought to be a model utopian experiment...is sufficient evidence that utopianism is not only ineffective but untenable". (Rupert,100)

The failure of utopian vision is witnessed through the October Revolution of 1917. The people of the Soviet Union started believing in a dark future.

Christopher and Ferns (1999) describe the dystopian work as more realistic compared to utopian theory. They believe that dystopian work represents different versions of utopian beliefs. Dystopian literature shows the current position of society and guides humans about upcoming destruction and danger. The term dystopia was first mentioned by British philosopher John Stuart Mill in early 1868. In the late 19th century dystopian literature began to develop as a distinct literary genre as authors published anti-utopian papers attacking utopian works. The prominent works of this period are Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888) and Looking Further Forward (1890) by Richard Michaelis. The dystopian works always disagreed with utopian ideals and tried to portray the actual harsh and destructive future.

Many critics, c.f. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, suggested different definitions and divided dystopian fiction into many parts. But the major dystopian works are divided into two phases; one dystopian situation is resisted through the body i.e. through enlightenment or revolution, and the second, when dystopian situations are articulated through narrative or writing and also show us the path and give us hope to change it. Critics like Frankfurt school scholars (1930), the writing of Max Horkheimer, and Theodor

Adorno present positivity and confidence as the characteristics of human nature influenced by an intellectual thinker. The Enlightenment work which tries to produce harmony and ideals gradually shifted to the decline of their belief and ideals. The chaos and war fought during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in people believing in the failure of utopian ideals.

Enlightenment philosophy failed to propose any rational ground for socio-political reformation or religious and economic upliftment. Rather utopian works portrayed an opposite force that contributed to the uprising/popularity of dystopian vision.

Dystopia can be understood in two paradigms: Classical dystopia and Critical dystopia.

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(i) Classical Dystopia

The idealistic and utopian texts like Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627) or H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* (1908) were replaced by dark and chaotic texts like *WE* (1921) by Yevgeny Zamyatin and *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) by George Orwell. These works focused on the actions of a citizen in society. A society represented as "a hell on earth, an absurd, death-bound social-political system where the elite deliberately conspires against its own people". (Gottlieb 18). Earlier, the term Dystopia was used to present the text that depicts a grim futuristic imaginary society in which totalitarianism has taken over the lives of its citizens. Scientific and realistic work like *The Origin of Species* (1859), shows that time was increasingly marked by disillusion. The ideals and beliefs started showing the opposite impact on the world.

Classical dystopia presents a detailed dystopian setting that draws attention to the upcoming danger and chaos. Classical dystopia made the reader think more critically about utopian ideals and promises.

(ii) Critical Dystopia

After the years of World War II, there was a beginning of new and strong optimism after facing the unlawful destruction of the dictatorial power. Now people "chose to carry on the fight for self-determination, economic and social justice, and personal freedom and fulfillment in a world of peace and plenty for everyone"(Moylan, 68). With time the precautionary or alarming works starting disappeared during the second half of the twentieth century. The revolutionary spirit started to indicate itself in the organized protests of the 1960s. Towards the end of the 1970s, it became clear that the rebellious movements of the last decades had failed miserably. Instead of accepting the situation, the observers of the 1980s and 1990s were deluged by messages of socio-political problems such as increasing unemployment, increasing cases of crime against women and environmental destruction for science and technology usage. All these factors resulted in the darker side of imaginative literature.

Characteristics of Dystopian Literary Texts

Studying some of the prominent themes in socio-political dystopian fiction, It is found that dystopian authors illustrate the dangers encountered in restricting personal life. They warn society against the dangers that can

result in the shortcomings of utopian ideals. They forefront the crisis in which either the people of the state do not wish to be part of collectivism or the

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government dictatorship that controls their people to gain power. Walsh (1962) depicts the characteristic difference in his writing. He says: "If utopia is social planning that produces good results, dystopia is most often social planning that backfires and slides into a nightmare." (137)

(a) Religious Belief and Advancement of Science

With the advancement of science and technology such as the Industrial Revolution, computers, and social media have added fuel to devastating situations instead of making human life easy and comfortable. They try to control and monitor their citizen very strictly. One of the appropriate examples of surveillance is George Orwell's Nineteenth Eighty Four, in which the ruling government used to watch citizens through big screens and cameras are everywhere to keep an eye on each individual. One of the important features of dystopian texts is controlling the individual through blind religious belief or technology. These two factors are usually seen as opposite or contradictory to one another. But, in this genre, they play a vital role in oppression. Public suppression is supported by these manipulative strategies of elite powerful cooperation. They intelligently manipulated the mindset of the citizens using Ideological State Apparatuses: a term used by Louis Althusser which means official organizations/establishments such as schools, colleges, religion, institutes and media (Althusser, 92).

Science is used to control and monitor citizens. Developing techniques to keep an eye on the people to maintain their administrative order. Society is manipulated with the rapid coalescence of technology.

(b) Loss of Individual Identity

Walsh (1962), the critic, explained the loss of identity in his words; "By weakening the sense of individual identity, they make it more likely that the average man will merge his own frail identity with the social whole and cease to demand that he be called by a name instead of a number"(Walsh, 143). Loss of identity is one of the prominent features of a dystopian world. Many literary critics and writers believe that concerning dystopia, the loss of individualism is a factor that results in making a collective or common social structure for the state. To make a utopia state, the rules and norms for the state make the individual sacrifice his wishes and opportunities and work as a machine under the rule. Sahgal in her work, This Time of Morning depicts the importance of individual identity through character kalias. He says,

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In my all dealings with human beings I discovered no magic formula for change-not as long as you consider the human mind and its willing co-operation necessary to your task.... We have made the human being the unit and measure of progress, so we can never at any stage abandon our concern with him. (Sahgal,3)

(c) Fascist Government

The importance of government in a society is aptly depicted by Sahgal in her work *The Day in Shadow*. In the work, the official policy is inclined towards a soviet alliance indifferent to the country's future interests. The new breed of politicians is smooth and unscrupulous. Two characters Raj Garg and Sumer Singh represent the two different sides of the politics. Raj Garg says, in the work, he realized that he and Sumer Singh, "Were not men of different political opinions supporting the same system. They belonged to different lines of thinking and the future of Asia would depend on which line won." (Sahgal, 8)

The theme of an authoritarian state is another prominent aspect of dystopian literature. From its origin, dystopian fiction had some modifications to this theme. In critical accounts, the totalitarian state was replaced by a firm/establishment and the central characters of the rebellion started becoming successful. However, many other factors remained the same in both classical and critical accounts. For instance, the ruling power is always concerned about maintaining its control over citizens and has a ruinous prepossession. The protagonist tries to stand against the government but is saved by other high authorities who favor him and the protagonist leads to trial and punishment.

(d) Sexuality and Women

As women are concerned, dystopian fiction shows control over the female body and desires. They are treated as objects just to produce offspring or to fulfill the sexual desires of males. *The Handmaid's Tale* written by Margaret Atwood is one of the appropriate examples to depict the condition of women in society. The Republic of Gilead got complete control over females' desires and they are assigned to high-profile men, known as commander or their companions. High-class/society women served as housewives, whereas else other women were used as baby-producing machines and worked as handmaids to the leader.

Sexuality is one of the major themes of dystopian fiction from classical to critical times. Sexuality in one way or another is related to women in a concerned form of abusive form.

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According to the plot or storyline of the work, sexual activities, desire and behavior related to it are either presented as a disenthraling from social norms or as an oppressive/repressive function or act done by citizens.

(e) Manipulating Citizens Through Culture, History and Language

Manipulation is done through various sources to brainwash the people is also a significant feature shown in the dystopian work. Higher classes or governments alter the data and history according to their need to control the people. Otiose facts and dumb entertainment are put to use to distract and brainwash the citizens and reality. They also make them question in a superficial way that has no link with reality. As Adorno and Horkheimer write a comment on "Media Culture" (2013): The most intimate reactions of human beings have become so entirely reified, even to themselves, that the idea of anything peculiar to them survives only in extreme abstraction, personality means hardly more than dazzling white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions. (135-136)

Language is also used as a means of manipulation. Totalitarian government eliminates some words and the meaning of other words that make an individual stay restricted around the language allowed by the state. The restriction and alteration in language compel an individual to express less or to understand limited. Language is not just a means of communication, Language helps an individual to utilize space and to understand inner life and the outer world. Language is a means of expressing and understanding. Language is one of the tools for rebellion energies and the first step towards rebellion is always to start with verbal saying/verbal communication. By controlling language, the state produces constant supervision and terror in society.

(f) Pessimistic v/s Optimistic Approach

In recent novels, the protagonist/main characters are able to escape the tyranny and rules which depicts a ray of hope for the future. For example, Zamyatin's work is not clear but ends work with a ray of hope. The book's main character, D-503, at the end, can re-indoctrinate the possibility of a revolution. There are several other small elements that gave us a ray of hope for a better future. Many of Mephi's resistance is alive and some tribal people living outside of the state's tyranny. All these small instances portray a feature of hope in contemporary dystopian literature.

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The concept of hope is skeptical/ complicated in dystopian narratives. They are not as optimistic in narration as utopians but they are also in doubt about being equivalent to the pessimistic side, anti-utopia. Classical dystopian works present a complete surrender situation against tyranny. With the development of the genre, hope or being able to make something good or positive also becomes a part of the narration.

II

UNRAVELING SOCIO-RELIGIOUS DYSTOPIA IN WHEN THE MOON SHINES BY DAY

Nayantara Sahgal is one of the versatile and realistic writers of contemporary times in India. She is an active creative writer and socio-political columnist for a long time. Her works, *A Time to be Happy*, *Plans For Departure*, and *Mistaken Identity* portray the pre-independence times while *This Time of Morning*, *The Day in Shadow*, *Storm in Chandigarh*, *A Situation in New Delhi* and *Rich Like Us* portray the post-independence period. She has, as A. V. Krishna Rao states, “inherited and cherished a certain set of values and attitudes toward life which can be best described as a complex of political liberalism, social sophistication, economic moderation and cultural catholicity in continual interaction with the Gandhianidealism.”(4)

When The Moon Shines By Day (2017) is one of Nayantara Sahgal's works which puts a satire on the dystopian contemporary society. The work presents the harsh reality of society, religious tension and political suppression of people. The work depicts the dystopian society through religious conflicts and how elite and authoritative people misguide people for their benefit. The analysis of the text through dystopian features presents a new writing technique of author, Sahgal.

The novel starts with the description of the portrayal of a woman and it also questions her posture and how she attracts attention towards her. The arrangement of the woman's standpoint and how the novelist has painted her is shown on the very first page of the novel. The text revolves around Rehana, a major female character and the events happening in her life. She is the main character of the novel who tries to bring peace to her life through reading old books with her three friends, Nandini, Aruna and Lily, who are understood as minor characters. The plot displays these three characters as acquaintances of Rehana. They are seen to make a book club, just to cater to their interest of reading books and who are lost in the imaginary world to relax their mind and avoid the chaos going on in the society. Her late father

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is a well-known historian of the 1930s. She has a collection of his books with her but she finds no place to keep them safe. In the contemporary time presented in the novel, the book that talks about and discusses the war and its effect on people has been removed from society at large.

The novel also exhibits that all four characters are in the book club. Rehana has chosen a book by a Japanese author that satires the British aristocratic life in the 1930s and its dystopian vision. Rehana likes the book when she first read it, but a new edition of the book is being read. Sahgal presents the unaffected life of upper-class people in the 1930's when Rehana talks about the book. "No setting could be more English- the lord and lady, inherited acres, the manor with its vast retinue of maids, footmen, butler. Aristocracy and hierarchy in its heyday in an atmosphere of forever more." (Sahgal, 8)

There are other major characters in the novel i.e. Kamlesh, a diplomat, a writer and a friend of Rehana. His character moves along with the story of the work. He suffered the wrath of the totalitarian atmosphere of contemporary times when his book got banned due to disagreement of content by the men in authority. Franz Rohner, is another major character, a German writer. He depicts the similarity between the incident happening in Rehana's country with the incident that happened in Germany in the past. He presents the link between the past atrocities and the present time and also warns other characters and readers through his experience.

The minor characters in the novels are Cyrus, Abdul, Suraj and Zamir. Cyrus is the son of Nikhil, who was a friend of Rehana's father. Now Cyrus becomes Rehana's friend, who displays an exhibition of his father's painting which is then destroyed by goons. Abdul, a Muslim servant of Rehana, presents religious oppression, demonstrated as characterized by Sahgal through his character. Suraj, a Dalit friend of Abdul who suffers and gets murdered due to religious conflict. Zamir, a writer is a lover of Rehana. His character describes how non

Hindus are forced to live far from the main city. The character of DCT (Director of Cultural Transformation) represents the ruling government and how it treats different religious people.

The plot of the 167 pages long novel moves in a nonlinear form. The narrative gives a glimpse of incidents from the past and makes a thematic connection between both the past and contemporary times. The story is narrated from the point of view of a third person (close third). This provides the reader with a deeper knowledge of the characters and scenes. As the story unfolds major characters like Rehana and Franz

progress to reveal the certain characteristic of

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round characters. While other characters are mostly flat and have only one- or two-character traits. They are seen as adjustable according to the situation without much revolt or disagreement.

(a) Fascist Government

In the opening of the novel, we find that Rehana has always been fascinated by old books as she has grown up with the memories of her father in the 1930s. Sahgal talks about the massacres in the war of Spain in the 1930s which was supported by Hitler. Sahgal satires the time by writing, "Peacetime though it was, the Hitler-Mussolini arsenal of terrifying newly minted armaments was pounding Spain's towns"(Sahgal,9). Rehana recalls the question she has asked his father about any other country helping Spain?. 'Not a single country did', his father replied to her. The other country's authority and people's government never tries to save Spain's people. This event shows the beginning of dystopian factors from the past. As is Sahgal's writing quality to write with the background of past events concerning contemporary times. When Rehana re-read the novel she selects that what his father said to her is true. There is no effect or difference in the life schedule of Manor's life. They were enjoying their life as if nothing is happening in the world. Sahgal portrays her views through her protagonist as she says:

For the manor life carried on as it always had and always would. English teas on green English lawns, breakfasts on a sideboard loaded with bacon, kidneys, kippers, kedgeriee and left half uneaten, and five-course black-tie dinners to which the men who governed England came. The centipedal crawl of fascism slithering through the story was conspicuous by its absence from the manor's pleasant days and nights. (Sahgal,11)

The novel unfolds a triangular structure while embedding the notion of the fascist government.

The text depicts more than one feature of dystopian fiction it brings change or revolution through art and literature also. Rehana's father makes her understand the importance of presenting truth and reality in literature and art. He said if only destroyers or controlling people's description of events are left in the world then it would be easy for them to control and manipulate the citizens and the world. Rehana knows the importance of literature and art that's why the dominating government always tries to destroy and hide the books and paintings depicting their controlling ideas.

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As we study the novel further, there are many incidents that talk about the wars, revolutions and destructive events done by governing political people which result in the bloodshed and death of many innocent citizens. Rehana recalls the importance of painting and art through Nikhil's painting. Nikhil was his father's friend and a well-known painter of their time. Nikhil tries to paint the reality of the time. His painting tries to speak through their colours and presentations. As Rehana describes his painting, "They had a physical strength one was not prepared for from paint laid on canvas. Dense, intense colour and all the shades of its absence

gave his paintings a violence that spoke" (Sahgal,26).

Nikhil paints the violence and suffering of people through his painting. Rehana further explains one of his paintings of a woman showing her suffering and violence done upon her. She says:

The grim grey interior of some confine where a naked woman lies. Her arms have been dragged up, manacled at the wrists and roped to something further up. Her mouth gapes in a scream you can hear being torn out of it by a paintbrush that makes remorseless use of dark and light. (Sahgal,27)

(b) Religious Identity

When Cyrus, Nikhil's son, an artist, goes to meet DCT (Director of Cultural Transformation), he wants to protect Hanif, a child artist, who is kept in the ghetto, a place where people of all other religions, especially Muslims, are located under ruling party surveillance. They are kept under the process of cultural transformation. Political officials are trying to control people and want to make their people follow only one religion. This controlling and preventing citizens from following their own path or religion is a dystopia.

When Cyrus requests DCT to protect and bring Hanif out of the ghetto, the response from DCT is also negative. Authoritative people try to control citizens and also ignore help if someone wants to help others. They either misguide or pretend to be helpless in front of the citizens. Cyrus describes the details of his office to Rehana. They live like they are the most peaceful and intellectual people on the earth but deep inside they are the ones who spread hatred and try to control people for their own benefit. Sahgal very aptly describes the religious control and domination done by the high-class authority in the name of the welfare of citizens. As DCT answers to the request of Cyrus in order to help Hanif for a better life. He says:

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We cannot forget the pain of invasions, Mr. Batlivala, the Turks, Mongols, Mughals, foreigners who interrupted our Hindu history. You may say we are now engaged in wiping out that painful memory and returning our nation by all possible means to its racial and religious purity. (Sahgal,66)

(c) Controlling Literature and Art

Another characteristic of a dystopian society is keeping art and literature under surveillance or control. As mentioned earlier Rehana's father told her about the political tricks that the government is using from past times. There are many instances in the work talking about erasing memories and banning books. When the book club decides to read a non-fiction work in the session. They want to call the author himself to talk about his book but that is not possible because an audience of four people is not a great deal for a renowned author. Aruna tells the book club members that authors are very conscious of their importance and respect. She also tells them about banning and arresting writers in his non-fictional and practical experiment book.

Rehana tries to save her father's book from official people is also describes the control of literature and art.

Rehana's father's book is about civilization, about the life of the 1930s, those times of music, art and intellectual thinking. His book describes the history of the 1930s and the hidden facts of the revolution. As Franz Rohner says: "Your Father's books must be preserved because he is telling how civilization came to be, all that was happening in those times, the science, the music, the art, the intellectual life, the ordinary life in that long transition from ancient times"(Sahgal,84).

Attacking and destroying the art is very brilliantly depicted by Sahgal in the text. She targets the violent and inhuman acts of officials to create a totalitarian atmosphere. The official wants to control the citizens with the weapon of fear and death. Cyrus decides to put an exhibition of his father's painting i.e. Nikhil's painting. He is very excited and happy about the

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Art Gallery Show. Rehana is also very relaxed and joyful as her father's books are away from officials and Nikhil's paintings are getting recognized.

As people start coming and enjoying painting. There is an attack on the gallery by some goons. There is smoke, fire and blood all over the place. Rehana herself became a victim of the incident. A group of people with rods, hammers and knives enters the gallery and starts destroying paintings and furniture. With goons, a missile was also dropped on the gallery. There is bloodshed and destruction all over the place. Rehana got badly injured in the attack and got into trauma.

Rehana describes this barbaric scene in her words, she says: "Light flickered, flashed, leapt through deepening dark, expanding before her eyes into a lightning-lit landscape in the breath-held instant before the night sky explodes in a tumultuous storm." (Sahgal,88) Cyrus tries to take care of people but feels helpless. Rehana continues to describe the scene:

A rock thudded past her ear into the stormy sky and crashed near her foot. She cried out as a knife pierced the landscape and stuck there. She turned in panic to see missiles flying straight as arrows to their mark. Something razor-sharp ripped through her sari. Something solid hit her head and sent her staggering to fall on shredded glass and splintered wood. (Sahgal,88)

When the Moon Shines by Day certainly echoes Orwell's Nineteenth Eighteen Four which also depicts controlling and misplacing of records and literature. The main character of Orwell's novel, Winston, learns

about the totalitarian regime. He lives as a citizen of Airstrip One in Oceania. In Oceania, those who do not submit to the Party suffer the wrath of the Thought Police. Orwell and Sahgal's parallel to totalitarian regimes of the early twentieth century such as Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, and the degree of control they maintained over their citizens, are clear. Orwell, in his work, shows the population is controlled

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by four ministries of Truth, Love, Peace and Plenty. Misinformation and lies are regularly distributed from the Ministry of Truth.

There is one more instance of banning and disappearing of art and literature. Kamlesh, Rehana's friend, the book is going to be banned and he got his name on the list of people monitored by highly authoritative people. Sudhir published Kamlesh's book, 'Genie', two years ago. But now the Government is just disappearing his book as they are not fine with Kamlesh favoring Non-Violation/ Anti-War thinking. They are saying this will misguide people/readers. Sudhir describes it to Kamlesh when they are having lunch. He says:

They don't want it said they are banning books, so they are just disappearing them like inconvenient people were disappeared in Chile and Argentina and other places and only their bones were left to tell the tale. But as books have no bones there's nothing left to prove they were there. (Sahgal,124)

That's how political people try to control, oppress and misplace art and literature. They try to take control through the weapons of fear and power. They are making a totalitarian state for people. The banning of art or literature shows the socio-political dystopia of contemporary society.

(d) Women and Sexuality

The position of women is also very important in a dystopian society. Nayantara Sahgal presents a picture of women in society. The role of women in society is very important but the suffering which women face is more as compared to men. The struggle and discrimination against women have been happening since the ancient period. Nayantara Sahgal presents the struggle and atrocities done on women by the authorities in past times. The writer describes through Franz, the atrocities and cruelty of war and ruling power.

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The struggle and dystopian conditions in society are portrayed in the text. When Rehana talks about her

mother's diary. The struggle her mother has gone through is presented in the diary. Her mother also tells the story of another woman in the cell. Her mother is kept in a cell, where there is no water, no cleanliness, no sanitary arrangements, nothing. She is kept there for a long period of time.

Her mother also depicts the story of another woman in the note dated 16 August 1942. The woman is kept in jail for the crime of murdering his husband who used to beat and starve her. When the woman tries to take a stand for herself, she is again punished by her husband. In the end, she has to kill her husband. She has to bring her six-week-old baby girl to jail with her. But due to the bad treatment and no availability of food and water, hereby girl dies in jail. This shows the level of cruelty and ill-treatment done by officials on the poor people and especially on women. She has to leave her son who is two years old. When Rehana's mother meets her in jail, her son is 11 years old and she hasn't seen them for nine years. All this cruelty and discrimination done by officials on women shows the dystopian condition of women in society.

Sahgal is a renowned socio-feminist with a prodigious realization of coercing political and social situations. Her meaning of feminism is completely based on Indian culture. She knows the role assigned to women but she attacks and tries to bring change in the old notion of discrimination in the name of culture, pleasure and sexuality. She describes various women's dystopian scenes/themes in her novel. The use of women for reproduction is best described or justified in Margaret Atwood's *Handmaid's Tales*. The protagonist of the story is a woman called Offred, which means "Of Fred" referring to the man she serves. The Commander is the high-ranking official in Gilead and Offred serves as his handmaid.

Atwood has imagined a late-20th-century future where a woman's capability to procreate is of paramount importance since disease and pollution have led to a catastrophic

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decline in the birth rate. Given this situation, the patriarchal Republic of Gilead, established as the result of a coup in New England, has thwarted what might seem a likely outcome: the increasing power of women with "viable ovaries". After passing laws denying women jobs, property, and money, all women who were not officially recognized as Wives, widows, or lower class.

Sahgal also describes the contemporary situation of women. When Sahgal depicted the life and details of Rehana's house. She also depicts the surroundings of that time. Rehana's house surroundings used to be quiet and peaceful. But now with the rise of many distressing events, the neighborhood has become loud,

shouts/sounds of quarrels and drunken brawls can be heard. One day, from her window, Rehana saw a woman beaten up by her husband. The drunken husband beats his wife and the next day the woman smiles at Rehana like nothing happened last night. Rehana describes the scene:

The couple next door was home late from a party. The woman being flung against the iron gate was teetering on her stiletto heels. The street light shone on her sequined sari. Her husband was slapping her expertly with the back of his hand swinging back and forth across her face until she lost her balance. The next morning she had smiled prettily and waved her jewelled fingers at Rehana through the window of her silver grey chauffeur-driven palace on wheels (Sahgal,61).

The scene attacks contemporary society. The situation of a woman was miserable then and now. No matter what. There is a long way for a woman to get equality and freedom. As the story moves ahead backdrop of ancient reference comes. The book club invites Kamlesh, as a writer, to talk directly with them. Kamlesh talks about his upcoming book on Shah-Jahan. He discusses the lifestyle of Shah-Jahan. How he made the Taj-Mahal for his beloved. But under one of the most famous king rulers, the situation of women was miserable. As Kamlesh

17 tells that, Mumtaz Mahal had fourteen children in nine years of marriage. Out of fourteen seven have died and she died giving birth to the last one. This shows the situation/condition of women in the past time.

The most barbaric and horrifying incident took place in the ghetto. Where other religious people are put together. The area is burned and claimed as an accident-fire. Rehana goes to the site and sees the horrifying act. The description of the incident gives a terrible/frightful feeling to the individual. Rehana sees a body that has a burned sign with a Hindu religious symbol. More than two hundred & fifty females and many more men were brutally killed. A pregnant woman is sliced and brutally killed. All these happened in the name of the religious purification of the country. The incident is described in the text as:

Next afternoon she was at the site with her group, looking down, forcing her gaze downward on naked buttocks branded with a swastika. Another body branded Om across torn breasts, stared up at her. A pregnant belly had been sliced open, the pulp that had been a foetus plucked out and tossed aside. Legs lay wrenched apart, metal rods inserted. Smoke was rising from the smouldering flesh of a neatly constructed human pyramid. (Sahgal,149)

Rehana hears the police officer saying that it is happening because of the carelessness of the people in a tenement. Rehana feels it is just to cover the main reason to misguide citizens.

Nayantara Sahgal very intellectually describes the social and political dystopia arising in contemporary society. How political people use their power to control and manipulate people in the name of religion. Their greed to be in power results in people suffering and dying in the name of peace and purification. The political system also becomes morally degraded as they only think of their welfare or the rich. They use normal people for their benefit. The text ends

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on an optimistic note but with a sense of fear in the mind of the citizen. The worst can come anytime and one should prepare for it.

Conclusion

To set up the world which is either in front of the present or is the interminable reality by blending the genuine and envisioned, the author used a sort of narrative technique that delivers a particular frame of imagery that drives the content toward the artistic theme of a dystopian world.

The novel *When the Moon Shines By Day* ends on an optimistic note as the cultural transformation program is crashed by the authority's workers and reveals the true face of authority. The failure of the cultural transformation program gives a ray of hope to the people of the country. Rehana and the other characters are relieved for some time. After the failure of the program, Rehana and the other characters meet to dine together and discuss it. Sahgal presented the optimistic end and writes: "This morning was proof to them the tide had turned, the monster of religious rule and holy war had been averted and all would be well." (Sahgal, 167)

Sahgal's novels unmask the realities and are a genuine illustration of the critical dystopia world. At the point *When the Moon Shines by Day* unmistakably decries the incomparability and steadily expanding strength of Hindu patriotism. Hindus have a place in the Indian custom, which makes them the lone real occupants of Indian soil. This philosophy is essentially pointed toward barring Muslims yet also different religions—Jews, Christians and Buddhists, among others—that came from outside India, who are in this way viewed as interlopers who should be killed and at last, removed or disposed of. Their smothering conventional

Hindu utopia unyieldingly turns into the Other's horrible dystopia world.

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The narrative technique of Sahgal is also very brilliantly interpreted in the research. The plot of texts is narrated from the third-person point of view which can be the writer herself and all the main characters are round and experience a lot in the text. The plot and artistic presentation of the situation involving characters shows the superior narrative technique of the writer.

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