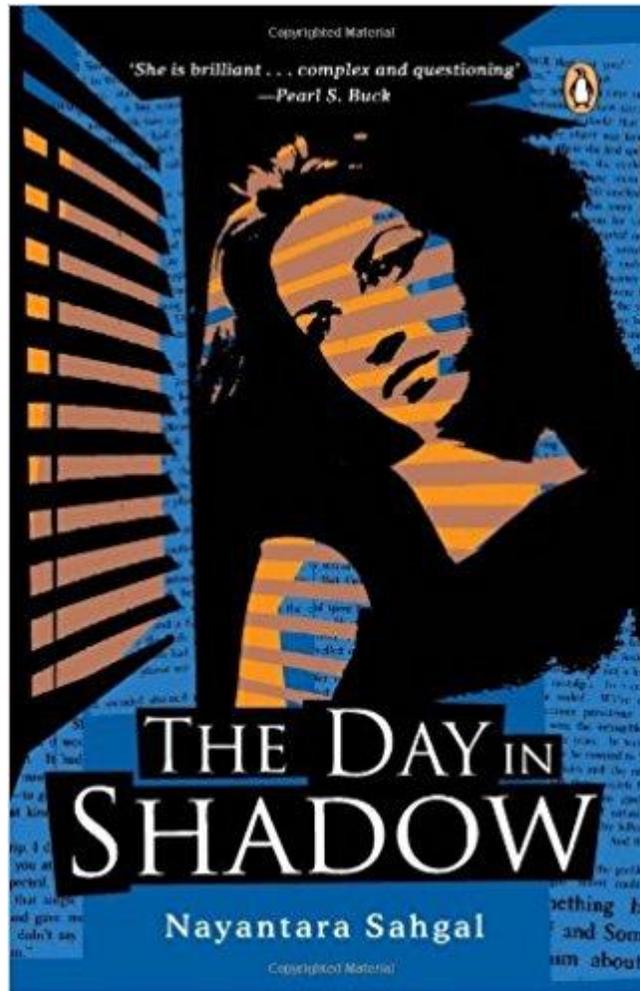


**Union of Mutiny in a Marital Relationship in Nayantara Sahgal's  
*The Day in Shadow***

**Ashline. S., M.Phil. English**

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**Abstract**

Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow* is based on the political, psychological stress, sufferings, mental torture and personal emotional shock in Simrit's life. Simrit suffers a lot in her

personal life. She feels completely trapped, depressed, oppressed, suppressed and doomed under the care of her husband.

### **A Revolutionary Novel**

*The Day in Shadow* is a revolutionary novel, about modern educated women's living conditions in India. The novel is one type of fiction that talks about women's oppression. Nayantara Sahgal, an outstanding Indian English writer, articulates her deep concern over gender oppression in her fictional world. She is one of the female Indo-Anglian writers to receive wide recognition. Some of her non-fictional works and several articles and stories were published in leading newspapers and magazines. Sahgal has been hailed chiefly as a political novelist.

### **Indian Woman's Quest for Sexual Freedom and Self-Realization**

*The Day in Shadow* is preoccupied with the modern Indian woman's quest for sexual freedom and self-realization. This novel highlights the relationship between political and personal commotion. In her novels the political and personal lives of people are brought together by the device of juxtaposition.

*The Day in Shadow* is Nayantara Sahgal's autobiographical novel published in 1971. This novel is no doubt an epic on woman's struggle against patriarchal domination and social construction. The woman in the novel is more aware of the injustice done by man, but habit makes her a willing prisoner of exploitation and injustice.

### **Simrit, the Protagonist of the Novel**

This novel is set in post-independence Delhi. This novel opens with the party scene, which is given by the Oil Products Limited, richly festooned for the grand party expecting men of consequence, ministers and business men; the novel revolves around the center of politics and man-woman relationship. Simrit is the protagonist of the novel. She is a journalist. She lives in Delhi with her children. She writes political news in the newspapers, and magazines. Raj is an M.P, who is the friend of Simrit. Simrit, Raj and other politicians attend the party. There, she talks with Joshi. Joshi is a lawyer, who argues for her divorce with her husband, Som. After the party, Simrit and Raj leave the party hall and pick the taxi. During the travel, Simrit recalls her bitter

experience with her husband. It is the story of Som and Simrit. Simrit ignoring the warnings of her parents, decides to marry Som on her own. Simrit's choice is a businessman husband, but her friends and Brahmin parents do not like him either. They think him a bore and unfit to be Simrit's husband.

### **Som and Simrit**

Som never discusses business in Simrit's presence. Som, the rougher element, likes to lead. Not that Simrit wants to lead, but only to be thought of as a person, that would mean a battle- and she is never prepared to fight. Ruddy Vetter is Som's friend from Germany. Vetter and Lalli are Som's business friends. Som has business dealings with them. But, Simrit does not know anything about Som's business dealings. Som explains to Vetter that she doesn't need him to spend more time with her, since she is satisfied with the children.

Vetter is a kind interested friend of Som, tries to bridge the gaping void between Simrit and Som, struggling to find what she needs? He tries to tempt her to have shopping clothes, jewels, anything; trips abroad, fantastic summer tours to Europe and children's benefits.

Som comes in and compels her with his urgency; Som was a companion of Simrit only in bed. She stays separate, excluded and rebellious. Much later she wakes unaccountable alone in the night, though Som is still asleep in the next bed, his back to her. Simrit feels she is on the verge of a fatal realization.

Once Simrit had dismissed the cook twice for drunkenness and bad behavior, though Som preferred him. She had thought at the time, it was nothing serious, nothing to quarrel about, but it was building up into a frightening situation - herself. It had become impossible to live with him. This emotional shock of a divorce plus a brutal divorce-settlement was inflicted upon her.

### **Freedom after Divorce**

Simrit enjoys real freedom and self-identity after the divorce. She works a lot and overcomes the cruel act of divorce settlement with the help of Raj. Raj supports and encourages her. She is impressed with the innocent, selfless and loving idiotic mind of Raj. He proposes to her and she agrees to marry him. At last, Raj and Simrit get married. Raj also oppresses her with

abusive language and knowledge. Ram Krisnan is a spiritual man, he helps Simrit to understand her individuality and advises her to stand on her own legs. This novel exposes the fact that women are degraded as well as oppressed by men, thereby motivating women to rise up against the oppression. So, we see that women get their sufferings as well as the instinct to rebel from men.

### **Simrit's Suffering in Life**

*The Day in Shadow* shows the lack of understanding between Simrit and Som. Aristotle remarks two thousand years ago in his work on politics that man is a social animal. He also declares that man is a political animal but man's instincts for society are stronger than his instincts for politics and power. This novel is also based on political and personal emotional shock in Simrit's life. Simrit suffers a lot in her personal life. All human relationships, particularly marriage relationships require a great deal of maturity, because it involves human interaction of the greatest intimacy to human beings. Simrit and Som are the main characters of the novel. They get married against their parents' wishes. After the marriage, Som and Simrit lose their maturity. Som doesn't spend any time with his wife. They feel a 'lack of love', after their marriage. Som always thinks about business and friends. He does not discuss the business dealings in his wife's presence. Som does not allow her to go out. He doesn't care about her writing career and her ambition; he ties her up with his children. She is an educated woman, but she does not have enough maturity to rebel against her husband.

### **Causes for Divorce**

Simrit decides to divorce her husband. She deserts him, leaving all the wealth to Som, but takes the children with her at the time of divorce. But, Som does not let her go that easily. He transfers six lakhs rupees to her and this is inherited mainly by their son, Brij. When Brij comes of age, Som acts very cruel towards his wife. All these problems happen only because of their lack of understanding. Som and Simrit do not understand their bond in their marital relationship. Som is a well-educated man and an industrialist. He knows about the modern Indian working women's suffering and struggles. But he does not understand his wife's mind and thoughts. Their relationship shows their lack of maturity and love.

Marriage is a bond between two persons. They have to share their emotion and understand each other's feelings. Male dominated society always takes the female society under their control. Som should give enough freedom to his wife, Simrit. This novel reveals that Som is a man, who wants to always pull his wife down. Som does not encourage her to go to work and neither does he give freedom to her as a writer. His attitude towards family is like a frog without legs. He keeps and treats his wife as commodity from which he derives the maximum sexual pleasure. Because of these struggles only she decides to divorce her husband. Simrit does not rise her voice against her husband. This novel shows the lack of maturity and mutiny in the marital relationship.

### **What Lies Ahead for Women in India**

Indians are growing well in the economic and educational levels. After independence India has undergone many changes. But, the Indian male does not know how to treat a female in a family? As always from time immemorial, women suffer a lot through the patriarchy of men. In the structure of society presented in the novel which patriarchal, man is the controller of the sexual, economic, political and physical power. *The Day in Shadow* focuses on a single powerful woman character Smirit.

Women are not allowed to think independently and are crushed down by the male – chauvinist society. Indian patriarchal society considers a woman to be an embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge. She should be virtuous, chaste, submissive, homebound, graceful and devoted to her husband and his family. Indian women have been living like this.

Simrit is a good example for modern Indian woman in society. Simrit mentally and physically struggles against her husband, Som. Simrit renders a living picture of the oppressed, depressed and suppressed life of a woman in India. Three fourth of women are living under the control of men. Nowadays women have education, money and jobs.

This novel shows the lifestyle of modern Indian women and their suffering in the husband-centred world. Women are dominated as well as motivated by men. Som dominates Simrit, and Raj motivates her. *The Day in Shadow* is an attractive novel, which highlights the tale of suffering

and oppression of women. Sahgal tries to reveal the terrible truth of the great amount of pain women suffer in the Indian society.

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### Reference

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Ashline. S.  
M.Phil. English  
Sri Adi Chunchanagiri Women's College  
Cumbum 625 516  
Tamilnadu  
India  
[ashlinstephen9341@gmail.com](mailto:ashlinstephen9341@gmail.com)