PREDICAMENT OF XENOPHOBIC AND ISLAMOPHOBIC VICTIMS IN THE FATE OF BUTTERFLIES

Dr. Faroze Ahmad Chopan
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Lovely Professional University, Phagwara 144411

Abstract

In an era of flagrant Islamophobia and Xenophobia, Sahgal’s representation of Muslims and anti-Muslim fanaticism tells us about the wavering face of the country. The nation depicted by Nayantra Sahgal in The Fate of Butterflies is run by a regime, who is preoccupied with limpidness and security. As depicted in the novel, the ruler has a policy-making team, headed by Mirajkar, who is famous by the moniker of mastermind. Even in her nineties, Nayantara Sahgal stays precise, influencing, and politically strong as an author, characteristics that are plentifully obvious in her new novella, The Fate of Butterflies. Like her past work of fiction, The Moon Shines by Day (2017), the script here follows the destiny of a close group of characters, living through a period much the same as our own, in an India set apart by partisan, sexual orientation arranged and position based savagery. The conciseness of the novel doesn’t permit space for some layers to the plot.

Key words: Xenophobia, Islamophobia, violence, politics.

The present India is witnessing an immense augmentation of Xenophobic and Islamophobic discourse at an intimidating rate. Radicalism, politicisation, and the recent refugee incursion have all been the active contributors to the intensification of the discourse of animosity and abhorrence of immigrants and Muslims. The recent scenario is a clear example of the unsolved question of communalism in India. Feminist literary critiques have always pondered upon the course in which women has been portrayed and has treated it worth sharp study. Though, in recent times a new aspect has arisen which has added even more motive for that, the rehabilitated systems and forced viciousness against feminine bodies has been captivating in bestsellers.

In every minute around twenty people are forcefully displaced because of persecution, war or conflict. As far as present media is concerned, we are always in threat of being invaded, by refugees or by Muslims. Now a days one can find many books of literature deal with identity, nationalism, belonging and borders. Since the assault
of September 11, the Worldwide War on fear was battled on numerous fronts, including the ideological war of words and pictures that seethes on the film screens over the globe just as the pages of pop fiction. Western social creation since September 11 has remained profoundly impacted by the occasions of that solitary pivotal day.

Stereotyping is a disentangled and institutionalized origination or picture contributed with exceptional importance and held in like manner by individuals from a gathering or a speculation, regularly misrepresented or distorted and normally hostile, that is utilized to portray or recognize a religious, ethnic, geological, phonetic or political group. What stays pivotal to the study of stereotyping isn't just the subject of who represents whom and with what outcomes, yet additionally the subject of how generalizations identify with the origination of what is held to be natural or normal how they make and continue a presence of mind of the best possible constraints of what is acknowledged as real what's more, right.

Xenophobia is characterized as an absurd dread or disdain of the new, particularly of individuals having a place with different races and religions. Segregation in the US has different marks including Islamophobia, against settler assessment, or then again prejudice. Xenophobia or the dread of the other isn't an American creation; notwithstanding, in the wake of September 11 attacks, because of the legend making capacities of the American corporate media, new 'feelings of dread of the other' or the settler have been deliberately initiated in the psyches of the American open; they were recently educated in Islam and its topography.

In an era of flagrant Islamophobia and Xenophobia, Sahgal’s representation of Muslims and anti-Muslim fanaticism tells us about the wavering face of the country. The nation depicted by Nayantra Sahgal in The Fate of Butterflies is run by a regime, who is preoccupied with limpidness and security. As depicted in the novel, the ruler has a policy-making team, headed by Mirajkar, who is famous by the moniker of mastermind. Even in her nineties, Nayantara Sahgal stays precise, influencing, and politically strong as an author, characteristics that are plentifully obvious in her new novella, The Fate of Butterflies. Like her past work of fiction, The Moon Shines by Day (2017), the script here follows the destiny of a close group of characters, living through a period much the same as our own, in an India set apart by partisan, sexual orientation arranged and position based savagery. The conciseness of the novel doesn't permit space for some layers to the plot. However, Sahgal is deft with conjuring circumstances that pass on the attitude existing apart from everything else, an unexpected knowledge into an individual, or a chilling feeling into what's to come.
The title of the book *The Fate of Butterflies* is quite symbolic, once going through the novel the reader understands that Sahgal has used butterflies for the minorities and refugees in the country. As she has given a beautiful example in the novel by comparing fate of minorities with the destiny of butterflies. In the novel when the protagonist, Prabhakar with the social worker Katerina visits a play school. Katerina was shocked to see, “A joyful shriek from the infant at her side made her bend down swiftly to prise open his fist. The crushed butterfly fluttered faintly and lay still. Another feeble flutter of its papery purple wings, and then to her evident relief, it flitted upward and away.” (Sahgal 19) Katerina said to Prabhakar; “Can you believe some schools teach children to collect butterflies and kill them? Did you know butterflies get thirsty and like to settle on wet leaves for drops of water?” (Sahgal 19) Just like the butterflies, the minorities in our country struggle to survive. Like butterflies it is easy to target minorities, and horrible techniques are used for that like the religious sentiments, cow, jingoism, women rights and citizenship act. Like the fate of butterflies, they are mercilessly lynched to death for awful reasons. Sahgal has symbolically depicted the lynching as:

   First you have to squeeze the poor thing through its middle to cripple it and then put it in a jar with some acid stuff for a couple of hours. That’s how long it takes to be sure it’s dead. After that you take it out and stick a pin through its middle and frame it in the same frame with all the other butterflies you’ve killed. Is that the way to teach children about nature? (Sahgal 20)

Sahgal satirises the profligate life style and lavish parties of the politicians. The novel depicts the poor class struggle by delving in to the painful childhood of Prabhakar. As Prabhakar clearly remembers: “. . . brick dust. It rose and fell in thick gritty gusts from the back-breaking brickload being hauled onto his father’s bent-over back and carried far off by him to be unloaded on a mountain of bricks piled high for use. . . . It drifted down into hair, eyes, fingernails, and toenails on the ground. It got coughed up, sneezed out, spat out.” (Sahgal 48) The memories of: “. . . his fathers naked toes gripped the bamboo scaffolding.” (Sahgal 48) was still haunting Prabhakar.

Initially Sahgal narrates how butterflies in search of dew drops to quench their thirst, use to wander from flower to flower battling the thorns for their survival. In the same manner she further describes how the poverty drove the workers out of their homes, making them migrants, in search of labour for their living wage. Sahgal gives the readers an idea of how hard Dalits have to toil for their existence. She describes the things like:
Mostly they were hired where hard labour was in demand over and under the ground, in sewers and on roads, highways and building sites where they cleared and cleaned the ground, dug ditches, mixed concrete, hauled loads, erected scaffolding, picked their way skyward, and plastered and painted what they had built. . . . These were skills that had to be learned untaught and untrained. They were learned the hard way, on the job. There was no regulated count of the bricks piled on your back or consideration of the weight your back could carry without breaking. No course taught what load you could jog with without losing your balance, or how to climb up a scaffolding toehold by toehold. No teacher warned: This is how, or you will fall to your death. (Sahgal 49-50)

In the recent years India has witnessed a rise in Islamophobia affecting every aspect of life here, like in Bollywood, the release of Padmavat led to a chaos in the society. In this scenario Paula Thompson writes: “In India, as in democracies around the globe, mainstream cinema has been a powerful tool that shapes public opinion and narrative. In a communally sensitive atmosphere in the country where Lynchings and murders in the name of religion are becoming a norm, Bhansali [film Director] has strengthened the stereotype of the evil, diabolic, murderous Muslim, a trope that forms the basis of right-wing hate of minorities.” (46)

Sahgal also takes us back to Gujrat riots, where she depicts the plight of women, as being a prone creature as far as the atrocities are concerned. The author compares the women sufferings with that of the Serbia, Bosnia and Rwanda. The social worker Katerine in the novel narrates one of the heart-wrenching incidents of the riots. Katerine reveals that:

It was still daylight when the mob came yelling-yelling their war cry . . . and threw lighted branches around to set the village on fire. Families rushed out of their homes and ran on every direction into the fields. The mob ran after them. And after us: me and three of village women and their children. The wheat had been cut and we kept stumbling on the stubble until the women who was very pregnant could go no further. They caught us and beat our legs with iron rods and forced us to the ground. (68)

Viciousness against women is an indication of truly inconsistent force relations among people, which have prompted mastery over and oppression against women by men and to the counteraction of the full progression
of women, and that savagery against females is one of the essential social components by which women are constrained into a subordinate position compared to men. Women have been languished over numerous years by the hands of segregating powers. Sahgal in her books has attempted to investigate these powers. In contrast to different women's activists, she shows a reasonable methodology in obvious Gandhian custom. She doesn't consider men liable for the woeful state of women. Rather, she accuses the framework itself. To the extent the creation of this framework is concerned, she blames not just men's merciless idea yet in addition also female’s reluctance and lack of involvement.

Be that as it may, as much the novella tries to be a political articulation—an admonition about the unpropitious occasions ahead—it doesn't make for an immersing fiction. The characters scarcely persuade and the story seldom exists. The sum total of what it has are a couple of discussions about governmental issues, and some rough episodes. The insignificant incorporation of political references doesn't make a political novel. It tends to be a flyer, yet perhaps not a show-stopper. Composing a political novel is a requesting exercise in fiction composing. A slight slip and the content start showing up as a vacant motto.

Works Cited
