

Contrasting Image of Woman Towards Life as Projected by R.K. Narayanan's *The Darkroom*

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ABSTRACT

This research paper spotlights the image of typical Indian woman through the character Savitri who adores her husband in the novel by R.K. Narayanan's THE DARKROOM. The protagonist reacts to the attitude of her husband and his relationship which clearly shows the dual face of the woman who can sacrifice herself for the family by living and who tries to drown herself into the river. When the third person enters into the family, Savitri's attitude get changed, the mental suffering is greater. Savitri's husband Ramani, is a symbol of male domination throughout the novel. The novel begins with the bright side of life and goes on with the dark side too and at the end the protagonist makes her life to be a better one. The woman character is shown both the creator of the family as well as the destroyer who aims to lose her life by drowning. This novel speaks about the women's psychology.

Keywords:

Male domination- typical image- pious- change in attitude- psyche- importance of family

The greatest quandaries of women in the patriarchal society are that they got adjusted to the male tastes and consummately forgot that they were a different gender with different nature. As a result, what the male dominated society imposed on them, the matter was not outlandish to them. They never thought that this treatment was a torture on them and they were made inferior by patriarchies. Thus, the women insensately accepted the most loquacious term in the current world "Gender Discrimination" as their lot. Narayan wanted to uphold the present deplorable plight of women.

"I was somehow obsessed with a philosophy of Woman as opposed to Man, her constant oppressor. This must have been an early testament of the "Women's Liberty Movement". Man assigned her a secondary place and kept her there with such subtlety and cunning that she herself commenced to lose all notions of her independence, her individuality, stature and vigor. A wife in an orthodox milieu of Indian society was an ideal victim of such circumstances (119)."

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 20:3 March 2020

**Prof. Dr. S. Chelliah, Editor: Select Papers of the International Conference on
Human Praxis and Modern Configuration through Literature -- VOLUME 2**

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Narayan's aim was to make conscious women of their own entities. That's why it is found in all of his novels that his women are modern in thought and credence though the geriatric women visually examine the traditional customs of India with devotion.

We find two generations of women in his novels: the first generation comprising of mothers and grand-mothers that are duteous and allegiant to the old convivial customs and the second generation comprise of adolescent women, who unlike the geriatric women are inculcated and assertive. They are candid and assert power whenever possible and indispensable.

'The Dark Room' is the light of feminism. It's a story of a woman, having 3 children and a dominating husband Ramani who is an arrogant husband, who never cared for the feelings of others. In the commencement of the novel we and that Savitri do not have the slightest power to do anything at home even after the 15 years of her espouse life. "How impotent she was, she cerebrated; she had not the slightest power to do anything at home, and that after fifteen years of espoused life" (6).

All decisions are taken by Ramani, even what should be yare in victuals, is withal decided by Ramani. Her husband treated her on 'other' and 'lack' terms. Feminism in R.K. Narayan's "The Dark Room" and "The Guide." When every morning Ramani leaves for office, he stands at the street door and calls who there is. It is an indirect ordinate dictation to Savitri to come there and optically discern him off. There are five female characters in this novel. They are presented meek and submissive as Savitri and Janamma or in a cockamamie manner as Shanta Bai is represented as a promiscuous female. Gangu is represented in 'lack' term as lack of cognizance, lack of resplendency, etc. For example, she wants to be a heroine, but she has not good figure or features. She withal wants to be a singer, but she has the lack of good voice. Ponnii is withal represented as a lamentable wife, who kens only to misconduct with her husband. She is presented as an arrogant housewife rather than a sensible one. Impuissance of the fair sex in Indian society has been shown in the novel very efficaciously through the impuissance of Savitri. Right from the commencement her helplessness is presented. For example when Babu suddenly becomes very ill, she meekly pleads Ramani that the boy has pyrexia, so he cannot peregrinate to his school. But Ramini shouts at her to mind her own business. She can do any work, she relished in the kitchen but leave the training to grown-up boy to him. It is none of women's business. Even Savitri cannot take decisions regarding her children. She is made only for kitchen. Savitri is so much alimented with her routine drudgery that she asks herself, "Was there nothing else for one to do than attend to this miserable business of the stomach from morning till night?" (8).

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In this novel women are shown as irrational being and they can do god job only in the matters of kitchen or adorning themselves. As Ramani says, Women are exasperating. Only a dunderpate would have anything to do with them. Hours and hours of dressing ... Stacks of costly sarees, all folded and kept inside, to be worn only when going out. Only silly-looking rags to gladden our visual perception at home. Our business ceases with paying the bill. It is only the outsider who has the privilege of visually perceiving a pretty dress (21). In chapter four, hawkers are selling 'dolls' in the streets; and even in the house dolls are exhibited; just as women are exhibited in our society. The doll becomes an apt symbol for women in the male-dominated society. Like dolls, women are additionally considered play things by males. For instance, in the novel, Savitri verbally expressed to Ramani, "I'm a human being," she verbally expressed, through her heftily ponderous breathing. "You men will never grant that. For you, we play things when you feel like hugging and slaves at other times. Don't cerebrate that you can fondle us when you like and kick us when you choose" (85).

Harsh and derogatory language is utilized for females in this novel. Even Ranga and the cooking support Ramani's viewpoint that a wife should not interfere in the husband's affairs. We find several instances in the novel as the cook verbally expresses; "Only once has my wife endeavored to interfere, and then I proximately broke her bones. She has learned to isolate me now. Women must be edified their place" (41). Mari is another example; he verbalized- "This was what came of sanctioning an inordinate amount of liberty to women; they ought to be kept under felicitous control, and then all would be well" (125). Even an old priest additionally used derogatory language for Ponni- "If she doesn't let you repose, thrash her; that is the way to keep women compos mentis. In these days you fellows are impotent mugs and let your women ride you about" (129).

Child imagery is utilized for Savitri- "You are a child, perhaps a precocious child but a child all the same" (12). Such types of abuses are utilized for women as 'restless rat' is utilized for Gangu, temple chariot is utilized for Janamma because of her bulky size and carriage. Ramani withal used such words for Savitri as the 'Ungrateful woman' and the 'Thankless Wretch' etc. We additionally find several instances of gender biases in this novel such as- Babu, being a boy goes to study in a superior college than the one in which Kamla and Sumati go. Somewhere in the novel Babu additionally remarks for Kamla and Sumati as- being a girl, they are a silly creature that's why they cannot understand Hollywood movies. In other words, Babu considers himself superior to Kamla and Sumati. Ramani withal gives suggestions to his daughters, how should they comport to be a good lady? He reprimands Babu for weeping like the girl. He should deport like a boy. In other words, the word weeping/cry is made only for the female not for the males according to chauvinistic males like Ramani. Thus Simon-de Beauvoir rightly verbalizes-woman is not born, but she is made through socialization.

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