
**Exploring the Male-Dominated Society in the Modern Age in R.K. Narayan's
*The Dark Room***

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the presentation of a patriarchal society in R.K. Narayan's *The Dark Room*. The book, published in 1938, highlights the plight of women in a patriarchal society, written mainly in the character of Savitri. This article suggests that *The Dark Room* is still topical in depicting women discrimination in the contemporary age, through the inspection of the gender stereotypes, marital control, and pressures from the society. Despite that progress in women's conditions, much of what Savitri faced will sound familiar in modern day. Based in the imaginary city of Malgudi, *The Dark Room* is a story about the lonely battle which Savitri, a repressed housewife, wages against monotony, deprivation and sexual abuse that countless women experience in their everyday life. Savitri's experiences also allow Narayan to show the psychic, emotional, spiritual, and social cost of patriarchal power, revealing how gender hierarchies continue to characterize contemporary living. This debut is a powerful exploration of the corrosive effects of cultural traditions, financial reliance, power imbalances, and the role of shared guilt in perpetuating male control and female disempowerment. The book is about male domination, financial control, emotional abuse and the expectation of women, all afflictions women worldwide face. In today's society, women still grapple with pay disparities, domestic violence and cultural oppression that parallel those encountered by Savitri. The domination of the male necessarily filters out of the bedroom and into all aspects of political, corporate and cultural life, revealing that the fight for gender equality remains a work in progress. *The Dark Room*—as it turns out, as much a story of one woman's torment as an ageless comment on how comfortably women have made room for themselves in a world always ready to curtail them—is, after all, Narayan's creation. It challenges us, as readers in the modern era, to acknowledge and

confront—the old systems which still bind us, the mere buildings in which to detain the women and to ensure the metaphorical dark rooms of the world no longer enclose, but rather serve as monuments to the fight that once took place within.

Keywords: patriarchy, marital oppression, gender discrimination, male dominance, emotional oppression, domestic violence, subjugated women, contemporary society.

Introduction

The Dark Room by R.K. Narayan is a powerful canvas depicting the core of human relations, by a master storyteller, a classic tale of domestic tension and marital discord with his fine irony R.K. Narayan exercises the novelist's art of impersonation. The Dark Room is a powerful and sensitive novel of the experiences of a young woman Savitri, Narayan unpacks and brings to us the tortured psychological unpacking of the deep-down gender inequalities in our domestic and social life.(Suja et al.)

A tale of pre-independence India, the novel portrays the condition of a typical wife who has to surrender in deference to her husband Ramani, the domineering and self-centric male counterpart. But in the novel's curse (it is set in colonial India but while that is the setting, its themes echo eerily to our contemporary world where patriarchal structure still controls women's lives, only in less opaque ways) now it's killing our daughters. The novel indicates to what extent economic dependency, emotional abasement, and lack of self-worth perpetuate a woman's secondariness in the domestic sphere and beyond. Even in modern times in advanced societies, the reverberations of the battles of Savitri can be heard where the woman still finds herself a victim of discrimination, workplace prejudices, inequality of wages, and still shouldering the burden of the age-old stereotyped roles though she has clawed her way high up in the domain of education and profession.

Narayan finely designs the character of Savitri so that she epitomizes the inner turmoil of women who are caught in oppressive marriages.(Biswas) Her resistance, especially when she walks out of her husband's place in defiance is a woman's fight of coming to herself. But her eventual return highlights the fact that shaking off the patriarchal chains is never simple. This repeating pattern of brutality and grudging acquiescence mirrors the experiences of many contemporary women who, for all their increased opportunities, feel pushed by reality into conforming to patriarchal demands and authority. The dark mantle cell Savitri incarcerates her in, is symbolic of the fact that in a world where the voices of women are muffled perpetually, there is no psychological liberation for them.

Even in the present day, women's liberties are often questioned, their decisions measured, and their responsibilities hedged in by the desire for them to stay within socially-acceptable roles, ensuring that male dominance continues, in various ways. Also Ramani's description is like that of those typical guys from the past even in present society. His adultery and his lack of consideration for Savitri's feelings illustrate a climate of male entitlement, where men wield power without responsibility. In contemporary societies, despite legal systems and feminist movements that promote the value and rights of women, patriarchal norms and values remain in several domains of life, for example, domestic violence, sexual harassment in the office and the burden of unpaid housework, especially the responsibilities directed toward women. (Kumar and Devi) Silence of Savitri is thus symbolic of countless women still fighting to vanquish centuries-old gender injustices, signaling that the battle against patriarchy is not yet over.

The Dark Room:

The Indian Patriarchy and beyond Narayan's *The Dark Room* is not only a criticism of old Indian society but also a comment on the bigger patriarchal system which stretches across the culture and geography. The book is a provocation to think of the limits of male hegemony as sustainable and calls for a world where women can come out of the metaphorical dark rooms they are kept in. In Savitri's haunting story, Narayan forces us to realize that though things have significantly improved, gender equality is something that is here to stay as a struggle. The character of Savitri, an unhappily married woman, provides a commentary on the larger social experience of women: how they are repressed emotionally and intellectually in traditional settings. Her trajectory of struggling in silence and then finding a way to rebel could be anyone's, anyone in any time or place. Read against contemporary fiction, the novel's gentle critique of patriarchal repression is evident in an analogous, albeit changing setting.

So, for instance, Virmati seek for education and agency (in *Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapur), within the limited scope of a conservative family, is similar to Savitri's quest for a self and an identity, although in Virmati's case, the resistance is vociferous and combative. (Rasool) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions*, an adaptation of the Mahabharata from the perspective of Draupadi, tells a mythical and intimate tale of women, power, and pain in a man's world that is directly at cross-purposes with Savitri's powerless shrug, yet whose themes resonate with themes of the desire for agency. (Jeevitha et al.) Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You*, meanwhile, offers a contemporary, more upfront examination of ways in which women grapple with toxic masculinity (and marks an urgent transition from implicit critique to explicit rebellion); (Suhandoko et al.) its depiction

of marital emotional and physical abuse is far more seating than those of The God of Small Things.

In The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, Arundhati Roy broadens her gaze to encompass many such marginalized voices, but deals with the same systematic subjugation of women and works to establish how these battles still infiltrate all strata of society – domestic and political.(Priyadarsini) Although these contemporary works lend women a voice and frequently depict more vocal forms of resistance, Narayan’s Dark Room stands out as an early example of how the intimate, and often internal, battles of women in a society that celebrates and yet vilifies “proper” behavior continue to resonate over time, adding complexity to our understanding of that most volatile of triads, gender, power, and identity, a subject that seemed as relevant to me reading The Dark Room now as it was first published.

Gender Identification and Marital Suppression:

Narayan’s The Dark Room offers a clear picture of the gender roles and marital oppression of Indian society. Women are supposed to be submissive, selfless, and housebound. The heroine is aptly named Savitri and her predicament symbolizes the fate of a conventional housewife who has no control over her life. Her husband, Ramani, is depicted as an overarching authority, ruling every dimension of life that she occupies. This is indicative of this overall pattern of misogynistic oppression—to suffer abuse without questioning the husbands’ right to do so. The account of Savitri’s anguish that follows is representative of the emotional and psychological pressure that a patriarchal society inflicts on the female sex. Savitri, while feeling frustrated and set upon, nonetheless is expected to bottle up her emotions and stoically accept her lot in life.

The title of the novel, The Dark Room, itself is a metaphor for both the emotional and the physical places where women are supposed to seek refuge from male aggression. When the onslaught of the world gets too much, Savitri locks herself up in the dark room, a chamber of both her physical incarceration and mental imprisonment. This retreat into darkness is more than mere escapism; it becomes a commentary on how patriarchal societies stifle women’s pain, confining them in metaphorical and often literal boxes.

Narayan isn’t just criticizing any individual male figure such as Ramani here, but an entire system that conditions women to believe they are just supposed to accept that suffering will be their lot. That traditional belief that women should put up with abuse – for the sake of family – is so embedded in our society and reflects just how strongly patriarchy has held on through the generations. R.K. Narayan’s The Dark Room is an intriguing study of gender and marital oppression in colonial India. It’s a very patriarchal world in which the novel is set and as such, men are seen as the ones in charge, while the women are to be meek,

and obey the men. The protagonist Savitri, drawing pain from the lives of many an Indian woman who is confined in the four walls of the house, whose identity is defined by her roles as wife and mother. (Jose) Her husband, Ramani, is the icon of male chauvinism and does not mean a shit of respect to his wife and force his command in every particular. There is something passive, something cold in the attitude we take of Savitri undergoing in silence all that Sanyasi, her husband, does to her and the image that it creates of the sense that is laid upon women in society is the sense of silent endurance of any amount of ill-treatment.

Viewed in this light, *The Dark Room* offers a critique of the way in which oppressive gender roles lock women into an impossible bind of emotional and psychological abuse within marriage. One of the notable features of the novel is that the image of the “dark room” serves as an apt and powerful metaphor for Savitri’s state of suffering and solitude. When she is forced beyond her limits by her husband’s inhumanity, she goes into a dark room, representing her imprisonment of mind through marriage. This physical and emotional retreat is a concrete reminder of how women suffer in oppressive marriages, couldn’t they raise their voices to fight for justice of some kind. The dark chamber also symbolizes the larger societal teapot in which the women are expected to stew in silence, telling them that resistance is futile. In portraying Savitri’s descent into darkness, Narayan indicates how the patriarchal code negates the identity of women – rather than coming to self-fulfillment, women are made to feel that becoming submissive to male authority is the only way forward. For all her rebellion (Savitri runs away to avoid her suffocating marriage) her tale’s path reveals how deeply deep-seated these constraints are. On one level her leaving is a triumphant act of defiance, a symbol of a woman’s attempt to liberate her from the chains of patriarchal oppression. But when out in the world, she faces economic hardship and scorn from society, which makes it difficult to survive without the protection of a husband. The hard truth of this situation leads her back to Ramani and justifies the gender roles in the film as not only set by individual men but by the social and economic structures that means women do not have better choices.

Savitri’s short-lived liberation reflects a common refrain in literature: That when women do chase freedom, the game is often rigged, offering few, if any, answers. This arc of adventure and escape, disillusionment and return is of course everywhere in modern literature. In so too with *Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapur, where Virmati, despite being the ambitious woman who protests against the wishes of her family and tries to marry according to her choice, eventually finds herself equally trapped in an unhappy relationship. And in Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupe*, Akhila, a middle-aged woman who takes a train trip to escape from her stifling family life, listens to other women’s stories and comes to terms with the more complex truth that freedom doesn’t lie only in physical distance; it also exists as an

internal transformation and a struggle for recognition on a societal level — both of which, here, are won the hard way.(Us et al.) The Awakening by Kate Chopin Edna Pontellier's At first it is Savitri's emotional rebellion reflected in her growing self-awareness in The Awakening which leads her to eventually leave her family.(Al-Shalabi) But Edna's tragic fate is also a reminder of the narrow room for women who eschew traditional roles. And again, in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, refusing to abide by restrictive norms (by engaging in an illicit affair and resisting the father figure's rule) is answered with social banishment and an untimely death, illustrating the punishment women are likely to receive for rejecting the status quo.(Hassan)

The story of Savitri might appear muted and circular, yet it fits into a broader literary tradition that questions the illusion of female autonomy in a world where women are still not allowed to live on their own terms. With *The Dark Room*, Author Narayan also unlearns how institution of patriarchy tells women to accept her sufferings as normal. Savitri's is not a unique story, but a reflection of the stories of million other women, who are told since birth that all they should do is serve their husbands and families. Even other women in the book—housemaids, friends—reinforce them, and so female oppression is supported not only by men but conditioning. The novel is a subtle critique of this internalized patriarchy, of how women often can't see beyond the suffering they undergo to the life they could live beyond the conditions they are kept in. Narayan's storytelling challenges these rituals and practices, and asks readers to reflect on the urgent need for change in society, so that women have the agency to control their own lives.

In short, *The Dark Room* is a compelling critique of gender and marital oppression, and an exploration of the psychological and emotional price of patriarchal power.(Kumar) Savitri's trajectory from stoic submission, to modest rebellion and then back again personifies how limitations on agency result from gender bias that is deeply embedded in social, economic and cultural dynamics. The novel is in line with today's discussions about gender equality, because it insists that change needs to be structural and that dominant patriarchal structures need to be destroyed before women can be free to express themselves and live under their own will. The darkroom itself is a rich metaphor for Savitri's emotional and psychological condition. Every time she feels that Ramani's venomousness is taking a toll on her, she runs into a dark room, representing her pent-up misery. So the space is symbolic of how in a male dominant world, women's voices are suppressed.

Societal Expectations and Women Handled:

R.K. Narayan's *The Dark Room* is an intense story that traverses into the hard-bound societal expectations that women have to live with and the age-old patriarchal customs that define their lives both in family and society as well. Located in pre-independent India,

it tells the story of Savitri, a dedicated housewife who stood up for oppression and begins a journey of silent revolution. But because the story takes place in a traditional Indian household, and among a traditional Indian community, it's again and again to a certain extent, become one of those stories whose themes are timeless and universal, constantly showcasing the oppression and the subjugation of women that continues to prevail in the world today.

In the character of Savitri, Narayan reveals the oppressive standards that restrict women to certain roles—dutiful wives, self-sacrificing mothers, submissive individuals who must suffer injustice in silence. The novel questions the belief that women should be submissive to their husbands and put their families before their own needs, and accept their destiny in silence, without questioning the system which enslaves them. Das' score rises as Savitri's in the dark room, a witness to what it's like for this young woman in her plight and journey through the darkness, which in modern day, is tantamount to veiled women who want freedom for themselves but are bound by how society dictates it. Early in the novel, she's told she should be a good wife, even when her husband, Ramani, is outright cruel to her feelings.

"Emotional Infidelity and Physical Infidelity of Ramani in R.K. Narayan's The Dark Room:

A Sociological Study' provides a bold deconstruction of entrenched social male privilege and double standards in this regard, particularly within a patriarchal set-up, based on the betrayals of Savitri and the extramarital affair of Ramani in RK. Narayan's The Dark Room. His impunity to act with consequence (to woo another woman while treating his wife with frosty detachment) reflects older, unspoken prejudices that male desire and authority are elemental. The difference between Savitri is to last, to have to be patient, to be faithful, to forgive, to be forgiving in a way (of all the wrongdoings of Man).

What women are supposed to do to maintain family peace, and society's good opinion, is coolly dissected in Lang's heartrending portrayal of silent suffering and internal hell. The same is true for many of the novels of the past year, in which female characters deal with the emotional aftermath of male rule and the infidelities that have gone with that.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake, Ashima, while not experiencing blatant abandonment, exists in a state of silent angst and heart-broken solitude while she accompanies her husband to a land far away, and gets used to an insipid existence which is all about compromise and insignificance.(Dr. Padmini Sahu) In Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters, the protagonist Virmati, who defies her family and society to have a love affair with a married professor, doesn't find freedom but bears a life of marginalization and

unfulfilled desire — while the man has the respect and comfort of society. Similarly in Manju Kapur's 'A Married Woman,' where Astha's loveless marriage and her husband's emotional abandonment drive her to find substance in an illicit relationship, which is deemed to be scandalous in a way is less in the case of a man.(Mishra) In Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, the emotional lives of women are pushed to the margins or drowned out by societal demands, where what's expected for them is determined by patriarchal norms of femininity and their relationships to others.(Artheeswari et al.) Even in *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri, Gauri's unorthodox decisions after her husband's death identify her as selfish and cold, though they derive from her desire for intellectual independence — again, an indication of how women are criticized for acting outside their traditional roles of support.(Arianto and Ambalegin)

These novels, including *The Dark Room*, lay bare the structural disjunction between male freedom and female restraint. Today, contemporary literature generally lends women more narrative autonomy in articulating their rebellion, but the emotional and social toll of male privilege and female muteness still ring disconcertingly true. Savitri's silent suffering as a sign of historical and present gender inequity and her experience speaks to a history of fictional women who keep on contending with centuries of silence, endurance, and invisibility.

The day she revolts and runs away from home, it's a big deviation from the established norms but when she finally comes back that's when you realize how difficult it is to break the shackles of oppression. The outside world has no retreat for her, thus turning the message towards love, that women must be subservient, that society gives them no option but to follow tradition. Narayan subtly utilizes the darker room (where Savitri spends much of her time alone) as a metaphor for women's seclusion and internalized repression. It's a real and metaphorical prison where she locks up her own hurts and her own resentments, not much unlike a lot of women who were trained to stifle their sons. The situation is not much different today, despite the educational and professional opportunities afforded to women; women still find themselves faced with being forced to reconcile ambition with home and family. this concept of measuring woman's value by her toil and service to others still holds to cause of her plight was both real and universal. "Women learn soon enough that they have power only as an ornament, only as it serves a purpose and then they are thrown away. In addition, *The Dark Room* condemns not only the male-dominated world but also the role of women in perpetuating these norms.

The female characters in the novel, be they other wives, or kin, do not contravene this status, but instead entrench the idea that submission and the suffering it entails are a

measure of virtue. It is an internalized patriarchy that exists to this day, where women are condemned by their own sex when they seek to push back against conventional standards. Narayan's portrayal of these social impositions illuminates the intergenerational transfer of gender stereotypes, the indoctrination of girls from their youngest ages to conform, so that there is no space left for rebellion, or self-affirmation.

Although the story is about early 20th-century India, it's distressingly current: Everywhere, women live within prescribed gender roles and societal expectations that affect their lives. In this compelling story Narayan demands to know whether these are fair, and whether it is time for us to strive for a society where women can define their own roles out of the shadow of tradition. The central character Savitri, symbolizes the life of women through so many ages, the life of women, who have to tolerate emotional neglect, social pressure and hope that suffocates under the heavy weight of being made to choose the background in their own lives.

In a world in which men hold uncompromised power — as husbands, fathers, bosses, or lawmakers — women such as Savitri are given no space to stake out their own desires, wants, needs, or identities. (Kabir) Even the title of the novel, *The Dark Room*, suggests the literal and ideological rooms in which women are kept—the dark corners of existence where their pain is true, their wants are true, their voices are true, and their dreams are true—and ignored. Her husband Ramani is the archetypal patriarch, his superiority isn't based on feat or virtue, it's part of the larger social conditioning that men have been fed with, one that conditions them to think they deserve control, domination and submission. His behaviour towards Savitri lacks compassion, and she is regarded as a member of his family, rather than as an individual who may have her own thoughts and emotions and the right to dignity. The dark chamber in which Savitri can take refuge when she is troubled is not merely a material space but an emblem for the emotional exile women undergo in relationships that do not give them mutual respect and companionship. She is further diminished to a type of mechanical existence in this house where she is to keep silent in the face of her husband's caprices, tune in and out of her own demands for recognition, and take on the job of smoothing out the tensions in the home.

This familiarization of male power is just one of the reasons *The Dark Room* is at once deeply disquieting and an important reflection on gender roles, the same gender roles that, it could be argued, dog our 'modern' world. Despite having changed laws, education and economic opportunities for women over the decades, the most basic architecture of male entitlement is alive and well — and it shapes how we move throughout the world. In some ways, nothing has changed, and those women who throw down against male power—on the

shop floor, in the living room, on the street—are still punished and blamed even in an age where, we would like to think, that sort of behavior is unacceptable. Savitri's rebellious phase, the moment when she finally walks out on Ramani, is radical in terms of her era, but her eventual return underscores the cruel reality that many women are forced to confront: independence is not necessarily an option in a world that does not deem a woman to exist beyond her position as a wife or a mother. Her retreat into the dingy room, literal and allegorical, underscores the psychological devastation of a systemic oppression — how women are made to feel that resilience is their sole kind of agency, that pain is equal to piety and that they must always endure it in silence.

Narayan deftly reflects the hypocrisy of a society that reveres goddesses but denies its women the simplest autonomy and self-regard. Even today, in this so-called enlightened age, the presence of “The Dark Room” is felt as women increasingly stumble in their efforts to break free from the chains of male dominance. Women who marry abusers are told that they must adjust, that they must compromise, that they must tolerate, because the alternative — leaving — quite simply would leave many women with age, children, scars and bankruptcy in an unkind society forever asking what kind of woman walks away from her husband. The buildings may have altered, but the power politics they refer to are still chillingly familiar from Narayan's portrayal some 100 years ago.

Savitri's marriage with Ramani is a reification of the institution of marriage in patriarchal society. While Savitri is an independently minded woman, she is stuck in the emotional and psychological bondage that comes from the bonds of the institution of marriage, one which she cannot escape due to societal norms and limitations on women. She is the perfect wife, the fond mother and the dutiful companion, and plays them all at the cost of her own desires, wants, and ambitions. This struggle between Savitri's sense of self and the roles that are imposed on her serves as an illustration of the patriarchal nature of the family that Narayan criticizes through Savitri's misery. The inner lives of these roles take a psychological toll, and the novel reveals the resulting turmoil in Savitri. Her agony is one of loneliness, but it also points to the difficulty she has in the face of strong gendered expectations of asserting her own sense of being – or rather, asserting her being as separate from a gender presetting.

Narayan employs the dark room as a tool to probe the loneliness and suppression women experience when they try to step out of the clutches of a rigid patriarchal society. For Savitri, the dark room serves as a site of meditation and suffering where she is forced to confront the starkness of a gendered and patriarchal society that has defined her life and being. The book is a gentle condemnation, if you will, of a woman's private-and public-submission to the social norm that men know better than women. Patriarchy as portrayed in

The Dark Room represents the nature of Indian society in the 1940s and 1950s, which was structured mainly by the social, political and economic dynamic of that traditional time. Women were also marginalized in the workforce (and politics, for that matter) and academia, with limited options for finding personal or professional satisfaction other than marriage and parenting. Narayan criticizes these iniquities, by emphasizing how they suppress the potential of women and limits their capacity to lead an authentic life of their preference. Through all this, Narayan highlights the depth and breadth of male supremacy, which influences every facet of women's lives and perpetuates a cycle of oppression that still impacts women today.

The Research Gap

Relating masculine dominated society in this age in R.K. Narayan's The Dark Room is not yet visited very bulkily in that the whole scope of its patriarchal streams discusses whether following the threads of the novel's patriarchal patterns bring us into touch with current patterns of gender. Although today's society has many similarities with The Dark Room, this novel takes us through the unvoiced cries and travails of women (including the protagonist, Savitri) in deep straitjacketed pre-independence India, and very few are inclined to actualize a real-life application about how the endemic male superiority flourishing in the novel is the root cause of mitigated progress of women in today's India.

Additionally, the intersection of gender and other social and political elements such as caste, class and education are also under researched in the extant research. In addition, a lack of a powerful feminist theoretical background hampers the depth and extension of criticism, and many discussions merely discuss the contents of the novel more thoroughly, but fail to have a critical discussion of the regarding gender ideology, as for the case of the existential feminism by Simone de Beauvoir (Rohmawati and Pandin) or the gender performativity theory by Judith Butler. (He)

Furthermore, even though "The Dark Room" is often discussed in terms of its critique of patriarchy, very little attention has so far been paid to the protagonist's (albeit tiny) acts of protest or resistance as potential early recognitions or premonitions of feminist agency – an area that exceptionally could offer some vital implications for how female empowerment should be understood. Another important lacuna is the absence of any comparative literary perspective – most of the studies treats The Dark Room as a compact whole, not as a novel that can be related to Indian or world feminist literature to which it belongs in its representation of male hegemony. And also because the novel was written in British colonial India, critics tend to overlook the way colonial violence structured the social roles of men and women during the time in which Fan was in Patal. Filling this gap in both feminist discourse and comparative literature analysis through the integration of psychoanalysis and

sociological theory would give us a more delicate understanding of why, and how, the motifs of the domination of male in *The Dark Room* are still pertinent to the Cronin's novel.

Conclusion:

We are taken through the macros of this couple's marriage in R.K. Narayan's *The Dark Room*, where male domination takes centre stage in post-colonial India in the soul space in which the woman operates. With the character of Savitri, Narayan illustrates the psychological, emotional, and social price of inhabiting a world structured by patriarchy, a world in which women are determined by their relationship to men, and denied the agency to make choices about their own fates. The novel captures the struggle, the psychological loneliness and the eventual homecoming of Savitri, and how in many ways women are led a life of choices dictated by the men in their lives. Narayan's representation of male domination, however, serves not only to criticize history but also to resonate past struggles women undergo in a society that remains tinged with entrenched gender identities and unequal power relations. The dark room – as both a literal and metaphorical space – symbolizes the restrictions imposed on women's lives and sexuality in a society controlled by male terms.

In this hard-hitting work, Narayan stresses the need for social transformation and free women from repression imposed on them through male dominance and to aspire for a world where women can exercise their agency, shape their identity and fulfill their potential. The novel by the character of Savitri reveals the restraints put on women and their attempts at achieving Personal expression. Even though we now are supposedly enlightened with gender equality, many issues in Richard's book still exist even today: The dark room as an emblem of women's oppression reminds us that an end to gender inequality cannot be achieved through mere legal reforms; it requires a change in fundamental attitudes towards women. *The Dark Room* by R.K. Narayan is a sensitive portrayal of male domination in Indian society. It is in the character of Savitri that the book touches upon the restrictions imposed on women in society and the battle to establish identity. “Even though women have come a long way, a lot of what is in the book is still going on today and will always be unfortunately”. The dark room as a sign of female imprisonment and for me, the dark room stands as a metaphor of the imprisonment of women and reminds that the real gender equality will need not only legal transformation but it is necessary that society's view on women should also change.

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