

Representation of Women in R. K Narayan's and Khushwant Singh's Texts

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Abstract

A Woman is a gleam of light that lit everyone's heart with love, kindness, and affection. A woman is a keystone behind a family by accepting everybody with indefinite love. Every time she widens her capability and gives a superior innovation to the men's existence. This paper examines the representation of women in selected works by R.K Narayan and Khushwant Singh. In Indian culture role of a woman as a mother is greatly recognized as a goddess. She is worshipped as blessed as nature and praised as the source and contributor of life, food, compassion, and love. The main motive of this paper is to throw the light on women characters in the frame of maternal love and how Narayan and Khushwant Singh goes through deep into the reality of their works.

Keywords: Maternal, kindness, love, woman, contributor

Padam Bhushan and Padam Vibhushan awardees R.K. Narayan and Khushwant Singh were renowned names in the field of Indian English writing. R.K. Narayan was one of the prominent Indian English writers along with Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. Narayan presented a wide range of Characters and his representation of women characters was uniquely Indian. In his works, he portrayed the perfect glory of Indian life. He created Malgudi, an imaginative place in South India. He presented realistic endless characters in his writings. In his maximum narratives, there was at least one female character who took a significant position in the story. The Guide was the most popular novel of Narayan where he presented Rosie as a modern woman who was skilled, keen, and ambitious. In the same novel, other female characters were Raju's mother and Velan's sister. Raju's mother is symbolized as the conservative and typical women who follow Indian tradition and culture.

She was described as a devoted wife and a loving mother. She appeared as a gentle and strong-willed woman who was very friendly to her son. After the death of her husband, she

took care of Raju and guided Raju and Rosie about what is right and what is wrong. She was a more broadly developed character than her husband. She always talked and worried about Raju's choices, especially when he neglected his finances. Velan's sister played a very brief role in *The Guide* but her role was important in constructing Raju's spiritual appearance as a saint in the novel. It was she who built Raju's popularity among villagers by accepting the proposal of the groom that his brother opted for her. This decision of acceptance changed the mind of Velan and proved to his brother that Raju was a holy man.

In Narayan's *The Dark Room*, Savitri is a devoted wife, sacrificing mother, and victim of her oppressive and selfish husband, Ramani. At the beginning of the novel, Ramani forces Babu goes to school although he is suffering from a fever. When Savitri tries to negotiate on behalf of the child, he rebukes her and insultingly dismisses her by saying that she has no business to meddle with his handling of the children. He always criticized the food prepared by her. Savitri silently tolerated his unnecessary taunts. She did not rage her anger instead she tried to calm down herself. To overcome from insult, she stopped working and went to the dirty dark room of the house. She lay there on the floor without taking food or talking to anyone. Her children Babu, Sumati, and Kamala felt disgusted and scared of this. Ramani did not bother about her brood mood. She was represented as an oppressed wife but a mother who took the side of her children and saved them from Ramini. Ramini had no concern about his wife's daily routine. He pretended that she would come out of the darkroom herself when her surly mood passed off. Savitri heard that Ramini had an extra-marital relationship with Shanta Bai, a beautiful and ambitious middle-aged woman who traps men for money and flirts with them. Ponni, the wife of Mari supported Savitri and suggested to come to their village where she could dedicate herself to God at the temple. Savitri was a woman from the middle class who did not dare to leave her husband, instead chose to suffer in silence. She became the victim of domestic violence, threats, and physical brutality.

As a typical Indian woman, she sacrificed her fate for the betterment of her family. Grandmother's Tale had the elements of biography as well as an imaginary description of R.K. Narayan's maternal great-grandmother Bala. She was a child bride and married to Viswa. She was a bold character determined to achieve her goals. The story gave out an interesting and sentimental resist of a woman who won back her husband. Bala's husband left the village in a group of pilgrims. The behavior of villagers changed after this as they thought her husband had died and she had to perform the rituals of a widow. She didn't believe in the news of her husband's death. Instead of shaving her head and wearing white, she decided to leave the

village with a few clothes, money, and a knife to protect her from possible dangers. Ultimately, she was successful in finding her husband but he was living with a Marathi woman but she wants to get her husband back. Both Bala and Viswa came back to the village where Bala helped Viswa to start his jewelry business again. They became parents of five children. She became a perfect mother to Viswa's children.

Khushwant Singh was one of the most eminent authors of Indian English writers whose content was quite insightful and attentive. He had honestly and truthfully portrayed the true depiction and his viewpoint about his grandmother in his work *A Portrait of a Lady*. He had described many elements of his childhood memories which were connected to his Grandmother. This work gave a full account of his connection with his grandmother. He presented her grandmother as a tender, loving, and deeply religious old lady. In *A Portrait of a Lady* his grandmother was an old woman and her face was wrinkled. Khushwant Singh gave a detailed account of her physical appearance that she has grey hair and compared her hair with white snow. Because of her old age, she bent forward. She was a spiritual lady who always recited her rosary and also recited songs from Grant sahib and Sukhmani. She was a true example of maternal love as she was a fully dedicated grandmother. When the author's parents went to the city and author and his grandmother lived together in the village. Grandmother took care of him with love and dedication. She prepared food for him and fed him with love. He explained her love for him when she nursed, cherished, and fed him in the absence of his parents in his early childhood. He explored the interpersonal authenticity of contemporary Indian life with her. He portrayed her kind-heartedness person who fed stray dogs, her connection with sparrows and other common things with insightful delicacy. Grandmother had a strong character; extremely religious primarily spent her time chanting prayers. She was a pious woman, kind, warm, affectionate, thoughtful, available and caring.

She selflessly dedicated her life to grow young Khushwant, until he grew up and became self-reliant. She established a fabulous quantity of maternal love and remained a distant well-wisher as he pursued his own interests. She not even loved her grandson never but she loved birds and animals as her own children too and she found comfort in the company of animals and birds. She had an exceptional association and bond with dogs and sparrows. In Khushwant Singh's *Karma* he portrayed Lachmi as a native dedicated Indian wife. She was represented as an ordinary Indian woman who wore a dirty white sari with red border. Lachmi is simple and unsophisticated lady who packed cramped chapattis and mango pickle in the brass tiffin for her husband which confirmed her nativity. When she began communicating with

the coolie, it was understood that it was hard for her to categorize the distinction between rich and poor. She was presented as an uneducated lady who was fond of gossips. As she was uneducated, she had no knowledge of English manners. Her illiterate relatives were disliked by her husband but she showed sympathy towards them. She was represented as native Indian women dominated by her husband. Lachmi, wife of Sir Mohan Lal, was the personification of all traditional ethics and well-preserved culture of the country. She might not be good-looking, but there was no lack of integrity in her personality.

The most outstanding feature of her temperament was that she was down to earth person, unlike her husband. Her husband never gave her proper recognition and she apprehensively obeyed her husband. But she was an extremely delightful character and was one who represented the Indian women in a male dominated society. The author introduced her as an Indian who was fond of her own culture and language.

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that R. K. Narayan portrayed a variety of female characters which are traditional as well as modern. Narayan's Women Characters rose in influential way and they became everlasting examples of the Indian psyche. Her woman Characters represented rich treasure of Indian Culture. These women characters represented deep rooted Indianness and their thoughts, beliefs, habits, upbringing, ambitions and conduct. Khushwant Singh was outstandingly recognized for his sharp wits, mockery, and satires. His surveillance and appearance of Westerner and Indian characters are bounded with harsh humor. As he was good observer so in this paper will focus on his women presentation on his short story *A Portrait of a Lady*. Indian woman played many roles as daughter, sister, wife, and most outstanding as mother. In *A Portrait of a Lady* Khushwant Singh represented the most fascinating portrait of lady who was his grandmother.

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