



## **FEMININE MYSTIQUE IN IBSEN'S A DOLL HOUSE AND NARAYAN'S THE DARK ROOM: MODERN ADVERSITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper tries to bring out the feminist epistemology, the ways in which women construct individual forms of knowledge and self-expression, their expedition towards self-liberation in a patriarchal modern society. The feminine mystique socializes women to establish their identity in the society and meaning of their lives through their husbands and children, rivet a loss of one's identity in the requirements and wishes of one's other half/partner and family. The tragic protagonist Nora and Savitri have suppressed and oppressed by the male gaze society in their marital life and how the revealed themselves from the suffocation caused by male embrace in their life. Ibsen is much attracted towards the saying that woman cannot be herself in modern society since it is male-dominated. It examines the gender inequalities of traditional society nineteenth and mid-twentieth century.*

**Keywords:** Feminine Mystique, Male Gaze, Self-liberation and Self- expression/realization

## Introduction

Ibsen propounded a new genre known as modern drama and turned into a “father of modern drama” by uplifting theatre from entertainment to a possibility for exposing social problems. *A Doll’s House* established Ibsen as a contemporary writer of modern drama. He began to write off social tragedy which had not been the focus of contemporary drama and offered a new dimension to modern drama. He wants to portray the real world especially the position of women in the society and their struggle. F.L Lucas said, in ancient times, a tragedy meant a serious drama; in medieval times, a tragedy meant a *story* with an unhappy ending; and a modern tragedy meant a *drama* with an unhappy ending. A modern tragedy was a play in which the tragic protagonist or hero who belonged to the middle class or lower class individual in which a hero or certain other characters were caught in a difficult situation, like the protagonist was often the victim of social force.

Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* is a modern tragedy as it discussed a women’s expedition towards self-liberation in a patriarchal society. Walter Goodman declared that “a great document of feminism and Nora was an icon of women’s liberation”. In the drama, Nora also caught in a difficult situation to overcome that she had to do some forgery unexpectedly that ruined her life entirely. Nora Helmer’s position in her marriage with Torvald was visible a subordinate one as she herself contains the needs of Torvald’s. Nora was like a doll in his hands, a typical woman in a typical house had no power to act independently, it was a situation of others women’s to during the period of her. When her husband was in crisis, she decided to help him to obtain his health back her decision happened to be a flaw of her life as the plot progressed, tragedy coiled from here and she became subjected to blackmail by Krogstad. She must disclose it to her husband and learned that he was not the genuinely caring and selfless person, she anticipated him to be but Torvald seemed to be very much concerned about society and his position in it, live by social norms. When he came to know the truth, he had no support for his wife instead he stood by the side of the society because he was that much moulded by social conventions that made him blind and unable to understand his wife’s suffering. This destroyed their marriage life whenever there was a conflict in family men’s always forgot to see the sufferings of their partner and they try to dominate them in a certain way which suits them. Here also Torvald did that for him society and acceptance were important than his personal life. The nineteenth century undergone a vast shift

from the old social order of self-improvement to a new social order which founded on money but women at the time could not control over money without the support of man who subordinates them in all the ways whereas unmarried women like Mrs Linda had the power to control over the money and their life individually than married women who were discouraged to act independently. Mrs Linda's story was different from Nora, she had married a man for wealth and her family not for sake of love when she found nothing in life her sacrifice became no use. Like Nora, Mrs Linda also committed mistake but in a different way, in either case, both were suffered from the male patriarchal society they could come out of it reality and hardship which undergone by them were inconsumable despite their struggles and efforts in their life. When Nora came to know the reality of her husband she was no more a doll in his hands and in the house as well this showed her realization towards the society and where she had been there in it, therefore, she decided to know herself (self-realization) and to live her life without any support and decided to divorce her husband to pursue her own path independently, she had rejected the life which society labeled for her as a wife and mother, in act 3 she said to Torvald that "I am going to see...who is right the world or me" this leads her to a new path that she had chosen for living herself after disappointed with the family life for which once she had sacrificed herself turned out to be out of her world now that because of the patriarchal society and its traditional norms which made her decide so. To some extent Nora refused her motherhood also left her children with Torvald as a result of this conflict to that extent she had suffered a lot ultimately this lead in a new where nothing can deceive her thus broke the traditional norms where the women supposed to be surrendered in the hands of her husband and society made her feel inferior to man, in contrast, this modern genre defeated those old conventions and all. Ibsen emphasized women's self – fulfilment and her position and responsibility and her role in family and society. He brought up the obstacles that were faced by women in their life which determined by society and male patriarchal society.

In *The Dark Room*, the tragic protagonist of the novel is Savitri, a subservient housewife, extremely dominated and neglected by her husband. In Hindu mythology, Savitri is a woman who sacrifices everything, including her life, for the sake of her dim-witted husband. Since then she is portrayed as the ideal Hindu wife - a suffering, martyr-like, obedient, and submissive woman. It is no twist of fate that R.K. Narayan decides to choose the name for a passive victim of domestic violence or ill-treatment who has been habituated to be passive to a man. Ramani,

husband of Savitri fed up by tormenting his good-natured wife, in time starts having an affair with a beautiful woman Shanta Bai. In any case, when Ramani's treatment of her intensifies and compounds, disregarding every urgent endeavour by Savitri to spare the marriage, she at long last snaps. She tosses her wedding necklace down (the wedding accessory is as huge in India as the wedding ring is in the west) and spills out years worth of fury and anguish to Ramani, mourning that she has no rights in the public arena regardless of whether she needed to declare them, and that she is asset till the day she passes on. So the arrangement is to bite the dust. Savitri keeps running from the house in tears to dedicate herself completely to the Sarayu River. She suffocates herself yet buoys to the surface and is seen by a nearby convict named Mari who is moved by pity and hauls her out of the water, drawing the water from her lungs. He asks her for what valid reason she attempted to murder herself and reveals to her that there in dependably trust throughout everyday life, and constantly another way. The hoodlum's better half, Ponni, tidies Savitri up and encourages her to discover comfort in an existence gave to otherworldly examination. Thus Savitri begins to work in a sanctuary, wanting to discover peace as a Hindu pious devotee. Rather, she ends up attacked and peered toward by other men, and continually inconsistent with the sexist minister who abhors seeing a lady working in a sanctuary - a place commanded by the male Brahmins of the Hindu pastorate. Disappointed and discouraged, Savitri starts to miss her little girls and miracles on the off chance that she was narrow-minded and unreliable to abandon them, and considers how gravely they are being dealt with by Ramani. She understands that every one of her endeavours to escape was futile, in light of the fact that as a lady in this general public, she has no place at all aside from where her family is, in any case. Furthermore, fleeing won't secure her girls or bring her tranquillity. Surrendered, and strangely content with her present circumstance, a tranquil and pensive Savitri comes back to Malgudi and to her home. Nothing changes. Ramani is resentfully triumphant that his insubordinate spouse has finally taken in her place, and keeps on acting as he generally did. Furthermore, Savitri keeps on enduring it. This story does not discuss essentially with an inundated marriage. Savitri may appear to be vexed to the point of endeavouring suicide, yet she comprehends her part throughout everyday life. The Dark Room depicts the means she takes to manage the issues throughout her life and how she approaches attempting to cut a self-sufficient space for her. Narayan brings up the brutal substances of a woman and their parts as spouses and moms inside the familial structure that is common in India. He treats Savitri with sensitivity and makes a

strong story. According to the norms of modern drama/play there is a tragic flaw in both women character and the society itself had a tragic flaw in it because it never offered any good to the people and there was a reversal of fortune in their life that completely changed their life from happiness to sad and finally there was a discovery of truth also occurred that made them to realize themselves who they were and as a result they made their rest of the life according to their own wishes.

## **Conclusion**

It concludes that ultimately Nora and Savitri are forced to accept that they have no identity if she separated from her husband but despite that, she prepared to create her own identity through the self-realization. In this modern drama, the failure of Nora and Savitri marriage happened to be a tragedy but not ended with bloodshed and death of characters but death in marriage life of characters and their self-fulfilment.

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