

SENTIMENT OF FURY IN NARAYAN'S THE DARK ROOM

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ABSTRACT

Ramani, in 'The Dark Room', is a hot tempered bully. The atmosphere of the house depends on his mood. Tension prevails in the house as long as he is at home. He is eccentric and lawless in his taste. He is aggressive and domineering. He bullies his silent suffering wife and innocent children. He wants everything to be according to his own desire. His harsh behavior even to the youngest child Kamla, his thrashing of Babu after the failure of electric current in the house, his callous behavior towards Savitri when she asks him not to go near Shanta Bai again etc are the instances of his fury. He is not ready to make amends even when Savitri offers to leave the home. He furiously asks her to take her things and get out. There are also instances of the fury of the priest, Ponni and Savitri. In all these instances Kamla, Savitri, Babu, Ramani, the priest, Ponni and Mari are the objects of the sentiment of fury. Their behavior at that time is the Excitanto. Fury, irritating, wildness, thundering, scolding and crying of the Asraya, the person whose sentiment is aroused, are the consequents. Wrath, pride, arrogance, perspiration, weakness, depression etc. of Asraya are the transitory feelings.

Key Words : Sentiment, Fury, The Dark Room, Consequents, Feeling.

Introduction

Rasa theory, which becomes the source of the aesthetic pleasure in literature, is a deep psychological study of universal human emotions. Bharata, who is known as the father of Sanskrit literary criticism, postulated this theory. Bharata states that Rasa is manifested through the combination of Vibhavas-determinants, Anubhavas- the consequents and the Vyabhicharibhavas- the transitory feelings. Here we are discussing the sentiment of fury in R. K. Narayan's The Dark Room.

Sentiment of Fury

Sentiment of Fury or Wrath is based on the dominant emotion of anger. It owes its origin to Raksasas, Danavas, haughty men and is caused by fights. An enemy or somebody who is harming others, arouse the feelings of anger. Therefore the person who awakens anger in one's heart is the Alamban or the object. The behaviour and actions of the object are the Excitants or the Uddipans. Any sort of physical movement or activity which follows the arousal of emotion is the consequent. The feelings which quickly pass in and out of a person's heart but do not hinder the main emotion are the Sancharibhavas or the transitory feelings. Helped by these constituents the dominant emotion-anger is relished as Furious Sentiment. Ramani in The Dark Room is a hot tempered bully. The atmosphere of the house depends on his mood. He is aggressive and never cares for the sentiments of his wife and children. Everything should be according to his own desire.

One day Savitri was in Janamma's house when Kamla came and told her that father wanted her to go home immediately. Savitri's heart beat fast as it was very unusual. Reaching home she saw that her husband was

pacing the front veranda. Her throat went dry. Seeing Savitri he said that any one could come and take away all the things in the house because there was nobody around. Savitri replied that she left the cook in charge of the house. "He is not a watchman. Perhaps you'd like him to put up his oven at the street gate so that he can look after the house and cook at the same time".(24)

He has changed his coat and wearing a blue blazer. Savitri felt relaxed when he told her that he had come home to take her to cinema. Savitri intended to call children but he said that they could go some other day. Though she knew it would be useless to plead but she could not restrain her self and insisted that children should also be taken. He denied strictly and was not ready even to take the youngest one Kamla. Kamla was insisting to be taken out making some indistinct impatient noises. Ramani was infuriated at the sight of the girl appealing to her mother. He thundered. "Learn not to whimper before your mother." To Savitri he said, "Are you coming out at all or shall I go alone? You can stay here and pet the little darling"(25)

Savitri suggested to go some other day but Ramani did not want to postpone the programme. He ordered Savitri to go and dress quickly. Savitri went in to dress. Kamala also went behind her stamping her feet and crying. Ramani said, "If I hear you squeal, I will thrash you, remember. Be a good girl." A moment later he shouted "Savitri, I will count sixty. You must dress and come out before that."(26)

Kamla and Savitri are the objects of the Sentiment of Fury. Savitri's desire to take the children with them or to postpone the programme and Kamala's pleading to go, stamping her feet and crying are the Excitants. Ramani's thundering is the Consequent. His wroth and arrogance are the Transitory Feelings.

Sumati, Kamala with the help of Ranga decorated a pavilion for the festival of Navratri. With about eight narrow planks resting on raised supports at the ends, Babu constructed a step like platforms. The girls arranged the dolls over this gorgeous setting and a fantastic world was raised in an hour. Next day Babu brought his friend, Chandran for the lighting arrangements. With a piece of wire and spanner Chandran worked wonders. The whole of the pavilion was illuminated. Babu felt very proud for all this.

Babu decided to switch on the lights at 5:30 in the evening. By that time a dozen visitors in their bright silk had already arrived. The switch was pushed but no light was on. Not only the lights of pavilion were off but the usual hall bulbs had also gone out. Babu went out saying somebody had tampered with that.

At about seven-thirty the conditions were different. There was no light in the house. Visitors were received in the pale light of a hurricane lantern and the pavilion was lit by the flickering oil lamps. The atmosphere was dim and gloomy. The sister's rage knew no limits. Babu was in utter despair. Chandran had gone to cinema and would not be back till ten. And there was no other friend who knew anything about electricity. When there was no other way Babu along with Ranga set out to the electric office in Market Road- a distance of about two miles. The people in the electricity department send them back by saying that they will go there only when the pole fuse is burnt. If the meter fuse is burnt it is not their concern.

When Babu reached home he found his father in a terrible temper. Ranga's absence delayed the opening of the garage door and it had infuriated him. He entered the house in that state and found it dark. Failure of electric current was one of the things which completely upset him.

"He stood in the doorway and roared, "What is this?" Savitri let the question wither without an answer. The girls did not dare to answer.

"Is everybody in this house dead?" he asked.

Savitri was angered by this, "What a thing to say on a day like this, and at this hour! I have seen very few who will swear and curse at auspicious times as you do."

"Then why couldn't you have opened your precious mouth and said what the matter was?"

"There is nothing the matter. You see that there is no current and that there are no lights, and that's all that's the matter."

"Has anybody gone to the Electric office?"

"Babu has gone there."

"Babu, Babu, a very big man to go."(45)

This irrational cynicism enraged Savitri but she remained silent. He pursued on to change clothes, grumbling all the way. He cursed the whole household and all humanity standing in the dark. Then he shouted "Raga Raga" Savitri

told him that Raga had gone to the electric office with Babu. "Why should everybody go to the Electric office? Is Babu to be protected like a girl? Whose arrangement is it?" He raved, "Bring some light, somebody."(46)

Savitri sent the lantern along with Kamla. Kamla set the lamp on the floor

"Here, that's not the place to put the lantern. Do I want illumination for my feet? Bad training, rotten training." He lifted the lantern and looked about for a place and said, "Don't you know that when you bring a lantern you have to bring a piece of paper to keep under it? When will you learn all this?" (46)

Ramani asked whether they had been in the dark all the evening. She told him that there was current till six o'clock and then...she hesitated. When Ramani asked what happened she told him that Babu's friend put up new bulbs for the dolls and when Babu pressed the switch something happened and all the lights went out. When Babu returned from the electric office he found his father standing in the hall and shouting. As soon as he saw Babu he asked

"You blackguard, who asked you to tamper with the electric lights?" Babu stood stunned. "Don't try to escape by being silent. Are you following your mother's example?"

"No, Father,"

"Who asked you to tamper with the electric lights?"

"I didn't touch anything. I brought in Chandru. He knows all about electricity."

His father moved towards him and twisted his ear, saying, "How often have I asked you to keep to your books and mind your business?"

"I'll try to set it right, Father, as soon as Chandru comes home."

"Who asked you to go near the dolls" business? Are you a girl? Tell me, are you a girl?"

This insistent question was accompanied by violent twists of the ear. Babu's body shook under the grip of this father's hot fingers. "No, Father, I am not a woman."

"Then why did you go near the dolls?" He twisted the other ear too. "Will you do a thing like this again? Tell me!"(47-48)

Babu remained silent in helpless anger his father slapped him on the cheek. When the boy asked him not to beat him he gave a few more slaps. Savitri dashed forward to protect Babu. She took him aside glaring at her husband, who said "Leave him alone, he does not need your petting." She felt faint with anger. "Why do you beat him?"(48) She could only ask and then she burst out crying. At the sight of her tears Babu could not control himself any longer and sobbed. Here Babu is the Object of the fury of Ramani, power failure due to the arrangement of his friend is the Excitant Ramani's shouting, cursing and slapping the cheek of Babu and grumbling are the Consequents. His arrogance and wrath are the Transitory Feelings.

Ramani is also the Object of the fury of Savitri. His beating of Babu and twisting his ears are the Excitants. Savitri's glaring, fainting and crying are the Consequents. Her weakness and depression are the Transitory Feelings

At the strong recommendation of Ramani Shanta Bai got the job in the office. Some space was needed to arrange a table for her. Pereira assured Ramani to make some arrangement in the large hall. For this purpose he asked Kantaiengar to clear up his table and to go to another corner and added that another table would be given to him according to the order of the boss.

"This is atrocious. I shall resign."

"And leave your family in the streets, I suppose?"

"What does he mean by it?"

"Women and children first, my dear fellow. A rugged piece of timber like you can be kept anywhere, but wouldn't a fresh rose need a lot of air, light, and this large table, to keep it alive?"

Kantaiengar was wild. "Isn't it enough that he has dumped all that lumber here, making the place unsightly and choking, that he should be bringing in this thing now?"(75)

In order to enjoy his anger Pereira told him that the boss said

"Take care that the accountant does not lose himself in a trance and fail to add and subtract. Let his chair be arranged to face a wall."

"Does he take me for a woman-hunter like himself? Remember that if only I cared for these things____"

"You could have had a hundred women at your beck and call? Likely to.... Do you very much wish you to stay where you are and not to be disturbed?"

"I wish resign this job before I move out of this place," said Kantaiengar furiously."(75-76)

Ramani and Pereira are the Objects of the Fury of Kantaiengar. Pereira's asking Kantaiengar to move to some other place, comparing the latter to a rugged piece of timber and taking him to be a woman-hunter are the Excitants. Kantaiengar's wildness is the Consequent and his wrath and pride are the Transitory Feelings

Savitri tried her best to save her home from destruction. She was the silent suffering wife. She put up with insult and maltreatment but cannot tolerate her husband's infidelity. Ramani continues with his tyranny and Savitri pockets everything. The only way of her protest is that sometimes she confines herself to the dark room. But she would come out of it on the request of her friends and children. Though Ramani would little care for that. Her endurance is exhausted when she learns about her husband's affair with Shanta Bai, the probationary insurance assistant. Ramani's absence at night and Gangu's revelation of truth ignites her from within. She no longer remains the silent woman. When the breaking point comes, there is such a righteous fury of suppressed agony

and anger that even a brute like Ramani is astonished and he "understood the terrific force that a woman about to be hysterical could muster," (109) Savitri revolts when her dignity is threatened.

He tried once again to hold her hands, and she shook her hands free, violently. "I'm a human being," she said, through her heavy breathing. "You men will never grant that. For you we are play things when you feel like hugging, and slaves at other times. Don't think that you can fondle us when you like and kick us when you choose."(110)

He tried to comfort her. She was momentarily satisfied by his acquiescence. She allowed herself to be drawn to his side. Encouraged by his endearments she demanded the promise not to go near Shanta Bai again. He was irritated by the question and asked her not to dictate to him. When she repeated the question he asked her not to be silly.

"She understood the menace in his tone, drew her-self away from him, and said, "So you refuse?"

"Yes."

"You won't give up this harlot?"

"Mind how you speak!" His head throbbed with anger.

"You are not having me and her at the same time, understand? I'll go out of this house this minute."(111)

Ramani is the object of the Sentiment of Fury. His affair with Shanta Bai and his refusal to give up this relationship is the Excitant. Savitri's heavy breathing and shaking her hands free violently are the consequents. Her wrath, pride, perspiration are the Transitory Feelings

Savitri is also the object of the Fury or Ramani, her demand of a promise from him not to go near Shanta Bai again using the word harlot for her, is the Excitant. Ramani's irritation and throbbing of head are the consequents. Her wrath and pride are Transitory Feelings.

Savitri went out of the room. After some time Ramani also came out and found her waking the three children. On being asked why she was doing so, she replied that she wanted to take them with her. Ordering Savitri to leave the children, Ramani dragged her away from the children. At this all three of them started crying. It infuriated Ramani. He thundered "Now keep quite. Here, Kamla, if I hear your voice I will peel the skin off your back. Babu, Sumati, lie down and shut your eyes, and shut your mouths. Sleep at once! Obey!"(112) The children fell down and shut their eyes.

Here Savitri is the Object of the Fury of Ramani, Her trying to wake the children to take with her and the children's crying are the Excitants. Ramani's dragging Savitri away, scolding the children and thundering are the Consequents.

Ramani turned to Savitri and said "Savitri you are tying my patience. What madness is this? Go to bed. For the last time I tell you, go to bed."(112). Taking her by the hand he tried to lead her to her bed.

"Don't touch me!" she cried, moving away from him. "You are dirty, you are impure. Even if I burn my skin I can't

cleanse myself of the impurity of your touch." He clenched his teeth and raised his hands. She said, "All right, strike me. I am not afraid." He lowered his hands and said, "Woman, get away now".

"Do you think I am going to stay here? We are responsible for our position: we accept food, shelter, and comforts that you give, and are what we are. Do you think that I will stay in your house, breathe the air of your property, drink the water here, and eat food you buy with your money? No, I'll starve and die in the open, under the sky, a roof for which we need be obliged to no man."(112-113)

Ramani asked him to take her things and get out. Savitri retorted in her anger "Things? I don't possess anything in this world. What possession can a woman call her own except her body? Everything else that she has is her father's, her husband's, or her son's. So take these too...."(113)

Then she removed her diamond earrings, the diamond on her nose, her necklace, gold bangles and rings and threw them at him. She tried to go near children to take them with her but he barred her way saying that they were his children. She accepted "Yes, you are right. They are yours, absolutely. You paid the mid-wife and the nurse. You paid for their clothes and teachers. You are right. Didn't I say that a woman owns nothing?"(113)

She broke down staring at the children on the beds. Ramani picked up the ring and the necklace and giving them back to Savitri said that they were the gift of her father. But she refused to take them saying that they were also a man's gift. Then she moved out of the house in the dark. It appears she wants to wage a war against the dominance of man whether he is a husband, a father or son.

Here Ramani is the object of the Fury of Savitri. His trying to lead her to her bed by taking her hand is the Excitants. Her break down is the Consequent Her wrath and pride that she would starve and die in the open under the sky than to be under a roof for which she is obliged to a man are the Transitory Feelings

Ponni and Mari brought Savitri to the temple. The old man opened the tall doors at the temple portals with a bunch of keys. He asked them to come in and not to spend the whole day standing outside. Ponni retorted if he had no kind words to say, Mari asked Ponni not to irritate the old man by such remarks. Ponni turned to her husband with a hiss.

"Go away and mind your own business, do you understand? We can look after ourselves quite well without you." Mari hesitated. Ponni cried, "Now begone! Go and open your tool-shed and earn some money. There may be people waiting for you. Don't waste the morning gaping at us. We can look after ourselves quite well"(177)

Mari said he want to wait till the shrine is opened to prostrate before God. Then she asked him to sit down there and to wait till the shrine is opened and then disappeared

and not to follow them about with his remarks. Ponni is furious over Mari. Mari is the object. His staying there and asking Ponni not to irritate the old man with her words are the excitants. Ponni's turning to her husband's with a hiss is the consequent.

The priest had gone round the corridor once and was back again at the starting point. He was furious

Do you want me to telling you 'Come on, come on' at every step? I go round thinking you are following me, and talking, and you are still here!"

"It will cost nothing to repeat your words to us again."

"Here?" asked the old man, horrified. "What can I tell you here? I was going round showing you where you have to do what, and you are content to stay behind. You people will kill me one day, making me walk round and round this corridor till I am dizzy. I am not in the prime of life now. Keep it in mind."(178)

He moved again tapping his staff on the cobbled pavement. Savitri and Ponni followed him. He pointed at various corner saying that she had to do a little tidying there and stopped at every bit of litter saying that all that should be removed as she was paid for that. Then they went to the portion of the corridor that was overshadowed by the branches of an immense mango tree growing in the field outside. He spends nearly half an hour there pointing to every leaf the tree had shed down and said.

"I have asked those rascals to do something about their tree and they won't do it. I will lop off these branches one day; let them drag me to a law court if they like. I am ready to spend my entire fortune on the lawyers."(179)

Ponni and Savitri are the objects of the Fury of the priest. Their staying at one place and not following the priest is the Excitant. The priest is also angry over his neighbour whose mango tree was overshadowing a portion of the corridor of the temple. This portion was littered with the leaves all the time. It Excites the Fury of the priest. His weariness and fright are the Transitory Feelings.

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