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Research Article



Psycho-Analysis of Indian Woman in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya

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Abstract

Kamala Markandaya, as a follower of Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, and Henry James, delves deep into the inner workings of her characters to reveal their passions, goals, obsessions, pains, and struggles. Their life on Tuesday or Wednesday is not what it was on Monday

or Sunday as various impressions come to their mind from all sides everyday. Chari, Ghosh, Sarojini, Dandekar, Rukmani, Nalini, Helen, Clinton, and others feel worried when they think about the past, the present, and the future. For the most part their previous events torment them and they have an existence of misery and hopelessness. While some impressions are trivial, others are as sharp as steel. As a novelist, she is highly conscious of the form and structure of each novel and hence avoids all useless impressions so as to give order and shape to the novel. She analyses her characters deeply, goes deep down into the inner workings of their mind and emotions. She brings out the struggle going on their mind. Her characters are reflective in nature. They suffer silently the arrows of pain and sufferings thrown by fate on their way. Markandaya displays some of her characters' obsessions and agonies. She also puts them through travails and difficulties. The characters also go through the journey of attachment and detachment. Almost every aspect of human nature and emotions has been dealt with very minutely by Kamala Markandaya in her novels. Sometimes, she criticizes her characters too for their drawback. Her treatment of her characters is objective, fair, detached and unbiased.

Keywords: Psycho-Analysis, Obsessions, Agonies, Travails, Attachment, Detachment, Reflective, Phantoms, Tranquility, Perplexed, Suffering, Spiritual aspirations, Intellectual healing

As a realist, Kamala Markandaya does not present phantoms, fairies and witches as real people of this world have been created in her novels. She was overjoyed when the Indian flag was flown in the Parliament at 12 o'clock on August 15, 1947, when India gained independence from Britain. In his poem "Where the Mind is Without Fear," which was published in 1913, R.N. Tagore expressed the hope that Indians would continue their struggle for national liberation and would ultimately achieve it. Then, at that point, they will concentrate on various subjects in their own territory and in their own language. Because Indian culture is so rich, they will never be slaves to a foreign culture in their minds. Kamala Markandaya, like Tagore, had complete faith in Indian culture, civilization, history, music, architecture, and other aspects of Indian culture. despite this, she supported innovative medical, business, and legal knowledge, as well as new technological advancements. Unlike Gandhi, she remained a supporter of large industries, in order to eradicate widespread poverty. Let India to establish her own image on a global scale and permit Indians to develop new technological and scientific inventions. She is admirable as a global citizen because she wanted to make progress after breaking national barriers. In 1948 she moved to Britain in order to be a famous writer. She began writing *Nectar in The Sieve*. After gaining experience in the field of journalism, her narrative abilities and concepts soon won her admiration.

Just before the first chapter of the novel "A Silence of Desire" she quotes two lines from Longfellow, "Three Silences there are: the first of speech, The second of desire, the third of thought." She wrote about her thoughts on the silence of desire in this book, which Buddha saw as the root of human suffering. However, Sarojini, the novel's heroine, has no material, intellectual, or spiritual aspirations. Indeed, even the hero Dandekar is almost happy with a little income of 120 rupees every month. He lives a normal life with his three children in an eight-storey rented house. Dandekar and Sarojini have faith in God, and the Tulsi plant is regarded as a representation of divine power. It is regrettable that Christian educators denigrated Hindu deities in the classroom.

He could save a few rupees from his salary and was fully conscious of his self-dignity. His co-workers frequently mentioned the regrettable fact that, in today's India, it is pointless to expect sincerity and faithfulness from women. His day-to-day needs were fulfilled by Sarojini and he felt no feelings of malice against her. His two little girls Ramabai and Lakshmi complied with his orders and son Chandru played in the cradle. When Dandekar first met Sarojini on the roadside, he talked to Rajam, her widow cousin. Mr. Chari, his boss, admired his work and liked him. Yet, Mr. Ghosh was an intense expert and like other clerks, he also feared his feeling of discipline.

When he does not find his wife at home, tension rises within his family. He learns that she frequently leaves at noon. He decides to follow her because he doubts her. He is stunned to track down her in the company of other people. He had seen the image of this man in his tin box also. She simply responded that he is a saint and that she receives solace, mental fulfillment, and physical healing from him when he inquired about this man. However, just like Othello, he continues to question her morality and views her as an infidel. Even his friend Sastri is unable to solve this riddle because his tension keeps rising. Dandekar follows her until he reaches the ashram of the saint, forgetting even his office responsibilities. He is surprised to see numerous other couples praying together.

Dandekar gets angry often. He does not understand why Sarojini gives his daughters money to buy tiffin from the market in the first chapter. For what reason can she not prepare food and refreshment for the relatives? But as usual, she keeps her mouth shut and says nothing in retaliation. She is regarded as a good "listener" by the author. At the start of second chapter the author shows compassion toward widow Rajam who makes a decent living with her small person. In this passage, Rajam makes a bitter reference to the universal fact that "time flies" extremely quickly and does not care about the suffering of innocent sufferers. If Sarojini is not present, Dandekar is irritated when he gets home. Without bothering for his permission, she generally leaves home and children and hence can be regarded a supporter of detachment—Is a housewife 'physically chained to the house'? (Markandaya 10) The author then talks about Ramabai's secret desire to become a movie star, even though she does not know how to get trained for that! He is shocked to learn that his wife does not like silk sarees from Mysore.

In the beginning of the third chapter, the author mentions a few changes she observes in the nation following independence. Chari, an I.C.S. liked to be a great politician as a political leader gets reputation in the country. Second, the general populace was content with the democratic system of government. Thirdly, the residents were liberated from the control of the British Raj. Fourthly, they were free to exercise their fundamental rights. Fifthly, numerous leaders of Congress Party who had endured imprisonment because of their revolutionary thoughts, had got political powers. On the other hand, clerks like Sastri always talked about the advantages of the British Raj, like how the British built a system of transportation, post offices, banks, and schools, and so on. However, Sastri was also aware that 'times are changing.' Here the author repeats Buddha's theory that time changes and alongside time, life changes. Change is the law of nature. Sastri makes the observation that Indian women are no longer 'virtuous creatures' in terms of their psychology (Markandaya 16), and the days when Sita and Savitri followed their husband into the forest due to their dedication are long gone.

Dandekar is ignorant of the fact that domestic women are also required to perform numerous tasks within the confines of the home, and that taking care of children's needs is not an

easy task. He scorns Sarojini for venturing out from home without his consent and blames her for unfaithfulness. She inquires him: Who infuses him with such absurd thoughts? For what reason does he blame only women for the increasing number of divorce cases in India? How are they unfaithful? Is a man not to be blamed for extramarital relations? Despite the fact that Dandekar enjoys sex with a whore these days, Kamala Markandaya, like Thomas Hardy, puts men and women in the same category. He frequently walks around the town's red area. According to the author, men and women ought to be pure in body and mind at the same time. When he realizes that the saint is not a womaniser, he forgets his tension. The saint does not ask his followers to steal money or ornaments for him; instead, he relies on donations from his followers. Even though the author does not mention the ethics found in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Bhagwadgita*, etc., he only survives in the forest with his devotees.

In the event that a couple of modern Indian women could not follow customs and ceremonies, co-education is not to be blamed for that. The author asserts that proper education has the power to transform the nation as a whole, and the elderly must urge their children to get the best education as soon as possible. It is essential to seek the advice of a doctor and undergo tumor surgery if Sarojini is ill. Both Dandekar and the saint are correct when they say that healing doesn't come from spiritual bliss but from surgery.

Since Kamala had moved to Britain and got married with a Britisher, she acknowledged the advantages of British Raj and portrayed them in detail in chapter three. She made a sound case that the people of Russia, China, Japan, etc. likewise became developed nations though the Britishers did not control these countries. She is implying that Indians are free to advance after 1947, when the British left the country. Dandekar chooses to throw the book, he has put in the box, which portrays the things that young women master during adolescence period and get ruined.

In the fourth chapter, the author of "A Silence of Desire" describes Dandekar's nervous state as he discovers the picture of Sarojini's Swamy in the box. He becomes lifeless because he never expected Sarojini to cheat on him. Joseph, a coworker of him, asks, "Has his wife run away with someone?" Another colleague comments that "women are sly cats" (Markandaya 27) and their future steps are consistently erratic. Sastri makes reference to the fact that many depictions of the real world in Indian films are twisted for the sake of entertainment. He gets some information about the circumstance and Sarojini will be pursued to find out the truth. However, Dandekar's agony is unending, and the readers discover a fatal flaw in him. He made a bad decision by taking a hasty step and not trusting his wife Sarojini. She is not a harlot or whore. All of this is because of her faith that the tumour in her abdomen will be removed by God. He is advised by Sastri not to view marriage as a meaningless and frivolous institution. After all, wife is husband's companion and gives her whole self to him. Accepting that all women cheat is wrong. The writer requests that the readers to realise the contrast between the real world and imagination. Appearances are frequently deceptive!

Dandekar appears dull, melancholy, and disillusioned at the beginning of the fifth chapter. He has the impression that the ground beneath his feet is shifting and that everything on earth is temporary. Because his wife has proven to be fake and false, nothing lasts forever on earth. He has lost faith in all the assurances he had previously placed his faith in, and there is no grace or truth in life. He finds himself in the void, where nothing seems to exist. His house of cards has

collapsed and all of his hopes have been dashed. He asks himself “How might his wife be unfaithful to him?” He realises that each of the three children has no significance at this point. He is even more shocked to learn that Janki, a maidservant, has been fired by Sarojini.

Sadly, he experiences sexual anxiety during these tense and depressed moments, but alas! He cannot now approach Sarojini regarding this. She does not want to meet him while she is in bed. She turns around because she was not in the mood to have sex with him. He just continues to believe that women have dark sides to their personalities and does not understand the full context. Nowadays, women are not prepared to realise a husband’s sincerity and devotion. But the truth of the matter is that such small quarrels do not last longer between husband and wife.

In the beginning of 6th chapter, the author analyzes the psychology of Dandekar and Sarojini further as she has full faith in the character of Hindu women. Generally, Hindu women are sincere and attach importance to their husband and children. How is it that she now fails to fulfil his demands? Is she really in love with another man? Has she decided to elope with another fellow? What is lacking in him? Has he betrayed her? How has he neglected her so far? His mind gives only one answer — “Times were changing” (Markandaya 40). Due to angry mood he does not give any penny to the beggar. Now his gloominess reaches its climax. Just he asks himself — How can another man be worshipped by her as a god? And that too in his own house? Well, he will catch them unawares! Here he realizes — Life goes on ... (Markandaya 43). Then he becomes conscious of the gaps that existed between clerks and the officers. He feels a little uneasy after giving a rupee to Rajam and then realizes, “Well, he was not himself because his wife was not herself...” (Markandaya 44).

He continues to consider both aspects of marriage today. He recalls how Sarojini always waited for him at night and gave him hot food. She never demands anything for herself. She only wants the children if she has any demands. He remembers “all the yesterdays of his past life” (Markandaya, 49) and faces insult when his official Ghosh embarrasses him. Since his wife has a tumor and does not flirt with the Swamy, nothing comes of nothing. However, she disagrees with Dandekar’s suggestion of surgery and wants to be healed through prayer. She frequently has the impression that her pain has subsided. In contrast, she occasionally experiences severe stomach pain, and no amount of prayer can alleviate it.

The immorality of laborers who attempted to flee their jobs is mocked by the author in the seventh chapter. He is completely disoriented mentally because he does not know what will happen next. He cannot move forward or backward. Like Hamlet, he thinks excessively and his companion Sastri helps him in these crucial moments in time. Dandekar wrongly thinks, “... their (women’s) virtue lasts just as long as you watch them” (Markandaya, 55).

He does not respond to Sarojini’s inquiries, such as, ‘Has he seen her lying naked with the saint?’ Does he think she’s stupid or a fool? His issue is that his skepticism causes him to lose his wisdom, making it difficult for him to speak politely to her. Dandekar’s eyes were filled with both reality and pain these days, so Sastri asked him to learn about Swamy’s life in the following ways: “of course no man could withstand God” (Markandaya 59). After all, Sarojini’s actions cannot destroy the peace in the home. However, Dandekar feels shocked with the straightforward and plain direct of Swamy in the town. Just he relies on the help of his enthusiasts and doesn’t have anything to do with material additions. Dandekar puts some coins in a pouch that is hanging there

when he comes back from his room. Naturally, some of his vision cleared up; calm mind, all passion gone!

In the ninth chapter, the author has portrayed the gap between metropolitan life and rural life. Rural people rely on nature for their food and water. There are no pucca roads there, so the only way to get around is by cart. People in the village believe in saints' wisdom and do not provide children with any form of education. The author argues in this chapter that new community projects are required for village welfare. Presently Dandekar understands the severe reality, "... knowledge came linked with pain" (Markandaya, 65).

Dandekar's problem was — How to get rid of illusion? Still his wife depended upon natural healing and he insisted upon surgery so as to get out the tumour. Her sickness proves that she is not a harlot. She continues to bear the pain of this 'growth' for months and does not disturb anybody. Of course, she does not have faith in western treatment of diseases. So far Dandekar doubts her character and now he accepts her as a virtuous woman possessing sincerity and tolerance. When Swamy advises her to go in for surgery, she gives her consent and gets cured after the operation. Here the artist has depicted the conflict between tradition and modernity and concentrates upon "paralysis, reaction, realization, panic" (Markandaya 69). She describes the panic of husband and wife due to tumour. Dandekar feels mentally paralyzed when he doubts the presence of another man in her life. Sarojini's reaction against his remarks is mild as she wants to maintain the peace of the family. Without losing any time Dandekar realizes her folly and does not misbehave with Swamy.

Dandekar faced lots of problems because he had been absent for three days without applying for leave. There is a charge of "deliberate disobedience to an order" (Markandaya 73) against him and he vents his outrage against Sarojini as though she is liable for his absence. As his joy has vanished from his life, he feels lost. Swamy disrupts his tranquility, knowingly and unconsciously. He becomes "insensible" to her at this point, but he doesn't do anything about it. The fact that he does not beat her for her actions is the best quality of his character. When he examines the silver ashtray in the box and discovers that none of the ornaments are present, he is perplexed. Sarojini had presented him with all of his securities out of ignorance and naive trust in the Swamy. Dandekar, who was miserable, ends up ruining himself. He is now without support for his rainy days. Sastri was his source of consolation because at this point office files and Ghosh's rage had caused him tension. However, Sarojini's disregard for her duty to the children only fueled the fire. She knew the little income that her husband acquired consistently. He was not dependent on his parents' assets. The tumor surgery would then require a significant financial investment. Thirdly, she did not listen to his suggestion for operation as if he was going to kill her. Since her mother and grandmother had the fear lest she should die the same way. She therefore relied on Swamy's healing power rather than taking the risk. She was unaware that extensive research had been conducted in the field of surgery over the past three decades and that Indian hospitals now had all of the necessary equipment. So, the author upholds the advanced methods of medical procedure in serious sicknesses in light of the fact that no risk was associated with Sarojini's case. She was reassured by the surgeon that the procedure would be safe and successful. Nowadays Dandekar turned out to be profoundly reflective as he found himself defenseless before Sarojini. She should accept an ultimate conclusion and he was not ready to stand by any more for the

activity. He was afraid that if the tumor burst, then... At this crucial moment, the author remarks, "... life must go on. Tragedy could follow..." (Markandaya 76).

Dandekar's salary for three days was to be deducted and a fine of rupees ten was imposed upon him by Ghosh. He was warned not to repeat this nonsense as the officer did not know about the disease of Sarojini. He felt as if he suffered from nausea. He failed to understand the basic truth that misfortunes never come alone. His boss Chari had sympathy for him as the latter looked 'diseased' and morose. Nervousness of Dandekar has been illustrated in 11th chapter by the artist and readers feel pity for Dandekar and his wife. The author remarks, "He felt emptied, derelict, lying beside the woman. The moments of oblivion were done with... It will be bad; I must try and remember how powerful it was, how irresistible, otherwise it will be unbearable" (Markandaya 83).

When Sarojini insists that she prefers to be cured in her own way, he finds himself 'trapped' and helpless. The doctor had told him — she is not going to die due to tumour and yet Dandekar felt highly tense. Of course, he repents for enjoying sex with a harlot and admits, "...What sort of a beast am I to have lain with a whore" (Markandaya 86).

Like G.B. Shaw and Namita Gokhale, Kamala Markandaya satirizes the evil of prostitution, a disgrace on the name of society. In a thoughtful mood she raises the questions — Why do men go to prostitutes? Do they find real satisfaction while enjoying sex with them? Do they not have the fear of getting V.D. from them? Is Dandekar not a victim of moral lapses? Should he not have controlled his passion for sex? Why does he not think of the future of his daughters?

In the beginning of 12th chapter the author asserts that it is good to worship God wholeheartedly but it is absolutely condemnable to trust the tricksters and fake saints. How can she be cured just by blessings of the saint? Moreover, Swamy does not assure her of perfect cure with his prayers. This is just nonsense — Healing by faith, the performance of the impossible, the revelation of the divine ... (Markandaya 88). She wants to assert the need of modern technology and surgery to get cured of such maladies. The qualities of an ascetic have been illustrated in this chapter as many fake saints earn money in India with tricks of their own. Due to poverty and ignorance many villagers feel cheated by these saints. Here she asserts the word 'prudence' and asks readers to realize its importance in daily life. In the 13th chapter she satirizes the saints who lead a pleasant life though they do nothing physically for the society. In a rational way Swamy told Dandekar that he does not ask Sarojini to come to him. She is to be blamed for visiting him.

Towards the end of 14th chapter Dandekar decides to leave Sarojini to her fate, "Sarojini go her own way. I have fought as far as I know how... I just don't know what to do next" (Markandaya 104). But his friend Sastri asks him to protect her from the control of saint. Now the consciousness of Dandekar awakens and he decides to become firm. His boss Ghosh tells him frankly that he'll not be able to help him as it is a family affair and there is no legal complaint against the saint. But Chari listens to his problem patiently and promises to do something in this connection. Let the time come and something will be done. Dandekar also becomes highly conscious of his moral betrayal as he enjoyed sex with a whore. The author does not pardon him for this 'betrayal'. She asks — Has he not distorted his own life himself? His daughter Ramabai also feels disturbed as her mother often leaves home to see another person. The question is raised at this juncture — How will Ramabai get a proper husband in case her mother is defamed for loose character?

Surprisingly, Sarojini asks Dandekar to buy children new clothes for the Deepawali festival. He buys something for all three of them without considering the cost of clothes and ignores Sarojini. How does she deserve new clothes during a time of unfaithfulness? Presently he offers prayers to Tulsi plant to seek for its favors. The author devotes sufficient attention to the “cause and effect” relationship (Markandaya 116) in Chapter 16, where the plot is developed and the psychology of Dandekar and Sarojini is analyzed. Because she has given away all of her ornaments made of gold and silver, he does not get angry. There is no contention between them on this issue as the two of them feel alienated with material things.

Swamy moves his ashram to a different village at this point, which is a wise decision. She can give Swamy ornaments if Dandekar can sell his watch to buy clothes for children. He does not scold her for removing the gold chain from her son’s neck. He tells his companion Sastri that reality matters for him. Because Swamy did not compel Sarojini to donate ornaments to him, the author does not place blame in this instance. Sarojini does not experience any tension when Swamy moves to a different village and the two of them are freed. Just Dandekar feels a minor misery. Had she not offered the little trimmings to Swamy, the family issues might have been settled without any problem. However, he acted prudently by not crying over the spilled milk. His hopes all end in failure. The author asserts in the middle of the 18th chapter: Swamy takes a wise step at this juncture and shifts his ashram to another village. If Dandekar can sell his watch to buy clothes for children, she can give away ornaments to Swamy. He does not rebuke her for taking away the gold chain from the neck of her son. He tells his friend Sastri that reality matters for him. Here the author does not blame Swamy as the latter did not compel Sarojini to donate ornaments to him. When Swamy has shifted to another village, Sarojini does not feel tense as both of them get liberated. Just Dandekar feels a minor agony — Had she not given away the small ornaments to Swamy, the family problems could have been solved easily. But he found wisdom in not crying for the spilt milk. All his hopes prove to be forlorn. In the middle of 18th chapter the author asserts, “... one must live in the present ...” (Markandaya 130).

He did not hope to get anything from his worthy wife as he knew he would not be able to live without her. After all she is the mother of his three children. It is important to note that Sarojini is not a flat/type character as she has her own weaknesses. Perhaps she does not accept the authority of husband though she survives in the male-dominated society. She does not revolt against social norms as she does not have sexual affairs with Swamy. Towards the end of 18th chapter the artist asserts, “... only fools fight ...” (Markandaya 132).

Her superb consciousness is fully awake when she does not feel agony on the departure of Swamy because saints don’t settle at one place permanently. They wander from village to village for the moral upliftment of their devotees. Of course, they depend upon their devotees for food and cloth as they have renounced their personal families. Through Sastri the artist asserts the virtuous character of women in the middle of 19th chapter and says, “... our whole society rests on the virtue of our women, they are the foundation” (Markandaya 135).

When the virtues and lapses of Sarojini and Dandekar are compared and contrasted, she wins more votes than her husband. She does not lose her equilibrium though he remains tense from the beginning till the end. He feels at ease only when she gets cured of her tumour and hopes — Life will be different and pleasant with each other. The artist asserts that wife and husband are

complementary to each other. After the departure of Swamy, he feels that his wife has returned to him and he is not merely a body without soul. The author asserts through Chari that no officer can “make world news” (Markandaya 167). She makes the readers think when she says, “Pictures look different to different people” (Markandaya 167).

Towards the end of the novel Sarojini leaves an everlasting impression upon the mind of readers when she lightly takes the news of Swamy’s departure and says, “What should I do? I formed an attachment, it is broken, that is all. One must accept it” (Markandaya 173).

So, attachment and detachment are two sides of the coin of life. Life can’t be ended when drops scatter in different directions. Life must go on with tides as T.S. Eliot said, “Every end has a beginning and every beginning has an end” (*The Waste Land*). Towards the end of the novel the attendant of Swamy returns all the silver and gold ornaments of Sarojini to Dandekar as the former feels that the latter is attached with them. After seeing his previous assets, he feels as if nothing belongs to him. He tells the attendant that there was a time when he struggled for these worldly things with passion. Gone are the days of his worldly temptations. His only possession is Sarojini now and she has returned to him with heart and soul and hence he leaves the ornaments there and moves towards his home for a new life full of vigour, cooperation, affection and love. He wants to survive in the present so as to prepare himself for the future bliss and bury the past that gave him numberless agonies. After having been attached with worldly things he learns the moral lesson of detachment and controls all his worldly desires.

So, Kamala Markandaya peeps into the inner mind of Dandekar, Sarojini, Caroline, Anasuya, Valmiki, Swamy, Ellie, Annabel etc. and describes their passions, ambitions, emotions, feelings, obsessions and tensions in real colours. Whether it is the case of Dandekar or Sarojini, Markandaya always analyses each one of her characters deeply, bringing out the deep emotions, desires and ambitions lying deep down into the subconscious mind. She very well depicts the struggle going on inside the mind of her characters. Her characters are of reflective nature. They suffer the hardships, sufferings and sorrows given by fate. Her treatment with the subconscious mind of her women characters makes her a prominent novelist. There are only a few novelists who have dealt with the subconscious nature of her characters so minutely. As a follower of stream of consciousness technique, she can be ranked with James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and so many other writers.

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