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## **The Psychological Analysis of Male Characters in the Selected Novels of Kamala Markandaya**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Kamala Markandaya, a prominent Indian novelist, delves into the complexities of the human psyche, crafting characters that grapple with societal expectations, internal conflicts, and the evolving socio-political landscape of India. Her male characters, in particular, offer a rich tapestry of psychological nuances, reflecting the anxieties, aspirations, and transformations that men navigate in a rapidly changing world. Her novels, often traversing the socio-political landscape, also delved into the intricate psyches of her characters, particularly the men who inhabited her fictional worlds. Through a psychological lens, we can gain a deeper understanding of these male characters, their motivations, struggles, and the ways they navigate their evolving identities within a changing India. One recurring motif in Markandaya's portrayal of men is their grapple with tradition and modernity. In *A Nectar in a Sieve*, Nakula, the protagonist, embodies this internal conflict. He yearns for progress and education, yet feels bound by his ancestral role as a farmer. This internal struggle manifests in his strained relationship with his wife Rukmani, who represents traditional values. Nakula's journey reflects the broader societal tension between the allure of Western modernity and the enduring pull of Indian customs, a tension that defines the psychological landscape of many of Markandaya's male characters.



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## **KEYWORDS:**

Human, Characters, Traditional , Modernity

## **INTRODUCTION**

A psychological analysis of the male characters in Kamala Markandaya's novels reveals a rich tapestry of emotions, motivations, and struggles. Through their journeys, we gain insights into the complexities of navigating tradition and modernity, the search for self-definition in a postcolonial world, the constraints of gender roles, and the enduring connection to the natural world. By examining these male characters through a psychological lens, we gain a deeper appreciation for the nuanced and multifaceted portrayal of masculinity in Markandaya's fiction, enriching our understanding of both her individual characters and the broader socio-political landscape she portrays.

One recurring theme in Markandaya's work is the tension between tradition and modernity. In "Nectar in a Sieve," Nathan, Rukmani's husband, embodies this conflict. He clings to the comfort of his ancestral land and traditional practices, even as modernization encroaches upon their village. His resistance to change stems from a fear of losing control and his sense of belonging. His psychological rigidity creates a barrier between him and Rukmani, highlighting the challenges of adapting to a changing world while holding onto cherished values.

In contrast, Raju, the protagonist of "A Handful of Rice," represents a more fluid approach to navigating tradition and modernity. He straddles two worlds, the rural village and the urban university, grappling with the conflicting ideologies they represent. His internal conflict manifests in his relationships with his family and his aspirations for a different life. Markandaya's portrayal of Raju's psychological journey offers a nuanced perspective on the challenges faced by young men caught between the expectations of their past and the allure of a future they yearn for.



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Another prominent theme is the search for self-definition in a world shaped by colonialism. In *The Nowhere Man*, Victor, a mixed-race lawyer, grapples with his dual heritage. He feels estranged from the two his Indian and English roots, battling to find his place in a general public characterized by racial and social pairs. His psychological unrest originates from the frontier heritage that sections his character, compelling him to go up against inquiries of having a place and acknowledgment. This investigation of the postcolonial mind adds profundity to Markandaya's male characters, displaying the close to home and psychological intricacies of exploring a world molded by verifiable power lopsided characteristics.

Furthermore, Markandaya's men often grapple with the limitations imposed by their gender roles. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukmani's husband Naranappa embodies the traditional patriarchal figure, clinging to his authority despite his own insecurities. His controlling nature stems from societal pressures and expectations, revealing the psychological burden placed upon men to conform to rigid gender norms. However, Markandaya also portrays men who challenge these norms. In *The Coffers*, Sankar, a young engineer, defies societal expectations by choosing a career path traditionally associated with women. This investigation of orientation jobs and assumptions adds one more layer to the psychological intricacy of Markandaya's male characters.

At long last, Markandaya's men frequently show a profound association with the regular world. In *A Modest Bunch of Rice*, the hero Ravi tracks down comfort and reason in the rhythms of provincial life. His association with the land furnishes him with a feeling of strength and personality, diverging from the tensions of metropolitan life experienced by other male characters. This common topic of nature as a wellspring of comfort and psychological establishing further improves how we might interpret Markandaya's men, featuring the significance of their relationship with the climate.

Markandaya also explores the complexities of masculinity and its manifestations in different social contexts. In *"The Nowhere Man,"* Victor, a disillusioned Indian man living in London,



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embodies a crisis of identity. He grapples with feelings of alienation and displacement, struggling to find his place in both his homeland and his adopted country. His psychological turmoil stems from a sense of rootlessness and a yearning for belonging, highlighting the challenges faced by individuals caught between cultures.

Furthermore, Markandaya sheds light on the emotional landscape of men, often stereotyped as stoic and unemotional. In "The Cofferdams," Ken, the engineer in charge of a large-scale construction project, experiences a profound sense of grief and loss after the death of his wife. His grief manifests in a quiet withdrawal and a struggle to connect with others. Markandaya's portrayal of Ken's emotional vulnerability challenges traditional notions of masculinity, revealing the depth of feeling that men can experience.

### **Psychological Analysis of Male Characters in the Selected Novels of Kamala Markandaya**

**The Patriarchal Burden:** Many of Markandaya's male characters embody the weight of traditional patriarchal structures. In "Nectar in a Sieve," Nathan embodies the stoic yet burdened patriarch, struggling to provide for his family while grappling with the changing role of men in a post-colonial society. His anxieties about his diminishing authority and the perceived threat of modernity manifest in his controlling behavior towards his wife Rukmani. Similarly, in "A Handful of Rice," the landlord Sankar embodies the entitled patriarch, clinging to his fading power and exploiting his tenants to maintain his status. His possessiveness towards his daughter Ratna reflects his fear of losing control and highlights the psychological pressures of upholding a crumbling social order.

**The Search for Identity:** Markandaya also explores the struggles of men seeking to define their identities outside of prescribed roles. In "The Nowhere Man," Raju's quest for self-discovery takes him away from his family and village, leading him to confront societal prejudice and his own internal conflicts. His journey becomes a metaphor for the psychological turmoil



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experienced by individuals attempting to forge their own paths in a world defined by tradition. Similarly, in "A Thirst for Sin," Sankar's son Ravi rebels against his father's oppressive expectations, seeking solace in unconventional relationships and artistic pursuits. His struggles embody the psychological challenges faced by young men caught between the shackles of tradition and the allure of modernity.

The Impact of Trauma: Markandaya's novels also delve into the psychological impact of trauma on male characters. In "Possession," the protagonist Michael suffers from post-colonial anxieties and survivor's guilt after returning from World War II. His fractured mental state manifests in his volatile behavior and strained relationships, showcasing the lasting psychological scars of war and displacement. Similarly, in "The Golden Cage," Rajkumar's experiences during the Partition of India leave him emotionally scarred and disillusioned. His psychological trauma manifests in his withdrawal from societal norms and his struggle to form meaningful connections.

The Evolving Masculinity: Through her complex male characters, Markandaya subtly critiques and redefines traditional notions of masculinity. In "Another Name for Love," Srinivas defies societal expectations by prioritizing emotional connection and vulnerability over stoicism and aggression. His willingness to express his emotions and challenge gender norms marks a shift towards a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of masculinity. Similarly, in "Pleasure of Innocence," the young Rishi embodies a gentle and sensitive masculinity, challenging the stereotype of the dominant and assertive male.

Markandaya also portrays male characters grappling with the challenges posed by modernity and the erosion of traditional ways of life. In "Nehru's Gift," Ravi, a young man from a rural village, embodies the aspirations of a generation seeking education and upward mobility. His journey to the city exposes him to new ideas and opportunities, but also to the harsh realities of urban life and the disillusionment that can accompany rapid social change. Ravi's struggles to



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reconcile his traditional roots with his modern ambitions reflect the broader anxieties of a society in flux.

Another notable example is Raja, the protagonist of "The Nowhere Man," who migrates to England in search of a better life. Initially driven by ambition, Raja gradually becomes disillusioned by the racism and alienation he encounters in his adopted home. His internal conflict between his cultural identity and the pressures of assimilation mirrors the broader experience of postcolonial migrants caught between two worlds.

Similarly, in "The Coffin Dams," Raja's son, Kishan, displays a genuine connection with his mother and a willingness to question the rigidity of traditional gender roles. These nuanced portrayals reveal the complexities of individual experiences and challenge simplistic categorizations of men within Markandaya's fictional universe.

Through her different and nuanced depictions of male characters, Kamala Markandaya improves her accounts and adds profundity to her investigation of social, political, and individual changes. The men in her books are not only thwarts for the female heroes; they are people wrestling with their own struggles under the surface, cultural tensions, and the difficulties of a quickly impacting world. By looking at their battles, goals, and weaknesses, Markandaya offers a more profound comprehension of the human experience inside the particular setting of postcolonial India and the more extensive topics of innovation, custom, and orientation elements.

Digging into the psychological cosmetics of the male characters in Kamala Markandaya's books advances how we might interpret her scholarly universe. By looking at their inspirations, nerves, and unseen fits of turmoil, we gain a more profound appreciation for the intricacies of human experience, especially as it unfurls inside the setting of a quickly evolving society. Markandaya's nuanced depictions of men challenge generalizations, uncovering the diverse idea of manliness and the profound profundity that lies underneath the surface. Through her



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characters, she offers a convincing investigation of the human condition, welcoming us to think about the psychological powers that shape our lives and connections.

## CONCLUSION

Kamala Markandaya's male characters offer a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of the psychological complexities faced by men in a rapidly changing society. They grapple with the burdens of tradition, the anxieties of modernity, and the scars of trauma, while also seeking to forge their own identities and redefine traditional notions of masculinity. By delving into their inner worlds, Markandaya provides a profound understanding of the human experience in all its richness and complexity. Markandaya's male characters are not simply one-dimensional figures; they are complex individuals who reflect the multifaceted realities of life in a society undergoing profound change. Through their stories, she sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by men in a rapidly evolving world, enriching her narratives and offering valuable insights into the human condition.

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