

FEMINISM IN THE NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA

Dr. Deepty Pandey

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Dedicated to
Veena vadini Maa Saraswati
[the Goddess of knowledge]
For
Blessings the strugglers
Struggling for success

Certificate

This is to certify that Deepty Pandey has worked satisfactorily for the requisite number of terms under my supervision and that the thesis, entitled “Feminism In The Novels Of Kamala Markandaya” embodies her own work.

It is also certified that she has worked in Patna University in her first and last terms.

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Preface

Kamala Markandaya is a post-independence female novelist. One can feel the intimate relation of Kamala Markandaya to the South Indian Peasant women. She is close to the native country and its condition during the contemporary life and expresses her feeling, notions and ideas with power. Her ten novels present the vivid description of India after independence. In her novels, one can find the rural and urban scene, spiritual quest, modernism, attitude toward feminine superiority, East - West encounter, conflict between tradition and prevailing modernism and somewhat historical attitudes.

A lot of work has been done on Kamala Markandaya. The present investigation is my humble attempt in this regard. My study on Kamala Markandaya is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter 1 entitled “Introduction” presents and elaborates written novels and its relation to the pen of Kamala Markandaya with dividing chapters.

Chapter 2 deals with the maternal instinct and feeling in relation to Markandaya. So it is entitled “The Maternal Instinct”.

Chapter 3 represents the prevailing modernity in contemporary society in relation to the mentioned characters in novels. So it is entitled “Modernity”.

Chapter 4 entitled “Spirituality” deals with the theme of “Spiritualism, mysticism, pious and holy notions in Markandaya’s novels.

Chapter 5 entitled “Urban Influences” deals with the rural and urban areas of South India in relation to Kamala Markandaya.

Chapter 6 deals with the theme of East - West meeting and its conflicts in regard to both Indian and British. So it is entitled “East - West conflict”

Chapter 7 presents the superiority of female in regard to the male tendency to be superior. It is entitled “Feminine Superior”.

Chapter 8 deals with Markandaya’s contribution to the English novel. It presents the evolution and the assessment of all chapters and works.



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To express my indebtedness to all persons who directly or indirectly extended their help and co - operation in an impossible task. But I find no words to express my gratitude and indebtedness to my husband, parents, brothers, friends and loving daughter Gutgut whose smile make me sincere and bold to continue my book.

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I

Introduction

Generally, Modern English period is said to have started in 1453 A.D. The East India Company set up in 1600 A.D, began to show its armed victories with the battle of Plassey in 1757. The result was the inevitable introduction of numerous East Indian words into English. English has also borrowed words from Dutch, German, Russian, Turkish and Hungarian, besides many of its colonies. It is a well known fact that the English language came to America with the colonists from England. Therefore, the language that was spoken by the settlers at the time was the language of Shakespeare, Milton and John Bunyan. Speaking of English in the present - day context, it has rather grown enormously during the last few decades because of many scientific inventions.

English is still the medium of instruction in many Indian universities and colleges. It is the only language through which one can reach the farthest corner of the world without much difficulty. It is the Indian - English writers who are creating the image of India abroad. Even the best writings of the Indian writers in regional languages takes decades to get translated into foreign languages and in case of translations, mostly remain neglected in the English knowing world for

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reason of linguistic inappropriateness and stylistic insipidity. In India even today, if there is any language that deserves to be called the language of the intellectuals it is English.

Literature may be categorized into various types as Hindi Literature, English literature, Sanskrit literature, Urdu literature, African literature, Australian literature, Canadian literature, Parsi literature and the literature of New Zealand. Each country has its own culture and Literature. To define Literature is an almost impossible task. We can simply say that it is a permanent expression in words of some thought or emotion, and that is as far as we need go. Literature is the mirror of society and reflects the social, political and economical life of its own age. Indian writing in English is a part of literature and is largely encouraged and appreciated. There are three review as the Indo – Anglian and Indo - English writing.

1. Indian literature in English translation.
2. English literature written either by Indians or by Englishmen on Indian themes and thoughts.
3. Indo - Anglian journalism and other Indian writing in English.

The term **“Indo - Anglian”** is used to denote original literary creation in the English language by Indians. Indo - Anglian literature is distinguished from Anglo - Indian and Indo - English literature. Indo - Anglian literature continues to grow and flourish and this despite all the misguided and prejudiced and politically motivated campaign against English as a **“Foreign”** language, a language which comes in the way of its growth.

B. Rama Chandra Rao aptly says, “The Indo - Anglian writer presents, according to this view, a highly exaggerated and distorted picture of Indian life. Thus Indo - Anglian fiction is dismissed on patriotic as well as literary grounds”.¹

Indo-Anglian literature is an all India phenomenon and an offshoot as well as an important ingredient of modern Indian Renaissance. Indo-Anglian literature being both an Indian literature and a variation of English Literature provide the perfect medium to highlight this confrontation. The novel as a literary phenomenon is new to India. Epics, Lyrics, Dramas, Short stories and fables have their roots going back to several centuries.

Indian writing in English is a part of the literatures in India. It is now free from the shackles of the British hangover quite distinctly and it is now the expression of a distinct and fairly identifiable Indian sensibility. A large number of Indian writers have written with assurance and inwardness. **In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson “The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sore remains of foreign harvests. Events actions arise that must be sung that will sing themselves”.²**

It is an undeniable fact that not only Indo-Anglian literature but all Indian writing has been considerably influenced by the English literature to them through English. Thus Indian English literature has both appeal to Indian reasons as well as the English. English has been domesticated and nativized in India and it is one of the Indian national languages. We find the clear cut stamp of Indianness in the writings of Tagore, Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Ezekiel, A.K.Ramanujam, Kamala Das and others. Indian writers are no more imitative. They are creative and original. The period between 1820 - 1900 is called the Indian Renaissance. The poetry of the Renaissance period is influenced by the English Romantic poets and Victorian poets. Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats and Tennyson were the prominent influences. Henry Louis Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Manmohan Ghose, Swami Vivekanand, Edmund Ghose, Toru Dutt, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu are prominent literary figures, Who participated in their

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contribution to Indian English literature with Indian themes, mysticism and philosophy.

A novel is a fictional prose narrative of substantial length. In Italy during the middle ages and the Renaissance, a prose tale was called a **“Novella” (short new thing), “news”**. It was developed by Giovanni Boccaccio.

Even more than in Indian English poetry, it is in fiction that the Indian writers have made their mark. Indian English fiction is a late development. Actually, the novel as a form was new to India. The earliest works of fiction in Indian English were translations and other propagandis pamphlets. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the herald of the Indian Renaissance, wrote fine prose pieces but no fiction. Surendra Nath Banerjee, Gopal Krishan Gokhale, Tilak and other freedom fighters and reformers wrote in English but their contribution is chiefly in prose and journalese. The novel in the modern sense of the word began to be written under the influence of the English literature. Only Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote **“Raj Mohan’s wife”**. His other novels **“Kapalkundala”, “Durgesh Nandini”**, were translated into English from Bengali. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was influenced by Walter Scott and nationalistic fervour of the age. Rabindra Nath Tagore wrote novels like **“Choker Bali”, “Gora”, “The wreck and the home and the world”**, translated into English. Bankim, Tagore and Sarat Chandra remain the major influences of the pioneers of novel writing in India. The novel in India had its rise in Bengal. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee became the first Indian writer of a novel in English. Indian English Literature(Novel) has four phases of its development. The early phase may be called **“The Phase of Imitation”**. The second phase is of **“Indianisation”**. The third phase is of **“Increasing Indianisation”**, and the fourth phase is of **“Experimentation and Individual Talent”**. Indian English novel began to appear in nineteen twenties and gathered momentum in the following two decades. The

Indo - Anglian fiction has been categorized into two groups viz. The pre and Post - Independence groups of writers. With the growth of schools, colleges and universities and English as a medium of instruction, it has attracted a lot of writers to experiment in different genres of Literature. Nationalists and thinkers who experimented to express their views and to convey the thoughts and awaken the spirit of nationalism among the Indian. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Arun Joshi, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Salman Rushdie, Manohar Malgonkar have successfully written novels and made a unique place in the Indian fiction world. Indian English fiction is on the move. Each creating new dimension on their exploration of thematic representation of the emerging issues of the time. Similarly in India too, we have marvelous natural story tellers including a set of women writers who have maintained their own **“Great Tradition”** through their sincere efforts in Indian fiction. A notable development is the emergence of an entire school of women novelists among whom the leading figure are R.P. Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai. By the end of the sixties and in the early seventies newer voices are heard, the most striking of them are Arun Joshi and Chaman Nahal. Raja Rao has a very high sense of dignity of his vocation as a writer. He looks to his work in the spirit of dedication. For him, Literature is **“Sadhana”** not a profession but a vocation.

“Literature as Sadhana is the best life for a writer. The Indian tradition which links the word with the absolute has clearly shown the various ways by which one can approach literature without the confusions that arise in the mind of the western writer viewing life as an intellectual adventure. Basically, the Indian outlook follows a deeply satisfying, richly rewarding and profoundly metaphysical path. All this may sound terribly Indian, but it is not so really Valery, Rilke and Kafka, for instance,

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are so close to this view as Tagore in looking upon literature as Sadhana”.³

There are detective novels and novels using the stream of consciousness technique. Virginia Woolf is the prominent figure using this technique. In the context of this new technique, Kamala Markandaya is not afar. Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* has made the use of this method. Women in modern India have not only shared the exiting and dangerous roles in the struggle for Independence but have also articulated the national aspirations and the consciousness of cultural changes in the realm of literature.

Women novelists have made a significant contribution to the English fiction. They are like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, R.P.Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Attia Hussain, Kiran Desai and Arudhanti Roy have presented a woman's world very poignantly. They have developed their individual styles of writing. They voice the feministic concerns objectively and appealingly.

Writers like Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal and Kamala Markandaya go beyond feministic concerns and portray in the wider context the themes of alienation in modern, urban city, tradition and modernity, east - west encounter and social conflicts.

The Indian English writing impact Gandhian thought and philosophy. Indian English writers treated the figure of Gandhiji as a myth, a symbol or a tangibal reality. It was not merely the character of Gandhiji that looms large in Indian fiction but for the first time focus changed from urban life to rural life, from educated characters to sweeper like characters as in 'Untouchable' by Mulk Raj Anand. K.S.Venkatramani, Krishnaswami Nagarjun, Humayun Kabir, K.A.Abbas, D.F.Karaka wrote novels. Mulk Raj Anand, a social novelist, was influenced by Indian Philosophy, Indian literature,

Tolstoy, Chekhov, D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Chinese poetry, Persian romance and Punjabi folklore.

R.K. Narayan, one of the most popular novelists of Indian English Literature, was free from any propaganda, commitment of purpose. He does not try to express any particular philosophy or point of view. Raja Rao is certainly the most brilliant and philosophical writer of Indian English Literature. He was also influenced by Gandhian philosophy on some extent. His popularity is chiefly regarded in "The Serpent and the Rope", "Kanthapura" and "The Cat and the Shakespeare".

G.V. Desani's "All about Hatter" is a comic novel with variety of themes like East - West encounter, search for identity amidst the turbulent national and cultural atmosphere, exploration of reality in life.

The earliest of the social realists of the period is Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906), a novelist strongly influenced by Tagore and Gandhi. While both this fictional theory and practice show his affinity with Anand. His novels present high idealism, social purpose and affirmative vision of life. For him Art is a means of communicating news on various subjects.

Unlike Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar (1913), is a realist who believes that art has no purpose to serve except pure entertainment. His novels possess thematic variety. Like Khushwant Singh, he also writes about tragedy, despair and heroism. There are novelists like S. Menon (1906), Balchandra Rajan (1920), Chaman Nahal (1927), Arun Joshi (1939), Salman Rushdie (1947) and Vikram Seth (1952). Nahal like Khushwant Singh draws the picture of violence and sex quite realistically. During the last decades, some novelists have successfully written novels in English. Sudhir Ghose, Manoj Das, Shiv.K. Kumar, Amitav Ghose, Upamanyu Chatterjee and Sashi Tharoor are prominent among them.

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Like the women poets of the Post - Independence Period, the women novelists too form a sizeable and significant school. R.P.Jhabvala(1927), is a prolific and versatile writer written about personal relationship, man - woman relationship and domestic life of Delhi city. Jhabvala is an outsider - insider while Markandaya(Purnaiah Taylor 1924) is an insider - outsider, an expatriate, she lived in England for a number of years.

Nayantara Sahgal(1927), is usually regarded as an exponent of the political novel. She is a gifted writer whose main concerns are human values and complex human relationship.

In contrast with Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai(1937), youngest of the major Indian English women novelist, is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in political and social realities. Her novels can be examined as the manifesto of female predicament. She has deep psychological insight into her characters. Her novels reveal feminist concerns with the predicament of women in male dominated society. Most of the women novelists are concerned with human relationship, social realities and woman's predicament.

“Mainly it is a political novel rendering the high incandescence of national liberation struggle of the Indian people against the English colonizers”.⁴ Santha Rama Rau a widely travelled writer, has written beautiful, travelogue in which she narrates her observations of men, manners and culture. Her two novel, ‘Remember the House’ 1956 and ‘The Adventuress’ 1970 are charming pictures of the East - West encounter while Nargis Dalal's experience of journalism has hardly proved a salutary influence on her fiction. In the realm of the literature, Gita Mehta has established herself as a novelist with her novels ‘Karma Cola’, ‘Raj’ and ‘A River Sutra’. Important examples of the latest novelists are Arundhati

Roy's, "The God of Small Things", Namita Gokhle's "Paro : Dreams of Passions", Shobha De's "Socialite Evenings", Starry Nights "Sisters", Brinda Mukherjee's "The Forth Profile", And "A Fizzle Yield", Jhumpa Lahiri's "Interpreter of Maladies" and "Namesake". Shakuntala Srinagesh's one novel "The Little Black Box" 1955 is an interesting experiment in psychological fiction.

Every artist depicts the picture of life. Painters with brush, Musician with his instruments, Carpenter with his tools and Novelist with his/her pen. Every writer is the product of the age in which he/she writes and Kamala Markandaya is no exception in this respect. In the realm of literature, she is one of the most famous of the modern Indian writers.

Kamala Markandaya(1924) was born in Mysore and studied at the University of Madras. She married an Englishman 'Bertrand Taylor'. From 1940 to 1947, she worked as a journalist. She passed away on 18th May 2004. She is known as an Indo - British novelist, one of the finest and most distinguished post - Independence Indo - Anglian novelist. She is a modern writer of traditional fiction. Internationally known as a writer of "Nectar in a Sieve". She commands a wide reputation as a creator of extremely readable novels. If Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan from the 'Big three' of the Indo - Anglian novel and Manohar Malgonkar comes a close fourth. She can safely be classed next to him

H. M. William observes, "If both Khushwant Singh and Manohar Malgonkar intoxicate us with a heady wine of adventure and action that brings a touch of optimism to the picture of the contemporary India they present, We return to a still grimmer, more harrowing presentation of Indian life in the recent novels of ————— Kamala Markandaya ————— who unite in seeing the essential tragedy of India as the loss of the truly human, the truly personal beneath the welter of impersonal or social forces,

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whether of blind nature or of man himself in all his folly and wickedness and blindness”.⁵

Kamala Markandaya is not a powerful novelist like Mulk Raj Anand but She is an outstanding Indian Woman novelist. Though not very prolific in comparison with Mulk Raj Anand and R.K.Narayan, Kamala Markandaya is a novelist of bulk. Of all the women novelists including R.P.Jhabvala, she is the most prolific. Kamala markandaya's novels are chiefly concerned with human relationship and woman's predicament. She has given novel after novel and in each novel she has covered a new ground. Her novel is thematically wide ranging. Her themes are not generally new in the context of European and American fiction and also in the context of Indian English fiction. The themes of ever present poverty and hunger, tradition versus modernity, East - West encounter etc, are stock themes of Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya and R.P.Jhabvala but these themes have been explored by Markandaya with a degree of newness.

In the Post - Independence period, most of the novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal create a scene of urban and rural folk but Kamala Markandaya is the finest exponent of the rural society.

Kamala Markandaya, an expatriate writer, is chiefly regarded the most gifted Indian English Woman Novelist. She is concerned with the plight, status and attitude of woman in India under the stress of changing social, economical, modern, spiritual and political forces. She tries to awake the consciousness of Indian Woman against the traditional oriented society and communicates the real existence of woman. She is the most outstanding modern novelist who concerns with “Feminism”.

India is a male dominating country and women are regarded as inferior in mind and superior in heart. Indian women are mostly traditional believing in Indian culture,

tradition, customs, creeds and trends. In ancient time, women had an honorable position in society. They were equal partners of men in all walk of life. Indian women intend to be like Sita, Savitri, Gargi and Anusuya because they are pillar of Indian womanhood. During the Mushlim rule, they lost their position, honour and right of equality. During the British rule, their position remained unchanged. **Meenakshi Mukherjee**, commenting on this point of identity - crisis, says that **“Writers who are made aware of their Indianness as well as of the difference in the two systems of values: One rather acquired the other inherited and taken for granted”**.⁶

Being a post - independence novelist, Markandaya draws the picture of women in the context of India. She portrays the figure of 20th century women as they are progressing in all fields of life. She has tried to show the plight of woman with her greatness, soundness and boldness and tries to show the real existence of woman, struggled between tradition and modernism.

Being an agricultural country, India has a large majority of women who play her role in this society. They are coming from the four walls of the house and contribute their importance in improving the condition of family and village. Now the role of woman is equal to man. Both are partners in society. They bond together and do their duty very sincerely. They are devoted to each other.

In the context of present day, women are being independent. Markandaya has tried to raise the condition of woman in rural India. Keeping an optimistic view, she shows her humanism. She is such a novelist, who tries to show different types of woman in the context of India and England. Different novels present different figure of women - as Peasant woman, Traditional woman, Lustful woman, Glamourous woman, Westernized woman, English woman, Spiritual woman and Motherly woman. She shows greater power and insight in portraying different types of women characters. She is a

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typical representative of the feminine sensibility. In comparison with other novelists, she is the most gifted and the greatest novelist, who show remarkable skill in portraying women characters.

Mulk Raj Anand, the greatest social reformer and novelist, creates the figure of lower and poor class but lacks in portraying such women characters. Other women novelists like Anita Desai, R.P. Jhabvala, Jane Austen have drawn the figure of female characters. Anita Desai, R.P. Jhabvala's women characters belong to the upper - middle class and city life while Markandaya's characters belong to the rural life. Markandaya's keen observation combined with critical acumen and the feminine sensibility brought her international fame with the very first novel. "Nectar In A Seive" 1954. Her other novels are - "Some Inner Fury" 1955, "A Silence Of Desire" 1960, "Possession" 1963, "A Handful Of Rice" 1966, "The Coffin Dams" 1969, "The Nowhere Man" 1972, "Two Virgins" 1973, "The Golden Honeycomb" 1977, and "Pleasure City" 1982. The description of different types of women in India creates a woman's world. They are natural characters. Today, the victim of these women as described in the novel. Being traditional women like Sita, Savitri, Gargi and Anusuya they denote the qualities of contemporary modernism and struggle for their real existence.

R. S Singh, praises Kamala Markandaya's involvement in India's social life, her critical acumen and feminine sensibility all of which contribute to bring her international fame through her first novel "Nectar In A Sieve".⁷

Markandaya has written ten novels and all novels reveal her deep preoccupation with the changing Indian, social and political scene, her careful conscious craftsmanship and her skilful use of the English language for creative purpose. Our project "Feminism in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya" bases on the different chapters as "The Maternal

Instinct”, “Spirituality”, Modernity”, “Urban Influences”, East-West Conflict”, and “Feminine Superior”etc.

The Maternal Instinct as the feeling of a mother can be clearly seen in the character of a female. Markandaya is herself a mother, having a daughter Kim and she is successful to portray the picture of a mother. She has tried to show the inner feeling of a mother as hers own through her fictional character. Rukmani in “Nectar In A Sieve”, is an idol of Indian woman and Indian mother. As the conservative and traditional belief of Indian people that children are the boon of a God. Rukmani has also six children and she suffers all difficulties and problems related to social, economical and individual for the sake of her own children. As a mother, she teaches them, nourishes them with providing all essential facilities and show her affection tenderly. Markandaya’s motherly feeling is the sequel to these Indian mothers. She is very near to Indian tradition and feelings while living abroad. Through her novels Markandaya has tried to reveal the positive and negative attitude of a mother towards their child as the feeling of both Indian and Britishers or Western. She is grieved to see the negative vision of an Indian mother and feels the breaking unconscious vision of modern Indian mother.

A.V. Krishna Rao points out, “Rukmani and Nathan, the peasant couple in a south Indian village are the victims of two evils. Zamindari System and the industrial economy”.⁸

The next chapter “Spirituality” deals with the spiritual conception of Indian people. India has been a spiritual country for a long time and many holy persons exist and preach to the world. So through the novels “A Silence Of Desire” and “Possession”, Markandaya expresses the religious and spiritual mind of Indian characters, how they believe in Sadhus and how they indulge to serve these Saints and Swamis leaving their own daily routine work they are ready to neglect their

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own children. Sarojini in “A Silence Of Desire” is such a character who forgets to fulfil her responsibilities towards her husband, children and family for the sake of a Swami and spent more and more time in the company of Swami. These novels show Markandaya’s spiritual thinking as she is also an Indian novelist. It shows Markandaya’s positive attitude of a religious person who helps the people in the developing of their whole point of view while the negative attitude of Sadhu deprives from the society and feels ashamed.

The chapter “Modernity” evaluates the prevailing modernity, modern habits, manners, ideas of the contemporary society and gives the views of both positive and negative development. It shows that both spirituality and modernity go together. As the time changes, new views and ideas are taking place and the new generation tries to compromise with old faith and new views. Through the novels “Two Virgins”, “Some Inner Fury”, “The Nowhere Man”, the novelists have tried to show the changing features of contemporary India that how the Indian people are copying the Western thinking and are adapting their ways of living, wearing and eating. If modernity shows the positive development of a people, it also disgraces the personality of a person. Lalitha in “Two Virgins” loses her graceful personality engaging with a modern man and its view of the film industry. She is puzzled to see the glamour of a film world and sinks in this false world.

“The first four novels are, effectively, first person narratives. Each novel is as organized as classical play. A microcosmic equilibrium is upset giving rise to a conflict; the focus is always on the main character, the plot is unfolded step by step, there is a rapid denouement after the climax”

The next chapter “Urban Influences” deals with the rural and urban problems and difficulties related to that area where Markandaya lived before marriage. She was the victim

of all these difficulties faced by the peasants and other people. Markandaya shows her own despair of rural India which is suffering from political, social, economical and individual problems even after the achievement of independence and different types of technical changes. Markandaya is a realist to depict the true picture of urban and rural areas of South India and tries to evaluate the aspect of suffering peasant woman who struggles alone and succeeds to win over all difficulties social and economical. It shows the 20th century as the new woman entering India. The main purpose of Markandaya is to show the image of modern India under the impact of various changes political, social, intellectual and cultural.

“The East- West conflict” is the major theme in the novels of Post- Independence novelist. Kamala Markandaya herself shows this conflict through her novels. She was born in the East and settled in West. She is well able to understand the racial conflicts, and faces difficulties to exist in this alien country. Her chief purpose to express the feeling of the people in an alien country and her novels deal with the tension between the two races and two countries.

Chapter 7th “Feminine Superior” shows the superiority of a woman over a man. Today's women are new woman. They have been changing in all walks of life. Today, nobody can bind them. They are free individually as well as economically. Being a woman novelist, Markandaya has expressed her own views and thought about women as they are progressing in all fields. She suggests to the woman to go ahead and win all fields.

Living in London, she has sympathy for the suffering Indian women and crisis over her misfortunes and plight. She depicts the condition of a widow. Aunt Alamelu lives under the protection of her brother and sister - in - law. She feels no positive attitude towards life. She has no freedom to express her opinions in the house, she has no status at home.

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A Tamil proverb says that **“a widow lives only to be a cook of another widower”**.¹⁰

A woman should have played different role in her life as wife, mother and sister. This role of a woman as wife and mother is directed toward attachment to family, submissiveness to husband, devotion to children and in the efficient management of the household. Markandaya, as a mother and wife, is also successful to achieve the aim to be the greatest novelist and her concern with the Indian woman to achieve those objects that they want to achieve. Her characters Lalitha, Rukmani, Sarojini are successful to achieve the aim, facing difficulties, they are never be discouraged.

Markandaya is very close to her characters. All the chapters deal with the documents as we find in the novelist also. Her novels deal with all these chapters. Her first novel “Nectar in a Sieve” 1954, treats the theme of hunger and starvation in Indian villages. It depicts the rural life of the south India. It reflects the real condition of peasant woman and farmers in the light of contemporary India. It tells the story of India that what was the picture of India after the independence. It shows the difficulties, suffering, disasters, desolation and problems of Indian peasants. It is a touching tragic novel, compared to Pearl S. Buck’s “The Good Earth” and Alan Paton’s “Cry, the Beloved Country”. It is a realistic chronicle of Rukmani’s family in particular and the sufferings of peasants in colonial India in general. Rukmani is the youngest of the four daughters of a village head man and is married at the age of twelve to Nathan. Her family is tortured by poverty, hunger, deprivation and starvation created not only by socio-economic factors but also by the vagaries of cruel nature. Rukmani was the hardworking and devoted wife of Nathan. She was willing to accept challenges in order to achieve her aims. Rukmani bore six sons and one daughter. Her daughter, Ira, resorts to prostitution to save the family from prostitution. Kuti, the youngest child of Rukmani,

dies of starvation. Her two sons Arjun and Thambi leave for Ceylon for work, and Raja, the third son, dies in a quarrel and at last they lost their land. Markandaya's second novel "Some Inner Fury" is entirely different from "Nectar in a Sieve".

Iyengar remarks "If Nectar In A Sieve recalls Venkataramani's Murugan the tiller, Markandaya's "Some Inner Fury" recalls his "Kandan the Patriot".¹¹

For the first time, Markandaya dramatises the East – West conflict. It is a novel of violence and destruction. Essentially, it is a political novel. It is also a tragic novel like "Nectar in a Sieve". The novel deals with political passions prevailing over love and justice. The clash between passion and patriotism is presented in the novel. The Inner Fury is suggestive of Indian passion for independence.

In regard of this, Margaret P. Joseph remarks, **"The myth of the white race being the elect of god was produced by the myth of the heathen who worshipped sticks and stones. Hence the white thought of himself as a 'father figure' with a mission to fulfil and this compensated for the reverse image, which was that he was guilty of the unashamed exploitation of the country".¹²**

The third novel "A Silence Of Desire" explores the theme of the clash between traditionalism and modernism, between faith and reason represented by Sarojini and Dandekar who form a married couple in the novel. This novel depicts the east – west encounter in the form of a conflict between the Indian spiritualism and the western modernism. The conflict between husband and wife represents the conflict between science and superstition.

As compared to the three earlier novels of Markandaya, "Possession" is by and large **"a disappointing novel"**.¹³ The locale of the novel shifts from India to England and America

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and again back to India. The story is related by Anusuya, an Indian novelist who goes to England in connection with the publication of her novels.

Caroline Bell, a young British woman 'rich, divorced, wellborn', visits India. She runs across the fourteen year old Valmiki, a rustic talented painter. She gives her patronage to Valmiki who, is needy and neglected, accepts it. She takes him to England and makes him a distinguished painter. During the visit of Swamy, Valmiki discovers that the letters showed to him were false. He leaves Caroline and begins to live with Annabel. But Caroline creates a crisis in the life of Valmiki. Being disappointed through such situations, he returns to India and refuses to return with Caroline. Caroline is a "Possessive" woman.

Thus the theme of the novel has a symbolic significance in the context of India's historical past. Just as India achieved its independence in order to establish a national identity, Valmiki also serves his ties with Caroline and becomes independent in order to gain his moral and artistic salvation.

"A Handful Of Rice", the fifth novel, is comparable to Bhabani Bhattacharya's "He who Rides a Tiger". Escaping the poverty and apathy of his village, Ravi comes to Madras with a view to living a better life. But contrary to his expectation the city offers him nothing but unemployment and frustration. He comes into contact with Damodar who introduces him to his gang that deals in smuggled goods. One night, he tries to escape a policeman, he forces his entry into the house of a tailor. This novel shows the personal failure and struggles of Ravi. "A Handful Of Rice" is an original product of Markandaya.

Markandaya's sixth novel, "The Coffer Dams" deals with East-West theme. It is laid in the jungle of south India. The novel deals with the conflict between material

versus spiritual values. Howard Clinton and Mackendrick, the partners of a large British engineering firm, began the construction of a dam across a south Indian turbulent river in Malnad. The young Helen, wife of Clinton, has a deep curiosity to know the country and its people. "The Great Dam" is finished the man-eater-like river "will have its flesh". The blast comes off prematurely, killing forty men, mostly tribals. Bashiam is asked to operate the crane to lift the heavy boulders to release the trapped corpses. But the defective crane collapses wounding Bashiam seriously. The novel, as a whole is a deeply disturbing protest against the simplicity and humanity of an earlier order of life.

"The Nowhere Man" is the most powerful and the maturest of the novels of Markandaya. It deals with the theme of east-west encounter through individual experience and relationship. The ambivalent relationship between India and England is realistically depicted in the novel through the experiences of individuals. The novel treats the tragic life of an elderly Indian immigrant. Srinivas, who spent half a century in England is compelled to feel like an outsider, an outcast. He and his wife, Vasantha, were forced to leave India, as their family was suspected of underground activities against the British rule in India. They settled down in England and their two sons, Laxman and Seshu were born there. Seshu is killed by a German shell during the war. Vasantha dies of tuberculosis, rendering Srinivas utterly lonely. A. V. Krishana Rao assesses the growth of Markandaya's genius in the following terms: **"The variety and quality of the 'felt life' in her fiction renders it label-proof in that it indicates the direction to a plausible resolution of, rather than offer definite solution to, human problems"**.¹⁴ Srinivas is compelled to consider himself "A Nowhere Man", an alien, despite his stay for fifty years in England. He contemplates suicide, Mrs. Pickering prevents him. He also gets afflicted with leprosy.

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Fred sets fire to the building, he dies of shock. This novel ends with tragedy.

The eighth novel “Two Virgins” has been rated as the weakest of all her novels. It has the theme of adolescence and growing up, of love and conflict between parents and children, of contrast between village and city. This novel is divided into six parts. In part I, Markandaya depicts the village background with Appa and Amma, their two daughters Lalitha and Saroja. In part II, Miss Mendoza, Lalitha’s school mistress, introduces her to Gupta, the film director who selects her to cast her in a documentary film he is making on the village. In part III, Lalitha goes to the city for the premiere of the film and attracts the lure of the glamorous film world. She hates her family. In part IV, She returns seduced. In part V, Lalitha’s parents meet Mr. Gupta. Mr. Gupta refuses to adopt Lalitha. He says, “Lalitha is a woman with the natural desires of a woman”. In part VI, Lalitha undergoes abortion successfully and leaves her parents.

The ninth novel “The Golden Honeycomb” is an immensely satisfying fictional piece. It is a momentous historical novel in which the novelist makes a remarkable fictional assessment of the Indo–British encounter. This novel is divided into three parts, each introduced by an epigraph. It differs from other earlier novels. Besides, the novel has a prologue and an epilogue, shedding light on the historical events.

“Pleasure City” 1982, the last novel written by Kamala Markandaya. The short review of the novels of Kamala Markandaya points to the fact that she is basically a novelist of feminine sensibility and undertakes to analyse the changing pattern of Indian sensibility, urban or rural, East-West conflict, Indian maternal feeling, feminine superiority, through feminine perspective. This effort obviously results in a very wide spectrum of episodic and character analysis. Though the

novelist believes in the advantageous values of modernization and globalisation yet she has firm faith in the pathological role of traditions and her different novels prove that people of a new colonial nation like India are basically struggling for an identity which is yet to be but in this search for new soil they uproot themselves completely from the existing system thereby enhancing their miseries manifold. Markandaya's different novels also presents the aspects of feminism which spread very fast in India after independence.

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II

The Maternal Instinct

“Janani Janmabhoomischa Swargadapi Gariyasi”

Woman, as the unique creation of the world, has different roles in her life daughter, sister, wife and mother. The role of mother is incomparable. Mother is love, Mother is peace, Mother is happiness, Mother is life, Mother is everything in the life of a child. A child can not live without its mother and a mother can not imagine a life without child. She bears a lot only for her child.

There is a charming myth connected with the creation of woman by Brahma who, in his generosity, wished to give man a companion. Since he had exhausted all the material in the creation of man, he borrowed several components from his beautiful creation, Nature, and made “Woman” out of them. Hence, the reference to woman as Prakriti. After abortive efforts on Man’s part, Brahma rebuked him, “If you cannot live with her ; neither can you live without her”.

This primordial myth carries an unmistakable implication of the need for continual adjustment in Man-Woman relationship; indeed this is the basis of all civilized relationships in life.

Manu, the law giver, often blamed for his many ‘misdeeds’ has exhorted, “Where women are honoured there

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the Gods are present.” But man has often been guilty in history of doing violence to something inviolable and rightly invited woman’s protest.

Like other instincts as love, anger, jealousy and sex, The Maternal is also unquestionably a instinct. It is generally found in all woman. A Psychologist’s analyses these instincts in “psycho-analytic”. Freud, Jung and Bergson are prominent psychologists who approach different types of instinct in their work. The psychological theories propounded by Freud and later by Jung and Bergson brought about a revolutionary change in the assessment of human behaviour. Freud’s findings were rooted in the theory of biological instincts. He affirmed that the unconscious plays a very significant role in shaping human conduct. Biological study is also a form of literature. This form may take place in Psychological or Psycho-Analytic theories that examine the author and the author’s writing in the frame work of Sigmund Freudian Psychological. The word **“Maternal”** means **“having feelings that are typical of a caring mother towards a child”**.¹

There is no relationship in the world so spontaneous, sacred and at the same time natural, as that of the child towards its mother. It is through the mother that a new life is shaped and released into the world. It is the warmth of a mother’s love that first puts its imprint on the offspring. “A mother who has no love for her child, is something abnormal, unnatural”. Hence the Acharya sings, “Kuputro jaayate chet kwachidapi kumaataa na bhavati”. (A bad son may be born but a bad mother is not possible.) How did the mother — the women — come to occupy such a high pedestal on the stage of this country’s cultural heritage? As a wife, she became the symbol of the glory and prestige of the family, the dharma of life in toto. In the life they lived, loving, adoring and worshipping nature, absorbing her laws and rhythm into their lives, woman played a distinctive role. As the woman entered motherhood and acquired the qualities of

self sacrifice and surrender, in addition to her infinite capacity to love and give, the love of a mother and motherland became one and the same and in the light of this unique relationship, man became naturally conscious of his 'family' duties and responsibilities towards his motherland.

In India too, both men and women writers have seen women in the relationship as mother, wife, mistress and sex object. Sociologists regard India as a traditionally male dominated society, where individual rights are subordinated to group or social role expectations. A woman's individual self has very little recognition and self-effacement is her normal way of life. An Indian woman too as a part of that set up has accepted it and lived with it for ages.

Meenakshi Mukherjee explains, the fiction of this period, "has turned introspective and the individual's quest for a personal meaning in life has become a theme of urgent interest for the Indo - Anglian writer".²

In the context of the woman novelist, Kamala Markandaya draws the picture of different roles of woman as - wife, daughter, sister, teacher and mother. She is a novelist who shows the motherly touch in a mother through her characters. The motherly touch as love, affection, tenderness, kindness, are to be seen in the characters like **Rukmani**, **"Nectar in a Sieve"**, **Mannikam's wife**, **"Two Virgins"**, **Nalini and Thangam**, **"A Handful of Rice"**, and **Sarojini**, **"A Silence of Desire"**. Rest of the novels lack in the description of mother.

In her paper on "The Images of Woman in Hindi Novels", Dr. Aruna Sitiesh, confining herself to post - independence novels, writes about revolutionary changes during the last fifty years. Most writers still see woman basically in the role of an ideal wife and mother. Although everyone agrees that women's exploitation should be stopped, the validity of the institution of marriage has not been questioned.

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Economic independence and Education gave rise to the New Woman, who is confident and articulate.

In Hindi fiction, writers see woman basically in the role of an ideal wife and mother. Most of the women themselves attach utmost value and dignity to their biological and social roles. Motherhood is generally seen as the fulfillment of one's personality and relationship.

Raja Rao, an Indian novelist in English, recreates the archetypal images in his novel, **“Woman is the earth, air, ether, sound; woman is the microcosm of the mind, The woman is fire, movement, clear and rapid as the mountain stream. To Mitra she is Varuna, To Indra she is Agni, To Rama she is Sita, To Krishna she is Radha. Woman is kingdom, Solitude, Time, Woman is growth, the woman is death for it is through woman that one is born; woman rules, for it is she, the Universe”**.³

Markandaya portrays the picture of mother only in four novels. Her mother characters have the motherly qualities like love, affection and modesty. Her mother is fortitude, facing difficulties and problems in life but never hopeless. Rukmani, Ira and Kunti are the main female characters. Rukmani is mother of six children. Being a mother, she takes care of children, teaches them as what she knows. She thinks - **“When my child is ready, ‘I thought now, ‘I will teach him too; and I practiced harder than ever lest my fingers should lose their skill”**.⁴

Indeed Rukmani is the mother figure in “Nectar in a Sieve”. Like in most Indian women, her strength lies in her innate capacity for compassion and sacrifice. It is true that she is not a match for the physical strength of a man. She herself admits that

“The land is the mistress to man, not to woman; the heavy work needed is beyond her strength”.⁵

But for Nathan she is an influence because he seeks in her peace, comfort and love. It is true that she is the mother figure in the novel.

The embodiment of such a mother figure is found in **Rukmani** in Kamala Markandaya's "**Nectar in a Sieve**". The single force that unites the whole structure of the novel is the character of the narrator Rukmani. She is not simply a village girl, a loving and devoted wife and a sacrificing mother. She has transcended these limited physical identifies to represent the universal mother figure. Kamala Markandaya has not confined Rukmani to any particular class, creed or convention. She is conceived as the encompassing, enduring, devoted, sacrificing, suffering, loving and forgiving mother figure.

Woman shapes her personality by a careful cultivation of certain virtues. Her strength lies essentially in her innate capacity for compassion and sacrifice. This strength may not be a match for man's physical might. Yet her influence on man is indeed great. He seeks in her love and peace, comfort and solace. Woman finds her utmost fulfillment in motherhood and that is her greatest achievement too.

Rukmani is the axis, the immovable, affirmative force around whom all the other characters in the novel revolve. She has no illusion in life, is disturbed by no desire or longing, her support does not waver. Rukmani is ever ready, ever attentive, to stoop, to render, to extend her eager heart to the person in need.

Rukmani has given birth and has known the intimate, umbilical bond of love that ties her to her children. She is constantly vexed by her failure to feed them. But when she finds Raja beaten to death, his limp, fragile body lain at her feet, her grief knows no bounds. The intensity of her sorrow and misery leaves her speechless.

Her silence is the silence of the deep sea. Under the calm, composed self is found the strong under current of pain and suffering. Violence is not her way. She can think of no calm, no compensation for her son's premature death.

In India, the birth of a male child is a joyous event. A male child is an asset to a family, growing up to work the land. The birth of a male child especially a first born is perceived by many Indians as a reflection of the father's masculinity. Being a conservative, Nathan wanted sons because sons would help him to work on the land. Rukmani, an Indian mother, bore a daughter Irawaddy. She remarked :-

"She was a fair child, lovely and dimpled with soft, gleaming hair. I do not know where she got her looks; not from me, nor from Nathan, but there it was; and not only we but other people noticed and remarked on it : I myself did not know how I could have produced so beautiful a child, and I was proud of her and glad even when people pretended to disbelieve that I could be her mother".⁶

As a caring mother her tender heart could not bear Ira's infertility and she took her to the doctor for medical treatment. Ira's husband remarks :- **"You gave me your daughter in marriage. I have brought her back to you. She is a barren woman".⁷** Nathan said, **"He is justified for a man needs children".⁸** Rukmani's approach was, **"My thoughts went to Kenny. He can help, I thought; surely he can do something. My crushed spirit revived a little".⁹**

Undoubtedly, Rukmani is a great woman, who plays all her roles as daughter, sister, wife and mother, endures all difficulties, famine, disasters, problems, coming in her life from her wedding till her husband's death.

"She is the eternal mother bound by love and affection to her hearth and home. Biologically, she is the receiver giving birth to human beings. Emotionally,

Philosophically and Spiritually to she is the absorber who imbibes everything that comes her way - joy, happiness, hardship, poverty, loss, pain, suffering - Nectar as well as poison. Her journey from home to her husband's house is her journey to motherhood".¹⁰

Rukmani is a victim of the tragic incidents in her life as - the death of Raja and Kuti, Ira's separation from her husband and her prostitution, Murugan's migration to the city, two sons migration to Ceylon and at last the death of Nathan, but she has fortitude and is very caring of her family. She is also a victim of the tragic moments in the city.

Kuti's struggle for life is pathetic. For a mother, to watch her little child gradually drift to his end, starving and suffering all his way, is too painful to bear. To Rukmani, misfortunes and sorrows are the essential ingredients of life.

Rukmani, therefore, has achieved the significance of universal motherhood. Everything that crosses her path is sieved through her kind, simple, tolerant, understanding, sympathetic and loving self.

Psychologists define two types of Mother. Normal and Abnormal. A normal mother having a motherly feeling and an abnormal are having no maternal feelings. Markandaya has also depicted two types of mother, one who has positive attitudes towards her child and those who have negative attitudes towards her child.

Rukmani, the mother figure, symbolizes the mother earth. The Earth is the virgin soil, the source, the origin, the well-spring. The life - giver, the supporter, the sustainer, the nourisher and even more, the last resort, the consoler, the healer. It is the positive, sustaining force of life. The mother Earth is ever present with outstretched arms to welcome all and sundry.

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Rukmani in “Nectar in a Sieve” is the Mother Earth. Her integrity is never on the brink of collapse. On the face of all calamities, she unfolds her lap to take in everything and everybody around her. She is the eternal mother figure.

Rukmani, the mother figure has positive attitudes while in “**Two Virgins**” there are women who are losing their motherly feelings. They are advanced, they don’t like to suckle their babies and sent them to Manikkam’s wife. Manikkam’s wife is provoked. **“I sell it, it flows, see how it flows: and she opened her bodic and squeezed the nipple between finger and thumb”**.¹¹ Manikkam’s wife bargains her own milk, She knows better that women **“Don’t want to spoil the shape of their breasts, which suckling did. They wanted to keep them round and firm for their husband”**.¹²

Markandaya has tried to show how today’s women are going to lose their motherly feelings through the novel ‘Two Virgins’. God has created mother, the great boon but now a days women are unable to provide this great boon to their child.

Amma (Two Virgins) is also an idol of a good mother. She loves her daughters and tries to develop her daughter in proper ways. She makes no difference whether they differ. Lalitha is more beautiful than Saroja but she said **“All our babies were beautiful, not a flaw or blemish on any of them”**.¹³

She objects to Lalitha when she draws attention towards the film city. She gives good direction but it is Lalitha’s fortune that she became a film actress and spoiled herself. Saroja follows the ideals of her mother, Indian culture and understands the changing condition of society and compromises with those situations. She hates the city because modernity in the city influenced Lalitha.

Prof. K.R.Srinivas Iyengar's (1908) epic in English 'Sitayana' 1987 is a striking example of it in recent times. It is a fresh recital of the Ramayana in English - from Sita's angle - sitary charitam mahat - Sita's sublime saga".¹⁴

In his view, it is a presentation complementary in the traditional Rama - Sita story and not repugnant to Valmiki's 'Itihasa'. There is a tilt in Sita's favour for he gives equal importance to Sita's point of view and "make up for the imbalance in the original". Sitayana opens refreshingly enough saying;

"Of Womanhood, I write/ of the travails/ And glory of motherhood/ of Prakriti and her infinite modes".

Prof Srinivas Iyengar, however makes it clear that he has no feminist designs. His Sita is not a rebel; she fits into the old pattern and remains within the same parameters but with understanding and voluntary acceptance.

Markandaya's other novels "A Handful Of Rice" and "A Silence Of Desire" cover the maternal instinct of a woman. Nalini and Thangam in "A handful of rice" show their inner feelings and attachment towards their children. Nalini has two daughters and a son and when her son suffers, Nalini a mother feels, "He is no better", she said worriedly, indicating the sleeping child. I think a doctor.¹⁵ and what happens when her son died, she "felt only a stiffness, she had nothing to offer him except her stiffness".¹⁶

Sarojini (A Silence of Desire) has daughters Ramabai and Lakshmi. Like Lalitha in (Two Virgins), Ramabai also longs to be a film star. Dandekar likes his daughters and tries to fulfil all their needs. "A Silence of Desire" explores the theme of the clash between traditionalism and modernism, between faith and reason represented by Sarojini and Dandekar "Sarojini had been

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a realist, she was a good wife, good with the children, an excellent cook, an efficient manager of his household, a woman who still gave him pleasure after fifteen years of marriage, He was lucky there”.¹⁷ **Dandekar** “was very fond of his daughters, Lakshmi who was, ten her face still rounded in the contours of childhood, but lanky limbed, and Ramabai, nearly twelve. She put both bangles on one wrist now, in the new way, instead of one on each as her mother did”.¹⁸

Markandaya’s depiction of motherhood in “A Silence of Desire” shows other aspects of a woman Sarojini disturbs herself through some traditional views. She spent time in the company of Swami to cure her tumour. She is careless towards her family and children, but a father like Dandekar has the maternal feelings, who cares for his children in his own way. But a mother is a mother and at times daughters like Ramabai in (A Silence of Desire) need a mother. Dandekar said kindly to Ramabai “come along now, lie down and I’ll find you some aspirin’ but to his surprise. She shrank back” Dandekar said gently, “Is the pain bad? Just tell me”. Ramabai said “I want my mother”.¹⁹ He knelt beside her, meaning to draw her close, but again she shrank away. “You mustn’t come near”.²⁰ Dandekar realized the place of a mother, “He gazed helplessly at his daughter’s tear - soaked face. Her mother should be here, he thought, there’s nothing I can do, it’s not my place”.²¹ He had managed to make her smile, but his own heart was heavy. “All men are fools when it comes to their children”.²²

Home is the cooking pot where the ingredients of character are blended together by the Mother, supervised by the father, supported by the relatives and nurtured by the neighbours. The result could be a Shankaracharya, a Jesus or a Hitler, a Saint a MAN or a Brute. When homes are shattered naturally, our bigger home, the Earth, is broken to pieces. A mother is indeed the first window through which a

child looks at the world, through which visions and perceptions enter into a child. If that window is broken, dust - covered or opaque, so will be the vision of the child, fragmented, patchy, caricatured. How important then that the mother - window be ever kept clean and transparent, affording wholesome panoramic views of the world beyond?

Jayamma in (*A Handful of Rice*), is a worthless lady - neither a good mother nor a good wife. She is selfish, greedy, cruel, mean and a lustful woman, who only cares for her joys and comforts. Mother must be able to feel the pulse of all her family members - husband, in laws, children, their friends, servants and others. She must specialize in the art of holding the family together. The relationship between mother and child is so pure that no body can think negative, but few of them have negative views between the relationship of Mother - in - law and Son - in - law. A mother is a mother whether it is ones own or in law and a son is a son whether it is ones own or law. Markandaya's novel **"A Handful of Rice"** indicates such negative relationship between a Mother - in - law and Son - in - law. Jayamma is a lustful woman who often admires Ravi's masculinity and is attracted towards him **"But going deeper which she could hardly bring herself to do, she knew that what really troubled her was the lust that had risen in her like a tide, the surging exultation that gluttoned her as she felt her blows falling on his flesh"**.²³ Jayamma liked her 'handsome son - in - law'. **"Jayamma at first was concerned for her daughter, but when she realized there were no real injuries she held her peace. In all the years of their married life Apu had never once raised his hand to her, but then, she thought, with the faint contempt. She still bore her husband, which even his death had not expunged, in that way Apu had never been much of a man. She shivered a little thinking of Ravi's masculinity; and there was even the seed of a thought in her mind, though she would not let it grow,**

that in her daughter's place she would have welcomed her wounds".²⁴

Ravi knows about it and one day he tries to rape her. Jayamma refuses him to do so, then he replies, **"No, why should I? You've wanted it for months, for years. All the time you lay with your husband. Every time you looked at me - Do you think I don't know how you have been starved ?"**²⁵

As a novelist Kamala Markandaya is a typical representative of the feminine sensibility. She shows greater power and insight in portraying women characters. Rukmani, the narrator heroine in her first novel "Nectar in a Sieve" is a powerful tragic character. She is elevated to the sublime dignity of a **Mother of Sorrows**. She suffers shock after shock but she does not accept defeat. Her husband Nathan betrays her, her daughter indulges in flesh - trade to save the family from starvation and her child Kuti, dies. She is forced to leave her village. Markandaya minutely and realistically portrays her psychic condition when Rukmani along with her husband, Nathan, leaves her village with a heavy heart. **"This home my husband had built for me with his own hands — In it we had lain together, and our children had been born. This hut with all its memories was to be taken from us".²⁶**

She represents a large mass of unprivileged and helpless women in rural India. They are unrewarded for their labour. They are apt to bear injustice and inhuman treatment as if it is their destiny. Rukmani and her peasant family face every conceivable problem brought on by a cruel and also by equally cruel and unjust social order. The novelist not only shows the miserable life of common rural masses but

wants to hit at the unjust existing social and economic order of rural India society.

K.J.Patel states the revealing statistics :

“Woman constitute half of the worlds population and one third of the official labour force; perform nearly two thirds of the hours worked but according to some estimates (based on UN, ILO statistics) received only one tenth of the world’s income and possess less than one hundred of the world’s property”.²⁷ Rukmani feels nostalgic about the past and sees **“A black - rimmed orange glow against which floated images of the past - my sons, Ira, the hut where we lived and the fields we had worked”.**²⁸

This reflects their intense emotional attachment to the life giving, life - sustaining. Mother Earth where they have been born and brought up and sowed and harvested and tilted continuing the process of procreation and creation. It shows their love of dust.

A Writer remarks that a bride at 12, Rukmani is a mother at 13, mother of six children at 24, old at 40. Put bluntly in this manner the ages shock one; but Kamala Markandaya weaves the fact so evenly into the story that one sympathetically realizes that tropical flowers in their natural state blossom early, wither soon and yet retain a clinging fragrance”.

Like Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya, **“Markandaya is also a humanist novelist believing in the betterment of human lot in particular and social amelioration in general. She has instead a firm conviction that literature must be purposive and play a significant role in the amelioration of humanity. But it does not mean that she is a propagandist”.**²⁹

Nature is the source of all knowledge. Wordsworth, the great nature poet observes nature as a mother, nurse,

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guide and teacher. “Lucy Gray’, an imagined girl, developed in proper way in the company of Nature”.

“The anchor of my purest thoughts, the/ nurse, The guide, the guardian of/ my heart, and soul of all/ my moral being”.³⁰

There are the other aspects of mother in ‘Some Inner Fury’. A modern mother who has less time to care for children but has time to spend over modern things. Mira’s mother often goes to play bridge and to keep her father company.

Ira in (Nectar in a Sieve) became a prostitute only to feed the child. But unable to see her child brother, Kuti slowly dying of starvation. Later she gives birth to an albino son, thus casting slur on the family’s fair name. Commenting on the situation, **K. R. Chandrasekharan** rightly remarks, **“The sad recourse of Ira in Nectar in a Sieve to prostitution in a desperate attempt to save her dying child - brother is a revelation of how immorality is born out of sheer poverty”.**³¹

A woman who thrown under the shackles of her petty womanishness has imbibed the universality of spirit embodied in her ‘femininity’ can be trusted upon to carry out the badly needed restoration of ‘life’ inside and ‘nature’ outside. All women must learn that the essence of their being is not ‘womanishness’ but ‘femininity’. The former is linked with all womanish weaknesses such as gossip - mongering, selfishness, narrow mindedness, petty jealousies, self - assertiveness and so on. A woman should, with maturity, learn to manifest the sweetness and fullness of motherhood whether physically she attains motherhood or not.

It is necessary that rural women be awakened to new realities, challenges and opportunities. For this, a university education is not needed, technical training is not necessary, nor possession of any of the sophisticated skills. Only their

instructive motherliness - sum total of their capacity to love, sacrifice and serve has to be awakened. Their essential femininity is to be invoked, their spiritual core should be touched. That is all.

In the context of different types of women, Markandaya shows the different qualities of a mother. She depicts peasant women, lustful women, spiritual women traditional women having motherly feelings.

“Many literary analysts have suggested that the value of suffering is an important component of Markandaya’s novels because she portrays her positive woman characters as ideal sufferers and nurtures”.

Rukmani, a peasant and traditional woman having motherly care, love and affection. She has fortitude facing difficulties but never hopeless towards her responsibilities. She is an ideal mother for the contemporary India. Jayamma, a lustful woman and mother, is a sore. Speaking about Ravi’s mother - in - law, Joseph comments : **“Ravi calls his mother - in - law (at different times) a bitch, a sow, an old cow, a mannygoat, and these names reveal a good deal about her character, for springing from Ravi sub conscious, they are terms suggestive of sexual frustration and animal lust, and culminate in the description of her reaction to incest. Taken together the derogatory nature of this animal terminology stresses the overall pessimism implied in the symbol of the jungle”.**³²

Parameshwaran adds that In late 1970s, when I contacted the editor of the world Author series about a volume on Markandaya, I was told it had been assigned already to someone else. Several years later, when I wrote again to ask why the volume had not appeared, I was told that the assigned critic could not get the biographical details required for the first chapter in each volume in their series. Amazingly enough, despite biographical notes by various

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critics, (Premila Paul, Martin Tucker, Rekha Jha, Ruth Montgomery), we still do not know too many details about her life. Despite meeting her several times, I forgot to ask for her husband's first name. Her daughter has been identified as 'Kim' by Montgomery, but in our conversations, Markandaya referred to her by her Indian name I mention this lack of specifics because it seems to be so much part of the Indian tradition of temple sculptures where the sculptor left exquisite masterpieces but nothing about himself, not even a name.

Some of Markandaya's heroines assert themselves in their new culture and do not succumb to their elders. Such girls like Mira, Premala and Sarojini only come to grief. Another important aspect of woman that features in the author is that of mother and mother-in-law. In Markandaya, the mother image is glorified in the Indian tradition. A mother of sons becomes venerable and feels fulfilled. While those with girls feel only a sense of loss. But with daughters the role of the mother is always protective one. It is relevant to note here that the attitudes of the two authors may be seen in their own relation to India - one, a daughter of India and the other a daughter-in-law.

Thematically the novels, have been validated but what adds to their literary worth is the use of language. Markandaya confesses that she polishes her sentences endlessly till perfection. One can attribute that exuberance in her language to her "Indianness" - a craving for colour, vitality and music. By its very quality it makes her readable to the point of enchantment.

Markandaya portrays both positive and negative mother, Anita Desai also portrays female characters like Nirode who suffers from mother fixation, he hates his mother who after the death of her alcoholic husband becomes the mistress of Major Chadha. Kunti in (Nectar in a Sieve), a mother, becomes a prostitute. She likes a luxurious life. Kamala Markandaya also a mother, having a daughter Kim, successes

in the depiction of mother. She has no difficulty to arise the inner feeling of mother. Markandaya's novels depicts the mother characters as loving, caring, affectionate mother and those who are losing their motherly feelings and touches. She is worried to see what will be the vision of Indian woman if they are being indifferent towards their child.

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III

Spirituality

The word “Spiritualism” means the belief that departed spirits communicate with men, the doctrine that all which exists is spirit or soul”.¹ Spiritual is a divine spirit concerned with religious thing. It is against materialism. There is a contrast between the spiritual and materialistic life. The Spiritual life is a divine, holy, life of order and value while the materialistic life is a rootless, unstable, isolated, individual disintegrated personality. Materialism makes man blind to the spiritual and inspires him to devote himself whole heartedly to the satisfaction of bodily wants and to attain financial success, social status etc.

Whenever the industrial revolution led to gross materialism and modernity prevailed the foundations of man's spirituality were shaken. Spiritual values were ignored because they could find little comfort in them; an absence of minimum material resources. On the other hand, material progress made at the cost of spiritual values, only brought misery and inequality and gave little happiness to the masses. Spiritualism and modernism are two distinctive words. They don't go together. If we are too spiritual, we cannot be too modern and a too modern person cannot be too spiritual. Having modern views and notions, a person can approach the spiritual,

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so he can enagage in the society.

Kamala Markandaya, an Indo Anglian Novelist reveals her spiritualism through her novels. Her novels "A Silence Of Desire" and "Possessions" draw the figure of swami, a religious person which denotes the positive and negative approach towards spirituality. Kamala Markandaya's Possession brings us back to the realm of spirituality. Perhaps, in the light of India's changing economic character, with market forces being allowed to take control, the thesis that Indian Spirituality is superior to western materialism needs to be reviewed and reexamined. Moreover, it is doubtful, whether the novelist herself intends to view the problem in terms of such binary opposites. In our opinion, "Possession" is a complex novel in which the author intends to expose the Swamy as much as she does Caroline, for ultimately the motives of the Swamy in reclaiming Valmiki are suspect. The architect of such a forward looking approach was of course, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who hoped that while India retained its ancient values, it would also imbibe and assimilate those qualities of the west that would put it on the path of progress and modernity.

Like possession in Anita Desai's 'bye bye black bird' too, we have a fine example of "East - West".

When we talk about spirituality, we discuss about renunciation also. It is always an Indian ideal in the life of a man. Mostly Indian novelists deal their novels with this ideal. Indo - Anglian Novelist Raja Rao was a philosopher and his novels deal with philosophy, spiritualism and renunciation. The conclusions of "The Serpent and The Rope" and "The Dark Dancer", in spite of the differences in their themes, techniques and levels of meanings have one basic similarity. Krishnan, the protagonist of Rajan's novel finds ulimate peace through suffering. After the death of his wife, his desire, passion, quest for happiness and concern for belonging

all are left behind. He emerges a freer and a more detached man. He no longer worries about his identity or his goal in life. A new equanimity replaces the previous tension and pangs of adjustment. The quotation from the “Bhagavad Gita” that appears on the last page of the novel is not without some significance when we notice the recurrence of the same ideal in so many other Indo-Anglian novels.

“He who seeks freedom/Thrusts fear aside/Thrusts aside anger/And puts off desire/ Truly that man/ Is made free forever”.

In “The Serpent and the Rope”, the conflicts and tensions are of a different nature, but the final solution comes again through renunciations. **Meenakshi Mukherjee** remarks, **“Be it renunciation of worldly goods and possessions, or the renunciation of selfish motives, passion and emotional bondage. Like all ideals it is a distinctly difficult condition attainable only by a very few. In real life, one hardly ever sees an ideal realised. But in Literature, it is not impossible to create a credible individual by the complete realisation of all the fragmentary attributes one sees in different human beings”.**²

The realisation of a “Jivan Mukta” as has been defined in “Yoga Vasistha”.

“The Jivan – Mukta state is that in which the saint has ceased to have any desires – He may be doing all kinds of actions externally, though he remains altogether unaffected by them internally ——— He is full of bliss and happiness, and therefore appears to ordinary eyes to be an ordinary happy man ——— He is wise and pleasant and loving to all with whom he comes in contact ——— though unaffected within himself, he can take part in the enjoyment of others, he can play like a child

and can sympathise with the sorrows of sufferers”.³

Although this definition appears in “Yoga Vasistha”, the concept of a man enjoying a superior bliss through detachment and inner calm appears in many other Sanskrit philosophic texts (Advaita Vedanta or the Bhagvad Gita, for example). In the Bhagvat Gita the description of the Sthita - Prajna comes very close to the definition of the Jivan - Mukta. It must be remembered however that the Jivan - Mukta or the Sthita - Prajna is not necessarily a man who has renounced the world. He could very well be a man living among the temptations of life, and doing many things that ordinary men do, and still be different internally. This is a fundamental and all pervasive ideal of Indian life, an ideal that cuts across the boundaries of language and regional culture, and as such it becomes a motif that can be traced in Indo - Anglian novels profitably. This Indian ideal is derived evidently from Sanskrit Sources, but it has permeated all levels of society and even people who may not be able to formulate the ideal in words have an instinctive respect for the qualities that comprise it. A different kind of contrast is developed in Anita Desai’s first novel, “Cry, The Peacock”. Maya the central figure is alive through all her senses and lives intensely for each moment. In R.K.Narayan’s novels it is possible to trace this ideal unobtrusively in behind certain situations and characterization. In some translations of Indian philosophical texts, the “Jivan-Mukta” has been called a ‘Saint’ in English but one must use the word ‘Saint’ in the Indian context with caution because of its existing Christian associations. In Narayan’s novel however Gandhi corresponds also to the idea of a Christian Saint in becoming a martyr, he accepts a cruel death like Christ’s to redeem the suffering of others. Later, in “The Guide” the martyr motif is reiterated with a different emphasis in the character of Raju, who was

very far from being a Jivan - Mukta Purush in his life.

The fictional characters referred to so far are men who live in this world and yet strive for detachment from it. But a large number of spiritual aspirants in Indo - Anglian fiction seem to be actual ascetics who have renounced this world. In the survey of Indian fiction K.R.Srinivas Iyengar remarked on the important part "Sannyasis" have always played in Indian fiction. Talking of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's early novel (Anandmath 1882) **Prof. Iyengar wrote : "In this and other novels, Bankim introduced (Sannyasis) (wandering ascetics) into the story - and, like the widow, the sannyasi too, often figures in Indian fiction, sometimes as a beneficent and sometimes as a malevolent influence".⁴**

Prof. Iyengar placed emphasis on the influence these ascetics have on other people's lives, and not on the ascetics themselves as central fictional characters.

There are other novels, Kamala Markandaya's "A Silence of Desire" where the Sadhu has a more complex and ambiguous function. The ascetics who influence the other characters in a benign way are a common feature of Indo - Anglian novels. They often solve problems raised by worldly men or bring peace to a troubled situation. This is the simplest pattern seen in novels as different as Bhabani Bhattacharya's "A Goddess Named Gold", Sudhindranath Ghose's "The Flame Of The Forest" and Kamala Markandaya's "Possession". The Swami of Kamala Markandaya's Possession appears vague and shadowy. He is hardly a living character, but he represents the other side in the tug of war for the possession of Valmiki. Lady Caroline Bell stands on one side. She claims to have discovered the artistic talents of the young goat herd, Valmiki and therefore she has a right over him. The swami was Valmiki's guide and mentor before the English woman found him but

he makes no claim to him. Eventually, however, he wins in the tug of war because Valmiki, after his global tour, fame and publicity, chooses to come back to his obscure South Indian village to the cave where the swami lives. The conflict here is simple, almost predictable; between possession and renunciation, between wealth and fame on the one hand and freedom and obscurity on the other. The figure of swami in possession is that of **“The holy man — he was deep in meditation when we came, a thin, muscular figure with not an ounce of spare flesh anywhere, not a stitch of clothing on his body, a man probably of middle years”**.⁵

The author weakens the impact of the novel by making the contrasts too clear cut, a solid black and white, cast in the now thread bare pattern of the spiritual East encountering the materialistic West. The over simplification is rather surprising because in a previous novel, “A Silence Of Desire”, Kamala Markandaya had very sensitively depicted the nuances of relationship between the spiritual and non-spiritual spheres of life.

Hinduism is the dominant religion in India. Islam and Christianity also are practiced. When India was partitioned in 1947, most of the Muslims moved to what is now Pakistan. Some, however, remained in India. The practice of Hinduism is filled with ceremonies and rituals. On different occasions Hindus pray to the Various Gods and Goddesses. Hindus observe many festivals during the year. One such festival is Deepawali or Festival of Lights which occurs almost in all her novels. Hindus worship the plant ‘Tulsi’ which expresses the spirit of spiritualism, occurs in the very beginning of the novel “A Silence Of Desire”.

“In the middle of which stood the divine tulsi that his wife worshipped. It was a small evergreen plant, crammed into bright and decorative brass in which it languished, surviving without health, but with a sharp, imperious smell that made you forget its looks – a smell

that clings to your hands until you had washed and scrubbed, and even after, and could haunt you if you did not pray”.⁶

Dandekar did not pray (Tulsi) because it is only a plant not a god but everybody has its own way to worship the God and **“it was a symbol of God, Whom one worshipped, and it was necessary that God should have symbols”.**⁷

Each spiritual object has a power which shows the rays of sparkling universality at a time and Dandekar stared at the ‘tulsi’ plant and found something different than other days - “Its glossy green leaves were almost black in the gloom but the polished brass of its stand caught and reflected every stray gleam of light. It was particularly bright tonight”.

Dandekar was shocked that his wife worshipped before the photograph of an unknown man. **“She kept a photograph of him in a locked trunk. She had set up a portrait of him and bedecked it as if it were some kind of God. Was this man, then, some kind of God to her? Physically, Spiritually?”**⁸

In Possession, the Swami wins the battle because he does not try, because he has reached that state where pleasure or pain, victory or defeat makes no difference. The identity of the Swami is ambiguous. Is he really a Swami or a Charlatan? This question arises when a reader reads this novel. Dandekar was puzzled at the relation between Swami and Sarojini. The faith of Sarojini in the Swami was too deep that she refused to go to the hospital to cure the disease. She says -

“To you the tulsi is a plant that grows in the earth like the rest - an ordinary common plant. And mine is a disease to be cured and so you would have sent me to hospital and I would have died there”.⁹ and **“One did not worship by the clock God was there and one stayed until one had found some peace”.**¹⁰ Dandekar was disturbed

because his wife believed in the Swami and went there to cure the tumour. Dandekar wanted to clear the reality of the Swami and he took help officially. **“He stood up, indignant with himself, meaning to march upto the Swamy, but at the same moment the Swamy rose, almost as if he had anticipated the move, and beckoned him forward”**.¹¹ and **“Guided him into the cool inner room”**.¹² The Swami’s question about his coming here and getting his help. Dandekar remarks, **“She believes in you, she comes to you ———— you can stop her coming”. Why?”**¹³ asked Swami. Dandekar knew the answer but he found it extremely difficult to speak, **“Because she is ill” “she must go into hospital have an operation”**.¹⁴ When Dandekar advises her to go in for a scientific cure Sarojini refuses.

In what way did the Swami stop Sarojini to come here asked Swami, **“If you wish your wife to be treated in hospital why do you not tell her so”**.¹⁵ Dandekar replied, **“she won’t listen”**¹⁶ Dandekar could not understand about the Swami. Shastri asked, Is he a charlatan? Is it possible that he’s genuine? I don’t know said Dandekar. I don’t think he’s a Charlatan.

In this world, we find Swami, Saint and Sannyasi, but whether they are true or false we cannot recognise them. It is only faith that they are respected and worshipped. Few of them are truly Saints and they help us unselfishly. Their views, ideas and notions are universal, filled with humanity. Dandekar was helpless he could not prevent Sarojini from going there. **“He left his easy chair and began pacing the courtyard up and down in front of the tulsi, Presently he stopped. If you were god, he said to the dark - leaved tree, you would tell me what to do, show me the way”**.¹⁷

There is no ambiguity in Anand’s attitude to the holy man he creates. But in Kamala Markandaya’s “A Silence Of Desire” the author’s stand towards the spiritual powers of the swami remains complex and elusive to the end. At first

the Swami's influence appears to be malevolent, because it breaks up a normal comfortable domestic life. Sarojini, a traditional Hindu woman, a good mother and a submissive wife, suddenly becomes distant and incomprehensible. Dandekar, who is a clerk in a Government office, feels that this stable universe is shaken because his wife has withdrawn himself from the family. At first, it is sexual jealousy that drives him mad, but later his wife confesses that she goes to a Swami in order to be cured of a growth in her womb. When Dandekar asks her why she kept this a secret Sarojini answers :- **"Because you would have stopped me going to be healed — yes you. You would have sent me to a hospital instead called me superstitious, a fool, because I have beliefs that you cannot share. You wouldn't let me until I lost my faith because faith and reason don't go together and without faith I shall not be healed"**.¹⁸

This becomes the crux of the conflict between faith and rationalism, a very significant issue in the context of Indian society today. The gulf between husband and wife widens. The wife completely ignores her household duties, the hungry children come back to an empty house and the tightly balanced economy of the family is disturbed because Sarojini begins to give away to the Sadhu whatever money or jewellery she can lay her hands on.

"Compulsion is the beginning of corruption The Swamy looked at him steadily, holding him so that there was no escape. It is an eating away of the spirit of whoever does it and whoever has it done to him. Is that what you want".¹⁹ Dandekar wants to confront the enemy who is destroying his peace and his happiness. He walks long miles, crosses a river and arrives in the village to see this Swami whose baleful influence has blighted his life. When he actually meets the man he finds that he can hold nothing against him. Dandekar feels a calm, a peculiar detachment from the everyday affairs of life in the presence

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of the Swami but he knows this to be only temporary. Dandekar has the same feeling of rising above the body and the worries of the world when he meets the Swami for the second time. But once he comes away from him he feels **“the pains, crept back, the worry, the misery, the lust for gold chains and silvercups”**.²⁰ He tries desperately to get Sarojini away from the Swami because he realizes “Our worlds do not mix. It is disastrous to try make them”. The activities of the Swami appeared ambiguous as Dandekar approaches, “It’s my wife. It’s not even her, it’s the Swamy. He had started now, the stark sentences came easily. She has a growth, she believes he can cure her, she goes to him more and more, she seems to have no strength except what she can get from him, she gives him whatever she can - clothes, food, money as much as she can lay her hands on, whenever she leaves everything to go to him - the children, me, our home. These things were her world but”.

At last the Swami went to somewhere. Nobody knows where he went. **“Was the Swami, a charlatan or a Saint? He could not make up his mind. Heart spoke one way, head the other and sometimes the two changed places”**.²¹ Different views were made by the villagers as **“he’s a fraud an imposter, a man who preys on the credulous of whom there are so many in the south. He’s an out and out imposter”**.²²

“A Silence Of Desire” is built around issues relating to tradition and change, faith and a scepticism attach to modern, mainly western derived attitude. Dandekar’s expectations of what life is and ought are revised by the experience he undergoes in the novel.

Madhusudan Prasad remarks - “The Chief thematic tensions in “A Silence Of Desire” issue from a conflict between deeply held faith and that insistence on what is

broadly described as rational explanation and behaviour”^{.23}

In *Possession*, The Swamy, the surrogate father of Valmiki, valuing his disciple's freedom to do what he liked, asked him. “Do you want to go still”? and then added, “If you want to, you must”. Valmiki had come to attain that serenity which the Swamy had already achieved. The Swamy had toured the world, returned to the same wilderness where he could contemplate on freedom, show compassion to the rejects of society, and live in peace with himself. Valmiki's own growth as an artist in terms of loss and restoration of his spiritual nature confirms the view that there was no stasis in that wilderness despite apparent stagnation; there was a movement within, a kind of agitation that refused to be limited to the physical and the mundane what the Swamy cared for and Valmiki realised was that what mattered was the spirit and not the body, the vision and not the vista, the creation and not the clod.

This is the essence of Indian Philosophy, which pervades the modern consciousness. Obviously, therefore, the Swami symbolizes the presence as much as the continuity of the values by which our ancestors lived. Although the same age as Caroline, the Swamy, like Shankaracharya, was ‘Jitendriya’, master of his senses. The choice between Caroline and the Swamy was as hard as the choice between the flesh and the spirit, the illusion and the essence. Valmiki opted for the harder path to be true to himself, for he knew that mere sensuality leads nowhere.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes : “The distress of Arjuna is the dramatisation of a perpetual recurring predicament. Man on the threshold of life, feels disappointed with the glamour of the world and yet illusions cling to him and he cherishes them. He forgets his divine ancestry and becomes attached to his personality and is agitated by conflicting forces of the world. Before he wakes up to the world of spirit and accepts the obligations imposed by it

he has to fight the enemies of the selfishness and stupidity, and overcome the dark ignorance of his self centered ego. Man cut off from spiritual nature has to be restored to it. It is the evolution of the human soul that is portrayed here. There are no limits of time and space to it”.²⁴

The purpose of art should be sacred and holy, it reveals the inner bright circle. In “Possession”, Caroline was unable to accept self-expression as the purpose of art, and therefore was unable to see and appreciate this revelation of the inner self of Valmiki in his later paintings. She saw him only as “a wasted man”, wasting his work in the wilderness of India. The Swamy, on the other hand, maintained that there is no waste in the work man does “to glorify his God” and in support of his contention he said:- **“There are Temples, Churches, Cathedrals — men have put all they possessed into their building and adornment but the names of the creators are lost — yet even you, lady Caroline would not look on it as squandered labour”.**²⁵

In Caroline’s opinion, the purpose of art was imitation and communication, and it was necessary for it to be shared by an audience. And the larger the audience, the better it was for the artist, she maintained. On the contrary, the Swamy believed that creation was its own justification as it was service to God, the great creator. In the tradition of Indian art and literature which has celebrated the artist’s anonymity as a mark of humility. The cave paintings of Ajanta, sculptures of Ellora or friezes of innumerable temples are here the obvious references. The basic differences between Caroline’s views and those of the Swamy - the western and the eastern views of art - is seen here in terms of what it does to the audience or to the artist. Anusuya was not a critic, nor did she demonstrate any special talent - she wrote for various agencies mostly on a commission basis. And yet she was a writer of some distinction. Anusuya who had travelled around

the globe “had a puritan streak” within her which with held her from accepting the west “as a passionate preference”. But she knew that to Valmiki and the Swamy, the two “spiritual nomads”, circumspection in any sense was unacceptable.

The author scrupulously avoids taking sides in the conflict. Just as one can sympathise with poor Dandekar whose orderly life is threatened with ruin from a power that he cannot fight, so one can admire Sarojini’s strength in standing alone in her faith. From an ordinary passive wife she becomes a woman with a will of her own, a will that happens to be different from her husband’s. In this struggle the Swami has only a vague distant part. He is brought before the reader only one two or three occasions, and on none of these occasions what he has to say is of much significance.

A Critic observes that Sarojini places all her faith in the Swami, surrendering her meagre wealth, her time, even her will power to him yet, when he leaves, she does not break, she accepts his decision and returns to her old routine.

There is a strong and obvious element of sex in their relationship, and yet there is as strong and obvious an element of sexuality. No word or touch of love passes between them. Rukmani, Premela and Sarojini are absolutely faithful in thought, word and deed to their husbands. Sex does not figure in their action or desires in their dealings with the men they hold so dear, and in the case of Rukmani and Sarojini one sees that it is a bond in the consideration of which sexual thoughts and acts are irrelevant. Yet it is a bond that would not exist if they did not belong to opposite sexes. Their relationship might seem unnatural to some, but in their social and cultural setting it is not uncommon or incomprehensible. They move on a different plane of chastity. This spiritual love is finely brought out in ‘Nectar In A Sieve’. From first to last Rukmani is bound to the English doctor, Kennington. He attends on her dying mother. It is not

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just gratitude and sympathy that bind them but mutual admiration and friendship. Her joy at seeing him is spontaneous. When she learns that he has returned after a long absence she drops her marketing and flies to him, garland in hand, as a beloved would to a lover.

The love that Sarojini bears the Swami is even more ethereal than Rukmani's feeling for Kenny. But its consequences are more material because her husband is drawn into the vortex of the attachment. Though she is just one of the scores around him. Sarojini is deeply and individually involved with the Swami. Her faith in his powers of healing is implicit and unquestioning. His touch on her head, she believes, will dissolve the tumour in her womb. A look, a smile, a word from him is enough to strengthen her. She ignores her house, her children, her daily routine. She upsets the equilibrium of her married life. She steals from the family silver to contribute to his fund. Then she throws caution to the winds and becomes completely indifferent to her family, spending her days at his ashram and her nights in solitude and prayer. Yet it is not physical love.

The Swami has some solace to offer to individuals who are torn by worries. Even a sceptic like Dandekar does not question the Swami's power to bring tranquillity as long as one is in his presence. But Dandekar reasons that **"his reality is not our"**.²⁶ Since one can not remain with him forever, and since the worries and frustrations return as soon as one comes away from him. It is practical wisdom to stay away from a man who disrupts the even tenor's of one's daily life. To Sarojini, however, the tenor of daily life has ceased to matter. She does not mind the children going hungry or dust gathering on the floor because these are insignificant matters compared with the deeper wisdom and peace she has received from the Swami.

The situation reaches an impasse. In order to bring about a solution, the interference of an outside agent becomes

necessary, and this outside agent comes in the shape of Dandekar's superior officer Chari. To him Dandekar pours out his woes when Dandekar wails, "I want my wife back" Chari wants to know if his wife has really left him. "She is still with me" said Dandekar "but it's only the shell. All that's real is left with the Swami".

A statement made by a western devotee of Rama Krishan, **"Speaking about Indian culture, I would like to say that Indian woman should become more aware of their cultural and spiritual heritage. They should consciously foster it, not only for their own good, but also for the coming generations. It is the new life that is now, born and raised in India which will determine the quality of the future generations. I hope today's mothers will not get diverted by the tinsel and trash offered from outside, but hold on to the old high values, and continue to develop the tradition of true motherhood. It is this motherhood, selfless and loving which is held highest in any responsible society. It is this which the whole world is in heed of".²⁷**

The private problem of Dandekar becomes a public issue. Government officials start an inquiry to determine whether the Swami is a charlatan or a Saint. Others want him to stay because they have faith in him. On the official level, Chari and his subordinate Ghosh represent the two points of view. Chari, a local man with an instinctive understanding of the people wants to let the Swami alone, while Ghose, in his enthusiasm for rationality and abolition of superstition, zealously wants to prove that the Swami is a fraud. Ultimately the Swami himself solves the problem by leaving the town of his own accord. Sarojini is restored to Dandekar, but her calm acceptance of the Swami's departure itself is something that she has learnt from the Swami and for a few stray moments Dandekar is possessed with jealousy at the thought that he is indebted to this man for the return

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of his wife. But he has her back and that is all that matters. And she even agrees to undergo surgical treatment for the growth in her womb, because the Swami has told her to do so. At the end of the novel we find her recovering from the operation.

But that is not all. It is not enough that the Swami, even when he voluntarily leaves the field, remains the more powerful adversary because his influence is abiding. There is also a public side to this issue. The Swami supported a hundred destitute and ailing people from what he received as gifts from his devotees when the Swami leaves, these men remain behind and as the resources slowly dwindle, they reach the point of starvation. Dandekar to assuage his sense of guilt at the departure of the Swami (he believes to the end that he himself was responsible for the removal of the Swami) makes one more visit to the Swami's deserted residence, only to come face to face with these starving people herded together in despair. The whole philosophy of life and existence of the East and West is different. To the West **"Individuality is — the peak and purpose of the whole cosmic process"**.²⁸ The western men think of egos and set themselves against the play of nature **"With an egocentric tenacity"**.²⁹ Western philosophy is rational, pragmatic, scientific and consequently materialistic; Western materialism being derived from the Greeks who placed more emphasis on reason. The East thinks not of individual lives but of life, in which the individual is "merely a part of the phenomenon". **Swami Vivekananda explains that the Hindus believed that every living creature is an emanation of the same pure white light of the Divine Being**.³⁰

Markandaya has tried to show the difference between Eastern spirituality and Western spirituality. In *Possession*, Caroline, an English woman remarks - **"Spiritual, if you like. There's no place for it in England. He ought never to have been allowed in"**.³¹ Universality of individuality entails

universal love for each and every creature and espouses “ahimsa” or non-violence. Philosophies also give shape to religion and although no man is born to any religion, religious differences are aggravated when **“a moral assertion is used to express an attitude of the man making the assertion — to show forth or evince his attitude. The attitude is concerned with the action which he asserts to be good”**.³²

One of the chief distinctions between the Hindu and Christian religions is this : The Christian religion teaches that **“Each human soul had its beginnings at its birth into this world — whereas the Hindu religion asserts that the spirit of man is an Emanation of the Eternal Being and had no more a Beginning”**.³³ Sri Aurobindo’s prose symphony *Life Divine* lies like **“a metaphysical bridge between the West and East”**.³⁴ Mahatma Gandhi’s ethics too were rooted in Indian tradition with close affiliation with Christian tradition. Even Nehru, **“a prophet of modernity”** remarked in his Azad Memorial Lecture : **“I have often wondered that if our race forgot the Buddha, the Upanishads and the great epics, what then will it be like”**.³⁵ In more recent writing, there have been philosophical novels like Dilip Kumar Roy’s *The Upward Spiral* and Raja Rao’s *The Serpent And The Rope* and *The Cat And Shakespeare*.

Kamala Marakandaya’s characters, Indian and English, embody their own respective philosophies and religious beliefs to the point of being incomprehensible to the other. **Rekah Jha** remarks, **“In all Markandaya’s novels, the Indian characters, strongly uphold the tradition of universal life and love, in their concern for animals, in vegetarianism, in providing shelter to destitute and deformed relatives and attitudes to death. Belief in Universal individualism enjoins**

active charity, meekness and humaneness”.³⁶

In “Nectar In A Sieve”, the heroine Rukmani, on her way to her new home in her husband Nathan’s cart, is glad to see the bullocks unyoked. Rukmani, despite her upheavals, is a woman of fortitude. She retains her instinctive love and kindness to adopt the leper puli, with whom she returns to her village after Nathan dies and whom she entrusts to Dr. Kenny’s care.

In Possession, Valmiki growing upto become a famous painter in England under Caroline’s patronage, could not shake off his belief that **“A part of God dwelt in every man and would one day reunite with the divine whole”.**³⁷

A famous critic remarks that one wonders how the same author who created this spiritual giant could have later created a ludicrous effigy and passed it off as a real spiritualist. The authors intention is to make him a sage and a seer embodying the spirit of Indian philosophy, a vasishta incarnated into the 20th century a beacon lighting Val’s life and bringing him safe to shore after his voyage on the perilous seas of love and fame Kamala Marakandaya fails very badly in this : the Swami rings hollow, though ironically, he is typical of the many such pseudoeremites in India who have enough scriptural knowledge to impress laymen and not enough self - control or detachment to keep away from commercial ambitions.

In Possessions, when Val asks him if he should go away with Caroline, the Swami says he must **“because if you did not you would have no peace — for the sound of chafing is like the croaking of bullfrogs, it has little charm”.**³⁸

The swami seems too much in and of this world to be genuine. Valmiki is not his only bond. He holds many strings and he is loth to let go of even one. He is a globe - trotter; we see him in Delhi, London, European and American

capitals, everywhere surrounded by material comfort and fashionable women. His platitudes are unattractive, One can never be a misfit in the service of God; "Everyone makes mistakes". His excuses are inexcusable. He says he realized after meeting Caroline that there were lessons that he had yet to learn from the world and therefore he returned to the world. Possession is a failure in other ways also the characterisation are neither realistic nor impressive. The plot is farfetched and the theme is filmsy. Lady Caroline is an autocrat, typical of the British Raj in India. She sets about getting possession of Valmiki with the same dedication and ruthlessness with which the British subjugated India. She moulds him in to a man, an artist and a lover after the image. She has in mind, and in the process ruins him and spiritual strength though in her opinion he gains more than he loses. It is the Swami's hour of triumph, but Caroline has the last word, **"There is still one thing to be taken into account. Valmiki is yours now, but he has been mine. One day he will want to be mine again, I shall take care to make him want me again and on that day I shall be back to claim him".**³⁹

It was a dichotomous way of life, especially for the women who were society - ladies and traditional housewives at the same time. As her husband's consort a woman played the role of a fashionable hostess in a westernised society. As a Hindu housewife she saw to it that the house hold deities were propitiated festivals and holy days observed. Children brought up in an Indo - English discipline and the servants ruled over in feudal style. They had liquor and meat served to guests but themselves partook of traditional food after traditional prayers. They encouraged their children to dress and be educated in English ways but took care to follow conventions regarding their morality and marriage. Their own marriages were eminently successful because the partners compromised, the men respecting and joining the religious

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rites and the women accepting and adjusting to their husband's westernisation.

The Swami in **“A Silence Of Desire”** leaves the town. Is it by his own choice, or is it imposed by Chari and Ghose. Who start an investigation into his activities. Is he a genuine or is he a charlatan? After building him up as a noble and true hermit the author becomes non-committal and leaves the answer ambiguous. Caroline is virtually maker of the artist and have a proprietary attitude towards the brilliant individual. There is obvious analogy between the protagonists of Markandaya's novel and the Bernard Shaw's 'Pygmalion'. As Prof. Higgin of 'Pygmalion' converts her ugly flower girl into a fair lady and thereafter himself fall in love with her. Similarly Caroline after picking up an illiterate painter endowed with extraordinary talent from an obscure atmosphere, turns him into a famous painter and later binds herself to him with the tie of love. But Higgins's devotion is rather more tender and selfless than Caroline. Caroline treats Valmiki as her potential capital. She turns the young artist into an obedient executor of her will from the day she changed his name 'Valmiki' to 'Val' and keeps him fully dependent on her. All his works are the property of Caroline and he is virtually a worker at her will. The helpless Valmiki finally slips out of her hand and gets united with Annabel whom he loves.

In the next novel of Markandaya, **“Some Inner Fury”**, the novelist expresses her high incandescence of national liberation movement of Indian people against the British rulers. In this novel, she presents the problem of the East and West through the picturisation of interaction and correlation of the spiritual world of the man of colonial East and the material world of the man of colonial West.

Since India is a land where mysticism walks side by side with realism, most novels with an Indian setting include a pious man steeped in the scriptures, and Indo - Anglians,

eager to woo and win the western reader, in variably add an eremite in the dramatis personae. It must, however, be granted that, of all the Swamis in Indo - Anglian literature, the Swami of **“A Silence Of Desire”** is one of the best portrayals. The uniqueness of Indian culture and tradition shows the beliefs and faith on such a holy person as in **“Possession”**, **“Valmiki had advanced and bending down, touched the Swami’s feet while the Swami’s hands rested briefly and gently on his bowed head”**.⁴⁰ Valmiki seemed happy enough in his presence. The Swami has an ashram that would shelter him as it would shelter anyone who needed it, and its religious foundation would ensure his safekeeping. The Swami is not stable at one place **“Is not possible live with Swamy — sometimes he is one place, sometimes another. Also is not necessary — when I wish to see him. I go”**.⁴¹ What is the occupation of a holy or spiritual person like a Saint. Markandaya has tried to define it in two types (in Possession) through its character.

“Spiritually, — his religion which held that a part of God dwelt in every man and would one day reunite with the divine whose or morally, making himself himself for public applause and that other coveted grail success?”⁴²

In **“The Coffer Dams”**, the English technologists and Indian engineers close their ranks after the accident at the dam site when the lives of Indians and a few English are lost. When two Indian bodies cannot be traced, the other laborers strike work. Rawlings, the quick - tempered Englishman, cannot understand why the fuss is made. But Clinton’s wife. Helen, has tried getting under the skins of the Indians and reasons with her husband: **“They believe the spirit will not be freed, until its body has been revered”**. Neither can Rawlings understand what Krishnan means by saying they will suffer **“Spiritual torments”**, If the body is deemed nothing. When the spirit is gone, the body indeed is

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nothing. “It is the spirit that matters”. Krishna asserts, but it is a matter of equal respect for their beliefs as the English wanted for their own. Helen has imbibed the spirit of understanding and love for kindred souls.

Markandaya’s other novel **“The Nowhere Man”** is depicted with the spirit of Indian vegetarianism. In this novel, Srinivas and his wife Vasantha domiciled in England for a long time, are still strictly vegetarian. After Vasantha’s death, Srinivas invites Mrs. Pickering to share his home but does not yield to her non - vegetarianism. His companionship with Mrs. Pickering is based on compassion. It is alien to his spiritual make up and he cannot endure it. When Vasantha dies of tuberculosis in England he cremates her in the electric crematorium but according to his religious beliefs he takes a casket of her ashes to immerse in the river. While spilling it in the Thames, he is chided by the English policeman for polluting the river but he pathetically explains that it was only his wife. His association with Mrs. Pickering brings in him an understanding of the Christian religion and he helps her to decorate a tree on Christmas to place by a window for the neighbors to see.

In **“Two Virgins”**, Saroja and Lalitha grow up in the Hindu tradition and imbibe a respect for all living beings. They believe that “You couldn’t destroy soul” though Lalitha was told by her Christian teacher Miss Mendoza that **“souls did not enter other bodies. They went straight up to heaven or down into hell or were cooped up in purgatory which was an in - between place for doing penance in”**.⁴³ Saroja feels concerned when Manikkam wants to sell a barren cow to the butcher. She feels relieved that his wife being **“A good Hindu”** would never consent to cow - slaughter. Saroja watched as Manikkam’s wife carefully bathed the cow’s udders and rubbed coconut fat into the splits. Markandaya makes this novel a spirited defence of her own Hindu beliefs and little else so that structurally the

novel suffers. According to Hindu philosophy the soul finds release only after its present embodiment of flesh and bones is fully destroyed on death. Appa's compatriot Rangu was cremated when he died in police action and his ashes were immersed in the river which absorbs both joys and sorrows because it is eternal, ever - flowing.

In **"Nectar In A Sieve"**, Rukmani is reconciled to the vagaries of her life. Rukmani's philosophy is one of fortitude. She believes that "a man's spirit" is "given to him to rise above his misfortunes". Man's wants are many and cannot always be fulfilled. **"Want is our companion from birth to death, familiar as the seasons of the earth, varying only in degree. What profit to bewail that which has always been and cannot change"**.⁴⁴ It is only such fortitude that sustains Old Granny who has lived alone making a meagre living by selling vegetables. "It is not unbearable. One gets used to it", she says. Kenny remains unconvinced "Do you think", he asks Rukmani, "Spiritual grace comes from being in want or from suffering"? Rukmani has been taught to bear her sorrows in silence. There is no pessimism in this but a deep rooted faith in God's mercies. Rukmani too is of the same faith. When her barren daughter Ira is forsaken by her husband, she consoles her saying 'we are all in God's hand and He is merciful'.

In **"A Silence Of Desire"** Dandekar is a second generation city dweller working as a clerk in a government department. His contact with the Europeans has no doubt given him a pragmatic and scientific out look on life. But at heart he remains an Indian who prefers to sit on a mat at home and is convention bound. The other side of him, his rationality, is shocked to discover that his wife is seeking somekind of faith cure for a serious ailment. Equally disturbing to him is her idolatrous worship of the 'tulsi' plant, yet his deep - rooted traditionalism feels the beauty and potency of her uncompromising faith. More disturbing to

him is the fact that Sarojini is bound up in socio - cultural beliefs that imply reposing faith in a Swami for her cure. In 'Possession', Valmiki takes the Swami blessings before he leaves the villages. But after the initial excitement of travelling to England, Valmiki seems to find no source of inspiration for his art.

Religion is realising God. **Dr. RadhaKrishnan has explained that the supreme reality is difficult to grasp and impossible to define**".⁴⁵ Rukmani in "Nectar In A Sieve" is desperate for a son which is considered a blessing of God. She visits her village temple and with her mother "would pray and pray before the deity, imploring for help until we were giddy". She prays with the knowledge that **"Gods have other things to do : they cannot attend to the pleas of every suppliant who dares to raise his cares to heaven"**.⁴⁶ with Dr. Kenny's medical care she bears another child - a son and then five more and she accepts them as God's blessings. When the rains fail, Rukmani, like the other villagers, takes it as God's punishment to them. She took a pumpkin and a few grains of rice to propitiate the Goddess and wept at her feet in contrition for her sins.

In **"Some Inner Fury"**, the anglicized kitsamy, brother of Mirabai, was no fervent disciple of Hinduism yet. The Evangelical method of converting Hindus to Christianity with inducements of all sorts were not stemmed by Hindus because of the latent tolerance in their own faith, kit, despite his western sensitivity, cannot reconcile to these slights to his Hinduism. These religious controversies are found in Possession centre on spiritualism and materialism. Differences between Hindu and Christian religion are shown in "A Handful Of Rice" when Ravi's father had taught him that Christians were good people and God's neighbours. Ravi does not bear any animosity towards Christianity but is curious about the 'coming colors' on the face of the Virgin Mary with the dimpled laughing child Jesus in her arms.

Religious dichotomies in India are more pronounced in the urban areas than in the villages.

In **“The Coffer Dams”**, Clinton’s distrust of the Indians is based on his conviction that they were “a people who worshipped birds and beasts and probably snakes, decking the forest with scruffy hutches which they knocked up out of driftwood and crammed with leaves and flowers for their deities”. The Hindu ways of worshiping God, deities and plant like ‘Tulsi’, are shown in ‘Two Virgins’ where ‘Tulsi’ was placed in a brass container. Saroja, a Hindu girl observed people how they offer things like fruits, honey, flower, garlands of roses, jewellery, silver and gold to God. Some had to be sold to maintain the temple and feed the poor and the priests. In Miss Mendoza’s church too, people offered candles. Lalitha informed Saroja that rich people also gave objects of gold and silver that were kept in a glass case in the crypt.

Amma fulfils a vow by bathing in the Ganges at Varanasi burning “camphor in a silver ladle and circling the fame thrice around them to prevent the eye of envy ravaging her beautiful daughters”, making her superstitious as well.

In **“The Golden Honeycomb”**, The British Resident Mr. Buckidge’s animosity towards the Brahmin Dewan arises out of the feeling that he considers the other “a devious Hindoo” with as many facets as the faces of “his innumerable gods, which you saw lush and immoderate in his temple”.

Swami Vivekananda explains that when a man has fulfilled his worldly obligations, he must abandon altogether worldly pursuits of possession, fame and power, recognizing the impermanence of these paltry prizes and seek spiritual knowledge by excelling in love and compassion. This is the ideal stage of his life. In a letter written to Margaret P. Joseph, Markandaya admits; **“I detest cruelty to any living being”**.⁴⁷ **Rekha Jha** observes : **“Markandaya has chiefly**

been concerned with a spirited defence of her own Hindu ideology. She goes into minor details in an effort to explain the rightness of these practices and asserts herself. But that is not all Artistically, they are used as fosters that mould her character, provide for their strengths and weaknesses”.⁴⁸

In Markandaya we found that each character is moulded to the framework of his religious and philosophical beliefs. Those more exposed to western pragmatism and rationalism are scientific in their approach yet rooted in their traditional beliefs from which, despite their knowledge they find they cannot sever links. The drama is not only with outside forces but within him also, such a case is that of Dandekar in “A Silence Of Desire”.

India is a spiritual country for ever and its people have spiritual beliefs, faith and notions. From ancient time to the present day, we have a lot of examples of religious and spiritual persons or things. They have unique power which symbolize omnipotence. But now as modernity prevails, people involved in advanced or technical knowledge, their religious beliefs shake. They are forgetting God(Ishwar). The most advantageous part of spiritual is to make a person good overall. If the spiritual belief shakes a person loses his behavior, conduct, ideal notions. Spirituality makes a man honest, polite and having compassion with all moral values. We should be spiritual having modern views towards life because as the time is changing, the people are becoming advanced, there a spiritual person cannot adjust to make progress. Modern views and thinking bring development. So Indian people remember their Indian culture, tradition, beliefs, faith, religious views but never forget to draw advance beliefs. If Indian people forget this what will be the future of India. The uniqueness of country will be lost. Other countries are adopting Indian way of living, thinking then why Indians are

forgetting this.

The Indian maintains that their culture had an essentially spiritual quality and was therefore superior to the materialism of the west. Its art was upheld as being more authentic because it expressed spiritual values as against the Greek art of the west that was obsessed with physical beauty. The English on the other hand found Indian art unaesthetic and unappealing. Tagore, an Indian poet, wrote 'Gitanjali' which is concerned with mysticism and spirituality.

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IV

Modernity

“Spirituality” and “Modernity” are two distinctive aspects in life. Both are contrasted to each other. Whether a man should be spiritual or modern, but both do not go together. Generally modernity implies the way which is new, advanced and does not resemble the past. The views notions and thought are changed from the ancient views and myth. It is opposite to the ancient or past.

The Concise Dictionary defines it as “being modern”¹ as new and up to date. Modernization as a process of change has attracted much attention from both scholars and laymen. Some have studied the modernization of the individual. Other have analyzed the modernization of society from the religious political, economical and educational viewpoints.

By modernization, we mean a process of long range social and cultural change, often regarded as leading to the progressive development of society. It is multifaceted development specifically leading to the industrialization of economy, an increase in the geographic and social mobility and the secularization of ideas which give rise to secular, scientific and technical education. It also means a change from the ascribed to an achieved status and a higher standard of living.

According to a writer “Westernization - which is a term he uses synonymously with modernization result not only in the introduction of new institutions but also in fundamental changes in old institutions. Implicit in westernization are certain value preferences. The most important value being humanitarianism by which is meant an increasing concern for the welfare of all human beings irrespective of caste, economic position, religion age and sex.

India is a land of great cultural variation and any attempt to generalize the cultural system can only be in a very broad and impressionistic sense. Pre - modern Indian society was caste structured and mostly patriarchal and patrilineal. The system of family was mostly joint or extended. Primary emphasis was placed on ritual (caste) status of the individual. The Karma theory holds that one's action in the past determine one's present life.

Marriage according to Hindu law is a sacrament and the bond of marriage was irrevocable. Divorce and widow remarriage were out of the picture and any marriage performed under Hindu law had to be within the caste group. Child marriage were considered to be the best and marriages were mostly arranged by the parents rather than the individuals. From the religious point of view, the ritual status of women came to be regarded as equal to that of “Sudars” as the former were considered easily susceptible to pollution as the latter. Thus, women lived a life of seclusion and observed “purdah in many parts of northern India among the upper castes”. Many customs like “suttee” (burning oneself live on the funeral pyre of the husband) child marriage and dowry were prevalent. All this referred to the superior status of the male and the super-ordination and subordination in the male - female relationship. During the British rule the structure of the Indian society started changing. Industrialisation was introduced in the Indian economy. The percentage of the population living in urban areas increased. Caste started giving

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way to class, at least in urban areas and education and employment opportunities came to be extended to all levels of society - irrespective of caste, creed or sex. As a result of such changes in the structure of society, similar changes in the value of society, also took place.

Consequently, "Suttee" and child marriage were abolished. Divorce, widow remarriage and intercaste marriages were recognized. Women were given a share in the ancestral property and the custom of dowry came to be criticized by the people. The process of modernization set into motion during the British regime was strengthened further after India gained independence. The Indian constitution today prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

In India, a woman may be called modern :

- (1) If she asserts herself increasingly against the authority of traditional figures like father or husband.
- (2) If she participates actively in mass - media.
- (3) If she does not involve herself deeply into the ritual and worship aspects of religion.
- (4) If she takes cognizance not only of the immediate environment but also of the outside one that is interest in 'extra - local' conditions.
- (5) If she feels free from extended family ties.

Indo - Anglian novelists such as Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Kamla Markandaya deal in their novels with the contemporary modern society. Woman novelist Kamala Markandaya is known as a modern novelist. She has given the aspects of modernization in novels. She draws the character inclined with modernization. Her novels "Two Virgins", "Nectar in a sieve", "A Handful of Rice", "Possession", "Some inner fury" deal with modernity. Markandaya an expatriate writer, covers the changing condition

of India from traditional into modernity and tries to show it through characters like 'Lalitha' and 'Govind'.

Markandaya's "Lalitha" (Two Virgins) is a modern girl who has all these qualities. It is often observed that an individual's back ground plays a significant role in the formation of his attitudes and beliefs. His family, school, neighbourhood, level of education, type of occupation and the income derived there from all determine to a great extent, the type and quality of his attitudes and values.

Markandaya is the novelist of rural India but her characters could not escape themselves from the glamour of city and modernity. Her characters dazzled to see the glamorous life whether they are Murugan, Arjun, Thambi, Nathan, Rukmani, Saroja, Lalitha or Govind. In "Nectar in a sieve", Rukmani the narrator of this novel presents the picture of both rural and glamorous life. She is a peasant woman, keeps faith in traditional way of living but at a time she turns to the city where she sees the other aspects of life. The doctor whose dress **"Under the thin shirt, The trousers"**. **Rukhmani "saw the figure of a woman"** and whispered **"Be careful - it is a woman"**.² shows the modern woman.

When the time changes, old views and thought are gone and new thinking and views have taken place. People's modesty shakes and manners and behavior have no grace. Rukmani and Nathan go to the city in search of their son and when they want to ask the peon where their son worked. The peon replies, without hearing **"No Beggars are allowed here"**.³ They are shocked to see the disgrace and shaking culture and manners in the city.

The temple is the center of worshipping God but now - a - days it is becoming the center of robbers and thieves. Rukmani and Nathan sheltered in a Temple with their bundles. When they went out their bundles had been stolen. **"There are many Thieves and strangers about**

these days”. “What, even in a temple! We did not think”

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“Yes even in a temple, of course. Many kinds come here, there can be no guarantee of their honesty”.

“It appears not ,” Nathan said heavily. “Our possessions have gone.”⁴

Every new and dazzling thing attracts the people whether they are villagers or city dwellers. In “Nectar In a sieve” the construction of the tannery attracted the villagers. It provided employment so the farmers and peasants women took interest in this. Even Nathan’s sons Arjun and Thambi did not take interest in land and went to the tannery for a job. The construction of the tannery transformed the village economically and socially. It changed the village into a small town. It was just an unimaginable dream which was going to be true as the villagers observe **“every day for two months the line of bullock carts came in laden with bricks and stones and cement, sheets of tin and corrugated iron, coils of rope and hemp.”**⁵

Rukmani, the narrator of this novel explains the dress of the overseer who came from the town. His dress was not similar to the villagers. **“Dressed in a shirt and trousers, and he had a hat on his head”.**⁶

The arrival of town people brought changes. The traditional people were motivated towards modernity. Mostly villagers wanted to engage in tannery. Some people were pessimistic about the tannery because it destroyed the traditional village occupation and life. The villagers recognized that it was driving people from the land and as Rukmani believed, destroying the village life. The cobbler, too, felt threatened and neglected. Others were more optimistic. They thought that they were being modern or advanced as city dwellers. Kunthi, for example, saw it as an opportunity for people to acquire employment and this actually happened.

She herself capitalized on the situation by becoming a prostitute. Her new life eventually destroyed her like it did many villagers. Because the employees at the tannery could spend, more than what the villagers could spend, the price of goods increased. This was beneficial for those who sold their produce, but detrimental for those who had to purchase. Like wise, small village shopkeepers were forced out of business by the larger shopkeepers who arrived in the village after tannery opened. Kunthi was much pleased to see the changes in the village, she said to Rukmani, **“Are you not glad that our village is no longer a clump of huts but a small town? Soon there will be shops and tea -stalls, and even a bioscope”**.⁷

Kamala Markandaya settled in Britain but her thinking and mentality is Indian. She was influenced by modernism and tried to show it through the characters how Indian influenced by modernity becoming advanced. Markandaya has achieved a world-wide distinction as a significant Indian-English novelist. Her novels have been read with deep interest and have elicited wide critical acclaim from both Indian and foreign critics of repute.

Stehpen Ignatius Hemanway, Writing about Markandaya, remarks that, “Markandaya is definitely one of the most productive, popular, and skilled Indo - Anglian novelists and a superb representative of the growing number of Indian woman writing serious literature in English”.⁸

The roots in ‘religion’ and family about which Narayan speaks, are fast drying up under the impact of western civilisation. A new group of writers are emerging who have little patience with a culture that idealises renunciation, contentment in the midst of poverty mystical silences, spiritual attainments. The older writers emphasized corporate and family life, the newer writers are concerned with the fate of the individual - primarily their own Home among Indian writers.

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Narayan makes no conscious attempt to use Indian English, Indian myth, or the theme of east - west encounter which is so large in Indian fiction.

The woman writer had one major advantage over her male counterpart, she had access to Indian domestic life which was denied to the male writer. Thus her portrait of India is more rounded.

The writers from commonwealth countries have an advantage over their Indian counterparts, for they are writing in a language that is their own. The advantage that the Indian writer has is that India has generated more interest than English speaking commonwealth countries because of the impact of Indian thought on writers like Shelley, Wordsworth, Tennyson, D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, Emerson, Thoreau and Walt Whitman.

Though the western reader is often guilty of taking a purely documentary approach to Indian fiction. Indian writers such as Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Manohar Malgonkar have encouraged this approach by writing socially competent novels. Of the major Indian novelists, only Narayan seems to steer clear of the larger social and political issues, maintaining that "Historical forces need not have anything to do with the production of the greatest". Manohar Malgonkar's "A Bend in the Ganges" selected by E.M. Forster as the best novel of 1964 is an epic presentation of India's struggle for freedom from the late thirties to the partitioning of the country in 1947.

The horror accompanying the transfer of population has been a major theme with Indo - Anglian writers. Though they might differ in the treatment of their subject matter and in their choice of gory incidents to enliven their writing.

Markandaya, a modern novelist, draws modern characters both male and female. Her male character Govind belonged to village but brought to England and changed into a

modern lad and the female character Lalitha, being a village girl, dazzled to see the glamour of city life and film city ruined herself. Unlike the other novels of the author, this novel "Two Virgins" is not built around any single motif such as the East - West encounter, the struggle for freedom, expatriation or search for identity, the conflict between tradition and modernity or again between spiritualism and materialism. However, as a novel that tells us the story of a young girl who ruins herself and brings disrepute on the family by yielding to the temptation of a glamorous career as a film star. One could say that it is a novel on the conflict between the old and the new, the rural and the urban and so on but there is no consistent exploration nor a convincing fictionalization of any of these themes. These themes are there in background but not handled meaningfully or skillfully as, for instance - the theme of social injustice and that of the clash between tradition and modernity are worked out in "Nectar In A Sieve" or the theme of immigrants or racial conflict is worked out in "Nowhere Man". This apart, the novel sadly lacks a well - constructed plot and the events and happenings do not make a well - ordered pattern of character, motive and action. The progress of the action of the novel is so linear, so little dependent on character or individual will or its conflict with the environment that the whole book reads like a picaresque tale involving the escapades of two village girls Lalitha and Saroja in a metropolitan world full of dangers and snares, one of them sadly and irredeemably lost in it and the other just managing to come out unscathed.

In this novel, Markandaya shows how a girl educated in the missionary school and attracted to the film city. She was ambitious to be a film star. The story of "Two Virgins" turns out to be therefore the story of two sisters, both of them spirited young girls pulsating with life and with a zest for living, who react differently to the lures and temptations of a glamorous new world which appears to be within easy

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reach and yet beyond them. As daughters of the same parents, as pupils of the same school and teachers and as members of the same society both of them share many common values and attitudes. Still they are different judged by their reactions to certain situations and by their responses to certain stimuli. Lalitha is prettier, braver and more daring than Saroja who, with her unconscious acknowledgement of her being inferior to Lalitha, develops a rather retiring disposition which makes her more obedient and well-behaved. But she has as much interest in sex, shows as much predilection for learning the mysteries of sex life as, Lalitha. She learns a lot from Manikkam's wife and she finds immense delight in watching her own feminine body grow and develop. She does not respect the old world values any more than Lalitha. But under the influence of Aunt Alamelu she holds on to those values and resists all those temptations which lure and ruin her sister. Lalitha advanced and says **"Every one in the city had a fridge" and "only film stars could afford such luxuries". "It wasn't a luxury, it was a necessity in a tropical country".⁹**

Miss Mendoza, a Christian teacher of Lalitha, is a modern and follows western culture. Lalitha is influenced by her and copies the ways of living and talking and in the novel **"Miss Mendoza's ways, which were modern" and "Westernized, Appa backed her up, he liked Indians to be westernized, which advanced them into the big world instead of remaining static in a back water".¹⁰**

Lalitha, a village girl, influenced by Miss Mandoza wants to adopt her ways and culture or how she walks, wears and lives. Miss Mendoza was **"used to sitting in chair at tables, and eating with forks and spoons".¹¹** and **"Lalitha had already warned her she would not tolerate any squeezing - up on the same chair which normally she did not mind. It will crush my clothes".¹²**

The amazing film world draws the picture of extreme modernity. It changes the ways, dress, culture even personality. Lalitha in *Two Virgins*, is a simple village girl whose parents believes in simplicity but its Lalitha's interest to engage in film world and she gets guidance from her teacher Miss Mendoza. Whenever modernity gets power it loses purity as in the case of Lalitha. Lalitha dazzles to see the lure of big city and wants **"the opportunity to become a film star"**. **"A film star said Lalitha, a film actress, a personality of the cinema, no less"**.¹³ A film city is also a part of modern society. When Lalitha gets an opportunity to be a film actress, she does not seize it and wants co-operation. Lalitha's mother is a traditional woman and said, **"in this world it is not possible to have the full truths on any subject"**.¹⁴ On the other hand, Appa pretends to be a modern and said, **"the Indian film industry was the second biggest in the world. He said it gave employment to two million people"**.¹⁵

We are treating modernity here as a dependent variable and background characteristics like education, occupation and income, as independent variables. Modernity is the result of an interplay of a complex number of factors like the rural - urban residence, spread of Literacy and employment in a formal bureaucratic organization. These individual background attribute help in determining the level of individual modernity. Previously, the women of the country had an inferior status to that of males. As such they were denied any formal education and work outside home for the middle and upper class woman was simply out of the question. When women got equality of status they also had an equal opportunity to get education and works. Those women who were able to get education and then later on employed were also able to change their attitudes, beliefs and behavior in the direction of modernity. Sociological literature today abounds in evidence that urbanization has a high correlation with the process of modernization.

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As a modern society places greater emphasis on education it is expected that modern - oriented women would feel that an educated woman has a superior status to that of an uneducated woman. It is, therefore, hypothesized that the higher the level of modernity the greater will be the feeling that the status of an educated woman is superior to that of an uneducated woman. It is shown that 78.9 percent of all the respondents think that an educated woman is definitely superior to an uneducated woman. 17.5 percent feel that they are both equal in status, and only 3.5 percent feel that an educated woman is inferior to an uneducated woman. Hence it appears that the status of an educated woman as superior to that of an uneducated woman, is accepted by all women irrespective of their different levels of modernity. It is not always necessary that only the highly modern women possess an attitude about the superior status of an educated woman, but the least modern women may also think in that manner. Hence it may be inferred that the superior status of an educated woman has become a generalized value.

Modern oriented Indian women would be expected to support higher age at marriages and would have a favorable attitude towards divorce, inter - caste and inter - religious marriage, but would have an unfavorable opinion towards the selection of male by parents.

Kamala Markandaya's Indian character Lalitha, is just like modern oriented girl. She expects for standard, advance and modern society. She is ambitious to involve in film world. Modern society likes it while a traditional oriented society opposes it. Her mother and aunt are traditional women and oppose it while her father and Christian teacher favour in Lalitha's attitude. Our Indian tradition does not recommend a woman will be a dancer or an actress. A woman belong to the middle or upper class is not respected if she intends to be a film actress. In "Two Virgins" Aunt Alamelu calls it a cheap and lower category and **"you, a respectable girl, a**

girl from a respected family, cried Aunt Alamelu, you want to be a nautch girl, a devdasi such as no one in our line not for twenty generations has ever descended to being, is that your ambition. A film star, said Lalitha, these days girls from respectable families act in films, can I help it if an old fossil like you hasn't heard".¹⁶

Mr. Gupta, a film director, wears modern dress. He **"had on a cream silk suit with a handkerchief to match"**.¹⁷ Indian culture and trends are traditional while English culture and trends are modern. Miss Mendoza's school has specialty and the people observes it. Indian dance is common in India whereas **"English dancing was the speciality"**.¹⁸

"Two virgins" is a modern novel but it has generally been rated as the weakest of all her novels. **According to Margaret p. Joshep, "This novel occupies the lowest position in the order of merit. Infact it can hardly be called literature, falling short, as it does, of the level attained by the other books. There is little attempt at plot construction and the story is merely a tedious description of village life, with stereo - typed contrasts between pre - and post - independent India, village and city, traditional eastern and modern western ways, the whole amounting to nothing more than a documentary about rural living such as the film director in the novel actually makes"**.¹⁹ Joshep concludes her study of the novel with the remark. **"On the whole two virgins is a very disappointing book"**.²⁰

In 'Two Virgins' Markandaya succed to show the slow way of prevailing modernity in the village. How the villagers turn towards the modern film city. They have eagerness to know the shots, the picture, the story and make up of the film world-Mr Gupta, a film director introduces the villagers and calls the shots, "He said there would be shots of the village pond and of the weavers quarters and a

wedding and a funeral as well". Amma who knows what went on, said neither was in the offing, there was no pond either, the villagers used the river or the wells. Mr Gupta **"turned Appa and said he might use the whole set up meaning Appa's house and field and appa himself as typifying village living"**.²¹ The word 'modern' often uses in the novels and it shows its quality of modernity as in the case of Mr. Gupta. **"Mr. Gupta, who was modern, coming from a city as he did"**.²²

When film - industry was started, it was known as a cheap and lower class woman enagaed in it, whenever a woman belong to the higher or middle class, enaged. She was threatened by the society. In "Two Virgins" Aunt Alamelu's view about film industry is some what as cheap industry. She said to Lalitha, **"you're throwing yourself at him, you're so full of this film star nonsense you can't see you're only making yourself cheep to him"**.²³ Ignoring it Lalitha cried, **I'm an artist, you have no conception of artistic affinity"**.²⁴

The power of western value and influences is that it puts a curtain on the eyes and blind the Eastern people. Eastern people thinks that whatever they speak and do they are absolutely right and follow them blindly. They have no inner sight power to show the right path and becomes a "Pendulum". Foreign returned Mr. Gupta has influenced Lalitha and Lalitha said **"he said they had a good deal to learn from the west and she believed him absolutely"**²⁵ and Lalitha **"was a budding actress"**.²⁶ But her Aunt refuses it and when she offers her a part she accepted. Aunt Alamelu said, **"you have accepted", as from "good family"**.²⁷ Mr. Gupta says, **"It is part of one's life as an actress"**²⁸ and remarks, **"I am a natural"**.²⁹ When Lalitha returns from city after playing a part in a film, she is totally changed. Her styles, way of living, manners, and behaviors all are changed. **"Lalitha descended with dignity. She had on cream -**

colored sandals and a plain voile sari".³⁰ The extreme modern views result that Lalitha returns home seduced, and soon her parents discover that she is pregnant by Gupta. Lalitha's parents take her to the city and meet Gupta. They accuse him of having seduced their daughter. Gupta says, "Lalitha is a woman with the natural desires of a woman" and confesses, "I am not made of stone".

If a person far away from spirituality indulges in modernity, his life becomes materialistic and he feels isolation. No one is there who consoles him even faith in God shakes him as Amma said about Lalitha. **"Made isolate by that western punk Gupta"**.³¹ The novel ends tragically. Lalitha goes somewhere and Saroja returns to the village with her parents. About this novel, **G.P.Sharma views, "on the change in the rural life brought about by the modern money-based civilization in the country after independence. The changes are marked through the perceiving eyes of Saroja, the village girl, as she sees them in her village and of her sister, Lalitha of the city"**.³²

Saroja just manages to remain a virgin in spite of all the passion and desire which are bottled up in her. What saves her perhaps is the attitude of fear, revulsion and distrust she has developed towards the city and its people after the shock that Lalitha's example has given her. It is this lack of sharp differentiation in character between the 'Two Virgins' which makes the novel less interesting and exciting than what it might have been if the difference between them had been at least as well pronounced as between, say Elizabeth and Lydia in "Pride and Prejudice" or Elinor and Marianne in "Sense and Sensibility" or Dorothea and Celia in "Middlemarch". If subtlety in character contrasts makes for consummateness in the novelist's art, it also detracts from its dramatic power and immediacy of appeal.

Markandaya's other novel "A Silence Of Desire" depicts both spirituality and modernity. In "A Silence Of

Desire” traditionalism and modernism symbolizes the relationship between Dandekar and Sarojini. **“The real achievement of the author lies in the projection of this theme through the awakening of a mind developing from thoughtless complacency to tremulous introspection”**.³³ “A Silence Of Desire” is her best novel so far as artistic fitness is concerned and her worst in artistic lapses. The mosaic bits form a realistic picture of apartment life in Bombay - the eight - storey apartment block has only one water faucet, the rooms will hold no more than two beds, framed tableaux of gods and goddesses look down from kitchen walls, Dandekar eats off a plantain leaf and his wife dines only after he has eaten, they have many neighbours but no friends. Modern views changes everyone. The people have lost their mutual understanding, their traditional culture, behaviour on the aspect of modernity. It has been said that in addition to politicians - a nation gets the literature it deserves. Where English is not native. Where there has been a phase of colonial occupation, where post - independence ambitions prescribe the restructuring of society, modernizing the economy while retaining - even revitalizing - the taproots of tradition, the literature that gets written is the one most needed. These preoccupations within society are almost invariably the preoccupations of writers. Themes and issues in the fiction which emerges substantiate the nexus. “A Silence Of Desire” is built around issues relating to tradition and change, faith and scepticism attach to modern, mainly western derived attitude. Dandekar’s expectations of what life is and ought to be are revised by the experience he undergoes in the novel. He is to a degree westernized. But there are values, beliefs and attitudes, especially in matters of faith, which are immemorial and which refuse to be cast aside in the process of Sarojini’s faith, for instance.

The chief thematic tensions in “A Silence Of Desire” issue from a conflict between deeply held faith and that

insistence on what is broadly described as rational explanation and behaviour. Each represents a view of life one drawing deeply from the past, the other relatively new and chiefly initiated by a scepticism mainly western in propagation. These tensions, together with the processes of change and adjustment they generate, are prevalent where the root and bole of old civilizations are re-structured to meet the challenges of modernization. Nations feel the urgency to acquire technology and industrial capacity while doing away with all that retards an actively sought wide ranging progress under whose compulsions the habit of metaphysics yield to physics:

“He wanted to be equal, he wanted his country to be the equal of any in the west and being equal excluded even a hint of medievalism”.³⁴

Dandekar has a part - Eastern and part - Western mind. The Western part consists of his scepticism about religion, a belief in the power of the scientific. Joseph believes in free love and is said to practice it. Influenced by Western films Mahadevan believes that no marriage is safe unless the wife is cloistered during her husband's absences. The vision of a new India, modern and progressive, taking her place among the nations of the world burns in Ghose. Dandekar is caught between two worlds, one 'scientific', not fully born, and the other traditional, not fully jettisoned. There is fusion in spiritualism and modernism between Dandekar and Sarojini.

“The Coffer Dams” is built on issues relating to tradition and modernity, freedom and responsibility, business attitudes and human values a rational approach to nature and an instinctual perception of the vagaries and moods of nature. All these issues from the various strands in the plot which is unfolded, with a degree of gradualness that is typical of Markandaya's best written fiction, through the interplay of such diverse characters as Clinton, Mackendrick, Rawlings, Helen, Bashiam Krishnan and Millie.

Markandaya ranks first as a novelist. Her novels have various theme as the theme of hunger and rural poverty, East-West theme, tradition and modernity, spiritualism and materialism and national upsurge. These themes are stock themes of Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya and R.P.Jhabvala. The theme of modernity gets the conflict between tradition and materialism almost in all her novels. But her “Two Virgins” has successfully explained the advantage and disadvantage of modernity. Thematically, the novel is not a sub-standard piece, as critics have called it. However, Uma Parameswaran’s remark is eminently suited to the novel, **“If ‘Two Virgin’ succeeds for some readers it is because it taps the treasure house of basic human experiences, especially the ever-popular one of adolescence, in a series of well-worded, well - organized vignettes. If it fails, it is because it does not go deep enough into the human experiences it talks about”**.³⁵

Markandaya’s novel “Some Inner Fury” deals with the theme of political value as India’s struggle for freedom. It dramatizes the lives of young people **‘lost in political confusion of the Independence struggle’**.³⁶ It is the story of Kit and Premala, Govind, Roshan and Mirabai educated, sophisticated, westernized Indians and Richard, a British visitor to India and Mira’s lover. It is not a novel simply depicting East - West confrontation like “The Nowhere Man”; it is about national struggle and the havoc it causes in the private lives of individuals. When Markandaya has written this novel, the condition of India was changing in all walks of life as politically, socially and spiritually. Modernity prevailed everywhere. Indian copied Britishers how they walk, eat, dress and live. The narrator of this novel expresses her own feelings as she engaged an English Man and tried to mix with him and his modern society. Her parents are also modern. Mira and Richard are rounded characters Kit, Premala, Govind and Roshan are presented as flat characters.

Meenakshi Mukherjee says that “Kit is entirely a product of the West and emerges as a stereotyped burra sahib”.³⁷

He is an Anglicized Indian wholly loyal to the Western culture and is impatient with traditional mores and attitudes whether they are advocated by his own mother, Dodamma, Mira or Premala. He is self - centred, self - indulgent, loves company and to that degree unmindful of the inconvenience or hurt he may be causing another. He is impatient with Premala for her insufficiencies even during their courtship but is willing enough to marry the unassuming girl. But once she becomes his wife, these same qualities of Premala mortify him deeply. **As Meena Shirwadkar notes, “Kit expects his wife to be modern and westernized but he treats her as an Indian husband might”.³⁸**

Western people believe in club and hotel and it is the symbol of modernity and high society. In “Some Inner Fury” Kit is an Anglicized and visits England and follows western ways and called **“as westernized”**.³⁹

Club is the sign of modernity in India. Mira’s family is an advanced family and do not believe in traditional value. Mother prevents Mira from going to the club with Richard, a foreigner. She dislikes that a girl would go with a young man. Being a modern girl, Mira assumes the club is **“(We might go to the club)” ——— “an excellent idea”**.⁴⁰

How can we observe that he/she is a modern. His way of eating, way of living, behaviour and dress and thinking shows his modern view or conservative. Roshan in “Some Inner Fury” is called **“Ultra modern”**.⁴¹ Premala is innocent, modest, utterly unpretentious and universally loved. **Prof. Iyengar describes her “as the sweetest and the most heroic character of the novel”**.⁴² and **“she is idealized even to the extent of being unreal”**.⁴³ says Meenakshi Mukherjee.

Markandaya is such a novelist who portrays different types of character. Her characters are Indian peasant, tailor, westernized, foreigner, modern, traditional and aristocratic. Her female characters are modern as Mira, Lalitha, Roshan, Caroline etc. Indo-Anglian novelists like Mulk Raj Anand and Manohar Malgonkar portray the princes in all their complexity against the backdrop of Indian Independence. Anglo - Indian novelist like Ackerley and Forster also deal with princes and Maharaja. Maharaja Ashok Kumar and Maharaja Hiroji bid for independence in Anand's private life of an Indian Prince (1953) and Malgonkar's 'The Princes' 1963, respectively, might seem insane, but not if one bears in mind what the British Government had led the princes to believe for nearly a century. Anand's Private Life of Indian Prince is a Dostoevskian novel on the grand scale and the author's most impressive achievements. Markandaya's "The Golden Honeycomb" deals with the Maharaja and is known as a historical novel.

In "Nectar In A Sieve" Markandaya's first novel, this dichotomy of values is captured in a most compelling way. It is the lot of Nathan and Rukmani to till the land belonging to another, paying an exorbitant rent for it and getting hardly a square meal a day as reward even after the best harvest. But Rukmani is content to live in the soulful quietude of her little village till His Garden of Eden is ravaged by a serpent in the form of the tannery like Maranders, the towns people came with cart-loads of bricks, stones and cement to build this hideous superstructure while their supervisor directed the operations **"with loud voice and many gestures but doing not a stroke of work himself".⁴⁴**

Markandaya has seen India at close quarters and have acquired an intimate understanding of its ideas, ideals and various modes of life. She is as well - acquainted with western ideas and mode of life. The major theme of her

novels is the social, culture, economic clash of these two modes, the western and the oriental.

Kamala Markandaya's acquaintance with Indian life is as authentic as her understanding of the Englishmen and their character. She spent a few years studying the life of South Indian peasants before marrying an Englishman and setting down in London. Culture being ingrained in the personality of the nation, it is visible the tannery does not anger well for the village. The action of the painful process of modernization is manifested in the disturbance beyond redemption of the prelapsarian peace of the village. The village is transformed in a small town. Rukmani's own daughter Ira is forced into prostitution by the inexorable laws of necessity and destitution. Rukmani cries in utter despair, **"Our money buys less and less. As for living in a town - if town this is why there is nothing I would fly sooner from it if I could go back to the sweet quite of village life".**⁴⁵

In "Two Virgins", this style is one of conversational reportage that fails to project vividly what has been felt and therefore shows little evidence of art. The language is simple but the simplicity betrays superficiality. Kamala Markandaya has an instinct for effective use of language. **V.Y.Kantak, quoting Remy de Gourmont, writes: "The art of writing is nothing more or less than the art of feeling, the art of seeing, the art of hearing, the art of using all the senses, whether directly or through the imagination".**⁴⁶

Kamala Markandaya's other novel "Possession" deals with the theme of East - West encounter but does not escape from modernity. If there is western values, behaviour and thinking, there will be modernity also. In "Possession" Valmiki was sixteen years lad, belonged to the village and compelled to go to England by a foreigner Caroline Bell. He believed in simplicity but when he reached England, his culture would

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be changed and became a modern. For Caroline Bell, Valmiki is just a means to achieve success in life and society. She is more interested in finalizing profitable negotiations with rich mansions in the capitals of Europe and America. And after winning the recognition in the higher society, Caroline now aspires to retain him for ever and so makes love with him. She leaves no stone unturned in order to bind the young man to herself. She compels the Tamil cook to write Valmiki a letter on behalf of his friend Swami, drives away her maid servant Elly, who expects a child from Valmiki and thereby creates circumstances for her to suicide, discredits the youngman in the eyes of his beloved Ennable, and deprives Valmiki of any means to come back to India. Valmiki himself characterizes her and says, **“She does not care for me. She cares only for what I can do and if I do it will it is like one more diamond. She can put on the necklace round her throat for friends to admire”**.⁴⁷

Caroline is a selfish lady and wants to get benefit on his behalf. She meets Valmiki when he was only an adolescent. After she brought him to London, she puts the studio at his disposal with canvas and colours in his hands and she does not provide him even basic education for essential literacy. This is reason that he always lived under an inferiority complex.

A writer writes, “The violence or the language here makes one almost suspect that perhaps, Kamala Markandaya is trying to make the story of Caroline and Valmiki, a parable of colonialism, the passing of an empire and the current insidious movement of ‘neo - colonialism’. This, however was over a decade ago, and much water has flown down the Ganga since then”.

In Pre - modern patriarchal societies the pattern of family life was joint. As an outcome of the modernization of the society the joint families are breaking up and in their

places nuclear or quasi - joint families are coming into existence.

The process of modernization seems to have left hardly any society unaffected and scholars all over the world would seem to be concerned with studying the various aspects of modernity. The modern western societies have achieved a substantial degree of modernization, whereas the societies of Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East and the Far East are developing at a faster rate to gain an even ground with developed societies. India and Turkey are two such societies which are experiencing a fast development in the direction of modernization. When modernization takes root in a society, it not only affects the structure of that society but also the value and attitudes that are held by members of that society.

In the context of modern writer, Markandaya draws attention towards the rapid increasing modernity in India through novels. She is a victim of that condition. Due to modernity, Joint Family System broke up. People disintegrated. They left their families in the villages and migrated to the town even foreign. Their feelings, compassion, modesty, behaviour and morality took place the cruelty, violence, lure of the big cities, and attraction towards the modern film world. Indian women lost their grace and modesty and became hard - hearted. Their maternal feelings have gone. Now they have no time for their family, husband and children. They show themselves as modern and advanced and go to the hotel and clubs. They like to make friendship with males and spend their nights with them.

The prevailing modernity is losing the Indian Culture and tradition. They adopt western culture and feel proud of being western. They are being slaves of western societies and modernity.

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V

Urban Influences

“A man’s destination is his own village,/ His own fire, and his wife’s cooking/ To sit in front of his own door at sunset/ And see his grandson, and his neighbour’s grandson/ Playing in the dust together/ A man’s destination is not his destiny,/ Every country is home to one man/ And exit to another”

The above lines can refer to the Indian or African.

The four major novelists as K.S.Venkataramani, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya are mainly concerned with a study of urban area in relation to its typical characters: peasants, landlords, priests, moneylenders and also in what manner they influence its economy, its value system and the caste and class structure. In Indo Anglian fiction the suffering of the peasants has been depicted at length. In the novels included for study, the village life with its saga of poverty, misery, illiteracy, tyranny, and exploitation has been dealt with. In the post independence periods, the situation of the peasants changed little. The need for industrialization has given rise to new problems for peasants and farmers who saw that their cultivable lands are shrinking day by day and as a result they were turned into landless laboures.

Among the Indo - Anglian novelists Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Kamala Markandaya have dealt their theme with a particular area. R.K.Narayan has chosen the south Malgudi, but it is an imagined area. Hardy, a Victorian novelist has chosen 'Wessex' and became a great novelist. Kamala Markandaya has selected the South. Sometimes she mentions the name of the area or somewhere she refuses to tell the area.

India is the land of villages and the real picture of India lies in the village. It is a fundamental social unit. It has been a basic and important unit in the organization of Indian social structure. Infact, the large modern cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras do not represent true country. True India can be seen in the village of this country. The real India is agricultural to the core; the three - fourth of its population still live in the villages. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Indian writers wrote about the village life.

The first half of the present century has been a rich and fruitful period for the Indo - Anglian fiction for the novels written during this period were deeply influenced by the epoch making political, social and ideological changes caused by the Gandhian Movement. The novels written during this period by K.S.Venkatarmani, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya capture the fervent mood of the nineteen thirties and give an account of the process of social change during this transitional period of Indian history. These Indo - Anglian novelists record in their village novels the impact of political ideologies and the Gandhian and socialist movements and the tremendous impact of the new industrial economy on the lives of the simple village folk.

Generally 'Urban' means relating to the town or cities. These urban areas are well depicted in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. The villagers are coming advanced and the villages are being urbanized. In "Nectar In A Sieve", the novelist presents the reality how the construction of a tannery

changed the rural village into a small town. Ravi in "A Handful Of Rice" migrated to the city to escape from poverty but here he was trapped in hunger and poverty. In "Two Virgins" Saroja and Lalitha, the two sisters, dazzled by the glamorous life of the city and the rural villagers are changed in mind, attracted towards the modernization and advanced life of the city.

In the Post - Independence period, among the women novelists, Kamala Markandaya's **"Novels seem to be uniquely reflective of the national consciousness in its multiple forms with the characteristic sensibility of the modern, educated Indian woman"**.¹

Mulk Raj Anand, K.S.Venkataramani and Raja Rao have written about the village life in all its manifestations : social, economic, political and cultural; and like them Kamala Markandaya too, has portrayed the life of a south Indian village where life has been static and moribund for a thousand of years. K.S.Venkataramani presents a picture of rural life in his novels and provides his solutions to the ill of industrialization life basing his principles on the Gandhian ideologies. Mulk Raj Anand raises a voice of protest against the exploitation of the down - trodden and the poor and wants radical changes in the socio - economic system through organization and collective action, Raja Rao gives an account of how the freedom movement and the charisma of Gandhiji penetrated deep into the psyche of Indian masses through the cultural and spiritual force and collective consciousness of the inhabitants of a remote south Indian village where myth and religion merge with the contemporary social reality. Kamala Markandaya seems to present the emotional aspects of village life, showing fear, hunger, death and despair in the process.

Kamala Markandaya's first novel "Nectar in a sieve" published in 1954, is a novel that depicts the impact of industrialization on the life of the people of a village whose

livelihood depends on rain, rice and land. Like Pearl S. Buck's "The Good Earth" and K.S. Venkataramani's Murugan, "The Tiller" Kamala Markandaya's "Nectar in a sieve" is a picture of a simple village people, urbanized and their chief sustainer is the land which they have been tilling for generations braving the wrath of the elements with their unflinching hope. Murugan, "the god annointed tiller" in Murugan, the Tiller is fortunate that he is helped and rescued by his mentor and benefactor, Ramu; Wang Hung, the poor, simple but sturdy farmer in "The Good Earth" has his wife's jewels which she had taken during the riots from the rich man's house, but for Rukmani, the central figure in "Nectar in a Sieve", life is a lone battle amid hunger, poverty and death. Unlike O - Lan in "The Good Earth" Rukmani is a literate woman and knows how to read and write, influenced by a father who said, **"Practice Hard" and "watching me busy with slate and pencil"**.² Generally women are not supposed to be literate in villages but it is the urban influence that a woman is more literate than her husband, even in family. Like O - Lan in "The Good Earth" Rukmani proves herself an enterprising and devoted wife.

Kamala Markandaya has chosen S.T. Coleridge lines for the epigraph in her novel.

**"Work without hope draws Nectar In A Sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live."**

Indeed this epigraph is very apt and appropriate if judged against the background of the story of this novel. 'Nectar in a Sieve' is a story about village life in which the key figure is Rukmani who suffers immensely throughout the novel. The story of Rukmani's hard peasant life illustrates the truth of Coleridge's line "Work without hope draws Nectar In A Sieve". "Nectar In A Sieve" is definitely a novel of Rural India and it is the well representation of the transforming rural area into urban area. In this novel, Kamala Markandaya depicts rural and urban area with its problems.

She also depicts the rural poverty, hunger and has devised a mode of documentation and seems to cry that rural India still despairs even after the achievement of independence. Mulk Raj Anand, Nayantara Sahgal also present the rural and urban society. Mulk Raj Anand gives a vivid description of rustic society but he has not yet completely solved the certain basic problems of the farmers through numerous welcome changes by Independence. Hindi novelist **Premchand** stood out as the most outstanding writer, whose novels like **'Godan'** and **'Rangbhoomi'** depicted with moving realism the tragic plight of the Indian peasant. In the post - independence period, most of the Indo - Anglian novelists like Nayantara Sahgal, are occupied with the urban scene. Anita Desai's "Where shall we go this summer" shows this aspect. Bhabani Bhattacharya is a novelist of rural folk. His themes generally revolve round poverty, hunger, of pestilence, traditionalism, caste, India's struggle against poverty and industrialisation.

'Nectar In A Sieve' is a very good study in rural and urban problems, The Indo - Anglian novelist of the post - independence era has laid great stress on the problems of the city. Markandaya has given the true picture of a peasant woman who uses her skill to improve the economic condition. A peasant woman works hard and pays her contribution to improve the conditions as Rukmani does.

"I planted beans and sweet potatoes, brinjals and chillies and they all grew well under my hand, so that we ate even better than we had done before".³

Nature is a part of life. It is with us through various aspects. Sometimes nature has a beautiful and lovely sight and sometimes it becomes cruel as an attack on humanity. Human beings suffer from these natural calamities. Nature brings both happiness and misery. Hope and despair come in the life and human beings should not be worry but should be bold, strong and face it as Rukmani faces it. Like Hardy,

Markandaya has shown the pessimistic side of nature. Hardy's Tess was seduced in the midst of Nature. Nature was victim but she could not help her. Markandaya's nature is cruel. It brings storm, flood, drought, pestilence and famine.

"Nature is like a wild animal that you have trained to work for you".⁴

The village, on the whole, suffers under the impact of the modern urban culture brought in by the British rule on the traditional Indian rural life and the value system associated with it. In addition of this vagaries of nature play a key role in their life as in the novels of Thomas Hardy. Rukmani, the key figure in this novel, does not accept defeat in the face of these odds. Even till the end of the novel, she has been trying to discover Nectar in a sieve, hopeful and undaunted.

"Fear of the dark future, fear of the sharpness of hunger, fear of the blackness of death."⁵

Like an ordinary village woman Rukmani is by temperament a traditional woman. After being married to a tenant farmer named Nathan. She is placed in a different environment altogether because her husband is only the master of **"a mud hut - unlike her father's big house"**⁶ and secondly as she comes to know later, her **"husband did not own the land he tilled"**⁷ as her father had done. But she is happy with her husband who is an illustrious tenant farmer she thinks like her husband that a good harvest means peace in a farmer's home. Rukmani and Nathan, like Wang Lung and O - Lan are greatly attached to the land. Wang Lung at one place in "The Good Earth" says, **"It had come out of the earth, this silver, out of his earth that he ploughed and turned and spent himself upon. He took his life from this earth; drop by drop by this sweat he wrung food from it and from the food, silver"**.⁸

For Wang Lung, the earth is everything and he constantly thinks in terms of it. On the very first day of

Rukmani arrival in his hut, Nathan, in a spirit similar to that of Wang Lung's, goes into the granary and comes out with a handful of paddy and says to Rukmani.

“Such harvest as this, and you shall not want for anything beloved”.⁹ Rukmani is moderate. She adjusts herself both in village and urban society. Unlike Wang Lung Nathan is a tenant farmer but his love of the land is not diminished after he has been evicted from the land only to become a beggar. In constant companionship with hunger, poverty and begging, he always feels attracted to the land and even while living away from the land, in his heart he has never been away from it. Markandaya has an outlook of a writer who sees the village life in India from a different angle.

As M.K. Naik rightly comments-

“Markandaya's fiction evinces a much broader range and offers a greater variety of setting character and effect, though the quintessential themes are equally few - viz, the east - west encounter take two forms - first a direct relationship between Indian and British characters; and secondly the impact of the modern urban culture brought in by the British rule on traditional Indian life. Markandaya's first novel, *Nectar in a sieve* 1954 illustrates all these pre - occupations”.¹⁰

In “*Nectar in a sieve*,” Kamala Markandaya has portrayed the life of a village in which all the ingredients of a traditional village are present, such as the moneylender and the agent of the village landlord and the vagaries of nature which are the constant treats in the life of villagers. Moreover, the agent of the landlord has been treated sympathetically. **“Shivaji acted for the zamindar, a kind man”.**¹¹ On the other hand, Biswas, the moneylender, has been treated mercilessly, and the narrator-heroine comments, **“For among us there is a dislike of the moneylending class”.**¹² and when Rukmani goes to Biswas to sell off her

vegetable he treats her in a very business - like manner and Rukmani comments, moneylenders thrive on other misfortune.

In this novel, Kamala Markandaya dramatizes the tragedy that has befallen an Indian village which has been tethered to the age - old customs and traditions. Rukmani and Nathan are the victims of the zamindari system on the one hand and the industrial economy. The tannery is the symbol of mechanical power and destroys the traditional basis of the village. Rukmani and Nathan see the tannery as a curse on their lives. They helplessly watch their sons being employed in the tannery. Rains failed, Rukmani's son Raja is killed at the tannery, in order to escape starvation, the villagers are going to the tea - plantation areas of Ceylon and the final blow comes to them from the zamindar who orders them to evacuate because they cannot pay the revenue due to bad harvest. Now Rukmani and Nathan have no way out but to go elsewhere to earn their livelihood. After an unsuccessful search for their son Murugan in the town, they eventually get shelter in a temple where food is distributed free to the poor. However, Nathan dies of hunger and disease and Rukmani comes back to her village to live with her son Selvam and her daughter Ira. At the end, she seems to her husband's view: **"Better to starve where we were bred than live here."**¹³ Rukmani like Wang Lung is not hopeless and it is her cherished hope that makes her an embodiment of courage, sacrifice, love, tolerance and compassion.

The traditional structure of the village in all the aspects: economic, social, and cultural has been affected by the appearance of an outer economic force which has been represented by tannery. In the wake of the ruthless and violent historical change the simple village folk like Rukmani and Nathan have become victims and the worst sufferers. In the beginning of the novel, Nathan is a tenant farmer with humble means but gradually his economic condition deteriorates. Meanwhile, the tannery, symbolic of mechanical

power, destroys the traditional village. The village is no longer peaceful. The calm and quiet of the village is destroyed by the “din and bustle” of the intruders. Not only the tannery has eaten up the land but also the sons of Rukmani, her son Raja had been killed at the tannery and her other sons Arjun and Selvam finding no interest in the agricultural pursuits of the forefathers decide to go to the tea plantation area in Ceylon. The domestic drama in the life of Rukmani takes a more sinister turn when her elder daughter Ira became a prostitute due to infertility. Uma Parmeshwaran has rightly summed up the basic theme of “Nectar In A Sieve.”

“Nectar In A Sieve” is the story of the faceless twilight of Indian agrarian bankruptcy, the horizon showing through the silent trees now with crimson ashes, now with soul - exalting splendor, always holding out the promise that the setting sun will rise again after the night, the night over approaching yet never encompassing”.¹⁴

Creative writing in English began with the exposure of educated Indians to English culture and art forms. The Indian writer in English has what B. Rajan calls his “mixed allegiances” and “the mixed sensibility”. The writer in English must mould the English language. Some English writers of fiction also faced dialectical problems which they solved by language arrangement.

English is the language in which they have chosen to reflect with utmost fidelity their whole range of sympathies and affections for things Indian as well as foreign. Indian writers in English no doubt face obvious limitations when using English to write Indian fiction. R. K. Narayan has proved that without experimenting with the English language, and only by its skillful use, he can delineate people whose responses and actions have no relation to this language or its habitual speakers. Indian writers in English have

successfully proved that English is flexible enough to accommodate any experience. Mulk Raj Anand makes abundant use of literal translation from Punjabi or Urdu in the dialogues of his characters. Khushwant Singh too recaptures faithfully the gestures, attitudes and the lingo of Punjabi villagers. Bhabani Bhattacharya began with linguistic innovations and experimental coining of words, but failed in the attempt only because such words had no basis in either English or Bengali. The language of Indian fiction in English operates one may say, at two levels.

1. There is the language of the non - English speaking Indians. This language must be assumed to have been translated directly from vernacular into English. It may consist of translated words, images and phrases.
2. The other level is the spoken English of the English speaking Indian, reported directly. This language is often governed by a limited "register" that situational segment of the English language governed by the range of vocabulary and syntax particular to the occasion or to the person who speaks or is spoken to. Each such "register" denotes effectively the quality of speech or the speaker.

Kamala Markandaya is an expatriate writer, living in London. Born and educated in India, her personality has developed within the Indian cultural ethos. Markandaya at the same time has an enviable mastery over English. What is being sought to be examined is whether she meets the constraints of language while defining the varied characters in her various Indian novels and the Indian atmosphere. Kamala Markandaya recaptures faithfully the south culture, attitudes towards Indianness, conflict in the mind about the winning Indian culture over western culture.

Like O - Lan, Rukmani has tremendous capacity for tolerance poverty, hunger, coupled with misfortunes do not

make her perturbed. In the home of her husband, who is a poor tenant farmer, she, for the first time experiences poverty and starvation. She suffers immensely for her family but she does not leave her endeavours to live clinging tenaciously to the life force and that is the reason she fights against the heaviest odds and never accepts defeat. She accepts all and everything. She says :- **“It is true, one gets used to everything. I had got used to the noise and the smell of the tannery, they no longer affected me. I had seen the slow, calm, beauty of our village melt in the blast from the town, and I grieved no more, so now I accepted the future and Ira’s lot in it, and thrust it from me; only sometimes when I was weak, or myself rebellious, protesting, rejecting and no longer calm”**.¹⁵

Rukmani had accepted not only the hard truth of the tannery but also of her daughter Ira’s tragic marriage and her defiant social attitude in relation to sexual matters, and her albino son Sacrabani. She had imbibed the spirit of endurance and acceptance. Like Wang Lung’s uncle in “the Good Earth” who has taken advantage of the helplessness and misfortunes of his kin and blackmailed them, Kunti has blackmailed Rukmani. Nathan confessed before Rukmani that he had taken some grains for Kunti because he was the father of Kunti’s sons - Rukmani, at first cannot believe it but later, she experiences pain, anger and disillusionment at her husband infidelity.

Kamala Markandaya, like Mulk Raj Anand, K.S. Venkataramani and Raja Rao has projected the image of modern India under the impact of intellectual and cultural change. In their attitudes and responses to this intellectual and cultural change these novelists have been directed by their own unique, individual talents and sensibilities. Markandaya focuses on individual sensibility as it is influenced and determined by the changing cultural and social forces. She is the typical example of a novelist of the decades of the

nineteen fifties and sixties exploring the anguish of the personal dilemma in modern society, dominated by the changing processes and the tyranny of the impersonal. Kamala Markandaya in *Nectar In A Sieve* has portrayed the essential tragedy of India as the loss of the truly human, the truly personal, beneath the welter of impersonal or social forces. Ira, Kunti and Puli in *Nectar In A Sieve* and Ravi, Nalini and thangam in “A Handful Of Rice” are the examples of such men and women who suffer the tyranny of custom and the blind social forces and in the process, they are dehumanized by their incessant demands.

The inhabitants of this village[India] are entirely dependent on agriculture. Nathan is a tenant farmer who wakes with the morning sun and is always busy during the time of sowing and harvesting. Nathan is a tradition bound tenant farmer who wishes his sons to work on the fields but that does not interest them. His two sons Arjun and Thambi plan to go to the tea plantation areas in Ceylon as labourers and when Rukmani tells them that money was not everything. Arjun replies, **“It is an important part of living ... There is nothing for us here for we have neither the means to buy land nor to rent it. Would you have us wasting our youth, chafing against things we cannot change”**.¹⁶

Rukmani and Nathan symbolize in themselves the ignorance, endurance and the unflinching devotion to their age-old customs tradition to which they are tied with inextricable bondage and they live for it and die for it. Arnold Kettle remarks, **“Literature is a part of life and it can be judged only in its relevance to life. Life is not static but moving and changing. Thus we have to see both literature and ourselves in history, not as abstract entities”**.¹⁷

Kamala Markandaya's other novel “The Coffers Dams” deals with East-West theme but it implies the urban and rural influences too. It is the latest novel, written in 1969, “Where the action; though set in India, is seen through the

eyes and experiences of an English woman. **“The interesting thing about Kamala Markandaya is that despite her superficial knowledge of and scant research into the customs and traditions of the Hindu way of life, her novels are successful”**.¹⁸

The *Coffer Dams* deals with the building of a huge dam with reservoir up in the hills of Malnad. The interaction between the British and the Indian technician and the tribals, their men - women relationship are revealing.

Every artist has its own area to paint the picture of life. Novelists like Mulk Raj Anand portrayed the village life of Punjab area. Kamala Markandaya has portrayed the picture of the village in south India. In **“Nectar In A Sieve”** Kamala Markandaya presents the story of a village in which its inhabitants are not in terms with the changing spirit of the time because in it they fail to get any means for their sustenance. As a result, the confrontation between the new, changing industrial forces and the old, agricultural way of life become inevitable and in the process, like the village of Kanthapura, this village and its inhabitants too, suffer immensely, nonetheless, the spirit to live and fight remains with them. Markandaya looks at the problems of a south Indian village from a sophisticated, educated and urbanized outlook. In **“Nectar In A Sieve”** the main focus is on the conflict arising out of the setting up of the tannery in the village. This industrial development in this area caused miseries to the villagers who are tenant farmers and due to the tannery their very existence is in peril because of the problem of evacuation of the land which they had been tilling for years one generation after another generation. Rukmani, the daughter of village Headman, has no proud of it. She adjusts in the simple village of her husband and uses her skill in that urbanized area. **“I had planted, in the flat patch of ground behind the hut, a few pumpkin seeds. The soil here was rich, never having yielded before, and**

loose so that it did not require much digging. The seeds sprouted quickly, sending up delicate green hoots that I kept carefully watered”.¹⁹ In this novel, when every thing is shattered due to the tannery, Rukmani’s sons have left the village, her son Raja is already dead, and at the end, her husband Nathan, too, is dead. Even then, in Rukmani, we come across the affirmation of hope for a new life not to be lived in a far off foreign land as paupers and beggars but as a self respecting member of a village community. Eventually, Rukmani comes to her native place where her roots were deep down with the pleasant memory of her marriage, her hard life for a short while as a barren woman, her worries on account of the marriage of her older daughter, Ira and the subsequent failure of the married life of Ira, experience of hunger, starvation and death coupled with the failure of crops - all seems to come before her eyes.

Although the depiction of the conflict between the traditional and the scientific spirit is the main problem of the novel, however, there are other issues pertaining to a village life which have been focused in the novel. There are : the depiction of the villagers way of life and the problems related with it; the impact of the outside factors such as the status of a woman and their different roles and the role of religion in the life of a simple, orthodox villager.

A person wherever lives, influenced by its customs, tradition, value, trend and behaviour. An urbanized person believes in its marriage ceremony; cremation way of life, and somewhat traditional. Rukmani, Ira Kunthi, Nathan all characters belonged to the village and influenced from its values. Rukmani believes in traditional marriage and its social customs. Markandaya has portrayed the life of the simple village folk with all the details usually associated with their way of life. The description of her marriage and the beginning of her married life unfold through the narrative the changing social conditions and the vignettes of village

life. Rukmani, as we know from her account, is the fourth daughter of a village Headman. He was a prosperous headman of the village, but now, particularly just before the time of the marriage of Rukmani he is no longer the Headman of the village and he does not have the precious power and prestige. It is clear from the admonishing speech of Rukmani's eldest brother. **"Don't speak like a fool, the Headman is no longer of consequence. There is the collector and to him is the power and to those he appoints; not to the Headman"**.²⁰ In these changing circumstances, Rukmani grows up to become a bride of an illiterate, simple and hardworking tenant farmer named Nathan. It is because of the fact as Rukmani herself comments. **"They could not find me a rich husband"**.²¹

Nathan has a conservative and traditional view as he does not like the girl and **"he had wanted a son to continue his line and walk beside him on the land, not a puling infant who would take with her a dowry and leave nothing but a memory behind"**.²² Religion and belief in super natural power play an important role in the life of villager. **Sir H.Sumner Maine has rightly commented that, "each individual in India is a slave to the customs of the group to which he belongs"**.²³ And in this respect Rukmani and Nathan are the slaves of customs and traditions of the village community to which they belong. In the very beginning of the novel, we find the description of the customs that give a clue to the way of life the people of this south village are going to live. When Rukmani for the first time comes to her husband's **"mud hut"** she finds **"a garland of mango leaves, symbol of happiness and good fortune"**.²⁴ This shows that the story is about the people whose life style and behaviour are steeped in the rural traditions of India and influenced from the modernisation. Rukmani and Nathan belong to the agricultural India and they live, think and love only in terms of the land they till. But their fatalistic attitude

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to life and their struggle for existence reflect their deep and intense religious impulse which sustain their spirit. On the whole Rukmani and Nathan have some strange quality of humanity.

Kamala Markandaya is the most outstanding woman novelist, who depicts the rural, urban, city and foreign dwellers in her novels. Except Markandaya, the other three Indo - Anglian novelist, viz - K.S. Venkataramani, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao have their roots in the villages. The fiction of K.S.Venkataramani, chronologically the earliest novelist of this period, extolled the ancient glories of village life. In his novels, *Murugan*, *The Tiller* and *Kandan*, the patriot he has shown that the regeneration of India will only be achieved through construction and upliftment of its village. Like him, Raja Rao also uses the theme of national struggle in his novel *Kanthapura*. The achievements of Raja Rao in this village novel is that he has universalized the common experiences of the villagers of a remote South Indian Village by exploiting the sources of Indian folk tradition at both the levels of theme and technique. Mulk Raj Anand's trilogy, "*The Village*, *Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and The Sickle*" has shown the pre-independence period of India. He has realistically shown that it is not just the British rule which is solely responsible for the sufferings of the poor peasantry in India. The exploiters are the British, they are rather Indians favoured and corrupted by the British system of administration.

Kamala Markandaya, unlike K.S. Venkataramani, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, is an expatriate who has been living in England for a number of years. She comes from an educated and urbanized background. It is significant that she wrote her first novel, "*Nectar In A Sieve*" capturing the stark realities of hunger, poverty, death and deprivation with which an Indian village is perpetually plagued, Although her perspective is different from those of K.S. Venkataramani,

Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand yet there is point of similarity - they all depict the economic inequality in the countryside and their main theme is the theme of the poverty, hunger and exploitation during the period when India was under British occupation. Like Venkataramani, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, she does not provide solution to the immediate problems of exploitation and displacement of poor peasantry resulting from the industrial development in the rural areas. The village novels of K.S. Venkataramani, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya find comparison with the village novels written in the different Indian language by Fakir Mohan Senapati [Oriya], Sarat Chandra Chatterjee [Bengali], Prem Chandra [Hindi], Palli Samaj [The Home Coming] by Sharat Chandra Chatterjee, all depict the predicaments and the helpless conditions of the simple and illiterate villagers in different localities. Rukmani and Nathan in "Nectar In A Sieve" are true representatives of the Indian peasant. Thus by analyzing the novels written by the Indo - Anglian writers like K.S. Venkataramani Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya and by comparing these with the novels written by the novelists of the Indian language we find that the depiction of village life is a pan - Indian theme, only the medium, and the language is different.

Kamala Markandaya gives vivid pictures of the hills of South India in its full bloom producing rice thrice a year and the place is dearer to her than misty landscapes of Wales or light blue azure of the Mediterranean Sea. Her entire creative work reflects her love and reverence to her native country India. Although she is a city dweller, yet she is familiar with the lives and problems of villages. The titles such as "rice and monsoon", "Handful of Rice" etc. shows her knowledge about the price of rice for Indian peasants. The novel "A Handful Of Rice" also depicts the rural and urban influences, Ravi, the main character belongs to the village and comes to the city and is influenced by the

culture, tradition of that city. He is the son of a poor peasant. He is tired of hunger and poverty, and in order to escape rural poverty he goes to the city. There he joins the local petty criminals. Still he remains a destitute. After some time he frees himself from this criminal business, marries and begins to live in his father-in-law's house as his assistant in tailoring. After Apu's death Ravi has to look after the entire family. The financial condition of the family worsens day by day. Ravi has to give up all his dreams and hopes. Even to earn a square meal for the family is difficult for him. Finally, he is very frustrated and we find him attacking a godown for a handful of rice. The main themes of the novel are hunger and poverty, exodus from the village to the towns and destruction of artisan by industry. It depicts real Indian life and is universal in appeal. The problems, thoughts and hopes of the protagonist are similar to ours. The setting is provided by a South Indian village in the vicinity of Madras and by Madras itself.

Kamala Markandaya, one of the greatest women novelists of Indian English fiction, very authentically portrays life both in Indian villages and cities. Before her marriage and setting down in England, she spent some years in a South Indian village and thus gained a first-hand knowledge of Indian rural life. Poverty is the keynote of Indian village life. Most of the people in Indian villages are poor as the villages do not offer any opportunity to the people to earn a better livelihood. In the villages, **"They had all lived between bouts of genteel and acute poverty- the kind in which the weakest went to the wall, the old ones and the babies dying of tuberculosis, dysentery, the 'falling fever', 'recurrent fever'."**²⁵ People in villages live below poverty line. **"He [Ravi] knew better the economics of village life, knew the superhuman efforts, the begging and the borrowing that went into raising the train fare, the money for the extras demanded by pride and the standards of a**

city. His father had managed it once, where many men like him never managed it at all".²⁶ That is why the people migrate to the city. Coming to the city, Ravi is disillusioned that for a poor man there is no difference between a city and village. An illiterate or undereducated villager is only suitable for manual labour. Here he is again exploited. Ravi and Apu get 80 rupees for one dozen jackets while the shop owners sell one jacket for 125 rupees. Ravi becomes very angry at this, **"he and his like perennially scratching round for a living, while they sat still and waxed fat on huge peremptory margins"**.²⁷ Ravi has to give up all his ambitions and after Apu's death his economic condition worsens. Finally, we find him struggling for a handful of rice. In want of money Apu and Ravi's son, Raju, are not properly cured and both of them die. Poverty gives birth to hunger and starvation. In our daily life, we may easily find people begging for a handful of rice, flour or any foodstuff. In the very beginning of the novel when the hero is before us, he is very hungry. He goes to Apu's house and says, **"I'm hungry, I want a meal. I'm starving"**.²⁸ Fruits are a rarity for Ravi and Apu's family. In the village as well as in the city we may see **"a cluster of people around the ice - fruit stand, mostly children without the money to buy, who stand transfixed, like small worshippers in front of the row of coloured syrup bottles"**.²⁹ Unemployment is one of the burning problems of our country. When Ravi comes to the city and is acquainted with the hard realities of the city he thinks, **"if there had been a job, it might have been different, but there was no job. The city was full of graduates the college turned them out in their thousands each year - looking for employment so what chance had he, with his meagre elementary school learning"**?³⁰ Sometimes he despised them, these refined young men who were having their education slapped back in their faces and sometimes **"pitted against men fresh from the colleges,**

bearing the seal of these great institutes of learning. And these young men waged as fierce a competition as any he had known. He had seen the queues that every vacancy produced, the long waiting times, the finedrawn patience that suddenly shaped these mild, well - bred men into screaming agitators".³¹

Markandaya has touched the problems of town or cities. Human being becomes puppets in the hand of various influences of cities. The problem of rapidly growing population and accommodation is also taking place. In this novel, in the beginning, we see that the protagonist, Ravi, **"had no quarters It was a matter of chance where he slept. A bench in the park, an empty six - by - two space in a doorway, the veranda of an empty house, the pavement, all in turn had served to bed down on ... since he had left the railway station, the coffee house and its pavement frontage had become a second house to him"**.³² After his marriage with Nalini they have to share their room with others. They have no privacy. Ravi has an ardent ambition to have a separate shelter for them, **"a place they could call their own, where he and his wife could talk, plan, dream, make love undisturbed"**.³³ Soon his dream is fulfilled, he constructs a shelter on the roof of the house. But after some time their privacy is disturbed. Thangam, Nalini's sister often comes there to share their room. In our Indian traditional society, if a man has lots of children, he should be idealized. When Nalini is going to have a child, according to their tradition. Jayamma sends Ravi out of the house. Outside the house, he meets a man and both indulge in conversation. Ravi comes to know that the man has many children. Ravi says that it is his own fault, he should not have had so many children. Now the man also realizes the fact and says, **"One's easy, two's easy, three and four one can manage-but when they keep coming ... some times I tell you, brother, I want to put my hands round their**

necks and squeeze until I know I'll never again have to think about feeding them, no, never again hear them whimper".³⁴ Ravi also has many brothers and sisters. Apu has a large family and in time Nalini gives birth to four children. One of them dies. Thangam also has many children. Generally in India the birth of a male child is a joyous event for everybody. When a son is born to Ravi and Nalini, Apu is very happy. He thinks, **"there had been babies before : his daughters, the twin sons of whom neither he nor his wife could bear to speak, who had been born dead ... Thangam's babies, daughter after daughter. Now at last a male child had been born to his house"**.³⁵ Ravi also desires a child, **"preferably son rather than a daughter, a little boy who would run after him and call him father, who would look upto him and to whom in time he would pass on his skills, so that he would never have to worry about whom to hand over to like poor old Apu"**.³⁶ Through this novel, Markandaya has tried to express the burning problems of society that are facing by human beings. Generation Gap is represented by Ravi and Apu. There is less love, harmony and understanding between the old and young generations. The younger generation is now revolutionary and disobedient. Ravi represents the young generation and Apu, his father - in - law, the old one, Apu does not want to increase the prices of the clothes as he does not want to lose the customers, but Ravi revolts against it. Many times there is a quarrel between them on this point. Ravi firmly wants to increase the prices even at the cost of losing the customers. Both the generations are finding fault with each other. For example Apu says, **"You young fellers now a days , you don't know how to conduct yourselves, you're all the same, mannerless monkeys with no respect for anything, not even your elders"**.³⁷ Ravi resorts, **"Why should we respect you, what have done to earn our respect"**.³⁸

The novel is replete with typical Indian urban scenes as kitchen, market, different types of gathering people. Jayamma's kitchen is a typical Indian kitchen. A blackened range runs along one wall, with firewood and charcoal stacked at the end. Jayamma is fanning a slow fire over which a brass vessel is simmering. Apu's house is very small and overcrowded. The scene of market shows the Indian urban area as a small cluster of people around the ice-fruit stand, mostly children without the money to buy. They have temptation for coloured syrup bottles and along the sea-side, there are the sight of hungry and able-bodied children. This novel presents the sight of crowded cinema-halls and people busy in eating and drinking so many things as tea, coffee, cola, monkey nuts, ice-cream, pakora, karabandi etc. The description of an Indian police is always cruel. Ravi comes in the contact of police in a city as they are, **"brutes and become devil when they put on their uniforms, the bigger ones in boots that they brought down so smartly on bare flinching toes"**.³⁹ The sight of a crowd waiting for religious procession, is common in India. Apu's family members are waiting hour upon hour for processions.

Markandaya lived in an urban area of South so she is successfully catch the thought, manner, tradition and values of that areas. Both her novels "Nectar In A Sieve" and "A Handful Of Rice" represent the rural and urban influences. Both Rukmani and Ravi are literate. Both belong to the peasant family. Both suffer but Rukmani presents herself as an ideal woman while Ravi is engaged in petty crime. Both novels show the Indian tradition of the male child. Both novels present the financial condition of a family that is very critical and ultimately even a handful of rice is a rarity to them. In "Nectar In A Sieve", the village converts into a small town and in "A Handful Of Rice" Ravi escapes from the rural village and comes into the city. The novel **"Nectar In A Sieve, 1954 highlights the eminent peasants problems**

of colonial India. Indian farmers cultivate the rice field standing in knee-deep water and sweating in the scorching rays of sun. For these peasants rice is just like nectar, the valuable gift of gods which gives eternal life. Rice is produced by their great labour but they are unable to retain it in their houses. Just like water, which cannot be stored in a sieve, rice slips down through the fingers of peasants and disappears in the corn bins of landlords and money lenders".⁴⁰ The novel is a family chronicle reflecting sufferings of peasants of rural India. The life of tenant, Nathan is hard and difficult. His wife Rukmani, a younger daughter of a village headman, had to marry him only because she was left without dowry as the whole fortune of the family was shattered in the marriage of her three elder sisters. Realising the misfortune of the family, Rukmani reconciles with her fate and agrees to live in a hut built by Nathan's hand. The poverty, starvation and suffering of the couple gradually increases with the passage of time. Poverty does not come in the way of the birth of her children. During the first year, they have a daughter Iravadi. Thereafter six children took birth in the family within a seven years interval which brought many sorrows and sufferings to Rukmani. **"The life of two generations, which could survive after a lot of economic and psychological crisis, has been depicted in the novel. People in one generation are drawn towards land and they do not think of their existence in any other way than in the village community. The other generation dreams of breaking these traditional ties as it provides peasants only "Nectar In A Sieve".**⁴¹ In "Nectar In A Sieve", Arjun and Thambi, the two elder sons of Nathan who decided to leave the village to work in a tannery, experience the impact of new tendencies. The consciousness of works is aroused under the influence of concurrent national liberation movement and they moved ahead on the path of struggle for social and

economic rights. Arjun and Thambi took active participation in the movement and started demanding, along with other workers, an increase in their wages. Thambi asked his parents his firm decision to fight till the end. The advent of industrialization in the rural area, the expansion of a tannery, the advent of drought and the famine, the meagre and unsteady income altogether drive the couple to the verge of utter despair. A son dies in the tannery labour strike and another goes away to Ceylon as an indentured labourer. Their third son vanishes into a nearby city. Many characters in “Nectar In A Sieve” are idealistic and the relation between people are marked by a stamp of sentimentality. The novel shows Kamala as an outstanding creative writer and a champion of the realistic trend in literature. She herself explains her philosophy as a writer and says, Literature provides the resonance that lingers in the mind long after the last headline has fled from the memory, while it lingers, there is neither black nor white nor capitalists nor communist; there is only human brotherhood. “A Handful Of Rice” resembles Bhattacharya’s “He Who Rides A Tiger” in many ways, but Markandaya’s nonsense realism makes her plot much more palatable.

Rukmani from “Nectar In A Sieve” and Ravi from “A Handful Of Rice” are exceptionally fine portraits of India’s downtrodden but resined and resilient millions. As the long suffering Indian woman who endures each crisis, Rukmani is a living replica of the stereotyped Indian wife who regards her husband as her god and her children as her divine calling. Markandaya infuses Rukmani with the fears, frustrations and astounding grace under pressure so characteristic of India’s peasant population. While Rukmani approaches sainthood, the more fallible and exasperating. Ravi is ultimately a more convincing character because he combines kindness and cruelty, passivity and action, pride and subcervience, idealism and pragmatism.

“Nectar In A Sieve”, like Anand’s novels is essentially a one character work. “A Handful Of Rice” is almost a one character novel, but Markandaya at least gives more body and distinct personalities to the minor characters. Ravi’s wife Nalini is a less introspective. Rukmani in every way, so there is little to recommend her as an original creation. Though “A Handful Of Rice” is an urban replay of “Nectar In A Sieve”. Markandaya seems more aware of the need to surround her protagonist with more easily definable minor characters.

In “A Handful Of Rice” the vagabond hero Ravi, like Rukmani in “Nectar In A Sieve” has a bit of learning. **“He could read, he could write- not only the vernacular but English”**.⁴² Unlike Rukmani, it is not Ravi who tells us his story but the omniscient narrator. Markandaya is therefore not shackled to the constraints of language in the same way as in “Nectar In A Sieve”. But in the dialogues of Ravi and the others, Markandaya is treading dangerous ground. Ravi’s dialogues with his wife Nalini, his friend Damodar, and his other relatives may be taken as translations. For the first time the transliterations are not accompanied with explanations. Indian terminology like “Chatram, Chapli, Masala dosai, Idlies, Pattani, Banchots” and authenticity like the “Police Thana” and the “Water Buffaloes”.

“The Coffer Dams” is also a third person narration. Markandaya has been provided ample scope to write her brand of English in the dialogues of the English experts and Indian technologists who are the main character in this novel. “The Coffer Dams” is, as Uma Parmashvaran states, **“a turning point in her literary career and has deeper implications in the context of expatriation”**.⁴³

In “A Handful Of Rice” Markandaya gives a graphic description of an Indian village where its people **“lived between bouts of genteel and acute poverty- the kind in which the weakest went to the wall, the old ones and the babies dying of tuberculosis, dysentery, the falling fever,**

recurrent fever and any other names for what was basically simply nothing but starvation".⁴⁴ "Two Virgins" also sets in village and city. The story of the two virgins Lalitha and Saroja is a tedious description of village life that an "Indian writer living permanently abroad cannot always be trusted to write knowingly about". Its theme sums up traditional Indian life as against the modern western outlook with Aunt Alamelu at one end and Appa at the other.

The poverty and hunger depicted in "Nectar In A Sieve" and "A Handful Of Rice" are still very real. Despite Markandaya's conscious efforts to make her novels acceptable to western readers, there is, at least in Nectar in a sieve, a fictional recreation of what should be a timeless experience or a familiar situation for most Indian[though undoubtedly non-english speaking Indians]. **"An air of grimness and barrenness and menace dominates the novels of Markandaya much as it does those of Anand. Cyclic in structure, they are also cyclic in terms of content and philosophical outlook"**.⁴⁵ Markandaya certainly evokes much sympathy for her protagonists in "Nectar In A Sieve" and "A Handful Of Rice". Govind in "Some Inner Fury" chafes at **"the culture of an aloof and alien race twisted in the process of transplantation from its homeland and so divorced from the people of the country as to be no longer real"**.⁴⁶

Any novelist, whenever he writes of any particular area, cannot escape from its roots. Urban areas are the backbone of India so Markandaya as Indo - Anglian novelist also writes of these influences in her novels. The novel "Some Inner Fury" describes both modernity and urban influences. The description of a village of India is shown as Mira says, **"I must go to the village". "I'm not a peasant"**.⁴⁷ India is the land of villages and its imagery is just like a bride, **"a November morning - which is the best of the cool weather months-there is a mist, filmy and beautiful**

like a woman's veil".⁴⁸ and "The rain began, I heard it drumming on the roof and we were in the village".⁴⁹ The Englishman Richard was surprised to see the villages of India and, "It was amazing how quickly the villagers put down their roots The scheme had begun late in November: by April the paddy was almost ready for reaping. The first reaping, The villagers would say, and bring you a head of paddy and part the husk and show you, eagerly the beginning of the white rice - grain, and murmur. The first harvest the first of many, God willing. And we would echo. "God willing".⁵⁰

Markandaya lived abroad but her close contact with India shows, her intense love for her motherland, never shaken. She says, "If you look at capecomorin on the map you will see that here the V of India comes sharply to a point, and be aware, as you walk on the sands, that under your feet a continent ends". Even in "Possession", Valmiki lived in a village but was sent to London. Despite living in a crowded atmosphere of London, he felt loneliness and nostalgia. He withers like a flower as if it has been plucked from its native soil and placed on a dry and stony soil. He feels suffocation in social milieu of London.

An interesting comparison, however, can be drawn between R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand. Born in 1905, Anand spent 20 years of his life abroad from 1925 - 1945. He wrote his first novel 'untouchable' in 1935, the same year in which Narayan, a year younger than him, published his first novel 'Swami and Friends'. By 1945 both Anand and Narayan had half a dozen novels each to their credit, but Anand's reputation as a novelist stood higher than that of Narayan. Both Anand and Narayan detached observer of Indian life.

India's grinding poverty affects the westerner most of all though it is the west that is in many ways responsible for it. Even Kenny tells Rukmani that he would return to his

country when tired of India's follies and stupidities, **"your eternal shameful poverty"**.⁵¹ One of these stupidities is the social structure in India. Rukmani is reluctant to let her sons work in the tannery, a western creation, because they are not of the "caste of tanners". She is duly worried about what her relatives will say. Kenny ponders over this: "One goes from one end of the world to the other to hear the same story. Does it matter what people say"? For Rukmani it does. She tells Kenny, "It is easy for you, but perhaps not quite so simple for us". It is therefore important for Rukmani to find a good match for her daughters Ira but the choice is limited by the demands of dowry. Ira's wedding has its share of religion, music, noise and feasting but it does not ensure happiness for Ira. She is rejected by her husband for being barren. The western method of selecting one's own partner is also not successful as Kenny's divorce from his wife proves. Human nature is the same everywhere and Kenny misses his sons just as Nathan does his. Kenny, the medical missionary and an unlikely friend of Rukmani represents, **"a sympathy for things Indian and embodies the finer aspects of the west"**.⁵²

An Indian village is not a colourful picture of a fascinating exotic object to be viewed and exhibited at will; it is a concrete manifestation of centuries of Indian culture, traditions, myths, religions, crystallized wisdom and philosophical ideas, preserved and enriched by each succeeding generation, but now being constantly invaded by sweeping Western influences and expanding urban monstrosities. It has within a magnetic power that draws its natives as if with affectionate silken cords. The concept of village can be fully comprehended neither by the westerners nor by the city dwellers but only by its simple-hearted natives.

By virtue of his urban upbringing and education, an Indo-Anglian novelist often feels handicapped in capturing the spirit of rural life and consoles himself in mere

enumeration of its external manifestations. On the contrary, a person born, brought up and educated in rural area fails to articulate in English his responses to village life though he may in a regional language. Hence where as the Indian literature in English can boast of only a couple of rural novels, based largely on the novelist's early recollection or vicarious experiences rather than on minute observation of the day - to - day activities in the village, Indian regional literatures have a rich crop of the finest rural novels.

Markandaya's "Nectar In A Sieve" is a genuine novel of rural India. Hari Mohan Prasad calls it **"an epic of Indian life at the grassroots, a full view of the village world where peasants grow and live, suffer and endure and emerge more dignified, more human in their elements with their tattered rags, their dying moans and their obstinate clinging to the soil like the stump withered all over but its roots delved in the earth"**.⁵³ N.K. Jain feels that the novel presents **"an authentic picture of village life in transition, particularly of rural poverty and hunger"**.⁵⁴ M.K. Naik, however, considers the rustic life in the novel "contrived" due to the novelist's description of "the public naming ceremony of Ira's child which is born in sin" and feels **"convinced that Rukmani's village exists only in the expatriate imagination of her creator. Surely, no traditional Indian village will allow so permissive a code of sexual morality"**.⁵⁵ Markandaya also depicts the onetime idyllic beauty of the countryside, now being savagely bulldozed by India's technological progress. She has not given the description of the village at the height of its glory but at its transitional period, affected particularly by the setting up of tannery. Nonetheless, slow change was coming to the village where, **Srinivas Iyenger feels, "life has apparently not changed for a thousand years" but now with the invasion of industry and modern technology "sinister consequences issue"**.⁵⁶ The tannery, symbolizing industrialization and its

associated evils, invades the village with clatter and din, depriving it of its children's playground, and raising the bazaar price high.

Even though the picture of rural life given by Kamala Markandaya is very sound and comprehensive, there are some details which are not accurate largely due to her confusion, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. Some of these points have been discussed elsewhere in a separate article. Markandaya talks of bonfire at the time of Deepawali; it should have been at the time of Holi. She talks of Rukmani using "a little of washing powder" whereas in the rural area washing soap, not powder was in use in the past, unless the novelist means washing soda [sodium bicarbonate] by it. Markandaya also does not seem to know how much of land revenue a landless farmer has to pay. When the crops fail due to drought, Nathan is forced to pay land revenue by selling a few mud pots, two brass vessels, a handful of dry chillies, the bullocks, two near-new saris, Nathan's dhoti, and together these don't fetch more than one hundred and twenty five rupees. It is surprising that whereas two saris sparingly used, two shirts and one dhoti of poor farmer fetched seventy five rupees, pots and pans, the food and the bullocks could fetch only fifty rupees.

Markandaya in order to show the financial difficulties of the farmer couple, has inflated the land revenue so much that it loses touch with reality and exposes the dark spots in her knowledge of rural life. But minor drawbacks apart, *Nectar in a Sieve* remains an authentic reconstruction of an age-old south Indian village in transition, buffeted and tossed by industrial winds, menaced and stunned by sweeping urban influences now precariously holding on to its primordial land with somewhat subdued but enduring spirit encased in a battered body and tattered trappings.

The portrayal of village life is not only a popular and recurring theme in India but also in the modern world

fiction of the early decades of the twentieth century. Most of the novels depicting the life of the peasants have received the Nobel Prize for literature. In 1924 the Nobel Prize award went to the Polish Novelist Raymont as the writer of "The Peasants" and in 1938, Pearl S. Buck won the Nobel Prize for "The Good Earth".

In English fiction, Thomas Hardy's Wessex novels, have portrayed the lives of the rustic people, their love and harmony with nature and the effects of industrial developments that started taking place in England at that time.

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VI

East – West Conflict

The word **‘Exile’** immediately evokes sympathy. It brings to mind a picture of men who are lonely and persecuted, who have been forced to flee from a home and a country dear to them, who struggle hard to survive among alien people. Little of this is true, and in nine cases out of ten it is the writer who has gladly said goodbye to his country. Irrespective of this fact, **‘Exile’** is a saleable word. If there were two books, one called **‘Writers in Exile’** and the other **‘Writers at Home’**.

The serious writer, whether he lives at home or abroad, writes for his own people. There is no definite pattern of how exile might affect a novelist. Too much has been made of the issue that a writer in exile loses contact with the soil, his people and his subject matter. Of the scores of Irish writers who left, how many lost contact with Ireland? Some only became more Irish. A few expatriate writers like Shaw and St. John Ervine did cut themselves off from Ireland but they still continued to find material in Irish life. Exile seems to have generally benefitted Indian writers and with the exception of a few, our best known writers live abroad. There are two factors that help the Indian writer who settles abroad. First, Writing in the English language, he cannot be in the main stream of the literary and cultural life of his

own country. Thus, his choosing an English speaking country is more of a homecoming than an expatriation. Secondly, and more importantly the Indian writer-coming as he does from a country with a rich cultural and historical heritage- is able to write about India even in his new surroundings. Indian customs, religion, family, folklore and the life of the people at the various strata of society, continue to provide subject matter. So much indeed in his work is steeped in Indian life that the casual reader may not see from the writings alone that many of these writers left India a score or more years ago.

Kamala Markandaya, an Indo - Anglian novelist, lived in England since 1948, but some of her best works such as *Nectar In A Sieve*, *A Handful Of Rice* and *Some Inner Fury* deal with Indian and rural life. Bhabani Bhattacharya who settled in the U. S. after several years abroad, and Ved Mata who, despite blindness since early childhood, continues to explore India and the Indian way of life from his retreat in New York. Indian Writers are not forced to choose exile, and they can criticize Indian social, political and religious life as comfortably from home as they can from abroad as long as they do not seek government approbation or reward.

The encounter of the West and the East is a prominent theme in Indian writing in English. It has wide ramifications that need a detailed and incisive scrutiny. The conventional polarity or antagonism between what is known as the East and what is looked upon as the West is indeed fast disintegrating in this increasingly scientific and despiritualized world. Nevertheless historically, philosophically, sociologically and even temperamentally, the East signifies a sort of orientation that cares eventually more for the inner and the unseen, the categorical and the absolute.

The West signifies a sceptical, hardheaded, if not cynical, attitude towards the problems of the world. The East and the West were first brought together in trade. In the

East, man accepts the forces of nature as invisible. He looks back to the past as a lost golden age and Hinduism conceives of nature as the tragedy of life and evil as ultimately illusory. The West, on the other hand, believes that man can strive to master nature through the application of science in the form of technology. Man in the West is an isolated individual charged with cherishing and developing his unique potentialities. But in the East man is a member of a strict hierarchical order where each must perform the duties allotted to him.

Clyde Kluckohn, an American sociologist, says that the views of a given group regarding the structure of the universe, the relation of man to the universe and the relation of man to the man represent the group's own definition of the ultimate meaning of human life".¹

Allen J. Greenberger points out that English writers like Rudyard Kipling, who based their stories on India, also believed that there was a basic difference between the East and the West".²

A critic even confesses that they were "like people living in a room upstairs who knew nothing of what was going on in the house below. He felt that the only way "to feel India", stipulated that you must become Indian, gain one set of qualities and lose the others".

The English found this difficult to do. But the need then, as now, "as the need for a mutual assimilation of East and West without injury to either". This indeed has been the greatest social problem the world has even seen or is likely to see. It was in Markandaya's words, **"too strident, too dissonant, too austere, too raw".³**

Indo - English writers, having learned the art of the novel from their acquaintance with it in English Literature, became chiefly concerned with how the East and the West came together to resolve consequent complication. Beginning

with Sarath Kumar Ghose's "The Prince of destiny in 1909". Indian novelists of English fiction attempted to study this encounter at various depth. The novel is about the dilemma faced by an Indian Prince who has to choose between his love for an English girl and marriage to an Indian princess.

Two centuries of British rule had exposed the Indians to a culture that was alien to theirs. A dialectic between the values of the East and of the West became, therefore, a natural corollary to this cross cultural encounter. In his article "The meeting of East and West, **"Anand Shankar Ray presents a searching analysis of the historical factors which were responsible for the East West confrontation"**.⁴

One of the reasons for the recurring East - West theme in the works of many Indo - English Writers can be traced to their endeavour to address themselves to a western audience and of their desire to define and interpret the East for its benefit and in the process rediscover their country and their own special identity. Again, while recognizing the cultural antagonism that exists between the East and West, there has been a continuing effort on the part of some of the novelists to explore areas where these differences can be explained away and an understanding reached. It is equally clear that they have been consciously or unconsciously influenced in their approach and treatment by a seminal work like E. M. Forster's "A Passage To India" 1924. One of the obvious themes of Forster's novel is the friendship between Dr. Aziz an Indian and Cyril Fielding, the English principal of Chandrapore college.

The influence of "A Passage To India" on Kamala Markandaya's "Some Inner Fury" 1955, is unmistakable. Like Forster, she focuses on the **"familiar dilemma - between personal relationship and racial prejudice"**.⁵ In Raja Rao the East - West theme assumes a depth and validity in the quaintessence of the advaita philosophy of Brahminical India, to the exclusion of India at all other levels. Mulk Raj Anand

had made a quest of sociological problems. He examines the Western ideas encroaching on Eastern traditions and declaims the latter. In his novels, India's medieval and aristocratic society is sought to be changed by the agencies of modernity like science, industrialization and liberal democracy in order to create a dynamic new society. The East - West problem is viewed not so much on British - Indian aspects of the dilemma as the Indian - Indian conflicts. But the personal social problem is seen as a traditional East - West conflict. R.K. Narayan is more concerned with translating the East West dichotomy into Indian terms consonant with tradition versus change. In Bhabani Bhattacharya again the East West is viewed against - **"the frail old world wheel of wood set against the giant machines of the modern age"**.⁶

Khushwant Singh's "Train to Pakistan" where the East West differences became an integral part of the texture. The choice of the English language to write Indian fiction is central to the whole situation of this East - West clash. As **Srinivas Iyengar says, "Peculiarities of Indian life and experience and speech-don't easily admit of translation into English terms"**.⁷

Markandaya lived for a time in a village in South India but set sail for England in 1948 on marrying an English man. India has been the country of her birth and upbringing, and England, that of her adoption. She herself has become a product of inter cultural forces. Her personal, social and religious heritage is prone to be touched by her expatriate status.

In the complex fabric of contemporary Indian civilization, the two most easily discerned strands are the indigenous Indian traditions and the imported European conceptions. Almost every educated Indian today is the product of the conflicts and reconciliations of two cultures, although the consciousness of this tension varies from individual to individual. This cultural conflict - or synthesis, as the case

may be - has for some reason always assumed a vital significance for the Indian novelist who writes in English. And as late as 1960, J.M. Ganguly's *When East and West Meet* shows that the East - West motif has not yet exhausted itself. In the intervening half - century a number of novelists have attempted to study this encounter at various depths of meaning. In some novels, the West appears as a character, in some others as an attitude or a set of values. In the years following independence, however, a number of novels have appeared where the conflict between the two cultures is not on the social but on the personal level, whose theme in broad terms may be called an individual's search for identity in a changing India.

The definition of “**East**” as well as of “**West**” varies from novel to novel, but each tries in its own way to grapple with the problem that has continued to concern the Indo - Anglian novelist for more than fifty years. **S. H. vatsayan has noted in a survey of modern Hindi Literature that, “the search for a satisfactory attitude towards the West and of an emotionally and spiritually significant image of the East” marks the Hindi novels after the Second World War**”.⁸ But the Indian novelist in English is more seriously and consistently involved with the East - West theme than his counterparts in the Indian languages. We assume that an Indian, when he writes in English, does so only because it comes most naturally to him. **“There may be other reasons for the Indo - Anglian writer's concern with the East - West theme. One could argue that this theme is no more than a manifestation of the Indo - Anglian's writer's constant awareness of a western audience”**.⁹

East West Confrontation is also the keynote in the novels of Raja Rao. He maintains it in *Kanthapura*, and political confrontation is the life blood of *Kanthapura*. Rao understates the racial - cultural conflict between East and West in *Kanthapura*, but it is there as much more than a

tangential issue. In **“The Serpent And The Rope”**, the racial - cultural dichotomy takes on some novel twists and barriers are occasionally dissolved. East West marriages fail on a personal level, but there is hope because Raja Rao presents some of the personal differences as mystifying challenging, sometimes antagonistic.

Like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh, Markandaya also deals in their novels with the East West theme. Anand plunges his character into the main stream of the East West problem and views it from every angle. He does not stress the British - India aspects of the dilemma as much as the Indian - Indian conflicts, which Markandaya's character extremely plunges into the East - West confrontation as Mira - Richard. Anand preaches and teaches, Narayan entertains and Markandaya visualizes. Narayan is more concerned with translating the East - West dichotomy into Indian terms consonant with tradition versus change. Once Anand and Narayan had broken the ground and laid the framework in their early novels, the Indo - Anglian tradition began to blossom and spread. Unfortunately, there are as many repetitive, boring and non - artistic practitioners of the Indo - Anglian novel as there are of the Anglo - Indian novel.

Kamala Markandaya is probably the most outstanding example of the kind of author writing Indian novels in English today. Bhabani Bhattacharya has well developed the characterization of Indian women. Kamala Markandaya is a product of East and West and conveys a heightened sensitivity to cross - cultural problems in her fiction. She writes with equal competence about village and city, poor and wealthy, and her subject matter evokes comparisons with that of Forster, Anand and Bhattacharya.

East - West differences are an integral part of the texture of **“Train To Pakistan”**. Though perhaps Singh has very little original idea to offer, his tone is sometimes reminiscent of Forster's. Khushwant Singh does know how

to capitalize nicely on the stock platitudes of East - West political differences. Singh like most Indo - Anglian novelists succeeds in internalizing many facets of the East - West problem.

Almost all novels of Markandaya deal with the East - West theme. Her first novel, **“Nectar In A Sieve” 1955**, is a woeful tale of the trials and tribulations of a peasant couple, Nathan and Rukmani of a South Indian Village. Through their contact with the English medical missionary Dr. Kennington, affectionately called Kenny by the villagers. The author brings out the opposite view points of the simple and fatalist creatures of the soil, who endure their miseries with calm resignation and the enlightened Englishman who has been nourished on the noble, ideals of liberalism and has no patience with the passivity of the starving and suffering villagers for the amelioration of whose miseries he works indefatigably.

Kenny has been described as “tall and gaunt, with a pale skin and sunken eyes the colour of a kingfisher’s wing, neither blue nor green”. He is a philanthropist and great humanitarian. Out of his pity for the poverty stricken and suffering people of India he has left his country, his wife and children and come to stay among the people who are not his men and in a country which is not his own. He has identified himself with the Indians so much that he does not feel himself an alien among them. He does not even think that he is living in a country which is not his own. Talking to Rukmani he says, **“My country, sometimes I donot know which is my country. Until today I had thought perhaps it was this”**.¹⁰

The theme of the East - Westen counter assumes many dimensional aspects in Kamala Markandaya’s second novel, **“Some Inner Fury” 1957**, which is primarily a political novel dealing with the straining of human relationships in the wake of the **“Quit India Movement”** of 1942. The author

highlights in the novel two prominent aspects of India's confrontation with Britain - the impact of the western education and civilization on the outlook of Indians and the conflict between India and Britain arising from the latter's political dominance over the former. At the political level, the gulf separating India and England remains unbridgeable. It is at the personal level - in the love between Mirabai and Richard Marlow - it is possible to surmount racial barriers.

Whatever misconceptions Mira's mother may entertain about the West, there is no gain saying the fact that it has made much impact on her. Conversant with her son's westernized ideas she disregards the accepted code of conduct by permitting her daughter-in-law to stay with the family so that Kit may get to know her better. She even allows Mira to go out with Richard.

India's contact with the western civilization produced people like Kit who with an Oxford education and long years spent in England had become completely westernized. Richard with his easy and unselfconscious ways did not mind borrowing a dhoti from a servant, but Kit would be always impeccably dressed in suit and tie even on the hottest day in summer. Indian ceremonies and customs strained his patience Mira observes: **"Yet though he tried, the best he could achieve was a contemptuous tolerance, tinged with a faint mocking hostility, for the varied endless formalities of a wedding"**.¹¹ The décor of his house is entirely European - **"There was nothing that was Indian about it"**.¹² His wife Premala, with her traditional upbringing finds it difficult to adjust to the anglicized atmosphere of her husband's home. Govind, the adopted brother of Kit and Mira, looks upon the British as aliens who must be driven out of India. It is in Roshan Merchant that East and West find a perfect synthesis. She has received her education in England and thrived on the liberal and democratic values of the West.

Kamala Markandaya has a generally patriotic tone when handling political confrontation between Britain and India. Her attitude finds expression in the character of Roshan Merchant. In her novel, **“Some Inner Fury”** who says that the English were insufferable as overlords but humane, civilized and charming as individuals. Political dichotomy takes three forms in her novels: firstly, there is a mingling of political history with fiction; Secondly, the impact of the western political system which was not always in consonance with Indian lives and finally, the breakdown of personal relations because of political wranglings. Markandaya mingles political history with fiction in her second novel **“Some Inner Fury”** in which political conflict becomes the core of the plot. Mira like all Indians is sceptic of the government’s welfare project and remarks **“I hear her excellency has given the land”**.¹³ Richard, conscious of the power and authority of the crown now under question in India, retorts; “Does it matter .. who granted it”? Richard relents non-committally but Mira remarks: “In other countries, in other times perhaps not; but here in India, in the of war and civil war”? Richard is suddenly aware of serious differences between them and says quickly, “Has it infected you too - all this **“Your people and my people”**”?¹⁴ her fourth novel “Possession” is really a **“microcosmic rendering of England’s possession of India”**.¹⁵

In “some Inner Fury” , Kitsmay is just, the opposite of Govind in his attitude to the West. His education at the Oxford University in England has westernized him in every thing except his name. He is sophisticated and holds the high position of a District Magistrate in the Indian bureaucracy. Western culture has gone deep in his blood and he has a genuine respect for it. Contrasting him with Govind in his attitude to the Western ways of life, his sister Mira remarks: **“But Kit did not merely participate in it.he was part of it; his feeling for the West was no cheap flirtation, to be**

enjoyed so long, no longer, to be put aside, thereafter and forgotten. or at best remembered with a faint nostalgia, it went deeper. It was understanding and love”.¹⁶ His westernized outlook makes him an alien in his own country. He is unable to understand and appreciate the aspirations not only of his countrymen but also of his own wife who has been bred on oriented values of love and humanity. In his westernized outlook on life, Kit resembles Rangan, the assistant collector of Tanjore, in K.S. Venkataramani’s *Kandan*. The patriot 1932, Vedantam, the Indian civil service officer, in V.V Chitamani’s *vedantam*, The clash of traditions 1938, Cambridge - educated Krishan whose return to India after his stay in England is described in B. Rajan’s “The Dark Dancer” as “Coming back to indifferent sky, an anonymous teeming of houses” and Sanad Shirpal in Nayantara Sahgal’s “A time To Be Happy” 1963. All of them are unIndian in their outlook and find it difficult to understand their country men and identify themselves with their aspirations.

In Roshan, Markandaya portrays the liberated woman of modern India. Having been educated in England and on the western values she has a dual citizenship and feels quite, at home in both worlds. **“Born in one world, educated in another she entered both and moved in both with ease and nonchalant”.**¹⁷ Roshan resembles Rajeshwari who has been depicted in K.S. Venkataramani’s *Kandan*, The Patriot as the symbol of the resurgence of Indian women in the wake of the national movement. A highly educated daughter of a millionaire, Rajeshwari also renounces the comforts of her luxurious life to dedicate herself to the cause of India’s struggle for Independence.

Kamala Markandaya’s approach to the problem of a mixed marriage is more realistic. Like E.M. Forster in “A Passage To India”, she thinks that lasting and intimate relations between Indians and the British were not possible as long as India was ruled by Britain and the two races

remained locked in political conflict. At the time of parting from Richard as Mira decides to join the procession of political agitators, she reflects - **“Go? Leave the man I loved to go with these people? What did they mean to me, what could they mean more than the man I loved? They were my people those others were his. Did it mean something then all this your people and my people. For us there was no other way, the forces that pulled us apart were too strong”**.¹⁸

Both Kamala Markandaya and E.M. Forster thus emphasize that intimate relationships between Indians and the England could be possible only when India was free and both the races could meet together on an equal level.

Richard Marlow is delineated as a handsome, unconventional considerate and sympathetic Englishman. He is different from other Englishmen living in India, **“Who had forgotten the decencies of England amid the authoritarianism of empire”**.¹⁹ His unconventional behaviour in putting on shirt, dhoti and chappals borrowed from one of the servants, shocks Kit’s father who remarks, **“The Englishman has a lot to learn. I donot think his countrymen will approve his unconventionality”**.²⁰

The leitmotif of “Some Inner Fury” is the love story of Richard and Mira which prominently depicts the East - West theme. The insularity and narrow mindedness of the British community, sets off the honesty and sincerity of Richard Marlow. Unlike his compatriots, he is unconventional. Finding the Indian climate intolerably hot he wears dhoti and chappals borrowed from one of the servants. Mira’s father feels naturally concerned. He finds it a strain to socialize with other Englishmen at the club. Mira is visibly touched when he sits cross - legged on the floor of a Brahmin restaurant as though he had been used to eating in this manner all his life. Mira aware of an Englishman’s contempt for Indian art and culture is surprised at Richard’s

knowledge of stories from the Mahabharata. It is an indication of his desire to know and understand India. His love for Mira is genuine and sincere. Premala has died of asphyxiation in the school fire, Kit's has been knifed to death by the terrorists and Govind has been charged with Kit's murder. But when the mob invades the court room where Govind is being tried, Richard knows that now his "love" must give way to duty to his country.

Govind's arrest for Kit's murder on the evidence of Hickey, the missionary and the trial that follows bring matters to a head. It is obvious to Mira that the trial is an eyewash. Govind is innocent but the entire court proceedings hinge on the Englishman's word against Mira's. The point at issue is not whether Hickey is speaking the truth but that **"he is being used as a tool by the British to destroy a man who was dangerous to them"**.²¹ And Govind is in trial not because he is suspected of murder but because he has **"fought for freedom, for which crime and for none. Other - the British would soon make him pay with his life"**.²² Mira is filled with hate for the English prosecutor who uses coercion to make her confess to a lie.

Besides Richard, there are three other European characters portrayed in the novel. Hickey, a devoted missionary, Mrs. Miller, the discontened wife of an Englishman, holding a covenanted post and jail superintendent, a tall, frosty and sympathetic scott. The last two hacve been mentioned only once and are not of much consequence in the novel. Hickey has been described in details and plays a significant role in bringing about the catastrophic denouement in the novel. He is genuinely interested in the welfare and uplift of Indian villagers. He builds a school in the village to give shelter and education to poor children. Kit's wife Premala has a great regard for him and helps him in his humanitarian work. Govind and his men, however, hate the missionary and set fire to the school in their bid to kill him.

If the East feels that the West needs a spiritual standpoint, by implication the East must also acquire a more dynamic and cosmic character. The problem of Mira and Richard in “Some Inner Fury” has to be understood on a different footing. Their love remains inviolate even when political circumstances make it imperative for them to part. **Rudyard Kipling’s Famous lines:**

Oh! East is East, and West is West,/ And never the twain shall meet .

The concluding part of this poem “The Ballad of East and West” underscores his true meaning.

But there is neither East nor West/ Border nor breed nor birth/ when two strong men stand face to face,/ Tho’ they come from the end of Earth”

And this is exactly what Kamala Markandaya is seeking to share with her reader. At another level, Bhabani Bhattacharya is also putting across a similar message. Only Raja Rao stands apart in his brahminical aloofness.

Markandaya writes primarily for the western readers and, therefore, she tries to sell India whole sale to the west. In her novel she deliberately dwells upon economic, sociological, political and religious aspects of India, highlighting the problems of penury and superstition and their concomitants [in Nectar in a sieve, A Handful Of Rice, and A Silence Of Desire] beggars in “Some Inner Fury, A Silence of Desire and Possession” overcrowded trains and buses [in Some Inner Fury] and changes in social hierarchy resulting from independence [in Possession] with a view to attracting the attention of the western readers. This charge against her can be extenuated to a large extent in view of her being a realist which she definitely is. But the other charge [relative to the first one] that she repeatedly treats the theme of East - West conflict, under scoring the cultural contrast between the two for the Western market, cannot be ruled out. But while

she recognizes the evils and deficiencies in Indian life and society and warns her countrymen against a slavish imitation of the West, **“she does not offer any readymade solutions to the many problems facing the country”**.²³ The confrontation between East and West is found almost in all her novels. In “Some Inner Fury” Kit belongs to East while Richard belongs to West. Both meet and becomes an intimate friends. East meets West and honoured West when it comes to the East. Kit welcomes Richard and meet him to others. **“We were at Oxford together”. Kit would say, or “We come out on the same bond or “We met at a party in London”**.²⁴ A guest whether he is from our country or foreign always remains as a god. Richard’s visiting to India, respected as God by the Indian. Markandaya shows how a person westernized while he or she belongs to East. **“It was Roshan who came nearest to him in liking and sympathy for the ways of the West; but she belonged to the East too. Born in one world, educated in another, she entered both”**.²⁵ East always respects West, Richard Marlow, Kit was saying, **“We were at Oxford together They were shaking hands. Another man came up; then another woman with her husband; there was a lot of handshaking”**.²⁶ Due to advanced modernity, Western people are always assumed as intelligent. Mira’s father said about the knowledge of the Englishmen. **“The Englishman has a lot to learn”**.²⁷

Though usually more subtle, Markandaya [through Mira] manages to sum up in these two outbursts the feelings generated in Some Inner Fury as well as in A Passage To India. If we politically see this novel, **“K. R. Chandrasekharan goes too far, however, in calling Some Inner Fury a war cry against Britain”**.²⁸ The novel was published nearly a decade after Independence, and its anti-British sentiments are much more restrained than those of A Passage to India and Burmese Days. Indeed, this particular

anti - British bias is very much needed to maintain the tension in what is essentially a so - so - love story disrupted by politics. Mira's first person vision of India is a nice contrast to Rukmani's but artistically less satisfying. A typical it is nevertheless authentic and valuable. Mira seems too reserved and artificial, perhaps because Markandaya is afraid to plump in print the depths of a narrator so like herself.

In "Nectar in a sieve" the relations between the East and the West are generally friendly but mutual inability to comprehend the motivation and behaviour of the other remains a common problem. "Some Inner Fury" presents India against the backdrop of the freedom movement of 1942, caught in the maelstrom of her struggle against British rule. Roshan Merchant is another such emancipated young lady, Oxford - educated and divorced. She too is torn between the cultural and social demands of East - West orthodoxy and non - conformism. Born in one world, educated in another. She moved in both worlds with care and nonchalance. The marriage is solemnized with the customary ostentation. An Indian marriage is primarily a solemn religious rite, a tradition on which the older generation has been brought up. Premala appeals to Mira's mother for such a marriage, partly because she is traditional in many ways unlike the emancipated Mira, she prefers to sit at Kit's feet and feels a little uncomfortable in Kit's house that he has done up solely in the western style. His parents house had been equipped to cope with, both Europeans and Indians with "two dining rooms, two kitchens even two sets of servants".

In "Nectar In A Sieve", at the end of the book, Rukmani compromises, accepts that western science can find a release for Puli's infirmity but only as far as that no further. In "Some Inner Fury" although the central figure are of an Indian girl and a young Englishman, they are merely themselves, and not intended to be representatives of Indian cultures. If anyone is representative of Indian culture it is

not the heroine, but Premala with her Eastern calm and acceptance. The impact of the west is also seen more clearly on the minor characters than on the protagonist himself, in Kit, for ex. Mira's westernized brother in the civil service whose **"feeling for the west was no cheap flirtation it was understanding and love"**.²⁹ or at the other extreme, Govind to whom the western way of life **"was the product of a culture which was not his own - the culture of an aloof and alien race, twisted in the process of transplantation from its home land and so divorced from the people of the country as to be no longer real"**.³⁰ To talk of West and East with capita a W. and E., as Kamala Markandaya does, is always a dangerous abstraction, especially in fiction where abstract notions must never obscure the particular and concrete realization of individual human experience. Kit, because he is entirely a product of the West becomes more of a stereotyped [burra sahib] than a living character and his actions and responses are predictable. Premala, Kit's wife, who feels ill at ease in westernized environments is idealized to the extent of being unreal. West in Nayantara Sahgal's novel has a **very limited connotation**".³¹ "Some Inner Fury" also attempts to workout another familiar dilemma, familiar at least in fiction, thanks to E. M. Forster, between personal relationship and racial prejudice. In this novel, the climax is brought about by riot and violence in which Mira is separated from Richard. Because Mira is not a free agent and has no power of self - determination. This novel cannot be regarded the quest for self - discovery. Mira is merely the victim of forces beyond her control, the forces of history as it were. Though rather melodramatic, these lines carry a faint echo of the famous last line of "A Passage To India" "The earth did not want it — the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace - they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, "no, not yet' and the sky said, "no, not, there" — reminding us that "Some

Inner Fury” also ends on the note that East and West can’t meet because the forces that pull them apart are too strong. The name of Forester tends to stray into any discussion of East - West relationship in fiction, but comparison or contrast with him is not very relevant in the present context because what he attempted in his masterpiece was something very different from what most Indo anglian writers are trying to do. The static characters fall mainly into two groups: the representatives of the West [Kitsmy in *Some Inner Fury*, Girish Shivpal in “A Time To Be Happy and Cynthia in “The Dark Dancer”.] and those who embody the virtues of the East [Baba’s mother in *Remember the House*, Premala in “Some Inner Fury”, Kusum in “A Time To Be Happy and Kamala in “The Dark Dancer”. And lastly, we find that the resolution in most cases does not arise out of the conflict but follows a set pattern along preconceived lines. Except in *Some Inner Fury*, where the protagonist has no power to affect the denouement in everyone of these novels the East finally wins. This triumph of the Indian value does not emerge naturally out of the situations depicted, but is often arbitrary. Meenakshi Mukherjee remarks, **“A large number of their novels led to concentrate on the so called encounter between East and West not only at the level of people but also at the level of ideas. The impact of the West has created certain cultural problems and crisis in values in all parts of India though not at all levels of society, and as such is a theme of all India significance”**.³²

The other technique, that of choosing an unself conscious narrator can be seen in Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on Broken column* and Kamala Markandaya’s *Some Inner Fury*. In both cases the method is strictly autobiographical and in neither case does the author make any effort to maintain a distance between herself and the narrator. Both are written in a restropective manner, both deal with a young woman’s personal crisis set against the larger historical background of the

independence movement of India. Neither avoids the danger of sentimentality unherent in such reminiscent writing. In "Some Inner Fury", the action takes place in the historical years; 1942 yet it is essentially a novel of love. The two individuals who love each other belong to the different races of the ruler and ruled and the novel studies the impact of the troubled national spirit of the early forties upon their love.

"Some Inner Fury" also begins and ends on an unabashed tone of sentimental longing, when Mira the narrator opens a dusty silver box in her cupboard to find a torn piece of cloth. The author attempts to forge a link between the beginning and the end by repeating certain words like 'reddish dust', 'hot' and 'swirling'. Mira is the central character in the love narrative while remaining a passive spectator in the political and social upheavals of the times. Meenakshi Mukherjee says, "Mira's belief that individual are more important than their race proves to be naïve. The tide of history apparently can sweep aside the aspirations of individual men and women. At the end of novel Mira accepts defeat and admits that **"the forces that pulled us apart were too strong"**.³³ **The tragedy was inherent in the situation, and the romantic nostalgia of the tone made it more or less predictable from the first line of the novel**".³⁴

The obsessive concern of the novelists of independent India has been the cultural clash of the East and the West. Markandaya has not only studied this clash but also traced its origin to the very beginning of the process of modernization. Without any effort on her part to misrepresent the Indian or the Western culture she has tried to evaluate the direction Indian society has taken since independence. It is beyond doubt that Markandaya is a sensitive fabulist, and her depiction of the clash of the two attitudes, the Eastern and the Western, is authentic may be because her own personality combines in itself the contrary qualities and values of the two cultures. Even in her recent novel, "The

Nowhere Man 1972” the same problem of east - West encounter is centrally treated, although this time the locale is England and both the British hater and the Indian hated are burnt alive to death. They are victims of the same kind of fanaticism as had pulled Mira and Richard apart in “Some Inner Fury”. The problem here is not whether the contact between the East and the West generates conflicts. Here the problem is, what happens to the progeny of the expatriates? This is a new dimension in her understanding of the problem of the twain coming together.

Post - Independence India saw the departure of hundred of emigrants enamoured by the fairyland of orderly abundance in the West. The reason that prompted this exodus could be many. Emigration could perhaps have been seen as an escape from the communal, economic and ideological chaos which prevailed in the native land, it could also have been in pursuit of a foreign qualification which would elevate one's position in a society which still looked up with awe and admiration towards the West. Immigrant lost himself in the vastness of the cities, tall building, the machine like precision and the keen consciousness of time. This made him powerless. For an immigrant, confrontation with another society starts the process of deconstructing and restructuring the self”.

When I asked by Syed Amanuddin if she was an expatriate, Kamala arkandaya wrote in reply. **“I do not think of myself as an expatriate writer. All my thought processes are Indian; my parentage, religion and schooling are Indian, all my formative factors are Indian”**.³⁵

She maintains that her **spirit** has not altered, even after years of physical alienation from her people and country. And yet, in her novels, she has always evinced full involvement in the conflicts and tensions of those uprooted from the country of birth and living in an adopted country. Some Inner Fury 1955, Possession 1963, The Nowhere Man 1972 and Two Virgins 1973 are obvious examples. Even in

other novels where the setting is Indian, the differences between the Indian and the Western modes of life is more than implicit - it causes action. India as a cultural entity is amorphous, diverse and undefined. It is therefore, interesting to study how a sensitive author like Markandaya's orchestrates her views and, as an expatriate, defines it for her readers. She does not see India as a bolus of an indeterminate glorious past, or as a totally westernized future. She sees it as a changing reality, ever in flux, with clashes of attitudes, interests and emotions of living contemporaries, and yet maintaining its essential self.

A critic advocates that Markandaya's fourth novel "Possession" shows "how she reveals the unstated presence of that essential India which has resisted surrender and yet absorbed quite a lot from foreign cultures". Possession was published in 1963 as a memoir of Anusuya, a young Tamilian journalist who wrote for newspapers, the BBC and the Bombay film industry she also wrote novels and published them in London. A lady of contacts and common sense Anusuya moved between India and England without any problems of adjustment or residence. An alter ego of Kamala Markandaya herself, she felt quite at home wherever she stayed in a London apartment in a madras or Bombay hotel, or in a hut a remote Indian village. She was equally at ease with an ex - prince, a village headman, a glamorous lady or a poor maid - servant, a salon or a Swamy. This explains why she wrote with convincing familiarity about racial conflicts, spiritual concerns and social behaviour.

Anusuya met Carolin Bell at a party hosted in a madras hotel by Jumbo, an ex - prince. A rich, well - born, beautiful, divorcee of twenty eight, Caroline had 'spectacular qualities'. She was in India in 1949, **"like an animal in search of the salt lick that gives savour to living"**.³⁶ She needed arrack [the country liquor] and wanted Anusuya's help in procuring it. As Anusuya had written a book on

village life, Caroline rightly thought that she could be guided in her venture by her counterpart. It was there in the village about a few hours away from Madras that Caroline met a goatherd, Valmiki. A **“strangely endowed”**.³⁷ Boy of 14 who painted on walls and rocks. He was useless for the family, but was encouraged by the Swamy to paint in the service of god. A social misfit Valmiki had **“brought us nothing but shame and sorrow to his parents”**.³⁸ Caroline saw the paintings, admired them and decided to take the boy to England to provide him with opportunities and scope for self-expression. Pragmatic and passionate in equal measure, she was also a connoisseur of creative talent, she knew that the boy had the necessary gift, the inner urge to paint, and needed encouragement and a proper environment. The east could produce art but could not commercialize it. She wanted therefore to play the patron and eventually possess the unpossessable. The boy was illiterate and only 14, and in England, it was compulsory for him to go to school up to the age of 16. But she dodged the authorities by wandering about in European countries for two years. This tour and the subsequent one in America helped the goatherd grow into a sophisticate who could speak English and move with ease among people of culture. Valmiki acquired the desired qualities in stages in the course of six years tutelage under Caroline till he grew up enough to understand her motives and decide to return to the Swamy back in the village. Caroline gave him everything - encouragement, money and even her body, and yet he could not barter away his freedom for gratitude. She wanted to ‘own’ him and that, he thought, was **“not an uncommon iniquity”**.³⁹ Caroline cannot be charged with cruelty, avarice or meanness, but she cannot be absolved of her crime to “Own ‘Valmiki’; to deprive him of his freedom to feel independent and live the way he wished to live, **“Like sturdy thorn frees that seem able to ride the worst storm”**”.⁴⁰ Valmiki was a man of firm mind and clear

understanding. He alone understood, the implications of the bargain his greedy father had struck with Caroline. **“Caroline has not brought me she has only compensated for the loss of a labourer”**.⁴¹

In contrast to Valmiki is another painter in the novel : Annabel, a girl of eighteen, educated in Switzerland, distantly related to Caroline, who enjoyed the “illusory freedom” of **“her own charmed conservative circle”**.⁴² Using love as the tramp card she left her girlfriends to set up her home with Valmiki in an Italian room to have her rival Caroline “dispossessed”. But when she learnt from Caroline about Ellie’s suicide, she rejected Valmiki for his failure to recognize his responsibility to Ellie who carried his seed in her womb. Daughter of a regent, Caroline was born in India but was English. She had loved Valmiki and admired his art, and yet she knew that like other foreigners he was ‘emotional’ and ‘unstable’. Unlike the British, and therefore was untrustworthy. Annabel too found Valmiki different — **you aren’t like us**.⁴³ She said. But this dissimilarity was racial and therefore cultural, and was different from that which his parents had noted about him for being dreamy unlike other goatherds. Caroline, the compulsive promoter of art and literature, had thrown a party to boost the sales of one of Anusuya’s novels. Anusuya wrote about India, her homeland and published in the West for wider circulation, and lived an independent life. But Valmiki, being extremely poor and illiterate, became a total parasite on his patroness, leaving his destiny in her hands by surrendering to her his initiative, his right to self determination and the choice of his bed partners. Valmiki’s genius wilted in the formal dampness of the West. He needed the Indian sun to tend him: **“yes, he said, gently contemplative. Indian sun dazzling, blinding. You never get it like that here, do you? Sometimes you burn your hand touching the rock it got so hot. May you think of**

the terrible power there was up, there — you always ended up thinking of god”.⁴⁴

Valmiki's is a symptomatic case. He went to the West at an impressionable age when women, wealth and glamour all attracted him and deflected him from the path urged by the inner voice. In place of experiencing the joy of creation, he indulged in the pleasures of the senses. He was to Caroline what his money was to him. He was not accepted as a person, he was recognized only for his talent, which had its fallow periods. Valmiki's recognition in the West was in terms of money, but never in terms of humanity, the kind of recognition he got in India from the swamy. Caroline and the swamy the two admirers of Valmiki's art, proved to be adversaries each exercising power on the other in full knowledge that neither would yield to the other. He had returned to the wilderness of the village deliberately, assured that he was “no strangers to the wilderness” and that he did not need the “satisfactions” that she had given him and which he knew she could provide in the future too. He had observed in the past that although the words of encouragement spoken by the Swamy and Caroline were the same, their effects on him were not identical. Encouragement came genuinely from the Swamy - without expectations, without any motive, whereas in the case of Caroline, encouraging words came out loaded with her secret desire to commercialize his skill.

In Anusuya's perception, Valmiki was both in ardent participant in, and an outlooker on his place in the opulent culture of the West, the world of Caroline. She observed. “—there still remained, for good augury, vestiges of a cold and watchful inner eye, as disdainful of others as of himself”.⁴⁵ True, Valmiki was “capable of the most irrational, impassioned actions”.⁴⁶ and had accepted “So many lopsided values”.⁴⁷ but he was “not entirely rapt in fatuity”.⁴⁸ It was not without significance that he had painted

Caroline's beautiful and innocent face **"as false and as empty as the blue illusion of sky"**.⁴⁹ Although Caroline had decided on impulse to take the young painter to England and had rushed to Madras to claim him back in return for the satisfactions she had given him, she was spider-like, a perfect schemer. She manipulated the destinies of those who came in contact with her - Valmiki, Ellie and Annabel. One by one, each was made a victim of the traps laid by her. Even Anusuya was commanded to cooperate with her. Anusuya herself confessed **"—— not only Valmiki but I, also, had come within the orbit of her powerful influence"**.⁵⁰ Anusuya observed about Caroline's powers: **"Her warmth, bubbling, insincere power entrapped you; it forced you to respond, even if you suspected it was part of a training that enabled her to be amiable and exact amiability, precisely whenever she wanted to"**.⁵¹ Caroline's father had been resident for Jumbo's ex-state, a political adviser and now Caroline was a cultural adviser to the creative genius of India. It came very naturally to the British rule. **"She was faring, needless to say, extremely well, whenever the British go, as the whole of the East knows, they live on the fat of the land, though the British themselves have no linking of it. Simply by taking it for granted they have the hypnotised natives piling it on their plates"**.⁵²

With **"divide and rule - a formidable inherited skill"**.⁵³ Caroline too used forgery, deceit and lies to defeat her enemies, ensuring. Anusuya's complicity in her stratagems - Anusuya the intellectual who had learnt assiduously - **"English pallor, accent manners and disemphasis"**.⁵⁴ which Valmiki was to learn in six years till he became 'a finished article' needing no further refinements.

Anusuya formed the bridge between the two worlds making 'the undiluted East' comprehensible to the West which was all too ready success in England and America itself was

a result of the resurgence of interest in Indian Art and Culture after independence in 1947. Valmiki, an inhabitant of a remote Indian or European. Interest in India and Indian culture and history had come into fashion :- **“Being handsome helped Valmiki with Caroline. Being Indian helped him generally and massively for India had come into fashion. Fashionable to admire its art, fashionable to welcome its women and even, at a pinch, its men”**.⁵⁵

India had its own measure of attractions to offer the West - its creative talent and self - sustaining spiritual strength. Caroline came to the village to discover Valmiki and claim him in the same way as European and American women came to a hotel in Madras to seek ‘transquility’ from the swamy.

The physical condition of India was appalling in the years following independence - the period with which the novel deals; that is, the period from 1949 to 1955. With low - door huts, malaria - ridden patients and scraggy bullocks, Valmiki’s village looked dreary. Anusuya could see this happening as she visited Valmiki’s village thrice before he returned to adopt it for good. It was symptomatic of what was going on in the whole country in the early years of independence. As a result of this physical transformation and also increasing prestige of India in world politics, the East - West consciousness lost much of its sharpness. The Carolin - Swamy antagonism cannot be so violent today as it was made out to be in the early fifties.

There are certain remarks scattered in the novel that reveal ideas that have formed the bed - rock of Indian society and culture and have distinguished the Indian ethos from that of the pragmatic West. There are relevant to an understanding of the image of India.

1. Simplicity fosters honesty but affluence wilts it. The ill - mannered Valmiki was an infant terrible in the beginning.

2. Deflowering a virgin is unthinkable for a Hindu. However nondescript a Hindu Valmiki wouldn't have opulated with Ellie, thought Anusuya had he not known that she had already been ravished by Nazi - soldiers.
3. Theories of health and hygiene abound in India and everyone claims perfect knowledge.
4. The common man of India has been denied so much over the centuries that he takes life stoically and values contentment as an efficacious philosophy ignorant about her rights in the republic of India, Valmiki's mother accepted everything as god's desire and did not expect the doctor to come to her although patients of malaria could legitimately do so.
5. In India, Feminine beauty is associated with a fair complexion. Anusuya rightly observed that Caroline was found to be the most fascinating woman at the party given by Jumbo in Madras because **"English good looks pass for transcendent loveliness"**,⁵⁶
6. Indian response to modern art is only imitative and derivative so that the Indian reviews of Valmiki's painting repeated what had been said in western magazines. Even Anusuya had seen the beauty of Valmiki's paintings through Caroline's eyes initially and through the opinions of the critics of his paintings. Caroline and the Swamy are presented as adversaries, one standing for pragmatism and the other for idealism. Valmiki's choice is between two extremes which is itself a hangover of that simplistic thinking which sees life in black and white. Within the novel, therefore, the narrator herself is presented as a foil to Valmiki and as a model of the harmonious blending of Eastern and Western values. In Anusuya's personality there was the happy co existence of the two points of view - she admired the swamy as much for his inner strength as Caroline for her manipulative skill and

worldliness. She knew that a judicious mix of the two cultures alone could ensure meaningful cooperation in the field of art and literature. This seem to be the logical thrust of possessions, which was what was being envisaged in the fifties as the future of free India.

Kamala Markandaya 's characters are torn between loyalties, their ambivalence is seen not only in the love - hate relationship the Indian develops for the British, as lady Caroline points out in "Possession", but in the love-hate relationship that Indians have for India. This relationship is more marked in Rajan's *The Dark Dancer*. Pramod Kumar advocates. **"The conflict of East and West comes on the surface through the mutual relationship of a Hindu woman Mira and an English man Richard who have fallen in love with each other. Their love becomes gradually stronger and also the struggle of the Indians and britishers become more intense in the political arena. Increase in intimacy on one side and breaking off in otherside is the basis of conflict in the novel".**⁵⁷

The novel "possession" 1963, translated also into Russian language, presents life sketch of a painter, "Valmiki" who lives in Europe. A young English tourist lady Caroline Bell, while traveling in India, comes to know about, Valmiki, a god gifted artist and takes the young man with her to London so that the talent may not die. Valmiki there in London, becomes a famous artist and painter with the passage of time.

There is no direct confrontation between Indians and British in "A silence of desire" 1961, for the action of the novel takes place in independent India and the author does not portray any European character here. The hangover of the old regime, however, continues and we hear of 'the ugly imperialist intrulude' the stiffing atmosphere of which made C.V. Chari to resign from the Indian civil service which was

neither Indian, nor civil, nor of service. The refutation of the British claim to have rendered benefits to India by building 'roads, railways and bridges. "The British have told us many a time of all they have done - They built railways, roads bridges. Do you think in Russia, china, Japan where there were no British there are no roads, railways bridges"?

The East West encounter is, however, depicted in the novel on a cultural level through the conflict between the Indian spiritual faith and modernism born of India's contact with the West. The crisis comes to the surface when Dandekar, a government servant, who has suffered a great mental agony owing to his wife Sarojini's mysterious absence from the house in the day, learns that she goes to seek faith cure for her tumour from a swamy. Sometimes in his village retreat and sometimes at the white washed house when her husband advises her to go in for a scientific cure through operation instead of risking her life by relying on superstitious faith. She knows that faith and reasons don't go together and is confident that without faith she shall not be healed. Her cousin Rajan also finds fault with Dandekar for having lost faith in religion because of his training by the British.

Passing between violent trust and extreme mistrust and feeling deep concern for his wife's safety, Dandekar decides to seek the help of his officers, Mr. Chari and Mr. Ghose, to oust the swamy from the town.

Madhusudan Prasad remarks, **"Kamala Markandaya evokes the twin theme of colonialism and colonial confrontation deftly through her characters, the interaction, of certain events serving symbolic suggestions and in an almost direct expressiveness in the frequent confrontation between Caroline the imperial English lady and Anusuya, the self respecting westernized yet truly Indian narration"**.⁵⁸ Caroline treats him as a business proposition sometimes pondering to his whims and fancies, often being irritated by them. Valmiki is grateful to her for her patronage,

Sometimes he never got at home, But her hold over him is also annoying to him. They share, we are told, **“a sort of love - hate - relationship. Like the kind Britain and India used to have”**.⁵⁹

There is a great deal of similarity in the themes of Kamala Markandaya's novels "Possession" and "A Silence of Desire" which preceded it. While the later has depicted the conflict between the Indian spiritual faith and the western modernism, the former treats of the conflict between Indian spiritualism and the Western materialism. Valmiki, the rustic Indian artist, is the symbol of the raw independent India, for the procession of whole soul the formidable Caroline Bell symbolizing the western civilization makes an all out effort.

Caroline Bell, the daughter of a British Resident in one of the Indian state during the period of the British rule, is a rich, divorced English lady of beautiful looks. The desire to taste "arak", crude country liquor made by villagers, takes Caroline to a south Indian village where she meets by accident Valmiki, a rustic Tamil boy who has natural born talents of a painter. Discerning the promise of a great artist in him she takes him to London to sophisticate him and develop his artistic talents under the whole some influence of the advance western civilization. Caroline's attitude signifies the changed role of the 'whiteman's burden' to maintain control over others - to substitutes political dominance by cultural dominance with a view to alienating Indians from their own roots. Caroline's western culture makes it difficult for her to understand Val's identification with India. She overestimates the power of her influence or of her sophisticated Western civilization on Val when she makes the last effort to retrieve him from the "wilderness" of India and the company of the swamy.

Jumbo and Anusuya represent the two types of the Western influenced Indians. The former accepts the west of its material plane while the latter does it on the intellectual

one. Jumbo, an ex - ruler of one of the smaller states of India, intimates the British in organizing picknics and cocktail parties. He visits London to escape the monotony of Indian life and partake in the glamorous revelries of the British metropolis. He recollects with nostalgia the days of the British Raj. **“Old days in Delhi No, I’m wrong — not Delhi, too much imperial oojah . Simla, that was it. Christ, those were good days”**.⁶⁰ Anusuya also visits London but only to collect material for her stories.

In Ellie Kamla Markandaya portrays a Jewish girl of twenty years who looks crippled and aged because of the cruel inhumanities she has suffered at the hands of Nazis in concentration camp. Annabel, a distant relation of Caroline, represents the liberated and uninhibited English girls of the fifties.

Two of Kamala Markandaya’s later novels, ‘A Handful Of Rice’ 1966 and ‘Two Virgins’ 1973 also do not deal with the theme of the East West encounter directly. They, however, covertly show how the modernism set in by the Western influences incites the protagonists to revolt against their traditional environments and seek their fulfillment by carving their careers independently.

In “Two virgins” , however, we often hear of the British rulers from Appa, a freedom fighter, who was called a terrorist and whose house was burnt by the tommies. Being an old nationalist Appa believes that all India is one and he asks his daughters, Lalitha and Saroja - two virgins - never to discriminate between the Sikh and the Hindu but to learn to live as one. He blames also the **British for not even organizing a sanitary system in two hundred years of rule**.⁶¹ or for the making India a **“captive market for the British goods while were rubbish”**.⁶² Though Appa fought against the British regime in India, he has no rancour against the British or other European as men. He has modern attack on life and sends his eldest daughter Lalitha to the

christian looks. Three kings school, of Miss Mendoza for English education, even though his sister-in-law, Alamelu who stands for traditional values, opposes him. Lalitha is portrayed as a liberated girl who finds herself out of place in her village. Surroundings she is conscious of her uncommon beauty and wants to use it for leading a glamorous life in the town.

The scene shifts once more to India. Political history is recounted in the story of Appa's family in a post-Independent village. It is chiefly in the diatribe of the older generation against the British rule in India that history is recalled. Appa had been "a fighter for freedom" but the British called him a terrorist. After the struggle, when India gained Independence, Appa was left without any possession or job till the government rewarded him for his actions with the plot of not very arable land. Like *Possession*, this novel too suffers from a repetition of the theme of Britain's overlordship. Of all her novels, "*The Golden Honeycomb*" borrows most extensively of India's political history vis-à-vis the English.

Tagore made the first effort to create a new culture by fusing the East and the West together in his *Gora* in 1923. Markandaya's major theme has been the cultural clash of the two modes of life she has seen so closely. The Indian mind was dominated by the feeling that the English mind was pragmatic and the Indian idealistic, and that England was the exploiter and India the exploited. *The Golden Honeycomb* probes once more the problems of socio-cultural economic adjustments between the East and the West.

"Markandaya has constantly been preoccupied by the East - West conflict of codes and convictions of which she herself is a living example. This clash between the Eastern and Western values leads to an inevitable quest for identity".⁶³

‘the Nowhere Man’ is the most powerful and the maturest of the novels of Markandaya. Although it again depicts the East - West encounter, it is basically a moving elegy on England’s recent racialism which still continues rather unabated. Margaret P. Joseph observes, **“The Nowhere Man comes closet of all Kamala Markandaya’s books to being a true tragedy. It has most of the ingredients that combine to constitute a ‘Literary’ tragedy. The action is serious and of sufficient magnitude, since it concerns whole races —. The incidents arouse not only our pity for the individual involved, but our fear for the whole human race which permits stances that result in such catastrophes”**.⁶⁴

‘The Nowhere Man’ documents racial prejudices that are being spearheaded in recent political history, in England. Srinivas is an Indian expatriate who had left India with his wife Vasantha at the height of the freedom struggle, to escape being arrested for underground activities against the British rule in India. Their families had been opposed to British arrogance in India. Srinivas’s mother had been angered by the number of lives lost in the Jalliwala tragedy, even if it had been a retaliatory step. That “a hundred Indians should be killed for each Britain was ‘their scale, the scale by which they value themselves and against which we are measured. That is what we are up against; not their greed, or their anger, nor landhunger, nor the need to trade, but their arrogance the mentality that produces such policies and acts”. Srinivas’s sons are born and brought up in England. One of them, Seshu, even joins the British forces and is killed by a German shell. The heart broken Vasantha wants to “return to our country. There is no reason now India is free, why we should not”.

Balachandra Rajan points out, **“The presence of two cultures in one’s mind forms a wider and therefore a saner basis on which to originates the quest for identity**

and that the discordance between these cultures can be creative as well as merely confusing”.⁶⁵

In “The Nowhere Man” 1972, Kamala Markandaya treats the theme of the East - West encounter from a new point of view by depicting the predicament of Indian immigrants in England. In Anita Desai’s “Bye Bye Blackbird 1971” another Indian English novel bearing on the same theme, the protagonists Dev and Adit are of an age in which they can still have a choice and decide whether to stay in England or return to their homeland; In “The Nowhere Man”, the protagonist Srinivas is an old man nearing seventy who has no option but to stay in England. He has passed nearly two - third of his life there and has come to look upon it as his own country. He tells Mrs. Pickering with pride, “this is my country now” and again repeats, “My country, I feel at home in it. More so than I would in my own”. The East - West conflict as treated in their novel is not on the political or cultural level. It arises from the economic pressure faced by England in the wake of the disintegration of the British empire. Kamala Markandaya has treated the theme of the East - West confrontation more comprehensively than any other Indian English novelist. She looks at the problems in its varied aspects and from different points of view. She views the differences in the traditions and values of India and the West as a neutral observer and portrays different situations and characters objectively. **“Infact as Chandrasekharan says, he represents Kamala Markandaya’s warm appreciation of the English man as an individuals”.⁶⁶**

The juxtaposition and interaction of Eastern with Western attitudes has been the main fictional preoccupation of Kamala Markandaya primarily because she has experienced the inherent tensions herself as well as perceived the sensitive points at which the two cultures cross each other. In “The Cofferdams”, the labour employed in the work of the Dam is Indian, the engineers are headed by Krishan; the chief

crane - operator is Bashiam. Thus the Dam is combination of Indian brain and the Western brain.

In "The Nowhere Man", Srinivas who settles down in England but unfortunately not fully accepted by the English community. Srinivas becomes a rootless, restless individual, dispossessed of India and disowned by England. Though the predominant theme of the novel is displacement alienation, and a search for identity in alien environs, it treats of larger human relations rendering the work an interesting psychological study of human relationship as well as the essential human loveliness. Vasantha sticks to her Indian way of living, dressing, eating and even dying, though transplanted on a foreign soil. She grows tired of moving. Like the gipsies, from pillar to post and persuades Srinivas to acquire a house. She plans for future of her sons, while Srinivas thinks that acquisition of wealth and property might encumber them; 'shackle them to brick and mortar' and block their return to India once and for all. Notwithstanding Srinivas's becoming a man of property, the family's position is such that though they have given their house a name 'Chandraprasad' after their original home in India to all the neighbourhood and the postman it is only "No. 5" and the family 'the people at No.5.

The novel is based upon reminiscences and remembrances leading to the present. Rather, the psychoanalytical method of tracing the present to the past is very effectively adopted by the novelist. The last scene in which the death of Srinivas occurs is rather melodramatic much more would it be appropriate to say, cinematic. The novel begins in the presence of Dr. Radcliffe who diagnoses the disease of Srinivas and ends with the same doctor diagnosing the disease of the British community, which is also the malady of the modern world, intolerance, suspicion and jealousy that would breed in its indulging in mutually destructive animosity.

The Golden Honeycomb divided into three parts sums up the trials and tribulations of our country under a foreign governance through a succession of moving events, pitiable strikes and round the clock agitations and lockouts. Kamala Markandaya shows her deep insight in the handling of situations and characters in “The Golden Honeycomb”. She displays an exemplary courage and determination in grappling with an enormous situation created by the Indo - British struggle. The most charming feature of Markandaya’s prose is her command of the English language. She does not write like Mulk Raj Anand whose language seems to courage down temptuously or like Raja Rao whose writing meanders tortuously highlighting the anguish of the soul. Markandaya rather picks up her words and phrases carefully and makes use of them without any conspicuous linguistic distortions. Her language is not laboured. It is usually simple, chaste and crisp. The technique of Kamala Markandaya in “The Golden Honeycomb” is one of forceful narration and occasional descriptions. Her style reveals the person behind the work. It tells us a lot about the author’s education and cultural background and about her love of the motherland. Markandaya succeeds well in “The Golden Honeycomb” simply because she could tailor her method to the strict demands of a truly historical novel and one such demand is the adherence to choronology, and in this she ranks with Thackeray and Trollope in English fiction and Mulk Raj Anand and Manohar Malgonkar in Indo - English fiction.

Kamala Markandaya’s attachment to India is mental, and it seems despite her having stayed away from the country of her childhood and early youth for about two decades, she does not feel assimilated into the currents of life in her adopted country. She shares this experience with every expatriate. R. P. Jhabvala’s autobiography “An Experiences in India” 1972 bears testimony to this feeling of rootlessness and maladjustment. On the life of expatriate has

come out another novel "The Marriage" 1973. Timeri Murari underlines the feeling that the relationships of Indians and Englishmen although spread over years cannot be intimate. On the corruption of the West Kamala Markandaya had also shed light in possession 1963. But then she had done so to undermine the commercial instinct of the English lady, Caroline, as against the spiritual power of the Indian painter Valmiki. The inference is borne out by the fact that although she had offered to no avail her youth, wealth and skill to glamourize Valmiki she had not been able to win his heart and hold him long. Markandaya's temper was more theoretical than practical whereas the chief attraction of Timeri Murari's 'The Marriage 1973' is naturalistic depiction of reality.

In "The Coffer Dams" Helen, the wife of the founder of the company Howard Clinton and the head of British engineer, is an interesting character, precision of the other enlighten women character of Markandaya's fiction. Though British, she is in rapport with tribals and falls in love with Bashiam, the tribal engineer, Clinton portrays the racial tensions that are the outcome of a colonial past and that blot the contemporary social relationship. The English project of the dam and the plan of its construction was made without proper consideration of the climate condition of the regions. Krishan, whose views are shared by the local inhabitants, tries to convince the Englishmen to change their project and terms of finishing the construction but in vain. The construction of dam continues with the death of many labourers and the festive ceremony of the end of work lit up with the light of fires on which the corpses of the dead are burnt. The Britishers treat Indians as underdogs and do not care about their request and reject their submission with contempt. Clinton is quite sure and confident about the superiority of 'the man of the western world'. Although the colonial periods have gone but he calls the Indian animals 'bastards' etc. and when the rainy seasons sets in, he is appeared too anxious about the

safety of the dam only and do not care about the lives of the tribal villagers living in the lower areas of the dam threatened seriously by the fatal flood. This conduct of Clinton annoys both Indians and his wife Helen. She is a kind hearted lady who thinks that the Indians are ruthlessly exploited people who are in need of help. So Helen is distinguished differently from other ‘memsahibs’ by the Indians. She comes in close contact with the local people after learning the local language. She is angry at the authorities of Englishmen who, using their force and might have driven away the Indians people from their native land and in their lands have constructed for their comfortable bungalows. Her human kindness makes her worry about dying leader of the tribal people and the dreams of the leader about welfare of the tribal. Infact, the human kindness and worries of Helen for the unprivileged Indians are the anxiety of Kamala Markandaya’s own ironically and symbolically represented through the character. Markandaya, thus, shares own sentiments, along with her character Helen, the bitterness of insulted human dignity of the native inhabitants. This attitudes makes her closer to the Mulk Raj Anand who is a known champion of poors and deprived people.

In “A Handful Of Rice” political history is alive in the ruins and monuments of foreign dominance. “A Handful Of Rice” is what the vagabond Ravi is striving for in the city. K.R. Srinivas Iyengar draws attention to the fact that Ravi’s predicament can only be understood after a knowledge of **“the spiraling grain prices in India. Bad monsoons have caused havoc in the lives of millions and bad governments have proved incapable of effectively holding the price line”**.⁶⁷ The fusion of an Indian government with a western mind proved disastrous. Ravi is a victim of this English nemesis.

‘The Coffor Dams’ is a story about the time in post independent India when “the country was full of foreigners —

— all of them eager in greater or lesser degree, to gain a foothold in an expanding subcontinent of vast commercial potential”. The building of these dams in hilly Karnataka is bagged by a firm of English technologists in which Indian engineers and tribal labourers also participate.

In ‘Two Virgins’, There is no work for Appa to do in the restructuring of a new India. He sits and blames all the present day ills on British subjugation, like the inefficient sewerage system which they had not organized their 200 year mile.

In “Nectar In A Sieve” Rukmani sought Dr. Kenny’s medical assistance which helped her bear a son but she did not wish her husband to know, “I was putting myself in the hands of a foreigner”. He was ‘a friend to her father’s house, her own ‘benefactor,’ but because of being English he was dubbed as being one with the rules and oppressors. Rukmani therefore meets Kenny furtively because she was sure Nathan would not like his wife or his daughter going to a whitemen, a “foreigner”.

Rekha Jha remarks, “There is no dark pessimism in highlighting this confrontation but optimism that the new can learn from the old to foreign and forget and live together in a spirit of reconciliation. Unnecessary pain and anguish can be overcome in the larger interests of humanity”.⁶⁸

In “The Coffer Dams”, Helen was moved by the pitiable sight of the miserable millions of India and was even ready to share their faith in determinism. In the pride of western scientism she did not denounce Indians, as Kenny and Clinton did, for their slow understanding or indifferent response to modernity. Nor did she pretend like Caroline to be their mentor for these deficiencies. **“She was concerned only with the human condition at the present moment. She was neither so soulless as not to understand ‘soulful’**

India, nor was she unduly possessive to exploit the native innocence for her own gains”.⁶⁹ East West Conflict is the key note theme in Markandaya’s novels and almost all novels cover this. Through her novels, Markandaya has tried to show the winning power of East. The western values dominant the eastern values but the East wins over the West. The western modernism faces confrontation with primitive forces of India when the British engineering firm partnered by Clinton and Mackedrick set out to build a dam across a south Indian river.

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VII

Feminine Superior

Is 'Woman' superior to man? Does she have a separate identity? Is she in need of emancipation? In what ways can she supplement and complement the role of a man? In these days of "Identity Crisis" and women's emancipation movements, it is necessary that Indian women also discover their true identity and play their role effectively in life.

Woman is the most adorable, meaningful and satisfying of God's creations. The extraordinary grandeur that she embodies gets fully evolved and expressed in motherhood, provided she is able to rightly conceive, understand and make use of her motherhood, not just to 'mother' her children but for the unfoldment of the 'Spiritual Truth' within her. It is then that she transforms herself into a lighthouse of wisdom, a dynamo of 'Shakti' and a harbour of solace and peace. From then onwards her contributions to the welfare of her family get reflected in society in a subtle but powerful way. She then turns into an evolutionary force of unlimited possibilities, directly or indirectly guiding the destiny of mankind. It is said that behind every successful man stands a woman - as wife or mother.

Woman in India, as elsewhere in the world, are facing a crisis. What exactly are they to do with themselves? They seem to be walking on a sharp-edged knife. If they are a

little below the expectation of their spouse, they are dubbed as backward and useless. If they are smart and out wit their colleagues or partners in life they are looked down with suspicion and jealousy and are immediately classified as 'aggressive, unwomanly and unnatural so where are we to draw the line? How can she gain fulfillment and satisfaction from her life and at the same time not draw unwarranted comments and criticism and also maintain her status of independence, cooperation, amiability etc.

According to the modern view there are two things that stand out as solid expressions of the advantages that accrue to a society when women get good education. It is reported that in Kerala, within three decades there is an extraordinary steep fall in population growth, thanks to women's all round development. Secondly, infantile mortality in a society which gives a measure of women's awareness has in Kerala touched the level of that in Washington in USA, one of the most advanced cities in the world.

An analysis of what is the essence of wifehood, motherhood or an enlightened career that makes them such super women, one can easily find that it is the content of the wonderful ingredients of 'Tyaga and Seva', self-abnegation and service which link them up with Truth Eternal, Truth Universal.

It is this glorious past that the Indian woman has to live up to. She would do well to remember that she was the starting point, the cultural 'Bindu' in this grand evolution of the spirit. It was her purity, chastity, sacrifice and surrender that upheld the 'Dharma' of her family, community, nation and the world. In appreciation of this Manu enjoined, "Where women are respected there the Gods delight and where they are not, there all work and efforts come to naught." Where our homes were filled with such women, by whatever name they were called in the course of history - Sita, Savitri, Kunti or Damyanti the nation was aglow with a regal splendour. It

then had honour, dignity and integrity. Unfortunately, this lesson from history is lost on the present day woman. Digressed from the central theme of her existence, her 'Dharma' - She has lost her identity and has become lusterless and her home has become a place where man and woman co-exist, having no aura of faith, peace and happiness.

Every woman should realize within her, the source of power, strength, love and joy through her own pure and chaste life and her capacity to love, sacrifice and surrender. Through this, she would be able to achieve whatever there is to achieve - universal vision, infinite love, natural wisdom and great spiritual strength. These qualities should then be made manifest in her day to day life. Such a woman can then throw off the shackles of her bondage that would otherwise keep her within the narrow limits of her household. Her small self would then liberate itself and grow into the universal self. It is necessary for women to discover their true identity and role in society so that they also derive a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. Apart from the well-defined roles as daughter, wife and mother, there exists deep within a woman's heart throbbings of yet another indefinable aspiration. That is what she should seek, discover and manifest. Then, she would find her life blossoming, filling up with true life and becoming wholesome and complete. Only the unintelligent think that union with man is the be-all and end all of her existence. Such a woman stops her growth after marriage, loses her identity and then cries out in misery, "Who am I?", "What am I?"

Woman's education, empowerment and emancipation along these lines are very urgently wanted. To quote a woman again - "In order that women's influence may be preserved in order that she may not lose her hold over the respect as well as the hearts of her husband and her sons, in order that she may really be one half of humanity, as she ought to be; in order that she may play her part well in the

home, may train up her sons as they ought to be trained, in order that she may exercise an elevating power over the children round her knees, may prone a worthy mother to worthy sons”.

By and large, in the ancient history of India, women have been deified, glorified and also regarded as myths. There was and perhaps it is there even today, a duality in the projection of the image of woman in literature. There are deified, archetypal images and there are also debased and degraded images. Literature also portrays a few insurgent minority who protest against the existing ills. Along with conventional types, there are also protesting women characters in Indian literature. It is an accepted fact that in the vedic age, a high concept of womanhood prevailed as is specifically borne out in the paper pertaining to Sanskrit Literature. The following lines from Rajashekhar's Kavya Meemansa express the high Indian ideal about womanhood : **“Samskaro Atmani Samaviti Na Strainam Va Paurusam Va Vibhagam Apekshate”**.¹

The society recognized virtues, merit and talent wherever they existed and gender distinctions were not taken into account. Woman could besides fulfilling their distinctive roles, also participate in several other walks of life. Basically vedic society visualized two types of woman — **“Brahmavadini and Sadyovadhu”**.²

The first type was the archetype who carried on the quest of truth, knowledge and spiritual pursuits for her ideal and the second one - the ‘Sadyovadhu’ was the domestic type who dedicated herself to the welfare of the family though there was no rigid opposition between the two — The image of woman in literature, in the past and present belongs to the second category.

Writes Sri Aurobindo : “In India the institution of slavery was practically absent and the woman had at

first a free and more dignified position than in Greece and Rome, but the slave was soon replaced by the proletariat, called in India the shudra and the increasing tendency to deny the highest benefits of the common life and culture to the shudra and the woman brought down Indian society to the level of the western conquerors".³

There was an attempt at resurrection of the high condition of woman in our society after the introduction of western education, Reformist Movements, Promotion of women's institutions The freedom Movement and so on. With India acquiring an identity of her own, doors were thrown open for women too to acquire their own identities. In Post - Independence India, when women's education had already commenced and life had started changing the new woman started emerging. The spread of education inculcated a sense of individuality among women and aroused an interest in their rights. Women started becoming economically independent and there was a striving for the realization of their own aspirations. The new woman does not belong totally to either of the two former categories.

Feminist trends appeared on the horizon and they came into conflict with the conventional moral code. Infact, a set of new paradigms related to a woman's life came into existence - tradition and modernity, self - assertion and self - effacement, economic dependence and independence and so on. Post - Independence literature in India portrays all these trends and voices the clamourings of women for a new and just way of life. There is a view, may be of a small minority that the concept of the new woman **"is a western import born of western compulsions".⁴** and also that its acceptance in India like the acceptance of several other western concepts is just aping of the west and a sign of intellectual weakness. Post - Independence literature reveals the woman's quest for her identity.

The image of woman is central to the study of literature all over the world. Altering the context and the special meaning involved, what Shakespeare said of Cleopatra is indeed true of woman's image in general that "Age cannot wither Nor custom stale her infinite variety"

Woman has inspired literature and has been its pivotal theme too. She herself is also a creator of Literature and therefore a woman's presence in literature is all pervading. This is true of Indian Literature also. Literature is like a vast canvas in a framework in which the writer portrays their character.

"A bunch of revealing thoughts", this is a collection of papers presented at a seminar on "The image of woman in Indian Literature" organized by N. M. K. R. V. College For Women, Bangalore, a college with a strong center for women studies. Even in these days, after so much has been said about women's issues. A gender identity based study of literature has its own *raison - d - tre*. The image of woman in literature emerges out of the existing world. It also exists in the mind and imagination of the writer. A study of this kind, therefore, serves a double purpose- it shows which way the writer's sensibility works and whether over the ages there has been a change in it. It also serves as a mirror to the society in which we exist. Roles outside this i.e woman as an achiever, as a leader, or as a strong individual are by and large, either non-existent or rare. **"One peculiarity of the images of women" says, Marry Ann Fergusson, "throughout history is that social stereotypes have been reinforced by archetypes. Another way of putting this would be to say that in every age woman has been seen primarily as mother, wife, mistress, sex object - their roles in relationship to men".⁵**

The place of woman in Indian family as also in political life has been backward. In the tradition of Sharat Chandra Chatterjee, the noted Bengali novelist, woman has

been presented either as the embodiment of endurance, understanding and sacrifice, or, being immune to a large extent to the cultural impact of the West, as custodian of Indian culture. It is her virtue that counts, not her beauty. Therefore, the highest aim of an Indian woman has been to sacrifice for her lawful husband her flesh and personal ambitions. R. P. Jhabvala and Kamala Markandaya have excelled others in presenting young Indian women in love with foreigners. Markandaya's heroine Mira in "Some Inner Fury" 1955 and Caroline in "Possession" 1963, are women of flesh and blood. Yet each is an embodiment of the totality her country is known for. Mira's dramatic rejection of her English lover when he sided with the English men is indicative of her preference for her nation to her personal love. In the same way young painter Val's rejection of Caroline who had tried to soak him in flesh, fame and wealth, is symbolic of his preference for native inspiration to the imitation of the West. However, the woman of Indo - Anglian fiction are yet not delineated in their individuality and independence: they are either victims of the evil - ridden society, of ignorance, or of noble ideals of sacrifice and stoic suffering for husband and children, or else they are symbols of inspiration, generosity, compassion and patience.

Thus Indo - Anglian fiction took time to start off in all seriousness rather late, and yet it has produced some writers who can be favourably compared with foreign novelists of distinction. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar malgonkar, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Prawar Jhabvala are among many others who have won popular acclaim all over the world. Those Indians who feel that the Indo - Anglian have been over estimated despite the superficiality of their experiences and commercial intentions and think that they are actually inferior to Indian writers who write in regional languages, should make the comment of Dorothy M. Spencer in her introduction to her

book Indian fiction in English 1960 : **“A few writers must be considered exceptions, but for the most part I do not see marked difference between the works on the list published in translations, which are approximately one fourth of the total, and those written in English”.**⁶

Three of Markandaya’s novels “Nectar In A Sieve 1954, Some Inner Fury 1955 and Possession 1963, are presented in reminiscential mood. All the three narrators are women and the plots are circular”.⁷

Every time the story begins when the narrator gets into the mood of recollection and ends when the experiences of a whole conscious life leads her to a moment of decision to shake off her ambivalent attitude. Rukmani narrates in “Nectar In A Sieve 1954; her life story beginning with her marriage in such a way as to depict concurrently the agony of the Indian peasants. After returning to the village Rukmani cast a longing glance on the expanse of time that had elapsed between her marriage and the death of her husband. But Nectar In A Sieve is more than Rukmani’s autobiography :

The critics analysis whether a woman is superior or inferior in its own way. Generally, it regards woman superior in heart and inferior in mind but in the present day, this preamble is changed. Woman is successful in all walks of life. Home is the safe place for woman but now she is a working woman and going outside.

In regard of Feminine Superior, different types of woman as peasant woman, English woman, westernized woman and spiritual woman have their own superiority. Rukmani, in “Nectar In A Sieve” is a peasant woman and able to endure all sufferings. She is an idol of an Indian woman. Living in a village, she is literate and bears six children. She is superior both in heart and mind. She is differ from other peasant ladies. Despite the difficulties, she could not involve in evils

and keep her path clean while Kunti and Ira involve in prostitution. She becomes a good wife and a good mother.

The marriage between Rukmani and Nathan was “**a poor match.**”⁸ as it had been thought by Rukmani’s relatives and her village people. Even her mother was not happy with this marriage because it was below her social standard. In a village community, in setting marriages the social prestige and economic standard of the bridegroom family must be higher than that of the bride’s. Rukmani herself, at another place in the novel, describes the married life of Kunti who has also been “**married beneath her**”.⁹ On the whole, Rukmani’s married life is happy despite the fact that her husband has illicit relations with Kunti, a woman of unscrupulous behaviour in the village. But there are other marriages in this novel which have turned into tragedy, sorrow and sin. The marriage of Rukmani’s eldest daughter, Ira and married life of Kunti tell tales of woe. It is also, by implication the story of the modernization of Indian villages.

The narrative thread is again put in the hands of a woman in “Some Inner Fury” 1955, although this time the family, unlike Nathan’s in *Nectar In A Sieve* is westernised and the central concern of the novel is the clash between passion and patriotism. Mira the narrator strings together the experiences of some important moments of her life here in again, but the novel is more than a romantic biography of a young girl who had fallen in love with an English youth. The love Mira experienced in the arms of Richard was ardent, honest and guileless but it was a cursed relationship; besides being lovers they were also representative of two nations, one ruler and the other ruled. Govind, Mira’s brother [terrorist] was innocent, still the English court declared him guilty of treason for setting on fire allegedly a school building. India lost her case but the people round the court knew that the youngmen had risked his life for the attainment of freedom. For Mira, it was a difficult moment. She had to

make a choice between her love for Richard and that for her country. She could not shut her eyes to the political reality, nor could she renounce her ardent love for Richard who was also an Englishman.

Premala is a replica of traditional Hindu woman, she dislikes the fashionable entertainments, clubs, tennis and sorts. She is an embodiment of obedience, pity and self-renunciation. The sense of sacrifice of Premala soars high when she plunges into the fire to save the burning school and dies.

There is a wider exploration, sociological and economic in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. She portrays a large repertoire of women in a changing Indian society. In "Nectar In A Sieve", Rukmani struggles in a changing village and is shown as exploited. In "A Silence Of Desire", Sarojini Dandekar battles between tradition and modernity in contemporary India. What distinguishes Kamala Markandaya's novels is an awareness of the socio-economic forces and their impact on women. Kamala Markandaya deals in all her novels with different attitudes of women. Rukmani, an Indian peasant woman, narrates the story. She begins and ends the novel with her tale of woe. Saroja in "Two Virgins" and "Mira" in "Some Inner Fury" also deals with and narrates the story. Rukmani is a traditional woman while Mira is a modern woman having Indian attitudes, culture and behaviour. Her story is a love story with political crises. Saroja is a young woman, studying in a school, views about modernity. Her sister Lalitha is an advanced and modern girl and to go ahead she forgets all limitations and is engaged in evil. She becomes a film star and dazzles to see the lure of the film city. Lalitha is different from Rukmani and Mira. Despite all differences, Rukmani and Mira are superior than Lalitha. They never forget their limitations and remember their modesty and grace. Sarojini in "A Silence Of Desire" is a good wife, mother and woman. She is a spiritual woman. She

has all good qualities but she believes in a swamy and loses her time in the service of that swamy. She forgets her responsibilities towards her family and stands before the swamy. This spiritual and modernity conflict tries to break her family but fortunately her husband succeeds to put his wife from that trap.

In "Possession" 1963, the narrative is managed once more by a woman, but this time it is not the heroine of the novel. It is a writer friend of the heroine, hence interested in observation and analysis of her experiences. Valmiki was Caroline's discovery and therefore her "Possession". Caroline is English, westernized and a modern woman who traps Valmiki and brings him from India to England. She had rushed to Madras to claim him back in return for the satisfaction. She had given him, she was spider-like, a perfect schemer. She manipulated the destinies of those who came in contact with her Valmiki, Ellie and Annabel. One by one, each was made a victim of the traps laid by her. Even Anusuya was commandeered to cooperate with her. Anusuya herself confessed "**—not only Valmiki but I, also, had come within the orbit of her powerful influence.**"¹⁰ Anusuya observed about Caroline's powers. Caroline was a powerful lady but an English lady. She was machiavellian in her approach to life. She had an eye for beauty and art. Disagreeing with Anusuya she maintained that for appreciating art one needed only "half an eye" and not "knowledge". She loved art, so she declared that the headman would be a vandal if he washed down the walls to erase Valmiki's paintings she saw every painting done by Valmiki and even stayed for two weeks in the village to have more painting done by him. She showed tremendous patience and interest in the simpleton. She was called "bizarre" and "evil" and yet she was not a 'faint hearted woman'.

Thus Caroline improves Valmiki but for her own interest so she can not be stand equal to Rukmani. Caroline

is dishonest, selfish and moneyminded while Rukmani is selfless, honest, modest and lovely.

A thorough study of Markandaya's fiction shows gradual maturity of her art and genius. The word "Feminism" refers to "The belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim".

Markandaya's aim to portrays the female character with feminism. Markandaya is also a female so her novels are concerned with feminism and she is able to analyse the feminism trends. If she portrays the Rural woman, she also portrays the glamorous girl. She portrays all types of women as belong to high, middle and low class. She depicts both Indian and English women and approaches the superiority of female over male and others. Indeed, women are superior to man because she has power as Rukmani in "Nectar In A Sieve", Mira in "Some Inner Fury" and Sarojini in "A Silence Of Desire".

The 'mission' or the search for freedom, is the priority of the masculine, whereas the search for love is the priority of the feminine. This is why people with masculine essences would rather watch a football game or boxing match on T. V than a love story.

An interesting aspect of the modern Indian Renaissance has been the creative release of the feminine sensibility. Women in modern India have not only shared the exciting though dangerous roles in the struggle for independence but have also articulated the national aspirations and the consciousness of cultural change in the realm of literature. In the personality of an individual like Sarojini Naidu, the temper of Indian womanhood achieved its comprehensive synthesis; she was at once the lark of the Indian political awakening and the nightingale of the Indian imagination. In the development of the Indian novel in English, the feminine

sensibility has been assuredly well recognized, if a trifle overmuch and over-zealously at times by the Indian as well as foreign critics of Indian writing in English.

Kamala Markandaya's novels, in comparison with those of her contemporary women writers, seem to be more fully reflective of the awakened feminine sensibility in modern India as she attempts to project the image of the changing traditional society. The variety and complexity of the achieved content of her novels represent a major trend in the history of the Indo - English novel. In her novels, Markandaya not only displays a flair for virtuosity which orders and patterns her feelings and ideas resulting in a truly enjoyable work of art but also projects the image of national consciousness on many levels of aesthetic awareness. The variety and quality of the 'felt life' in her fiction renders it a valid proof in that it indicates the direction to a plausible resolution of, rather than offer definite solutions to, human problems. The accent in her fiction is on the drama of life rather than the dogma of an ideology in the given context. The novelist's attitude to society can be therefore termed as ambivalent in so far as it does not make undue demands on her creative autonomy and intensely moral vision. She is content to hold the artistic mirror up to society from realistic and moral point of view and permit the viewers to draw their own conclusions about the image which itself is not constant. The changing image of men and society is thus subtly projected in the Kaleidoscope of her art, imparting in the process to various vignettes of life a sense of the dynamics of change. William Walsh rightly observes : **"Her particular strength lies in the delicate analysis of the relationships of persons, especially when these have a more developed consciousness of their problems and are attempting to grope towards some more independent existence - she has been most successful and at her best, an impressive best, in dealing with the problems of the educated and middle class, and she has a gift for**

delineating the self - imposed laceration of the dissatisfied".¹¹ Walsh, however, complains that Markandaya fails as yet **"to establish a context as impressively real and as sympathetically grasped as her central characters"**.¹²

In fairness to Walsh, it should be mentioned that at the time of making the comment, Walsh did not have the opportunity of reading Markandaya's later novels, "The Nowhere man 1972, Two Virgins 1973, The Golden Honeycomb 1977, and Pleasure City 1982". Markandaya's range of experience is so remarkable and varied that the contextualisation may appear to be a serious lacuna in her fiction, particularly from a western critical view point. R. K. Narayan resolves this problem by sticking to Malgudi as a place symbol. Markandaya tries to resolve it by peopling the landscape in the most impressive and convincing manner. She does, of course, view the problem of human relationships in different contexts in order to arrive at a most sympathetic grasp of it. Her technical control and artistic competence are, in this regard, more evident in her later fiction than in her earlier novels. Her early novels, none the less, dramatize the agony and ecstasy of cultural changes in India, involving innumerable persons. Markandaya's Indian sensibility enables her, it is true, to grasp the plights of her Indian characters more easily than her British characters set in the Indian context. She is thus on 'terra firma' when she depicts a Rukmani or a Mira rather than a Caroline or even Helen in the Indian milieu.

'The Golden Honeycomb 1977' clearly and decisively establishes Kamala Markandaya's reputation as a leading novelist in English today. This novel is not only her best imaginative effort to project the development of national consciousness but also her most ambitious and brilliant work of art. It reveals at once her extraordinary sense of conscious realism and historicity, unmatched in Indo - English fiction, and only rarely evident in contemporary British fiction.

Markandaya's novel creates a sense of history in the reader's mind by depicting the events that rocked the state of Devapur for three generations. In this novel, she has depicted different types of women. Mohini, a wife and a mother, but not a legal relations, bears very meekly these relationships. Markandaya, therefore, achieves a sense of historical continuity - a quality of tradition - while recording the vicissitudes of fortune that befell Devapur, a representative princely state.

Markandaya shows exemplary respect for the recorded facts of history but uses them with a stunning irony and biting economy of phrase in dramatizing the saga of princely patriotism and the growth of individual consciousness. The tragedy of Bawaji Rao 1st, the people's king condemned to die in solitary confinement for his spirit of independence, paves the way for the crowning of Bawaji Rao 2nd. The seeds of royal rebellion are sown by his spirited queen, Manjula when she insists on suckling her baby [born in 1870] herself, repugnant to the royal customs. She perceives the palace practice of restraining the royal mother from nursing her own child as an unwarranted denial of a basic human freedom. Bawaji Rao 2nd, nothing if not a loyalist to the British Emperor, persuades his queen to accept not only his love but also his value system. The queen, nonetheless, nurses a grievance and helplessly watched the prince [the future Bawaji Rao 3rd] grow into a greater loyalist. Prince Bawaji Rao falls in love with a commoner Mohini - who, having taken her cue from the queen mother, refuses to become the queen to Bawaji Rao 3rd but feels content merely to be his concubine, a status that guarantees to her the freedom to bring up their son Rabindra Nath 1895 as she desires. Bawaji feels hurt about her decision, for he is obliged to marry Shanta Devi, a colourless princess of a neighbouring state, who is destined to bear him only daughters but no son. Ravi, the protagonist of novel, eventually becomes the heir apparent.

Markandaya weaves into the main plot two other sub-plots involving the other two institutions, namely, the story of the Dewans, Narahari Rao and Tirumal Rao and the story of the agent and residents Sir Arthur Copeland as well as Mrs. Buckridge during world war 2nd.

Since the structure of the novel is dramatic it opens with a prologue and ends with an epilogue.

Marriage is a bondage between two souls but now it is a compromise. Marriage between Rukmani and Nathan is an ideal while Mohini's relation with Bawaji Rao 3rd is illegal. Rukmani is honoured, respected and an ideal for others women. Getting married is an end in itself for many women and, in such circumstances, gainful employment becomes of secondary or no importance. A modern woman, however, would not mind combining work with marriage, where as a less modern woman would remain satisfied with being just a housewife. Woman in India now enjoy equal status with man and there is a large percentage who still feel that women do not enjoy equality of status. Earlier, it was that thought man is 'by nature' superior to women and it is because of his superior physical strength that he holds a dominant status compared to that of woman Indian woman still believe in the natural superiority of man to a large extent. If many women feel that man is superior, it is because of their dependence and subordination to man but modernization brings in increasing independence and equality in the man - woman relationship. The more modern a woman is the greater is her belief in treating a husband as an equal partner than as an inferior or dominant partner. It may be pointed out that none of the women replied that the husband should be treated as an inferior partner. Indian culture puts heavy premium on the birth of a male child because it is said that a man cannot attain salvation unless his last rites are performed by a son. A writer points out that a woman's position as a 'mother of sons' gives her authority in the

household. It is assumed here that with the onset of modernization this particular attitude would also undergo a change, and people would not distinguish between the birth of a male child and a female child. Emphasis on the birth of male child also points out the fact of the 'inferior' or subordinate position of woman to man. **"Rukmani of Nectar in a sieve and Mira of Some Inner Fury recollect their tales in the comparative tranquility of a reverie-like style."**¹³

Markandaya creates two totally different but compelling and compassionate narrators. Rukmani dominates her novel, but Markandaya is not always successful in giving a peasant's view of the narrow world in which Rukmani lives. If Markandaya creates Rukmani as an Indian woman peasant, dominates the novel, she also successfully creates Mira as a literate, city dweller woman dominating the novel. Both are perfected at their own level. **"It is extremely unlikely that any non-Indian writer could catch so beautifully and sadly the point of view of an Indian village like Rukmani"**.¹⁴ **"He asserts", Nectar in a Sieve is unequalled in English language novels in its first person rendering of this kind of Indian life"**.¹⁵

The well-bred Mira of *Some Inner Fury* lacks the inspiration of Rukmani because she is, to western readers, a more familiar type of first person narrator and heroine and is surrounded by equally intriguing if less developed characters. Mira is neither a flashy debutante nor a silly little rich girl but a thinking, independent, rather high-principled woman confused by the love. She feels for people who are at odds with each other. Mira painstakingly shows that her beloved Richard is an English man in a million, a veritable Fielding. Richard avoids the English community, is remarkably at home with Mira's family, relishes Indian food and clothing, knows stories from the Mahabharata, and is commonly gentle and gentle mainly is pressing his love for Mira. A pattern

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emerges in Markandaya's character sketches. Her women - Rukmani, Ira, Nalini, Mira, Roshan, Premala are all nobler, wiser, stronger, better than their male counterparts. But among the female characters, few are superior in one aspects and few of them are in other aspects. All are superior in their own specific quality to Kunti and Caroline. Rukmani is noble, ideal strong, wise, understood, patriot and liberal. Mira is literate, strong, powerful, modern, wise, patriot and understood. Rukmani is superior among all Indian views women and peasants women. Mira is superior among modern Indian women. Nalini in "A Handful Of Rice" is also good, lovely, beautiful, traditional and cooperative woman. She is superior to her elder sister Thangam and others who live in that society. Rukmani is narrator and victims of all events that happened with her and her surroundings. Nalini is not like Rukmani. She is neither a narrator nor an ideal for society. Roshan and Caroline in "Possession" are westernized and English women. They do not represent any ideal before the readers and do not show any superiority. They are mimic, selfish and do work for their own benefit and own sake. Caroline, an old lady wants to physically involve with a young village led Valmiki and captures him like her possession. Ira in "Nectar In A Sieve" is a good, supportive, motherly and cooperative but unfortunately involves in prostitution for appetite and food. Premala is also an Indian , city dweller and understood woman and die for the sake of the country. She has tried to be a modern as her husband wants.

Modesty graces a woman. It is not right for a young woman to go among young men. Mira's mother comments about woman that a young woman should not go with young men it denouns her personality and grace. Whenever we talk about marriage of a girl generally struck about dowry in mind. Most want dowry. It is rare who are against this system. Kit is against this system he said, "Was he to marry

a woman for her money?" But Mira's mother approach about this is that, **"the dowry is not for your benefit, it is for the girl's self respect, that she may not have to beg from you for her keep. You may be sure, she said, the money will be in her name and the jewels will be upon her body"**.¹⁶

A woman is supporter to a man in all aspect whether she is mother, wife, sister and friend. She suggests, guides and nurses him. Premala as a loving girl, is suitable for Kit. She cares for him as a wife and told Kit **"A woman must be companion as well as wife to her husband"**.¹⁷ It shows the superiority of a woman. Modernity changes the mind of a people. Foreign returned Kit changed while he was an Indian but his thinking about dress, changed from Indianness to modernity. As he provoked Pramela in "Some Inner Fury", **"You ought to try wearing shorts like Mira"**.¹⁸

Pramela, an idol of an Indian woman tried to compromise with this modern man and lost the modesty of Indian woman, she **"came to borrow my shorts. Put them on, blushing, blushed again, furiously, when Kit looked at her bare legs, for she had never worn anything but a sari. But this modesty, which is supposed to grace a woman, found little favour in Kit's eyes"**.¹⁹ Sari graces a woman. Markandaya is an Indo - Anglian novelist and she shows Indianness in her novels. Indianness shows dignity and feels superiority in feminine.

Although in the three novels, "Nectar In A Sieve", "Some Inner Fury" and "Possession", the narrative is managed by women, their status is not the same everytime. Discreet and sober, they are honest in the presentation of their experiences. But they differ in the extent of their social awareness. Rukmani says in the very beginning of the novel that she was neither beautiful nor rich. Mira also confesses her love for Richard, but she was sensitive enough to historical

persures to anticipate difficulties on account of her loyalty to her motherland. Anusuya, the narrator of *Possession* 1963 used to go to England in connection with the publication of her novels. Therefore, whatever she saw or heard about Valmiki and Caroline she hustled into the novel. Being herself a woman, Markandaya accorded authenticity to the narrative by putting the fictional matter in autobiographical style. Although it is not desirable to compare the characters of fiction with their creator novelist, **“it is impossible to escape being impressed by the remarkable similarity between Mira the narrator of *Some Inner Fury* 1955 and Kamala Markandaya the novelist herself”**.²⁰

In “A Silence Of Desire”, Markandaya establishes in unambiguous terms that the Swami may have been a menace to the educated few, but actually he was a solace to the anguished souls, and therefore unavoidably necessary for the spiritual health of the country.

In the other two novels, “A Handful Of Rice” 1967 and “The Coffor Dams” 1969, men characters occupy the central place. And the novelist herself has handed the narration like an omniscient writer. In “A Handful Of Rice” is highlighted the wretched condition of the lower middle class and their conformist attitude. As in the beginning of the novel, so in the end, he was struggling to procure food, the only difference being that by the end of the novel he had come to develop a typical middle class conscience. He would not allow the people, who attack the godown, to run away with bags of grains. “The Coffor Dams 1969, is a novel without a definite purpose and it puts heavy accent on the inscrutability of the universe.

In the Valhalla where novelists end up Kamala Markandaya will find herself somewhere alongside Thomas Hardy. They have much in common. The most memorable heroes and heroines of her novels are victims, victims of

fate, victims of their own characters or of the follies malice of others.

Unlike some other Indian writers who uses English, Markandaya takes as her characters - from a very wide spectrum : Indian peasants, students, Film producers, Indian émigrés in England, English engineers and their wives on contract service in

India, English working class types culled from London pubs and suburban flats. Her women are peculiarly memorable - Rukmani, Mira, Caroline Bell, Saroja and Lalitha. And she has a particular interest in analyzing women characters and suggesting as in "Two Virgins" the unusual poignancy of their fate. The narrators too are likely to be female and even when not, the novel will be told mainly from a woman's viewpoint. It becomes clear what attracts Markandaya in human beings. Her moral idealism controls and influences a largely realistic and often very cruel delineation of life.

But there is little humour in Markandaya, and though she contends she is for tolerance and gentleness, she shows little tolerance and less gentleness for those who offend her rigid and other puritanical code of virtue. Her irony is not amused like Narayan's but scorching like Anand's. In "Nectar In A Sieve", Rukmani remains a fiercely independent and heroic woman whose pride excessive surely does not allow her to save herself by returning the love of an English doctor. It is significant of Markandaya that Rukmani saves herself from going under as much by hatred as by love.

In the context of different types of woman, Saroja's awakening as a woman is a half - comic, half - tragic succession of glimpses of the furtive vaguely 'naughty' adult world. Kamala Markandaya has imposed severe limitations on herself by making a peasant woman, by virtue of her unenlightened situations can convey the author's sense of life only by objectifying it in her life. Such an objectification, however

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would require a slow and gradual development of events, surrounds and the fictional community. But this cannot be done within the small canvas the novel has in its present form.

What is commonly viewed as feminism today is largely a movement influenced by the ideas postulated, popularized and precipitated by thinkers and authors like Alice Walker, Naomi Little Bear, Judith Felter Bey, Lenahorn, Lilliam Smith, Michele Wallace etc. However, the masses, compelled by their habit of reaching at perfunctory conclusions, soon tended to overlook the fact that feminism is much more than a violent whimsical protest by women against everything which has been traditionally associated with them by men.

Therefore the statement that Virginia Woolf is a feminist should be carefully viewed within a proper perspective. Virginia Woolf had definite ideas about the role of women in life and her conception about it gradually developed and matured in her novels and other expository writings. Shashi Deshpande's novels present before us a sensitive portrayal of Indian womanhood without ever seeming to be defensive about it.

It is said that male is superior to the female but without female, there is no existence. Women are doing work in all aspects of life. Now she is going outside for survival. Like man she is living. She is equal to men and today the definition is changed. Women are superior but both men and women are necessary. Both work are important so both are equal and superior. Markandaya's female characters show the superiority of a woman over woman.

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VIII

Conclusion

To Sum up the achievements of Kamala Markandaya, we assess the Indian sensibility through her novels. Kamala Markandaya is one of the most outstanding woman novelists on the canvas of Indo - Anglian fiction. She is undoubtedly one of the major novelists on the commonwealth scene. A. V. Krishna Rao's summing up of her achievement is worthquoting in this context :

“Markandaya’s contribution to the Indo - Anglian fiction lies essentially in her capacity to explore vital, formative areas of individual consciousness that project the images of cultural change, and in her uncanny gift of inhabiting the shifting landscapes of an outer reality with human beings whose sensibility becomes a sensitive measure of the inner reality as it responds to the stimulus of change”.¹

Although the Indo - Anglian novel has been a relatively delayed manifestation of the modern Indian imagination, it has always been instrumental both in an artistic rendering of the contemporary social reality and also in reflecting the changing national tradition; as a complex of inherited values and acquired habits of attitude, taste and temperament. The achievement of Tagore whether his work is considered Indian

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or Indo - Anglian, comes to assume a central significance in the historical development of all modern Indian literature, particularly fiction. Whatever be the contribution of the contemporary Indo - Anglian novelists to the establishment of Indo - Anglian fiction, historically speaking, Tagore was the father of the Indian novel in the best sense.

A feeling of otherness is present, perhaps very naturally, in most Anglo - Indian novels. The Indo - Anglian novelists usually express an authentic oneness with their subject matter. The frequency of first person narrations in Indo - Anglian novels is especially rewarding because the Indian mind seems to unfold with great fascination in such works as Narayan's "The Guide", Markandaya's "Nectar In A Sieve", and Rao's "The Serpent and The Rope."

Indo - anglian writers do not specialize in a radically different kind of characterization alien from western norms of the relationship between plot development and character or from western notions of the significance of individuality. Some Indo - Anglian novelists capitalize on the philosophical attitudes which make uniqueness undesirable in India, but they match their Anglo - Indian counterparts. Anglo - Indian novelists seem especially uncomfortable with Indian characters, often rendering them caricatures. Indo - Anglian novelists are more hopeful, more eager to analyze; to Indianize both the good and the bad, the amusing and the terrifying, aspects of East - West encounters.

"A Passage to India" and its Anglo - Indian successors take the question of East - West personal - social relations very seriously. Surprisingly, Britishers [Orwell is the best example] are often more adamant and Anti - British in their sentiments than such Indian authors as Anand, Bhattacharya, Singh, Markandaya and Rao. Indo - Anglian writers manipulate this issue in such a way that attention is usually on the battle between modern or westernized Indians and their relatives or neighbours still rooted in tradition.

Ultimately, it is the handling of religious and philosophical problems of the East and the West which makes 'A Passage To India' and 'The Serpent And The Rope' so distinctive and distinguished. Novelists from both traditions follow Forster's lead but usually fail to say anything original or to use a spiritual theme as the framework artistically supporting a novel's total meaning.

Kamala Markandaya is a famous Indian writer. Her entire creative work of art is devoted to India. Despite being settled in London and married to a British national, she is a pure Indian by heart, thought, spirit and imagination. Her novel "Nectar In A Sieve" has been translated into seventeen languages and brought her world-wide fame. Markandaya is such a novelist who portrays the different kinds of women in her novels. She depicts peasants, westernized women, English women, spiritual women, prostitution, selfish and selfless women. Her picture gallery of females is wide. As the title "Feminism in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya" shows the all feminine qualities in her novels. The motherly touch in Rukmani, Kunti, Ira, Sarojini, Nalini, Mohini shows the maternal instinct found in all women as common. They represent the realistic picture of a mother in society. The good mother and evil mother are generally found. Markandaya has succeeded in drawing attention towards the prevailing modernity during the contemporary days. Her modern characters like Mira, Lalitha, Saroja are seen today. They resemble us. She also traces the disadvantages and evils of extreme modernity. India is a spiritual country and being an Indian, Markandaya presents spiritual characters like Sarojini and Swami. The effect and loss of the spiritual values are showing very clearly through the eyes of the novelists' characters. Markandaya has shown both the cultures of the East and West. She presents the picture of Eastern and Western values, its difficulties, problems, benefit and loss. Western characters like Richard, Caroline and Helen affect Indian characters like Mira, Valmiki,

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Rukmani but Eastern values always win and Western always follow the Eastern. India's urban and village influences influence both the novelist and the readers. India's urban values are rich and important and it is always alive and shows the majority and superiority over the other influences. Being a female novelist, she represents the feminine sensibility. Thus Kamala Markandaya's understanding of personalities deepens progressively in the first four novel, but her alienation from the Indian scene widens with the years. Numerous examples can be cited from "A Silence Of Desire", "A Handful Of Rice" show evidence not only of alienation but of the author's limits. To sketch a temptation assaulted Ravi caught in the sound and fury of today's urban scene requires a pen that has been dipped in the bloodstream of chaos and endless night. Kamala Markandaya limits herself to a small canvas in each novel and effectively brings out certain social foibles and certain emotional conflicts faced by average human beings. In these earlier novels she has a facile pen and a sympathetic attitude. But she does not go deeply into any problem or situation despite her keen insight and her eye for detail. She races on and the casual reader is carried away. The first three novels reveal progressive improvement in her grasp of human reactions to events, but her fourth and fifth bear evidence of increasing alienation from the social and economic conditions in India.

In 'The Coffer Dams 1969', the readers had watched with growing regret the heavy price of expatriation being paid by a good writer, could sit up and hope for a vindication of art over the limitations of social realism. The story of 'The Coffer Dams' is set in contemporary India but the social setting is a peculiarly limited one a construction site in one of the mountain ranges of south India.

'The Coffer Dams', and 'The Nowhere Man' are powerful novels which reveal new strength in the author, mainly a far deeper, understanding of human motivations, and

a bold experimentation in prose style. To Clinton, the dam is the living embodiment of men's indomitable will, and since will is the power that keeps man above the chaos and degradation of human weakness the dam has to be saved, no matter what the price. Also, the dam and man are one. He says, "one builds a ship, a bridge, a dam. What it is built of is plain to see. Iron, steel, glass, concrete would one not say? But not at all. It is built out of oneself one's blood, brain, nerve, guts, spleen and marrow. And spirit. What ever goes into us, goes into it. The making of the two is not dissimilar". If time were not of the essence, he would not have made the 'inhuman' decision. Bashiam, like Raja in 'Nectar in a sieve; is doomed to die because he has no roots. His "roots were attenuated; his homecomings were uneasy surface affair".

The novel leaves the three characters served from each other, but still strong. Bashiam husbanding his strength so he can start again where he left off, Helen glowing with "some gaiety of spirit" and a wholeness of vision. Of the many treatises that have been written on the problem of style in Indo - English literature. Meenakshi Mukherjee's 'The Twice Born Fiction' is one of the best. But she too is of the opinion that an Indo English novel should have an Indianness about its prose style. Of Shanta Rama Rao, Malgonkar and Markandaya she says, **"The style of all these writers has the smooth, uniform ease of public school English, which is highly readable but it is doubtful whether it is the most desirable style in fiction where one has to deal with particular human beings rooted in their narrow regional identities. These writers have generally by passed the linguistic and stylistic problems inherent in the Indo - anglian situation".²**

All the novels of Markandaya give messages, suggestions and new thoughts with important values if one novel presents the evidence related to rural and peasant

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other present the evidence of modern westernized cultures. Mostly show the conflict between tradition and modernism, The East West culture, spiritualism and modernity etc. The message in “Two Virgins” is the same as in “Nectar in a sieve”, the sustaining power of the spirit of acceptance that is most evident in those who live in Nature. But it is not a convincing novel. A girl who trades away her soul, lured by city splendours and a girl who watches , learns her lesson and returns to the bosom of “Mother nature” The characters are undeveloped, and stylistic experimentation and juggling of syntax a little too erratic Most of the incidents peripheral to the plot are excellent but the main thread is thin. What “Two Virgins” says about adolescence and maturation in 250 pages is said more effectively as incidents in earlier novels - Dandekar’s daughter crouching in a corner at her menses [A Silence Of Desire], Ira’s cold bloodedly trading her body for food [Nectar In A Sieve], Vasantha’s mind growing into womanhood when the British inspector of police twitches her skirt over her head with his cane [The Nowhere Man].

‘The Nowhere Man’ is a powerful novel. It has the theme of the love-hate relationship between India and England, presents through individual experiences. In this novel, the relationship between Mrs. Pickering and Srinivas could be read as the relationship between the best of India and the best of Britain. Just as the last scene in ‘Two Virgins’ strikes a wrong note, there is a sentence in the last scene of ‘The Nowhere Man’ that is close to disastrous. The relationship between Srinivas and Mrs. Pickering and by extension between Indians and the English or between any erstwhile colony and its former rulers, if one chooses to read the novel that way, comes crashing down because of this sentence. Srinivas lies dead on the street, surrounded by onlookers whose curiosity is now transformed into guilt. Srinivas and Vasantha are fairly typical Indian immigrants, carrying Indian habits, dress and beliefs to an alien land and living peacefully but without

in any way assimilating the culture of their adopted land. The Handful of Indians soil and the bottle of Ganga water treasured by Vasantha are both realistic and symbolic.

The later novels of Kamala Markandaya unmistakably show that she has lost contact with the Indian setting and way of life. The early writers chose to write in English because the British empire was at its zenith in their time and they were inspired by the wealth of literature and philosophy that come to them by the medium of the English language. But their roots were deep in Hindu culture. They were bilingual, often trilingual, knowing Sanskrit in addition to their mother tongue and English.

The creative work of Kamala Markandaya shows a definite tendency of adopting the themes. In the first novel, her protagonists are the Indian farmers [Rukmani], Thambi and others and in succeeding novels, the Indians, who have accepted the European culture, but at last renounce [Mirabai and Roshan in *Some Inner Fury*] and Anusuya in *'Possession'*. But in the best novel *'The Coffer Dam'*, Kamala switches over to the westernization of protagonist and opts for Helen, an English woman, as her central character. Kamala Markandaya is an outstanding creative writer of Indian English literature. Her novels have been translated into many languages because her novels earned wide response in the world's literary circles. Her fiction portrays the true Indian world perception written in realistic style.

Markandaya's style is usually crisp, calm reflective and economical when love enters the picture, her prose tends to become more "Feminine" lush and even a little gushy. Markandaya is definitely one of the most productive, popular, and skilled Indo - Anglian novelists and a super representative of the growing number of Indian woman writing serious literature in English. "*Nectar In A Sieve*", "*Some Inner Fury*", "*A Hand Ful Of Rice*" reveal her primary concerns as well as the merits and flaws of her craftsmanship.

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Markandaya's mise en scene, like Narayan in South India whereas he emphasizes the human comedy involved in the change - versus tradition issue, she stresses the tragic elements. Her smooth, public school brand of English not so direct, natural and unobtrusive as Narayan's English. Her use of radically different feminine narrators in "Nectar In A Sieve" and "Some Inner Fury" provides a significant contrast [here, specifically with regard to language] in the credibility and artistry of first - person narrators in English by Indian characters. Markandaya's first novel "Nectar In A Sieve" has achieved a world - wide fame. It represents the sight of rural India, its tradition, its culture and its way of living among peasants. Its main female character Rukmani is just like the Indian peasant in real existent. By making Rukmani her mouthpiece, Markandaya shows her disapproval of the purdah system though it has not been shown as widely prevalent in the village largely because she has been away from India for such a long time and also because the novel deals with the poor people among whom the purdah system is nearly non - existent. Since no middle class lady has been introduced in the novel, no purdah system could have been shown. The purdah system can be seen in the towns and cities as well, even if confined largely to a few middle class families.

For Meena Shirwadkar Rukmani, **"in her mute suffering resembles Maurya in Synge's Riders to the Sea".**³ Haydn Moore Williams also praises her **"great stature."**⁴ It would be a mistake to say that Markandaya errs in selecting Rukmani, a barely literate peasant woman, as the first - person narrator of 'Nectar In A Sieve' Rukmani's recounting of the spiritual and physical agonies she and her family endure as they sway back and forth from mere subsistence to penniless poverty and degradation is both poignant and bittersweet, given Rukmani's rural backwardness, however, the reader finds it difficult to believe some of her articulate contemplations of life's problems as well as her

superhuman acceptance of her husband's adultery. Rukmani's reflections sometimes ring with simple authenticity, at other times seem coated with a too profound wisdom. From start to finish, there is something too subtle and sophisticated about the English rendering of Rukmani's bleak history. Part of the problem lies in Markandaya's attempt to put graceful English prose into the mouth of an Indian village woman.

In "Some Inner Fury", **"Markandaya is on safer ground because her first person Indian narrator Mira [like the author herself] is rich, educated, a Brahmin, a writer, and in love with an Englishman"**.⁵ Here the English is much more credible, though ironically is effective and poetic than in *Nectar In A Sieve*. The feminine narrator also exhibits a Victorian avoidance of unpleasant words. For example when Mira recalls her brother Kits' anger at those responsible for the death of his wife, she blandly reports: "and deliberately, he called them the most terrible name by which men can be called".

Generally speaking, Markandaya handles dialogue well in all three novels as *Some Inner Fury*, *Nectar In A Sieve* and *A Handful Of Rice*. Like Narayan, she is eminently readable but hardly outstanding or innovative in her use of English. Indian terminology is sharply minimized in these novels, *Nectar In A Sieve* is preceded by a page explaining eighteen Indian words used in the novel, and *Some Inner Fury* is followed by a page defining such terms. **K. S. N. Rao asserts that "Markandaya is constantly explaining Indian festivals and customs such as Rukmani's dissertation on the taboo of an Indian woman calling her husband by his name, for the benefit of her international audience"**.⁶ *Nectar In A Sieve* was a "Book of the Month club" selection, and Markandaya's popularity in the West is undeniable though diminishing. At present, her Indian reader scoffs at her reputation outside India, alleging that

she oversimplifies the Indian scene from which she has departed and that she overplays poverty”⁷.

The Golden HoneyComb, Markandaya’s magnum opus todate, is a matchless metaphor in Indo - English fiction. Thoroughly researched in respect of the facts of history and tightly packed with details, the novel is technically perfect. It opens with the farcical scene of a futile British bid to make a victualling bania as the Maharajah of the state of Devapur, contrary to the traditional practice of choosing the king from the princely caste. The familiar design that marks out a typical Markandaya novel is revealed in this novel too, as when the action is ironically circled off in the end, with Mohini’s final words to Bawaji Rao 3rd. **“For once in your life you’re behaving like a father to your people. You’re actually letting them keep a fraction of what’s theirs, instead of grabbing the whole lot for yourself and your bania friends you ought to be pleased for their sake”⁸.**

Infact, everyone is pleased with the outcome though each has his own reason. The resident for avoiding a really awkward confrontation with a mass of non - violent people led by the prince himself; Ravi and Usha for being able to stand by a suffering people and assert their spirit of independence, Mohini out of a sense of self - fulfilment, the Maharajah for averting needless massacre of his own people; and finally the people themselves for being able to win the sympathy of their Maharajah.

Although the language of Markandaya’s fiction merits a special study in itself, it needs to be said here that in this novel Markandaya fully succeeds in evolving a brilliant linguistic medium to suit the communicative purpose of her fictional idiom. Her linguistic adequacy and stylistic competence consists in the choice and employment of appropriate imagery and vocabulary. Her language in this novel has a certain late Victorian flavour which nonetheless

fits in admirably because the period of narration spreads over the Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian periods of modern Indo - British history. The detailed description of the Durbar of 1903 in New Delhi, for example, is elaborate and evocative of the imperial gorgeousness and splendour. In the light of the discussion above, it may be concluded that Markandaya's literary sensibility project itself in this novel as an acute, if ambivalent perception of the different and distinct forms of national consciousness which shape and sustain the individual identity. Her fictional achievement lies in her being artistically rooted in the continuing though changing tradition of India. Her intellectuality and personal style of living in England do not affect her artistic authenticity.

Kamala Markandaya is a novelist of average emotions. In her novels written in autobiographical style, especially because the narrators were women, it was quite natural to avoid depiction of violent passion. In the fictional world of Markandaya the recurrent characters are swamis, beggars, artists, peasants, prostitutes, government officers and patriot. If beggars, prostitutes and peasants symbolize the economic backwardness of the nation, the swamis are the spokesmen of traditional values, although out of grace with Dandekar like rational men of commercial civilization. In *possion*"1963, the Swami and Caroline represent two divergent approaches to life, the spiritual [i.e. oriental] and the material [western] but the swami is shown also as capable of understanding the historical forces and his voice is the voice of wisdom. The beauty of Markandaya's style lies in its natural fusion of the personal and political the individual and rational and the traditional and modern. She admits the importance of physical and material needs, but she prefers to idealize life which also depicting sympathetically the existential anguish of her characters.

In the depiction of the personal, political and cultural life of India, as also of the West, Markandaya has been

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careful. Kamala Markandaya's attitude is patriotic. She thinks India should not sell her soul to the West. She should develop her own personality discarding outdated values and obsolete attitudes. Markandaya does not evince bitterness about English rule nor does she flatter the West uncritically. Her point of view is to a large extent unbiased and balanced, her aim is to display how various attitudes and ideologies shaped the human destinies in the context of the British regime in India. The most significant aspect of her fiction is her emphasis on human sensibility despite the fact that the central place is occupied by political and cultural conflicts in her fiction.

In the portrayal of Indian rural life, various Indo - anglian novelists have tried their hand with varying degrees of success. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya and Khushwant Singh have given occasional glimpses of rural life. Raja Rao's "Kanthapura" stands by far the best Indian novel in English in its faithful portrayal of rural life. The village "Kanthapura" with its caste divisions, superstitious, orthodox and religious minded people, tales and legends and blessings and curses find a good manifestation even though the novel is Raja Rao's literary trajectory for launching the Gandhian political economic social and moral ideas.

Most of the characters in the novel are typically rural. Rukmani, Nathan, Janki, Kali, Kunti, Ira, Old Granny and many more nameless characters have an unmistakable rural bearing. Their ways of life, attitude, manners and speech belong to the countryside. **Hari Mohan Prasad** calls Nathan and his wife **"Symbols of teeming millions, archetypal figure like Adam and Eve".**⁹ Whereas Hemingway calls Rukmani **"a living replica of the stereotyped Indian wife who regards her husband as her god and her children as her divine calling".**¹⁰ Other critics like **Uma Parmeshwaran** have

also heaped praises on Rukmani for her stoic acceptance of difficult situations”.¹¹

Indisputably, Markandaya is a fine craftsman. Her novels have well - made plots, revealing how highly she values structural tautness in the novel as an art form. There is hardly anything immaterial meriting elimination without causing any serious detriment to structural harmony or to her novelistic aesthetics. The structure in most of her novels is carefully built like one in ‘a classical play’ and the plot is unfolded step by step there is a rapid denouement after the climax. Commenting on the structural qualities common to the first five novels of Markandaya, a critic says, “The plots unweave at a sure and swift pace. There are no secondary plots, no political or philosophical digressions, no lyrical descriptions, or extraneous characterizations. The narratives are continuous and the lapses of time between incidents are often dismissed in a phrase. This gives forward surging motion to the stories.

“**Nectar In A Sieve**” has a neat circular structure. The beginning and the end of the novel are closely connected, creating a structural circle. Rukmani narrates the horrowing tale of her life after she has returned to her village. But there are a few minor drawbacks in the structure. The episode in which Rukmani in advertently touches the snakes which Nathan kills and the relationships between Kunthi and Nathan and between Rukmani and Kenny are neither satisfactorily dramatized nor properly assimilated in the structure. But of course, there are minor flaws. Therefore, a critic remarks that in this novel, A compact tightly structured plot such as we are to find in the next novel, is lacking is not tenable.

Like Nectar in a sieve, the plot of *Some Inner Fury* is also circular. Unlike the structure of the first two novels, the structure of ‘*A Silence Of Desire*’ is different. Markandaya has built in an element of suspense in the structure. The plot

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of "Possession" is also circular but unlike them, it is loose. But unlike 'possession', 'A Handful Of Rice', has a sound plot. The plot of 'The Coffers Dams', like that of 'A Silence Of Desire', does not give free play to the tragic insights of the author and resembles the plot of a fairy tale. 'The Nowhere Man' is undoubtedly a tightly structured piece of fiction. But unlike this novel, 'Two Virgins' has a poor plot, resembling that of a documentary on rural life. Apparently, the author has not made any conscious attempt at structural architectonics, in the novel. But 'The Golden Honeycomb' structurally speaking, is set in a historical framework depicting events in the historical chronology.

The remarkable feature about the plot in most of the novels of Markandaya is that the stories are inconclusive and at the end point to the ever moving wheel of life. K. S. Narayan Rao writes aptly about this quality of Markandaya's plot that **"The stories do not end in the spirit of and they lived happily ever after. It is as though they suggest the seeming endlessness of life cycle A narrative unit might be over but the life's narrative does not end. The novels conclude but they are not quite conclusive, obviously for an intended artistic effect"**.¹²

Markandaya is beyond doubt, a first rate teller of tales. Her different narrative techniques and shifting point of view have rendered her novels highly gripping. From start to finish her novels capture the undivided attention of the general as well as specializing reader - and credit goes mainly to her narrative art which reveals not only her tremendous dramatic power but also her remarkable capacity for aesthetic control and selection.

Stephen Hemenway observes that **"Markandaya is a fine storyteller whose handling of point of view, in particular, reveals a serious commitment to explore the potential of English language, fiction of India. Her first**

person narrations, though flawed, contribute much originality to the Indo-Anglian novel”.¹³

Markandaya faithfully records the inner workings of the minds and hearts of her characters particularly in the novels such as *Some Inner Fury*, *A Silence Of Desire*, *A Handful Of Rice*, *The Coffer Dams* and *The Nowhere Man*.” This characteristic of her prose style is noticeable at its best in *The Coffer Dams* and *The Nowhere Man*. Her prose style changes in ‘Two Virgins’. She has experimented with a journalistic style, using the indirect form of narration, in this novel.

In her novels, Markandaya has excellently handled dialogues. She has written realistic dialogues encompassing almost the entire gamut of human emotions. But she has presented very few conversations between Indian characters, thus tiding over what Uma Parmeswaran calls “**The problem of dialect realism**”. Uma Parneshwaran’s observation in this regard is worth consideration. She writes, “**Kamala Markandaya solves the problems of dialect realism by practically doing away with straight dialogue between Indians. There are very few dialogues between her Indian characters, and here she uses some rather standard Indianism- rather needlessly such as the omission of articles and the transformation of a statement into a question by adding a question mark [The voice would be suitably inflected] at the end ... Kamala Markandaya is obviously more at home with the conversational style of Englishmen for most of these dialogues are in direct speech and sound authentic**”.¹⁴ Markandaya is not an imagist novelist, unlike Anita Desai. As compared to Desai, she is frequently develops her images into independent units, giving the reader wider scope for connecting and interpreting them contextually. Infact, Markandaya is more a symbolist than an imagist.

In “*A Silence Of Desire*” the tulsi plant is a striking symbol. Obviously, it is a symbol of Sarojini’s religious faith.

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In "Possession" Caroline is the symbol of evil; while the Swamy is that of good. "The Golden Honeycomb" is deficient in symbolism mainly because its historical framework prevents the author from indulging in symbolic freedom.

Markandaya's British and Indian characters in this novel, like in 'The Coffer Dams' have been remarkably realized in the proper context. Mrs. Pickering like Helen, seeks to build bridges of understanding in a poisoned atmosphere; but unlike Helen, she is more convincing as a character. Mrs. Pickering is possibly Markandaya's most balanced and realistically realized British character while others, even when they are not stereotype, are probably romantically portrayed, if not caricatured. Markandaya succeeds with her semi-humorous, semi-pathetic character of Jumbo, Indian prince and playboy, suggesting in caricature the opposite side of the Indian coin from the peasant Val and the Swamy. Markandaya has tried to show both the rustic and city dweller characters. Her pictures of rustic life in 'Nectar In A Sieve' 1954 and 'Two Virgins' 1973 are as superficial as her attempt at low class urban realism in 'A Handful Of Rice' 1966 is unconvincing. The work of the numerous women novelists of the period, however, offers a more sensitive picture of this theme. R. P. Jhabvala in her 'Esmond in India' 1958 and 'Heat and Dust' 1975 is content to dwell elegantly on the surface a change also applicable to Anita Desai's 'Bye - Bye Blackbird' 1971, but the clash between Western-oriented rationalism and traditional religious faith in Kamala Markandaya's "A Silence Of Desire" 1960 is extremely powerfully realized, though this can not be said about her other exercises in the manner, including 'Possession' 1963, 'The Coffer Dams' 1969 and 'The Nowhere Man' 1972.

The central ideas in "Nectar In A Sieve" and "Some Inner Fury" are respectively the havoc of economics and politics in the lives of individuals as well as communities. The pathetic domestic dislocation, resulting in the vast -

disorientation of values in the modern set - up of a village and the violent disturbance of the unreal existence of a rootless upper class in a cosmopolitan center of civilization as a sequel to the furious political agitation in the country. In "A Silence Of Desire" Sarojini like Rukmani, she accepts the scientific spirit of the age which is not in conflict with the basic human values, as it merely attempts to make the human beings more happy here and now. The shifting of Swamy means the creation of a problem for the government materially. But the problem is deeper and more serious for the hundreds of people around him become spiritual orphans with his removal. The Dwarf, symbolic of the spiritual cripples and the puny defenders of the source of their spiritual sustenance is too scornful of Dandekar for his egoistic attitude. Ultimately, all desires are silenced whether realized or not : Dandekar desires to win back his wife; but Sarojini's desire to resort to faith healing is silenced by her acceptance of the surgical treatment; and the Dwarf's desire to be attached is also finally silenced by the Swamy's characteristic detachment and his departure.

Markandaya's literary sensibility projects itself in her novels as an acute, if unresolved perception of the different and distinct forms of national consciousness which propel the individuals progress in the modern world. It is possible to trace out in her novels an intelligible pattern of ideas that reveals her aesthetic assimilation of a long established tradition under the disturbing impact of modernity. The four cardinal ideas that pervade her fictional translation of the national tradition are, broadly speaking, social, political, spiritual and cultural. Thus, in the 'Nectar In A Sieve', a novel of rural India. She dramatizes the tragedy of the disruption of a Hindu joint family of a farmer owing to the heavy industrialization - a typically modern aspect of national economics. Nathan and Rukmani are representative of the thousands of uprooted peasants under an industrial economy.

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Markandaya's concern is with the traditional life of an Indian village in transition; and the underlying idea is principally social. In the second novel, "Some Inner Fury" the scene shifted from rural India to a cosmopolitan city of gaiety and luxury, hollowness and hypocrisy. "A Silence of Desire" is an imaginative commentary on the psychological maladjustment of a middle class woman, deeply religious and traditionalist. The novel is typically reflective of the expanded and repressed middle class motivated by tensions and resolutions peculiar to its psychology and temperament. **"It is interesting to note that the English Caroline in *The Possession* is so unlike the French Madeline in Raja Rao's *The Serpent and The Rope*. Madeline is so advanced and refined in her cultural make up that she never tries to possess Rama, but helps him in his spiritual quest, even as he guides her to the Buddhistic 'Eight fold path'. Caroline and Madeline thus offer a study in contrast, of the same European cultural consciousness".**¹⁵

Kamala Markandaya's fictional achievement lies in her being a steady traditionalist while transmuting the different phases of national experience into significant works of art. Her intellectuality and sophistication do not wear her away from the national tradition, for, as Edward Shils says, **"The entire childhood of the Indian intellectual was spent in a deep immersion in traditional life".**¹⁶

Kamala Markandaya has by now become a novelist of world stature enjoying both popularity and critical acclaim. Her fiction is largely sociological in its focus. It lacks depth because as a novelist her greater interest lies in story and social comment than in psychological characterization, complex technique or a profound vision of life. Her novels give a faithful account of contemporary Indian reality. **As Shiv K. Kumar has noted: "Of all the contemporary Indian novelists writing in English, Kamala Markandaya is the most accomplished, both in respect of her sensitive**

handling of a foreign medium and her authentic portrayal of the Indian scene. What distinguishes her most incisively from other Indian novelists is her acute awareness of a gradual shift in values that has been taking place in this subcontinent during the past two decades or so”.¹⁷

“Nectar In A Sieve” Kamala Markandaya’s first novel, is a fictional narrative that seeks to project the responses of an elderly Indian woman reminiscing about her life. It will be seen that Rukmani’s recollection ends where it begins and the narration may be said to have a circular pattern. This feature of the narrative imparts an impressive touch to the novel. Commenting on the narrative technique in “Nectar In A Sieve” K. S. N. Rao has rightly observed:

“In a detached and yet not wholly unemotional manner, Rukmani recalls the events of her life in a chronological manner. The dream like quality of her recollection is particularly impressive Rukmani recaptures the tragic intonation of her life in a clear, lyrical manner. She misses nothing, not a detail divided into short chapters, which have a psychological advantage of keeping the readers interest, the story purports to be a narrative of events in the life of narrator”.¹⁸

A discussion of Markandaya’s plots and characters is never complete until one considers the language of her fiction. Her employment of language is always suited to the narrator. Thus in “Nectar In A Sieve” 1954, the language is simple and even in its flow because it is the narration of an uneducated peasant woman. The narrative is definitely patterned and coherent because the speaker is not illiterate. The sophisticated language of “Some Inner Fury” 1955, matches the cultural background of Mira the narrator, and her sensitive awareness. Progressing through the more objective use of language [for a third personal narrative] in “A Silence Of Desire” 1960, to the rather fluent style of Possession 1963 to the expressive metaphysical language of “A Handful of

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Rice" 1966. In "The Coffer Dams" 1969, Markandaya mostly employs the technique of a third person narrative from different points of view. She enters the thought processes of Clinton and Helen successfully and her language achieves the powerful complexity of the thought process itself. Markandaya's narrative method wins our sympathy for Clinton also. Markandaya's language thus moves towards poetry. As style is the Man, her poetic sensibility is her inspiration. Markandaya's control and power are balanced by her choice of words and evocative diction. There are no oddities of construction as one sometimes finds in Anand or R. K. Narayan. Nor does she experiment with the language as Raja Rao does. 'The Coffer Dams' thus brings to the fore the major issues encountered in the process of industrialization. The rise of a Dam also means the rise of new values - commercialism, comfort and alienation from the tradition as in Bhattacharya's "Shadow from Ladakh" 1966. "The Nowhere Man" portrays the theme of loneliness. Srinivas's loneliness hangs heavily on him. His loneliness is caused by his separation from his life pushing him into a corner against an alien environment from which he has to protect himself. This domestic loneliness could have been offset somewhat if only the English community had accepted him.

Markandaya's fictional genius is basically imagistic. One can discern a common image pattern underlying her fictions: House imagery branching into tannery imagery, city imagery, jungle imagery and insect imagery. In "Nectar In A Sieve", the conflict between tradition and modernity forms the basis of the novel. Rukmani hopes for a grand wedding. But her hopes are shattered as a result of the march of modernity. In "A Silence Of Desire" the house image is situational. He expresses either Damodar's happiness when he comes back from office, sees his wife preparing a meal for him with her "—— movements - the noises of cooking —

—” or his intense sorrow when she is away to see the Swamy - “The place seemed pale and chill, like an unlit lamp”. The house image in “A Handful Of Rice” is situational and prefigurative. Ravi breaks open the grille and enters Apu’s house. It foreshadows Ravi’s deflowering Apu’s daughter, Nalini. After Ravi’s marriage with Nalini, he takes Nalini to a **‘box like’ room**.¹⁹ Of all Kamala Markandaya’s novels, *The Coffer Dams* is without the house imagery. And ‘*The Nowhere Man*’ is rich in this imagery. The house symbolizes Srinivas’s plight after the death of his wife. Its “grimy curtain and feeling paint” image the glamour of his life falling apart. In *The Golden Honeycomb*, Markandaya has used house images with symbolic significance.

Markandaya is very good at using the figurative language which demands of the writer the quickness of imagination to find an identical trait or object at some other place. The comparison is either stated or implied. By the use of such a language, the writer creates a pictorial effect, described by analogy and finds similarities in things which may be dissimilar or surface. This is done by the use of antithesis, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, metonymy, personification, simile and synecdoche. Similes and metaphors particularly abound in her novels. **Herbert Read defines metaphor as ‘the synthesis of several units of observation into one commanding image and the translation of a complex idea into a simple concrete equivalent’**.²⁰

By using metaphorical language, Kamala Markandaya uses *aveil* for a direct statement, though mostly its function is illuminative rather than decorative. The following passage has an abundance of similes and metaphor.

“Jayamma, large and vocal, carried the appurtenances of strength; it was her mouse like husband who exercised it. Ruminating on it Ravi sometimes felt affronted, indignant almost, that this shriveled up noventy, whom he had seen by night cowering and cringing before him, should by day order

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him about here and there. At these times he would wrap the jungle around him for comfort ... ah yes, the jungle, its darkness, its lawlessness, where a man's strength and courage alone gave him mastery ... live by jungle law, and then see who survived".

Markandaya uses short images rather frequently to portray an aspect of character, an idea or a situation. Her images are very casual and are scattered in all her novels. Since an image is a verbal picture or impression that appeals to 'various senses, she uses it to give a passing glimpse of a person or a situation, almost like a ripple or sheen of a wave. Her images are quite abundant and diversified, complex and sophisticated but are not as connotative as are those of Raja Rao in *Kanthapura* in which one can read the nature of villagers their imagination, and their sense of wonder and appreciation. Margaret Joseph. P however, comments Markandaya not only for her handling of imagery but also for its veracity and for **"that automatic flash of pleasure experienced by the reader who perceives its suitability"**.²¹ In some of her novels, her images are closely related to the subject matter. *Nectar In A Sieve*, a tale of rural life, has its images from nature and rural life. Nathan is "as brittle as a bamboo". Rukmani is asked to "bend like the grass". Kuti's thin body is like a handful of leaves and fears swarm about Rukmani's head "like the black flying ants after a storm".

'Some Inner Fury' which deals with the urban and western life, has different kind of images. A sheen on Premala's head is compared to **"a black pearl"**.²² The dirty residential area is soiled and stained **"bandage that has been on too long"**.²³

The use of humour in Indo - English literature is a rare phenomenon. Except for R. K. Narayan who is blessed with it in abundance one can find only occasional glimpse of it in Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. In Kamala Markandaya, it is almost non-existent. Markandaya makes a good use of

irony. Irony is a mode quite natural to most human beings, and originates from one's intelligence or stratagem, humility or arrogance. The titles of most of her novels are ironical.

"A Silence Of Desire" has for its subject a family drama between religious minded and orthodox wife and a modern, rational husband. The *Nowhere Man* shows the isolation of man as also East - West cultural relationships. Srinivas, the protagonist is "Nowhere man looking for a nowhere city".

In the use of Indian words, Markandaya is closer to R. K. Narayan than to Anand and Bhattacharya. Unlike Narayan, she does not indianize syntax, nor like Anand does. She literally translate the Indian idioms and phrases into English. Markandaya's use of Indian proverbs and idioms is as rare as it might have been in the writings of a foreigner. The problem of her language lies in her being an expatriate and in having lost nearly all her contacts with India. Narayan, Anand and Bhattacharya are firmly rooted in the native soil. Markandaya stays away in London and one wonders whether she even reads Indian literature in regional languages.

In evaluating the contribution of Kamala Markandaya to the Indo - English fiction, it is often pointed out that unlike Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Khushwant Singh, she has not evolved Indian English. The fact which is often ignored in such cases is whether there is really a need to Indianize English. The above novelists, who are cited in support of such a contention, have always Indianized English. Raja Rao's language might be Indianized in *Kanthapura* but it is not so in 'The Serpent And The Rope', Anand's and Bhattacharya's attempts at Indianizing English are usually confined to dialogues without being extended to description and narration. The Indianizing of English is not always a necessity; it is a desirability only in certain situations and with certain illiterate and rural characters where neat pure English may not go well. Uma

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Parmeshwaran's views on this matter are worth reproducing : **"The simple fact of the matter is that an Indo - English novel need not have an Indianness in its prose style anymore than a British or American novel need have some distinctive prose style that proclaims its country of origin. We know that the replicas of the statue of liberty sold in souvenir shops at the foot of the statue are all made in Japan. A tourist is usually disappointed when he notices this. But take away that tell - tale tag and the souvenir is seen to be what it is - a replica of the statue of liberty, which landmark he just visited, and will recall each time he sees the replica. The main point is whether or not the replica is well made. So also with a novel. Prose style is to a novel what the replica is to the tourist who has visited the statue - an aid to focus on an experience. If it is a model drawn to scale, it has scale, it has a certain value. If it is a model that only approximates the marginal proportions but is in itself a piece of art, it has a different kind of value"**.²⁴ Kamala Markandaya's contribution to the style of Indo - English fiction should be seen in the fact that though English happens to be her acquired language, she has made it an appropriate vehicle of her creative writing. In a world where it is fashionable to have an Indian flavour in English. Markandaya continues to be an orthodox perfectionist who maintains the inviolable purity of her language.

Though Markandaya admirably portrays Rukmani's special understanding - a decidedly Indian point of view - she sometimes exceeds the bounds of belief and fails to limit Rukmani's powers of comprehension and observation. Markandaya has had to step out of her own personality rather drastically to adopt the persona of a rural woman and her great leap has its advantages such as intimacy, objectivity and disadvantages of sentimentality, inability to identify totally.

Being a woman novelist, Kamala Markandaya expresses all aspects of a female, the inner voice, sentimentality of a woman, depression, frustration, feeling of dominate over some one, the hope of achieving aim, the happiness and sorrow, the patriotic feeling, the maternal instinct and all feminine quality.

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