

**A STUDY OF THEMES IN THE
NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA**

A

Thesis

Submitted towards the Requirement for the Award of Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Under the Faculty of Arts

By

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Year-2023

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Acknowledgement

In the name of the almighty, God the most gracious and merciful with his gracing blessing had led to success be upon this thesis. I would like to dedicate my research work to my parents **Mr. Sukharam Chidar** and **Mrs. Poonam Devi**.

It's my pleasure to express my thanks to honourable chancellor **Shri J. P. Sharma** and **Prof. Ranjit Singh** Honourable Vice Chancellor, P. K. University, Shivpuri (M.P.) for their cooperation and also for giving me the opportunity to do the research work. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to **Mr. Jitendra Kumar Mishra** Director Admin, **Prof. G. Pavan Kumar** Dean Academic of P.K. University, Shivpuri, (M.P.) and also thankful to **Dr. Deepesh Namdev**, registrar P.K. university, Shivpuri (M.P.). My special thanks goes to **Dr. Bhaskar Nalla**, Dean research, **Dr. Aiman Fatima** in charge of research P.K. University (M.P.), **Dr. Vikrant Sharma** Department of Arts, **Mrs. Nisha Yadav**, Librarian, **Mr. Pankaj Singh** IT Head for their Cooperation and **Mr. Ashish Gupta** Ph.D. Cell.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my Supervisor **Dr. Kavita Agnihotri**, Assistant Professor, Arya Kanya P.G College Jhansi and Late **Prof. Anand Kumar Tripathi** P.K. University Shivpuri (M.P.). I would like to thank **Dr. N. K. Jain** Principal Govt. Girls College Shivpuri for giving permission to do research work from P.K. University Shivpuri (M.P.). I am thankful to my colleagues viz; **Dr. A. K. Moghey**, **Dr. Mukesh Kumar Sharma**, **Dr. M.S. Hindoliya**, **Prof. Manjula Sharma**, **Dr. Jyotsna Saxena**, **Prof. Mamta Rani**, **Dr. Renu Rai**, **Dr. Anita Kamore**, **Prof. Mahendra Kumar**, **Dr. Vikash**, **Dr. L. S. Bansal**, **Dr. Suryanshu Choudhary**, **Prof. B. S. Jayant**, **Dr. Ajay Singh**, **Dr. Ratiram Dhakar**, **Dr. Gulab Singh**, **Mr. Bhanu Raje**, **Mr. Pawan Prajapati** and **Mr. Ramkumar Prajapati**.

Last but not the least, I am extremely thankful to My younger brother, **Mr. Anil Kumar Chidar** and **Mrs. Neelam Chidar**, Sister **Mrs. Kamlesh**, Brother in law **Mr. Kamal Chidar** my nephew **Manvendra Singh**, **Aditya Niece Tanishka** and **Rupali** for their moral support, patience and encouragement throughout the research work.

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Dedicated To,
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
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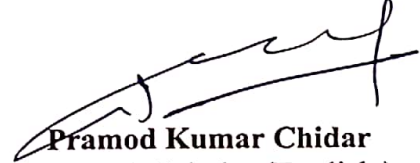
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ABSTRACT

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) is one of the most prolific women-novelists in the galaxy of Indian novelists of English language who had left behind her eleven novels in her credit including one published posthumously in 2008. Her works have shown a new path for the present and forthcoming generation; particularly associated with the studies and research in Indian writing in English. Her novels play the vital role in Indian social domain. The selection of themes and their revelation is an outstanding work that has attracted the mind of modern generation. In this thesis too, a glimpse of multiple themes would be discussed. I intend to focus on the varied themes occurred in her novel's sys thematically. Although some researchers have made their best efforts in this respect but so far no one has systematically made endeavor to do so. Hence, through this thesis, the researcher would focus on the multiple themes of her novels best possibly focusing chronologically systematic. Kamala Markandaya's reputation as a pioneering Indian novelist in English literature. She has left no stone untouched whether it is historical, political, religious, economic or educational issues. She has particularly discussed about the condition of southern India, her native land. As we go through the deeper side of the studies of her novels, we come to know that the numerous and multi-dimensional themes are interwoven. She has not stopped herself on any particular theme. What she has observed and experienced, she has mentioned that with the help of her characters. Through her next novel, 'Pleasure City' (1982), she has expressed the other kind of plight that is also concerned with economic circumstances. It shows the mirror to the plight of Rikky who abandons his traditional fishing trade for easy money in the face of socio-economic change. Rikky's attitude towards his old-fashioned job of fishing is quite reluctant. Markandaya has seen in him a ray of modernity. Rikky's desire for making his fortune in the modern ways is quite symbolical. He represents the modern generation. As being a young and energetic youth, he does not like to spend his life in the old-fashioned job of fishing. Tully and Rikky are two characters who grow to a fuller understanding and acceptance of the traditional restrictions and their own responsibilities. So the theme of modernity, employment-problem, quest for identity and passion for self-respected life come in our focus. 'Nectar in a Sieve' published in 1954 is also known as 'A Novel of Rural India'. It has many themes; major and minor. It shows us a picture of Indian

Society, victim under the clutches of industrialization. It has described the bitter condition of Indian people who are facing numerous challenges. 'Nectar in a Sieve' is the first novel of Kamala Markandaya which has received high acclaim from the readers and the critics. The title 'Nectar in a Sieve' has been derived from S. T. Coleridge's famous poem, 'Work without Hope' in which, he writes:

"Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve"

Through these characters, Markandaya has beautifully interwoven the story of Indian society, mingling several themes. Rukmani is the heroine of the novel. She is the central figure and the narrator of the story. 'Nectar in a Sieve' is the story of her experiences in life. As a protagonist, Rukmani has shown almost all the aspects of rural Indian society. Rukmani's husband Nathan is a tenant farmer and represents the hardness of the rural Indian. Irrawaddy or Ira is Rukmani's eldest daughter who is deserted by her husband because she is infertile. The portrayal of Ira's plight exhibits the theme of male-domination. Ira represents all those women, who are infertile. Not only Ira but all such women are compelled to face this social vice. Particularly, in India, such meanmindedness is found everywhere. Take the other case of Arun and Thambi, Rukmani's two elder sons. Here, the theme of unemployment problem is exhibited. Both are in the want of proper profession. To make their fortune, they are first employed in the village tannery and later to go Ceylon in order to work in the tea-plantation. In the other case of Murugan, the third son of Rukmani, Markandaya shows us the frankness and blending of rural-urban culture. Murugan goes to the city and marries a girl there. But, due to his bad habits, he could not live happily. Markandaya has shown us a fact that Murugan did not take lesson from the plight of his sister who was deserted by her husband. He too deserted his wife and children.

Kamala Markandaya's 'A Silence of Desire' is the third novel which was published in 1961. In this novel, Markandaya has presented the story of Dandekar and his wife Sarojini. The novel shows how men and women embroil themselves and each other by silence at times when their real need is to unburden their hearts. Dandekar and Sarojini live a peaceful life in beginning but due to some confusion, their peace is abolished. A fraction develops between both. As being a clerk, Dandekar runs his family in a very simple way. He centers his whole peaceful life around his adored wife and their three children. Their life is so simple that they have never known luxury but

they lead a comfortable and happy life. Their needs are no more than the food cloth and shelter. There is a good mutual understanding between husband and wife. This peace and happiness ends when a suspicion arises in to the mind of Dandekar. At one evening, Dandekar does not find his wife at home. There come several negative and positive thoughts into his mind. The negative thoughts surpassed the positive thoughts so suspicions arose and confidence breaks. Many doubts develop into his mind. He thinks that Sarojini has cheated and deceived him. Through this novel, Markandaya has presented a loving picture of a happy marriage in the Indian society; and the tense situation that endangers it become a focus of ancient conflicts- Science against superstition, religion against materialism and Eastern tradition against Western progress. These three are the major themes in this novel. Apart from these there are so many other themes too through which Markandaya has revealed her motif of writing this novel.

Now, we talk of her next novel, 'A Handful of Rice' In the novel, Markandaya turns to the urban situation in India for her subject, and more particularly, to the individual's plight in a social milieu governed by economic factors where the topsy-turvy ladder of social re-structuring has threatened the integrity and independence of the individual craftsman. In this Connection, Markandaya explores the psychological effects on Ravi—a victim of such industrial changes—as he moves from the position of a vagrant to that of a respectable tailoring apprentice, and the conflicts he experiences in remaining a "respectable" tailor. For the first time, Markandaya turns her attention to the social set-up in urban culture, and to the various under-currents that could be operating on a superficially stable structure. In the process, she makes us aware of economic forces threatening identities and relationships as they influence the lives of individuals. The situation of in A Handful Rice is one where people are forced to make compromises between their personal codes of conduct and the need for survival. Thus, the external conflict of the individual versus the social situation reflects the subterranean clash between the individual's belief in his free will and social conscience. Individuals like Ravi are faced with this clash because, on the one hand, there is the glitter of a prosperous life which one is free to attain if one is willing to forsake one's moral conscience like Damodar in the novel, and, on the other, his ability to listen to his "inner voice". While in the earlier novels, Markandaya was preoccupied with the cross-cultural encounter of East and West; in A Handful of Rice,

she makes no obvious reference to it. But the Western influence surfaces in the guise of urban culture where the old traditional hierarchies give way to a new social structure with its commercial classes higher up on the social ladder. Ravi's plight reflects the change operating in the urban Indian milieu. The abrupt change of attitude from complacency to questioning is also a result of the deep dissatisfactions of man's inner world. Markandaya's novel displays the plight of the individual who is in the power of huge political and social collectives, in an age of deepening inner despair and of appalling catastrophes in what appears to be a schizophrenic society. Markandaya's Ravi is a portrayal of the urban helplessness; but the self has to be allowed to have new functions, responsibilities and relationships and therefore has to be bound by new obligations. Ravi S complex character can be studied in the light of these forces. In the hands of a major novelist, society itself becomes an all-important character: Markandaya's novel is a case in point. In this novel she appears to be a more mature artist as there is no oversimplification of themes here.

The East-West confrontation is once again the predominant theme in *The Nowhere Man* (1972). It shows Markandaya's continued concern with cultural values in the context of racist attitudes in England following the decline and defeat of the British imperialism. In this novel, she probes deeper than in her previous novel into the actual social interaction below the surface of inter-cultural tensions at personal and group levels. The experiences of Srinivas, the 'nowhere man', occur against the background of intercultural conflict in the social situation in England and, like in *Possession*, expose the individual consciousness to an alien and hostile cultural milieu. While Val does not choose to go to England, Srinivas chooses to emigrate to England; while Val eventually returns to India, Srinivas dies a martyr's death on the altar of tolerance in the context of apartheid in post-war Britain. This novel clearly testifies to Markandaya's authentic experience as well as her clear mastery of the technique of fictionalizing the outer reality. Srinivas's problems as he tries to fit into the corpus of the British society form the content of the plot. The cross-cultural situation brings about the feeling of isolation as seen also in Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner* (1968) or Richard Wright's *The Outsider* (1953). All deal with the isolation of displaced persons at social and domestic levels. However, Markandaya does not give any formula for a better understanding because there is none except humane concern; and this, Markandaya does indirectly through her literature of concern.

Let's talk about Markandaya's strong novel 'The Golden Hone comb' which is supposed to be a novel of wider range in comparison to her earlier novels. It covers more areas of human existence. Through this novel, Markandaya has stored many things under one roof. This novel is considered to be the mile-stone of Indian freedom movement. It has multidimensional themes like class and creed, clash of two cultures; eastern and western, love and sex, desire and dare, optimism, power of endurance, rebellion; protest against the mean-mindedness, set in human minds due to the false notions and so-called traditions that, in actual sense come as the hinderance in the path of human progress and global brotherhood.. The novel has a beautiful love story of Rabi, an Indian boy and Sophie, a British girl. The former is the prince of Devapur, and latter, the headstrong daughter of the British resident. Both are familiar right from their early childhood, so their intimacy increased from friendship to love. Because of many barriers of class and creed, East and West, they face numerous challenges but do not admit their defeat. Markandaya has told us how the two lovers come forward against the racial barriers. How they protest against the so-called national-feelings prevailed in the both countries. The aristocratic life of Indian Maharajahs haven portrayed in such a manner that it seems that Markandaya has left no stone untouched in portraying the life of Maharajahs. How the Indian society was being governed by the dual system; one made by the Britishers and the other by the Maharahas.

It is clear from the discussion in the foregoing chapters that Markandaya's fiction is essentially a product of the cultural ethos as it moulds and modifies the individual consciousness in the crucible of time. It has been seen that the patterns of freedom and responsibility of tradition and modernity in terms of continuity and change, are embedded in the novels of Markandaya as she perceives and presents the ranges of tensions that occur between the individual and the environment. Markandaya's characters seem to experience the tantalizing tensions of a basic opposition between the felt need for freedom from the traditional restrictions, on the one hand, and their social obligations, responsibilities and duties on the other. This initially results in the individual's defiance of the conventional norms of social codes of behavior. Faced with the constraints and restraints laid upon her characters by the norms and circumstances and structural organization of society in a particular cultural context, they initially tend to shake off these constraints since these external forces seem a barrier to spontaneous self-expression as well as to an uninhibited action in responseto inner desires.

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A STUDY OF THEMES IN THE NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA

Introduction: Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) is one of the most prolific women-novelists in the galaxy of Indian novelists of English language who had left behind her eleven novels in her credit including one published posthumously in 2008. Her works have shown a new path for the present and forthcoming generation; particularly associated with the studies and research in Indian writing in English. Her novels play the vital role in Indian social domain.

The selection of themes and their revelation is an outstanding work that has attracted the mind of modern generation. In this thesis too, a glimpse of multiple themes would be discussed. I intend to focus on the varied themes occurred in her novels systematically. Although some researchers have made their best in this respect but so far no one has systematically made endeavor to do so. Hence, through this thesis, the researcher would focus on the multiple themes of her novels best possibly focusing chronologically and systematic. 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1955), 'Some Inner Fury' (1956), 'A Silence of Desire' (1960), 'Possession' (1963), 'A Handful of Rice'(1966), 'The Coffer Dams' (1969), 'The Nowhere Man' (1972), ' The Two Virgins' (1973), 'The Golden Honeycomb'(1977), 'Pleasure City' (1982), and 'Bombay Tiger' (2008 published posthumously) are her eleven novels, through which she has beautifully portrayed the picture of Indian urban and rural societies in which she herself lived. Mr. Dhawan has also focused upon varied themes in Markandayas novels. **Review of Literature:** Review of literature is the most important aspect for a researcher to understand the research-problem. It means that a researcher should be fully aware about the works previously done related with the same field on which, he or she is going to do. To meet with this objective of the study, various types of relevant literature have been reviewed. The articles, scholarly written, books, dissertations, conference proceedings, relevant to this area have been reviewed. Some work already done is as follows:

M.K.Bhatnagar writes in his thesis centered on Kamala Markandaya's 'Feminism' that she is an expatriate but one who has had her formative years spent in India. This book has provided solid information regarding the portrayal of East-West cultural clashes. She has shown how western culture dominates the culture of eastern

country like India. 'Nectar in a Sieve', according to Bhatnagar is a true portrayal of woman-predicament. This is the masterpiece of Kamala Markandaya. He has discussed about Markandaya's other novels; 'A Handful of Rice', 'Possession', 'A silence of Desire', and 'Pleasure City' and by going deep in the studies, Bhatnagar has revealed his many thematic elements.

M.K.Naik, in his book, 'Perspectives on Indian Fiction' explains about the multiple themes used by Kamala Markandaya which shows a brief analysis of her novels. R.K.Dhawan also writes about the concept of Kamala Markandaya's feminism, her technique, time-used in setting, her power of imagination, use of women-characters, etc in his book, 'Kamala Markandaya: A Thematic Study', writes about the themes of Markandaya's novels. He has discussed about six major themes; hunger, degradation, East-West encounter, fatalism, rootlessness, politics, and human-relationship. Anne C. Herrmann (1994) in his book, 'Therring Feminism Parallel Trends in the Humanities and Social Science' has his views about feminism of Kamala Markandaya. Diane and Robyn Weigman (1995), write in the book written in their coloboration, 'Feminism Beside Itself' about contingencies. Through this book, the authors have presented their thoughts about the consciousness of feminism.

Objectives of the Work: The objectives of the present research work are to study, identify, discuss, analyze, and to interpret Kamala Markandaya's selected novels and thereby to select them in the belief of Indian English literature.

1. To study the eleven novels by Kamala Markandaya keeping in mind the recurring themes mentioned by the critics and scholars.
2. To identify the secondary themes; cosmopolitanism East vs. West.
3. To study various thematic aspects in the selected novels of Kamala Markandaya.
4. To focus on religious and domestic imagery to explore a sense of identity in the light of Indian English novels.
5. To make an interpretation of special glooms of love in her fiction.
6. To be acquainted with the thrash about women for liberty and impartiality in the Indian society.

Statement of the Hypothesis: The selected novels of Kamala Markandaya reveal various aspects and make available a standpoint of life. At the present lot of research

work is done on Kamala Markandaya but nobody has attempted to study of the thematic analysis; women's image and to compare them to bring out feminine psyche, the changing faces of women and changing relationship between man and woman, including cosmopolitan life and culture. The study of themes in the novels of Kamala Markandaya, has not been done systematically.

Data Collection: The data would be in form of the primary and secondary sources.

A. Primary Sources: The eleven novels of Kamala Markandaya and her other works of short-stories would form the primary sources.

B. Secondary Sources: The reviews and articles published in various journals, magazines and in the books.

Scope and Limitations: Women have made remarkable contribution to fiction in Indian English literature. In Fiction, there is ample scope for the expression of feminine sensibility. Women have inspired literature and the feminine theme has been a pivotal importance too. She is herself a creator of literature and is all pervading. Woman is the cause of all actions. If woman is absent, there is no poetry, no song, no drama, no tears, no laughter, and ultimately no life in this world. But they are still walking on a tight rope to achieve their rights and social justice. Indian woman at the turn of century are in a transitional phase via-a-vis the interface of tradition and modernity. The different aspects of feminism are stressed through many Indian English novels. This study attempts to present various images of women protagonists projected by Indian women English contemporary and modern novelists like Kamala Markandaya.

This research work also tries to study comparatively the female protagonists in these fictions. Kamala Markandaya has written many novels but here it is impossible to analyze each and every novel of her. The present study will focus on only eleven novels.

Research Methodology: The analytical, interpretative and comparative methodology will be used for the present research work. The emphasis will be laid on the close reading of the primary sources and secondary sources, data available on the subject, visit to various libraries for the collection of relevant information. Besides, discussion would be done with the person who has done similar kind of study. Moreover, internet can be used for study. In the light of said methodology, the following tentative chapter scheme will be framed.

Chapter Scheme: The proposed research work is divided in to following chapters broadly:

Chapter I: Introduction: The first chapter of this research work would deal with the brief history of Indian English women novelists. The concepts of feminism, cosmopolitanism, feminine sensibility would be discussed. This chapter would also take the sweeping survey of Indian English women novelists such as Kamala Markandaya, R.P.Jhabvala, Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai, Shasi Deshpande, Gita Hariharan, Shobha De, Bharti Mukherjee and other contemporary women novelists.

Chapter II: A Thematic Analysis in ‘Nectar In a Sieve’ and ‘Some Inner Fury’: The second chapter, ‘A Thematic Analysis in ‘Nectar in a Sieve’ and ‘Some Inner Fury’ deals with the thematic analysis of the present novels broadly divided on the basis of the early writing representing the early phase of her writing. In this novel, the writer, Kamala Markandaya tries to explore the themes like childhood, early marriage, family-relations, mystery, alchemy, social identity, revenge, cosmopolitan cultural change, cultural clash, and transformation, exploitation; emotional and physical.

Chapter III: A Thematic Analysis in ‘A Silence of Desire’ and ‘Possession’: The third chapter, ‘A Thematic Analysis in ‘A Silence of Desire’ and ‘Possession’ ‘also shows the multi-thematic handling of the writer. It also reflects the themes like love and sex, violence, childhood, early marriage, superstition, family relations, conspiracy, morality, apartheid, ambition, helplessness, optimism, poverty, greed, sacrifice, myth criticism of social and political system, and transformation.

Chapter IV: A Thematic Analysis in ‘A Handful of Rice’ and ‘The Coffor Dams’: The fourth chapter, ‘A Thematic Analysis in ‘ A Handful of Rice’ and ‘The Coffor Dams’ covers the thematic analysis of the various themes that means within the first decade of the 21st century. Bharti Mukherjee deals with childhood, family and family-relations, cultural-clash, lesbian-relationship, supernaturalism, religion, sex and love, conspiracy, killing, bomb-blasting, criticism of social and political systems, marriage, male-domination, starvation, unemployment etc. These all and in addition to these highlighted themes other possible themes also will be analyzed.

Chapter V: A Thematic Analysis in ‘The Nowhere Man’ and ‘Two Virgins’: The fifth chapter, ‘A Thematic Analysis in ‘The Nowhere Man’ and ‘Two Virgins’ deals with diversified themes through her novels. The researcher thinks the following themes

also contribute to her novels along with the themes mentioned by critics and reviewers. The present novels highlights various themes like childhood, family, family relations, alienation, isolation, loneliness, supernaturalism, exploitation, love and sex, conjugal relationships, hidden realities of cosmopolitan life.

Chapter VI: A Thematic Analysis in ‘The Golden Honeycomb’ and ‘Pleasure City’:

Chapter VII: Conclusion: The final chapter, ‘Conclusion’ covers Kamala Markandaya’s various thematic compressions with her contemporary and some women writers with regard to their thematic handling. It takes a stock of the analysis done in previous chapters to evaluate her contribution to English novel as a contemporary novelist and her skill in handling multiple themes contributing to the theme of cultural change and transformation in all her novels.

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The bibliography would be prepared of:

- (a) Primary Sources (the original works of the author i.e Kamla Markandaya.
- (b) Secondary Sources (The reviews, articles, postcolonial works published in various journals, magazines, and the books.)

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Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) is one of the most prolific women-novelists in the galaxy of Indian novelists of English language who had left behind her eleven novels in her credit including one published posthumously in 2008. Her works have shown a new path for the present and forthcoming generation; particularly associated with the studies and research in Indian writing in English. Her novels play the vital role in Indian social domain.

The selection of themes and their revelation is an outstanding work that has attracted the mind of modern generation. In this thesis too, a glimpse of multiple themes would be discussed. I intend to focus on the varied themes occurred in her novels systematically. Although some researchers have made their best efforts in this respect but so far no one has systematically made endeavor to do so.

Hence, through this thesis, the researcher would focus on the multiple themes of her novels best possibly focusing chronologically systematic. 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1955), 'Some Inner Fury' (1956), 'A Silence of Desire' (1960), 'Possession' (1963), 'A Handful of Rice' (1966), 'The Coffers' (1969), 'The Nowhere Man' (1972), 'The Two Virgins' (1973), 'The Golden Honeycomb' (1977), 'Pleasure City' (1982), and 'Bombay Tiger' (2008 published posthumously) are her eleven novels, through which she has beautifully portrayed the picture of Indian urban and rural societies in which she herself is lived.

All the novels of her has shown the sharp and clear picture of her contemporary social phenomenon depicting the different kinds of social cultures, their reciprocal clashes, rites and rituals of different classes, happenings, incidents and traditions, sudden changes in traditions, men-women relationships, their manners and behaviors, manners of different castes and communities, their behaviors, influences, actions-reactions in contemporary societies, pains and panics of human beings, family problems, unemployment, gender discriminations and other type of problems.

It is observed that the study of cultural aspects in the novels by Indian women novelists is immensely significant and more effective because their works of cultural

transformation have not only brought before us a new aspect of social scenario but also introduced with us a remarkable field of studies and research.

The most significant feature of Markandaya's novels is the concept of cultural continuity in the din and bustle of social, political and economic changes in post-colonial India. She exhibits the impact of change in terms of human psychology which unites a million individuals and confers on each of them, what Lionel Trilling calls, 'an integral self-hood'.

Kamala Markandaya has presented her views regarding the Indian society mainly focusing on the attitude of male-dominated society towards women and down-trodden. It is almost the same everywhere in the world. Geeta Rani Sharma writes, "One may not believe that even today the maximum number of women raped are in the 'United States of America' and the largest number of broken families is also the feature of this economically most mighty nation of the world." (K.M 5)

In 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1954), Markandaya has portrayed the tragedy of a traditional Indian village and a farmer family assaulted by industrialization. It has a very beautiful and heart touching story of a family that is poor and unfortunate. It has already multiple social and domestic problems, upon that; the then English government has raised other problems by bringing the project of industry.

It covers the story of Rukmani and Nathan, the peasant couple in a south Indian village who have been shown in the predicament of the Zamindari system and the industrial economy. Her second novel, 'Some Inner Fury' (1955), also portrays the same problem of Indian society. It is thematically more astringent than the earlier 'Nectar in a Sieve'. This novel tells us a very pathetic story of the uneducated and uncivilized peasants with their problems of industrialization and landlordism. It attacks on those people who are supposed to be people of well to do families.

The novelist has tried to raise the issue of political violence and racial feud. In her third novel, 'A Silence of Desire' (1960), the novelist has shown us a psychological adjustment of an urban middle class family. It depicts the picture of urban society which is considered to be well-civilized and well-mannered. Markandaya has made her best to break our notion that urban people are free from domestic problems. She has beautifully and ironically portrayed the picture of these so-called problem-free people. She shows us

that in the name of progress, the urban people have shut their eyes; they do not like to look back upon their worse deeds.

In fact, domestic problems are same as like they are found in rural society. Woman-exploitation is same; rather in larger scale in comparison as it is found in rural society. But, under the curtain of so-called progress and fashionable lifestyle, they are safe up to some extent. Her fourth novel, 'Possession' (1963) has a study of the malevolent influence of a civilized barbarian over the native genius of an artist as a probe into an alien onslaught on the autochthonic cultural matrix.

Through this novel too, Markandaya has picked up the same problem of exploitation of man by man. Its protagonist is an artist who belongs to a poor class family. For the purpose of his livelihood, he keeps himself busy mostly in his artistic work but the people of so-called aristocratic families do not let him work peacefully.

The theme of her fifth novel 'A Handful of Rice' (1967) focuses on the significance of freedom and responsibility. Particularly, this novel is associated with the social and political themes. It discusses with us about the social and political problems occurred in India after she got freedom. During the British-rule, the Britishers had made India poor and helpless. They did not let India rise and make progress. Due to slavery prevailed for a long time, its people had lost their hopes of liberation and progress. As soon as India got freedom, a new dawn came before Indian people and along with this new dawn, numerous responsibilities came over them.

So, through this novel, Markandaya comes back to the theme of tragic potential of the economic compulsions in post-colonial India. Ravi, the protagonist in 'A Handful of Rice', begins where Rukmani ends in 'Nectar in a Sieve'. Ravi has shown in the desperate struggle for survival.

Depicting his plight and predicament, A.V. Krishnarao and K. Madhvi Menon write, "The weariness that settles upon him (Ravi) today keeps his mind in a state of suspended animation and extracts from him but an incomplete and hasty articulation. But tomorrow, yestomorrow for, Ravi's weariness is both physical and moral. While it paralyses and procrastinates action for the present. It does relieve him from the compulsive tension of the day." (Krishnarao A.V. And Madhvi Menon 2)

Further in 'The coffer Dams' (1969), Kamala Markandaya reveals the theme of techno-economic development and its impact on the indigenous cultural values systems.

In the earlier novels too, Markandaya has raised the issues of Industrialization that has created bitterness in rural India because it swallows the fertile land of peasants and makes them poor and helpless. In this novel, she has presented the story of Hellen and Bashim.

The Hellen-Bashim Relationship is a symbolic consummation of kindred spirits. The depiction of cross-culture influence has brought before us the fact how the people of different creeds come forward to make adjustment within them and work together for their better survival. It is a union of minds rather than bodies, of cross-cultural human affinities rather than promiscuous sexuality. Bashim represents a blend of cultures, and becomes the indispensable human link in the novel at the most critical phase in the construction of the dam. Hellen makes praiseworthy adjustment with him and comes forward to assist him in his adverse and bitter situations.

In the 'The Nowhere Man' (1972), Markandaya has picked up the theme of racial relations; she has viewed and experienced during her living in Britain. This novel shows the problems of the Indian immigrants who were facing racial problems in contemporary Britain. Markandaya has beautifully pasteurized the mal-attitude of the English towards the Indians.

Actually, it is a fictional paradigm of the value of human commitments and connection. As it is apparent that Markandaya chooses the term 'nowhere man' that is ironic in itself. She has done keen observation of contemporary England where she found 'no man'. This use of ironic term as the title of the novel indicates that the Indian immigrants were compelled to face numerous challenges in the want of human empathy.

Her next novel 'Two Virgins' (1973) focuses on the contrastive natures of two sisters in a rural area. It depicts the two phases of Eve; one full of grace, innocence, love and poise another filled with wild passion, dangerous desire, whim and caprice. Here, it is to be said that Kamala Markandaya again returns to the mood of her first novel and chooses a village as the locale of her new novel. Lalitha is the protagonist. Her younger sister is Saroja. The Tragedy of Lalitha can be best appreciated in the light of Saroja's internal monologue in the city after a futile search for Lalitha.

Her novel, 'The Golden Honeycomb' (1977) is a novel which establishes Kamala Markandaya's reputation as a pioneering Indian novelist in English literature. She has left no stone untouched whether it is historical, political, religious, economic or educational issues. She has particularly discussed about the condition of southern India,

her native land. As we go through the deeper side of the studies of her novels, we come to know that the numerous and multi-dimensional themes are interwoven. She has not stopped herself on any particular theme. What she has observed and experienced, she has mentioned that with the help of her characters.

Through her next novel, 'Pleasure City' (1982), she has expressed the other kind of plight that is also concerned with economic circumstances. It shows the mirror to the plight of Rikky who abandons his traditional fishing trade for easy money in the face of socio-economic change. Rikky's attitude towards his old-fashioned job of fishing is quite reluctant. Markandaya has seen in him a ray of modernity. Rikky's desire for making his fortune in the modern ways is quite symbolical. Here represents the modern generation. As being a young and energetic youth, he does not like to spend his life in the old-fashioned job of fishing. Tully and Rikky are two characters who grow to a fuller understanding and acceptance of the traditional restrictions and their own responsibilities. So the theme of modernity, employment-problem, quest for identity and passion for self-respected life come in our focus.

Hence, Kamala Markandaya's interest of theme-selection is not an artificial, it is pure natural. Her interest does not lie in theme-selection but in social revelation. If we talk of her 'Nectar in a Sieve', 'A Handful of Rice', 'The Coffin Dams', and 'Pleasure City', we find that these novels have numerous themes such as social exploitation, poverty, quest for identity, racial plight, man-woman relations, sex, hunger, poverty etc. 'Nectar in a Sieve' presents these themes in a very prominent manner. The novelist has shown us a violence caused by nature, man and machine. Man is not an active observer to this violence.

The novel deals with the peasants, their deeds, misdeeds, problems and anxieties, hopes, expectations, joys and sorrows. Nathan is a seasoned farmer and skilled tiller, but he is helpless if the elements are unkind. Like other Indian peasant families, this family is blessed with a large number of children who need to be fed. The young couple, who had a rosy start in life with mind full of dreams, soon encounters the harsh realities of life when nature fails them by bringing rhythmically drought one year and excessive rain the next.

Rukmani and Nathan are crushed by the two wheels of seasons: rain and summer. This is true of Indian farmers. India is a country, which has to depend on nature, even the

fate of farmer is intermixed with the vagaries of nature and those are the two plights that the Indian farmers are subjects to. One causes flood, other causes starvation. So, both, ultimately lead to death. Kamala Markandaya in her first novel shows the plight, the predicament of Indian farmer and their helplessness against the vagaries of nature.

Sahoo Jyotsna quotes, "When it rains it rains like cats and dogs. The year Ira, their daughter was married the monsoon broke early with an evil intensity such as none could remember before." (Sahoo Jyotsna 16)

Some of the prominent themes of her works are East-West encounter, confrontation between tradition and modernity and the clash of values.

A sense of identity is another significant motif running parallel to her main themes. Within this pattern she weaves a richly variegated picture of life, arranging her ideas, and philosophy with deft touches of feminine sensibility. The resultant picture of human suffering and insurance become a vehicle of her moral vision. She seems to wonder at the human capacity to endure and proclaim that man may be destroyed.

In this concern, she seems to be in favor of Ernest Hemingway whose novel 'The Old Man and the Sea' is the true document of optimism. Its protagonist; Santiago has been portrayed as a great hero of optimism. Even being an old man, he does not admit his defeat even after, he got failure in catching the fish completely for eighty four days. Santiago's dedication towards his work shows that the human- life is not made only for success. It is also made for unsuccessfulness. Prospero does not lose his courage. He kept himself busy in his work till the last breath of his life.

Same is the case with Alfred Tennyson's 'Ulysses', a well known poem in which, he has portrayed the life of an old man Ulysses who does not like to sit and pass his time in vain in old age. Being a king of Ithaca, he could rule over his subjects but he did not like to rule. He was full of adventurous feelings and performed of heroic deeds whole life so, he further too wanted to do some more heroic deeds.

For this Purpose, he handed over the charge of his kingdom into the hands of his dear son, Telemachus and left for the adventurous deeds. After passing twenty years, he comes back to his home only for some moments and again left for the purpose of his life. He went all alone. According to him, human life is not meant merely for pleasure and peace. It is also meant for taking risks and committing heroic deeds.

Kamala Markandaya too through her main characters has raised such issues. Her novels reveal her deep preoccupation with the changing Indian social and political scene. They reflect her careful, conscious craftsmanship and her skillful use of the English language for creative purpose. She excels in recording the inner workings of the mind of her characters, their personal perplexities and social confrontations. She endeavored to portray them as individuals growing into themselves unfolding the delicate process of their being and becoming. In her character's encounter with an alien political power, the anti-colonial or anti-imperialist attitudes are powerfully expressed and Markandaya's major characters project these viewpoints.

The early life of Kamala Markandaya has laid great impression on the mind of her. Let us view some points of her early life. Her father was serving in the Railway department where he was transferred from one place to another. Kamala had also to go with her father. In such a way, he happened to see the different type of the men-women and their cultures. She was deeply touched with society so she gained enormous experience of human-plight and predicament.

She herself writes, "My father was an inveterate traveler and something of a rebel, leaving the traditional preoccupation of his family, he had joined the Railways so that not only was the whole of South India opened to me during my childhood and adolescence but also a good part of England and the continent. I think the role of observer which every traveler assumes is good training for any writer. It makes a good starting point and I believe it was my starting point." (Montgomery Truth 296)

Kamala Markandaya was highly impressed with the atmosphere of her surroundings. This early atmosphere of excursions contributed to the growth of that extroversion in Kamala Markandaya that went on growing and growing with the passage of time and according to the opportunities she got. She was keenly interested in making her prestigious fortune. She started to understand the people around her. Her understanding of man and society developed.

As far as the issues of women are concerned, she had become the champion of women. She had raised women's problems pertaining to the all fields; social, political, religious, educational and what not? Her favors of women shows that she as being a woman herself experienced famine problems as like a shoe wearer knows where it pinches.

Kamala Markandaya had finished her early education at Mysore when she was only sixteen after which she joined the universities of Madras. Due to her keen interest in journalism, she bade farewell to Madras Universities without availing any degree. However, she had joined army service where she worked as a liaison officer for a brief period.

At last, she becomes a journalist and as a journalist, she worked mostly in Madras and Bombay. By time, she had become a young and beautiful girl of twenty four. She went to England where she sought a work of proof-reader in a private publishing company. She did many jobs. Her struggle in India and England made her strong and well-experienced. It is her extraordinary power of wit that led Kamala Markandaya to move out of the domestic world of the relationship of a woman with her husband and children.

The main special quality of Kamala Markandaya is that she keeps herself far away from the world of fancy. As a realistic novelist, she was special. As we know that literature is the mirror of society. It shows us all sorts of happenings. As a literary device, novel plays a humanistic role. It works as a teacher in our society because literature is not only a mirror of society but also it teaches us about many ideas that work in our life as the tools and weapons. She herself considers her novel part of what she calls 'the literature of concern' or 'Socio-Literature'.

She has also defined what socio-literature is, she has remarked, "The literature of concern has a part to play, therefore, and will be more effective than other media such as Television. For news is often forgotten, people develop a kind of defense mechanism that shuts off unpleasant truths, socio-literature prevents this, for it tells what it is like to be there and feel it happening to you." (Margaret P. 216)

Let us see her political concern. She was deeply involved in politics. When Kamala Markandaya was in her childhood, the freedom movement in India was on the peak point. The second world-war had risen that had swallowed many lives. She had witnessed that massacre from the nearest point that's why she had gone its deeper side.

As a journalist, Markandaya took part in politics as an eye-opener. Directly or indirectly, she played a positive role in politics. She could understand the strength and weaknesses of the then India. She participated in kindling the fire of nationalism through her novels in which she has seriously discussed the East-West encounter. Her novels

highlight the anguish of Indians and this anguish could be felt and seen by her only because she was an extrovert open enough to receive influences and then to articulate her reactions, S. Krishnaswamy has written; “She however, is not a theorist to dwell upon caste and class-problems only. Her concerns being predominantly socio-economic, her novels offer us a savage -tale of brutality, ignorance, mental and physical bludgeoning that the ordinary Indian, man and woman, is subject to.”(Shantha 162)

Her study of the women-world is based upon her own sex and experiences. For this purpose, she did not learn from other novelists like Mulkraj Anand and Bhawani Bhattacharya. Her sole attachment with society led her deep and deeper side in to the world of women who are oppressed and depressed even today. To attain the knowledge of women’s plight and predicament, Kamala Markandaya had to face numerous challenges. The first foremost challenge she faced was her own sex. She herself was a woman. Secondly, Women were supposed to be the tools of domestic works. It is but natural that, if a woman wants to do much more in the field of journalism and writing, she needs to go outside which is the major challenge.

Kamala Markandaya encountered with this challenge very heroically, went outside not only within her own country but also within the world. She went to England, did several jobs and became a successful journalist and novelist. In her novels, Markandaya has focused on the virtues of women. She used women characters mostly in the positive sense. In this respect, our mind goes towards the works of William Shakespeare. In all the plays of Shakespeare, he has been seen in the side of woman. He has boldly highlighted the virtues of woman Portia of ‘The Merchant of Venice’ is the foremost example of woman virtues. About Shakespeare, John Ruskin says, “Shakespeare has no heroes; -he has only heroines”.(John Ruskin)

It does not mean that Shakespeare and Kamala Markandaya have ignored the male-characters. Of course; they did not ignore the male characters. They have respectfully portrayed the virtues of men. Both Shakespeare and Kamala Markandaya use male characters in the appropriate proportion according to time, plot and situation and express their vices and virtues.

Kamala Markandaya’s women like Rukmini in ‘Nectar in a Sieve’, Anasuya and lady Caroline in ‘Possessions’, Sarojini in ‘A Silence of Desire’, Mire Promela and Roshani in ‘Some Inner Fury’, Hellen in ‘The Coffer Dams’, Jayamma and Nalini in ‘A

Handful of Rice', Sarojini and Lalitha in 'Two Virgins', Mrs. Pickering and Vasantha in 'The Nowhere man', Mohini and Usha in 'The Golden Honeycomb', and Mrs. Tully and Mrs. Pearls in 'Pleasure City' are found so interesting and lively only because of her hand knowledge of their psychology and plight.

Kamala Markandaya gathered this knowledge not through others but through her own experiences and frequent wanderings in the society, having personal meetings with women and attending gatherings and meetings where the problems of women were discussed. In this way, she increased her knowledge regarding the women's plight. From her very childhood, in a freer south India, Kamala Markandaya experienced the radicalism of the extremist group in Indian politics.

She passed sometime in rural India and thus had a firsthand experience of how men and women live in villages. Her interaction with Indian and British students in the school developed in her the sense that the attitude of the colonizers towards the native Indians was the attitude of hatred and indifference. The superiority complex of the Englishmen shocked her very much. These things helped her in reaching the root of the maligned relationship between the East and the West. Kamala came in contact with St. James Cathedral who influenced her because it was through him that many of her queries were solved.

She had a deep thirst of knowledge, that's why she took interest in seeking the sources of it; St. James Cathedral was one of them. For her higher education, she entered the Madras University where she widened her power of vision.

As a keen observer of society, she witnessed the Dalit-plight from the very near. She has seen many atrocities imposed upon the lower-classes of people whom we call 'Dalit'. The condition of Dalit-people is still not good in India. They are even today not free to choose for themselves the professions of their interests, they cannot open the shop of eatables and hotels.

The impact of untouchability is still present in our society. She was stunned to see the grim realities to life. She came in contact with the multi-cultural ethos of India, its various ethnic groups, the struggle of the castes and communities, the conflicts of the classes and the sharp division in the society on the basis of the caste and creed provided enough scope to her for writing. These all things made her a successful novelist. She did not confine herself up to domestic novel.

Unlike Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya is a writer who studies the external world more carefully than the inner. It does not mean that she does not peep into inside of characters. She has a brilliant art of inner painting. She portrays the inner conflicts in her characters. She learned this inner painting from Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. She has deeply gone through the works of Sigmund Freud, Adler and Jung. She studied the western thinkers who have written in the political rights of women. She has done the thorough study of Kate Millet's 'Sexual Politics' to understand the drama of human instincts and function of sex in the lives of men and women.

Kamala Markandaya has perfectly discussed on these women issues. Through her women characters, she has raised the voice against their exploitation. She has discussed this issue in a very suitable manner. She did not like to show any disregard towards the contemporary writers, particularly the Indian English novelists like R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. From the craft of Raja Rao, she was highly impressed. It is believed that she gained domesticity from R. K. Narayan, the idea of protest from Mulk Raj Anand and the cult of abnegation from Raja Rao.

As being a feminist, she might have studied the books of other authors like Kamala Das, Amrita Preetam, Jane Austen and Simon De Beauvoir. 'The Second Sex' of Simon De Beauvoir published in 1949 has played the vital role in the World of feminism. This is a very remarkable book. Markandaya has gone through the works of Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and the socialist theories propounded by Marx and Lenin. It is said; "A study of her novels will demonstrate that she has done justice with the subject that she has chosen and unlike Anita Desai or Shobha De, she does not condemn with vehemence." (Alienation and Rootlessness 38)

It is in this regards that A. V. Suresh Kumar has said that as a matter of fact is an appreciation of the artistic merits of Kamala Markandaya. He writes:

"It is often noted that the Indian novel in English suffers from two remarkable anomalies, 'Propaganda' and 'Sentimentality'. If Mulk Raj Anand succumbs to the charge of 'Propaganda' and R.K. Narayan is chastised for his maudlin 'sentimentality' and Raja Rao is abstract, then there is an author Kamala Markandaya who is relatively free of these two charges. Her works are known for a sense of restraint that enables her to voice her criticism of the socio-economic system without the explicit bitterness we find in Mulk Raj Anand, as we see in her 'Nectarina Sieve'. Moreover, when she expresses

her anguish, she does not squeeze the last tear drop and yet makes her feelings poignant enough to more ore hearts.”(A.V. Suresh Kumar 92)

As a woman Markandaya has touched the life of women not with her fingers but with her hearts. She has deeply gone in to the life of woman; beheld her life internally and outwardly as we know that woman has been the focus of many literary works down the centuries. In an age of rapid social, political and economic change, woman serves asa symbol and befits a close study. The main motif of Markandaya’s novels is to create a jerk among the women and make them capable to stand up against the exploitation of all kinds; sexual and mental. She raises them to confront with a tradition oriented society in which woman is supposed to be not more than a slave.

Her novels reveal woman’s sufferings because of the inherent imbalance in the social order. She has focused how woman has come forward to improve her life. She is boldly fighting for her emancipation, wants to get liberation and equal rights. Now, she has known how she can achieve her deserving status. Her quest for identity has been deepened.

In her study of Markandaya’s novels, Meena Shirwadkar has suggested that the value of suffering is an important component of Markandaya’s novels because she portrays her positive women characters as ideal sufferers and nurtures. As a novelist Kamala Markandaya is deeply concerned with the rapidly changing status of the Indian woman from the submissive, subservient, domesticated figure to the outgoing, liberated and creative woman intent on shaping her own future. The Indian woman in her novels falls into two distinct categories.

In This connection Pravati Misra writes.“(a) those who acquiesce their traditional social roles and perceive ideal womanhood in terms of being an obedient daughter, a subservientwife,aprotectivemotherandonlyamarginalparticipantindecisionmaking
(b) those who militate against the constraints of traditional Indian womanhood, who attempt to assert social and sexual power in the face of socio-moral resistance.” (Pravati Misra 40)

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Chapter-II

A Thematic Analysis in 'Nectar in a Sieve' and 'Some Inner Fury'

'Nectar in a Sieve' published in 1954 is also known as 'A Novel of Rural India'. It has many themes; major and minor. It shows us a picture of Indian Society, victim under the clutches of industrialization. It has described the bitter condition of Indian people who are facing numerous challenges. 'Nectar in a Sieve' is the first novel of Kamala Markandaya which has received high acclaim from the readers and the critics. The title 'Nectar in a Sieve' has been derived from S. T. Coleridge's famous poem, 'Work without Hope' in which, he writes:

"Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve"

And Hope without an object cannot live" (Nectar in a sieve 6)

This couplet of the poem shows us the drama of rural life that the novel presents. 'Nectar' means the drink of the Gods (Amrit). In other words, it is to be said that God has gifted the man with plenty and unthinkable gifts to enjoy but due to the materialism, they remain unable to use those gifts. The drink is the source of joy, peace and contentment. 'Sieve' means a small circular utensil with holes at the bottom. It is used to separate grain from chaff. This 'sieve' symbolically has passed and thrown away all the hopes and happiness.

Here in the context of the novel, Markandaya wants to tell us that the rural Indian, living in the beautiful and natural surroundings is expected to enjoy the nectar of happiness, peace and contentment but due to his poverty, all his hope, joy and happiness - the nectar - pass through the holes of the sieve, his poverty. It is futile to collect nectar in a sieve - it will flow out drop by drop.

In this world of materialism, most of the people are not lucky enough to have minimum food, cloth and shelter. Plenty of people are wandering in the want of their daily needs. The case of Nathan and Rukmani is one of them.

Such as the God-gifted nectar is not common to all, in the same way, the nectar - happiness - in the life of an average Indian is short - lived. The present novel, 'Nectar in a Sieve' has shown us the life of Rukmani. It is a novel of rural India. It is not the story of a particular individual and a particular village that is why Kamala Markandaya has not

assigned any name to the village. Nathan and Rukmani are husband and wife respectively but these are fantastic characters.

Both; the husband and wife are equally fond of each-other. They want to live their life with happiness and contentment. But due to their bitter circumstances, they could not live in peace; prosperity and happiness. They represent the poverty stricken peasantry of India. Nathan and Rukmani enjoy the 'nectar of life' but their nectar flows out from the sieves of their lives. Their happiness, peace and contentment do not go long. They are short-lived.

In the life of average Indian too so happens. Most of the Indian peasants spend their lives in poverty and starvation. They have to face numerous challenges. Nathan, Rukmani, Irrawadi or Ira, Arjun, Thambi, Murugan, Raja, Selvam, Kutti, Sacrabani, Kunthi, Kali, Janaki, Old Granny, Ammu, Puli and Dr. Kennigton are the fantastic characters; some are major and some are minor.

Through these characters, Markandaya has beautifully interwoven the story of Indian society, mingling several themes. Rukmani is the heroine of the novel. She is the central figure and the narrator of the story. 'Nectar in a Sieve' is the story of her experiences in life. As a protagonist, Rukmani has shown almost all the aspects of rural Indian society. Rukmani's husband Nathan is a tenant farmer and represents the hardness of the rural Indian. Irrawaddy or Ira is Rukmani's eldest daughter who is deserted by her husband because she is infertile. The portrayal of Ira's plight exhibits the theme of male-domination. Ira represents all those women, who are infertile. Not only Ira but all such women are compelled to face this social vice. Particularly, in India, such meanmindedness is found everywhere.

Take the other case of Arun and Thambi, Rukmani's two elder sons. Here, the theme of unemployment problem is exhibited. Both are in the want of proper profession. To make their fortune, they are first employed in the village tannery and later to go Ceylon in order to work in the tea-plantation.

In the other case of Murugan, the third son of Rukmani, Markandaya shows us the frankness and blending of rural-urban culture. Murugan goes to the city and marries a girl there. But, due to his bad habits, he could not live happily. Markandaya has shown us a fact that Murugan did not take lesson from the plight of his sister who was deserted by her husband. He too deserted his wife and children.

This betrayal of his wife and children again shows us the harsh attitude of male dominated society, in which women are used and thrown away like the toys and puppets. Rukmani's fourth son Raja belongs to the other aspect of society. He is employed at the tannery where further, he is caught stealing and is killed by the gatekeepers of the tannery. This incident presents many folds of social life; starvation, vicissitude, killing, looting and falling of a good boy on the wrong path. The episode of Rukmani's fifth son, Selvam highlights a new way of progress where Markandaya sympathises towards Selvam who gives up farming and starts working as an assistant to Dr. Kenny. Kutti is the youngest son. He dies of starvation in early childhood. This pathetic end of Kutti's life creates a jerk in to the heart and mind of the readers.

Markandaya tells us how a helpless woman falls in to bad company. After, her betrayal by her husband, she comes in the contact of other person with whom she gives birth to an illegitimate son that causes her other social problems. Sacrabani is Irra's illegitimate son. Kunthi is Rukmani's neighbor. She is a pretty woman who later on, takes prostitution. Kali is also Rukamani's neighbor.

Kali is good natured and co-operative woman. She comes forward to support Rukmani in her bitter days. Markandaya has highlighted hereby a picture of supporting elements of society. Janaki is another neighbor. She is victim of social forces. Due to her husband's business failure, she is compelled to leave her village where she was very happy. The plight of old Granny attracts the mind of the readers. Being an old lady, she is helpless, always wanders for food because poverty has ruined her. The novelist has provided us pinpoint information of the contemporary society. Old Granny dies due to starvation.

Old Granny's tragic death does not only focus on the scene of poverty but also the negative role of society, in which the Old Granny like women live and nobody comes forward to support them.

Through the character of Ammu, Markandaya has told us about the betrayal of a woman by her husband, deception, frustration of a woman, her wandering for food, cloth and shelter, and, and vicissitude of male-dominant society. Her husband is Murugan. He left her with no penny. She wanders with her children. Through this portrayal of a helpless and abandoned woman, Kamala Markandaya has shown us the unfortunate

condition of women-class and along with this description; she slightly attacks over Indian society which is the sole responsible for such bad happening.

The man like Murugan can be controlled only by the positive action of society. Puli, an orphan boy and Dr. Kennigton, popularly known as Kenny are shown as the virtuous characters. They both come forward to help Rukmani and her husband in their adverse days. Although, Puli is an orphan boy, he himself wanders here and there yet he proves that his soul is full of humanity. Dr. Kenny's attitude shows the picture of good men who come forward to assist the poor and beggars.

Here, we find multiple themes like poverty, Indianness, woman-exploitation, problem of unemployment, love and sex, domestic clash, theft and murder, starvation, life-struggle, social-reformation and quest for identity. Apart from these themes, there are so many other themes, out of them some are major and some are minor themes. To find out all the themes, it is required that the readers or researchers should go through the text of 'Nectar in a Sieve'.

Let us see the story in brief – The novel tells the story of Rukmani's life who is a widow. The portrayal of Rukmani's life is so sharp that it does not only portray the life of an individual but also, of the common women who are compelled to live dejected life. Markandaya's keen observation of society brings out the hidden facts of social life. Rukmani is the mouthpiece for her story-telling. She herself narrates the story.

By presenting her life-story, she draws a beautiful picture of Indian rural life. Rukmani is the fourth daughter of her parents. She belongs to a south Indian village. Due to poverty, her father could not seek for her a suitable match, that's why he had married Rukmani with Nathan, a poor. However, Rukmani's three elder sisters were married with sufficient dowry.

Rukmani's life is full of tension and frustration right from her marriage-time. In beginning, she was in dilemma that she should adjust with her mis-matched husband or not, but further as soon as she set her mind to establish peaceful relationship with him, the serpent of poverty started to swallow her happiness. Her husband was very affectionate towards her, so, she increased her intimacy, and came very close to his heart. Kamala Markandaya hereby shows us how life changes, how it takes turn, and how the comfort changes in to adversity.

This couple was blessed with a daughter. Her husband wanted a son so she consulted Dr. Kenny who provided her proper treatment which proved to be effective and successful. Rukmani's husband-desire is fulfilled. She gave birth to six children; all were sons. Hence, now, Rukmani has seven children including a daughter.

Here, Kamala Markandaya has slightly attacked over the selfish attitude of those men who are burning in the fire of son's wanting. Here, we find Nathan's feeling of gender discrimination. He makes difference between male and female. Nathan, just after the birth of his daughter, was not happy. He always thought of sons and now, he felt happy. There is a big chain of sons; namey known as Arjun, Thambi, Raja, Murugan, Selvam, and Kutti. It was now a large family.

The peace and happiness of Natan-Rukmani family came to an end with the arrival of a government project of establishing Tannery which was to be established nearby the village. Here, Kamala Markandaya has discussed about industrialization, employment, poverty, social evils like gambling, looting, corruption, cheating, frauds, and migration. Just after the establishment of Tannery, two types of the situations created; first, an opportunity came to the unemployed people, they could find jobs in tannery. Second, it swallowed the fertile land, the main source of people's survival.

Along with this, tannery-establishment caused many social vices started in the form of gambling, looting, cheating and threatening. Many hooligans started coming to village so the village-streets lost their peace. In addition to these social problems, many other hidden problems arrived. The environment –problem was one of them. Due to tannery's development, pollution increased. People were compelled to move to other places by leaving their homes and productive fields. Nathan and Rukmani were also compelled to do so. They were, already, poor and burning in the fire of poverty and starvation, upon that the establishment of tannery created other hidden and mental problems that made them fully dejected and several misfortunes continued knocking at the Rukmani's door. The heavy rains had destroyed her crops. The entire family was in tight-corner. Meanwhile, Rukmani's third son Raja was caught stealing skin from tannery. He was killed. Now, Rukmani was helpless. She could not save her son's life. Next year a natural calamity came upon her again. Her daughter Ira was abandoned by her husband because; she was unable to produce children. Nathan and Rukmani went to Dr. Kenny but there was no avail.

Kamala Markandaya has beautifully drawn a picture of varied problems; social, mental, and physical. She has shown multiple social discrepancies and labyrinths in which man and woman are badly trapped. The natural calamity is focused here that causes man's damnation. Flood and drought are two natural enemies of the farmers. Like the other people, Nathan and Rukmani face these devastating calamities. Ira became a prostitute because she was helpless. Markandaya has tried to tell us how our circumstances are responsible for our sorrows and sufferings. How society is accountable for that all where a girl was compelled to adopt the way of prostitution. No one liked to go ahead to save and protect her.

Nathan and Rukmani went to the city with heavy hearts and equally feet. They were wandering hither and thither seeking their son but did not get success. They took shelter in a temple where the priest gave them some food. Next morning an orphan boy came ahead to help them. With the help of this orphan child, they could seek the house of their son but here too, nothing was good. Their son had gone away by deserting his wife and children. There was no hope. They met with the wife of their son, but she coldly and bluntly asked them to go away. Once again they went back to the temple and lived on charity like common beggars. This was the worst phase of their life.

One day, Nathan was drenched with rain water, he developed a high fever, soon breathed his last. Poor, Rukmani was left alone. Her little boy Puli came to give her solid emotional support. Rukmani adopted him as her son. They came back to the village and her son Selvam and daughter Ira warmly welcomed them. In this way, Rukmani came back to her home and went on living her life in object poverty, suffering pain and agony till, Time, a great healer, healed some of her wounds. She was later able to regain her spiritual harmony and balance.

Hence, this is the story of Rukmani's unfortunate life; however, it is not merely the story of Rukmani and Nathan but it is the story of the whole Indian rural population whose Nectar of life flows out of the sieve of poverty and hardship. There are many Nathans and Rukmanis in Indian rural society who are wandering and struggling for their food, cloth, and shelter.

This novel contains many themes. Let us see one by one. First of all, we come to see 'Love' theme in the novel. Nathan and Rukmani are husband and wife. They are reluctant on their marriage. Although, in beginning there was no proper love and

affection between them but gradually, love developed and they became for each other hearty and mentally. However, Nathan loved his wife by the core of his heart right from the beginning but Rukmani thought that her husband was not suitable to her. But gradually, she started loving her husband in same proportion as her husband loved to her. Mark these lines how Rukmani shows her happiness in her new role of a wife, “While the sun shines in you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you which no one has seen before and you have a good store of grain laid away for hard times, a roof over you and sweet stirring in your body. What more a woman can ask for?” (Nectar in a sieve 30)

She makes compromise with her circumstances. She is aware of the two forces—the hope and the fear that govern the life of human beings. She accepts her poor landless husband, loves him by the core of her hearts. She at one place says, “We are taught to bear our sorrows in silence and all this so that the soul may be cleansed.” (Rebecca Argom 15)

It is the spiritual strength that helps Rukmani endure all her hardships. As A. V. Krishna Rao puts it, “the truth of the novel is the spiritual stamina of Rukmani.” (Nectar in a sieve 86-87)

Rukmani believes in social tradition. Her meek acceptance of fate and her sacrificing soul is quite visible in the novel. She confronts the Western doctor, Kenny who urges her to stand up against the male dominated society in which several women like her are facing troubles. Rukmani thinks: “What is our companion from birth to death, familiar as the seasons or the earth, varying only in degree. What profit to avail that which has always been and cannot change?” (Nectar in a sieve 88)

Her passive endurance is simply intolerable and Doctor Kenny is irritated. Indeed Rukmani is an epitome of power of endurance. She faces all type of troubles but never complained. She loves her husband Nathan because Nathan is a man who is poor in everything but rich in his love and care for her. She had happy and contented life. She says, “My heart sang and my feet were light as I went about my work.”

Rukmani’s life represents the life of common woman of rural Indian society. Kamala Markandaya is the only woman novelist who personally went to live in Indian village and chose the theme of rural life. She was deeply impressed with life and works of R. K. Narayan, M. R. Anand, Munshi Premchand and Bhawani Bhattacharya.

The impact of these men of letters is quite visible in her novels. The wide spectrum of her novels has given stories with socio-economic and the socio-political themes. They give us a chance of discourse on the socio-psychological issues, socio-religious issues and all those issues that are concerned with the plights of rural men and women. In this concern, Geeta Rani Sharma writes: "They are heterogeneous themes scattered in her novels—the theme of tragic waste and despair, the theme of the East-West conflict and the theme of the psychological maladjustment and social degeneration." (Uma Parmeswaran 184)

Her novels reveal her as a novelist of ethical concerns. The themes of her novels are not only human and interesting but also provides enough outlets to her qualities of understanding the social issues. The other themes of her novels are up rootedness, racial tension and prejudice, conflict between tradition and technology, a search for one's truth self, the experiences of exile and alienation. Her novel 'Nectar in Sieve' presents the tragic story of the unthinkable struggle of an Indian peasant-woman in the face of inundating rains and inevitable droughts and hunger and havoc. This novel belongs to the theme of tragic waste and despair is a deeply moving tragedy. Rukmani's family consists many members who remain always in wants and hunger.

Now, we draw our attention towards the themes of 'Some Inner Fury' (1957), the second novel of Kamala Markandaya in which she has presented the political, social and economic plights. This is also a tragedy like 'Nectar in a Sieve' Mira, Kit, Richard, Govind, Dedama, Premala, Roshan, Ricky and Hicky are the major characters through which Kamala Markandaya has focused on the Indian society and plights prevailed in it. In this novel, we find some glimpses of foreign atmosphere. In the beginning of the novel, we find such glimpses as the story begins with the return of Mira's brother Kit with his Oxford friends Richard. However, this novel does not depict East-West confrontation. It shows us national struggle and the plights prevailed in Indian society.

The depiction of incidents starts from the description of Kitsamy who is a westernized son of a forward middle class family from London. He brings with him foreign culture and manners in India. He also brings a British acquaintance Richard Marlowe. Kit's family consists of his parents, uncle and sister Mirabai. He urges to all his family members to receive Richard with courtesy and desirable affection.

They do so Richard is received affectionately and lovingly. He gets favorable atmosphere. Gradually young Mira increases her intimacy towards Richard. This increasing intimacy comes in the notice of Mira's mother who is fully old-fashioned lady. She does not like the frequent meetings of Mira with Richard. As soon as, Richard leaves the place to take up his other concerns, the entire family takes a sigh of relief.

The family started searching a suitable bride for Kit. Premala is made to go through the unorthodox process of reverse courtship in which the girl comes to stay with the young man's family to be tested and approved by him. Premala is by nature shy and conventional. She is basically Indian in spirit. She bends backward in order to become a suitable match for Kit. She decides to change herself. She moulds herself according to his ultra-modern tastes. This marriage is performed with a lot of fanfare but it reaffirms Premala's simplicity and religiosity and Kit's popularity and impracticality. Roshan, one of Kit's many westernized friends, laid an impression on the people with her unconventionality.

Kit takes up a job and settles down in a state capital. He invites Mira, to visit him. The mother slyly delays Mira's journey because she does not desire her meetings with Richard. But Mira gets acquainted with Roshan the Parsi girl, and decides to work for Roshan's paper. She is asked to report on a peasant resettlement in the neighborhood and in the process she stumbles on Richard at the Government House. He takes her to the model village and shows her around and their acquaintance matures into love.

Premala is unable to fit into the world of fashion and urban shining. Richard makes his best to show all sorts of modern things like cinema and markets. He takes her some cloths and other things. Kit wholeheartedly hurts his social sensibility by her indiscretions. Kit suggests that she might find distraction or amusement in a visit to the village in Mira's company.

It is thus that Premala comes to get involved in the progress of the school-building, to share in the dreams of Ricky the missionary and to adopt an orphan. Rebecca Angom remarks, "Premala in Markandaya's second novel 'Some Inner Fury' epitomizes the traditional concept of upper class Indian Womanhood. Hailing from a conservative family she tries to remold herself to her husband's Anglicized tastes. Her engagement to Kitamy, a westernized Indian fixed by the elders of the two families does not offer Premala an equal freedom as it did to Kit as he is called." (Some Inner Fury 218)

The marriage of Premala and Kit does not run smoothly. There were several reasons of their separation. Cultural disparities did not let them run as the husband and wife for a long time. It is Premala who tries to bridge the gap but fails. She tries to manage the situations but remains failure. She believes that it is her duty to make peace and compromise but her efforts do not bring her success. She even takes it as a wifely duty to move among the English circle as she says: "I would make a poor wife if I did not."(Some Inner Fury 220)

Hers was a one-sided affair in which she kept no stones unturned to adjust and please Kit whereas Kit remained busy in his own world. Premala goes in to the field of missionary works of setting up of a school for children in a village, helping the English missionary, Hickey. She very interestingly participates in social welfare activities and a small girl-child against the wishes of Kit. Premala feels internal happiness in the company of the adopted child.

The little orphan child gives her peace and mental relax. It fulfills her needs and desires. Premala comes back from her visits to the village. She accepts all the challenges very heroically. Although Roshan, another woman in the novel, also faces challenges but she does not fight like Premala. There is much Difference between Premala and Roshan. Srinivas a Iyengar writes, "Silence is stronger than all rhetoric, and whose seeming capacity for resignation is the true measure of her measureless strength." (K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar 441)

Further Shantha Krishnaswamy writes, "In Premala, Markandaya shows the insecurity, isolation, bewilderment and vulnerability that the traditionally brought up Indian woman's falls, when she has to adjust to western norms of living, when she has to accommodate the tastes and values of a culture in flux."(Shantha Krishna Swamy 49)

As being a typical Hindu woman, she abides herself with Dharma which she believes the way of salvation and happiness. Markandaya shows Premala bearing sufferings like Sita, in Ramayana. She is burnt alive while serving in a school run by a Britisher. Her husband Kit does not like her business.

Two themes which are closely intertwined in 'Some Inner Fury' are love and death or love and war leading to death. It is between Mira and Richard. Mira is an Indian girl whereas Richard is an Englishman. It is between Kitsamy and Premala. Kitsamy is a westernized husband whereas Premala is a typical Indian girl. We find in the both cases,

undeclared war which runs between the freedom-seeking, colonized Indians and the colonizing Britishers.

As we know that the racial prejudices do not let the two persons come together who belong to the different castes or community. This racial problem comes as a hindrance in the both cases. The themes of love and death interact and intensity each other. The death of Richard tests the love of Mira and the death of Premala tests the love of Kitsamy. Hence, the title, 'Some Inner Fury', is quite appropriate. It indicates, the novel clears with 'Some Inner Fury' the passion, love, anger, of Mira for Richard as also with the fury of the Indian freedom fighters up in arms against the colonizing Britishers. The impact of freedom movements in India is quite apparent. It has inculcated the feelings of Indianness within the hearts of youths like Mira and Premala who harbor the quest of freedom.

As the wave of the freedom movement lashes the subcontinent, personal relations between Indians and Englishmen are swept away, leaving nothing intact. A.V. Krishnarao writes: "symbolically significant on two levels, first, the emotional inner fury of Mira is completely quenched when her love for Richard results in an ecstatic experience of the sweep and surge of love; secondly, the wider inner fury of the nation at large is fully vented and culminates in the violent demonstration of national indignation at the alien rule, Govind being its focal figure" (A. V. Krishna Rao 30)

According to S.C. Harrex who has been a serious scholar of the writings of Kamala Markandaya, the theme of the novel is "the tragic participation of disunity and catastrophe in personal relationship." (H. C. Harrex 248)

In this way, we can say that the novel, 'Some Inner Fury' is a very complex novel worth several themes running simultaneously; it may appear to be a document of East-West confrontation which is illustrated by the love between Mira and Richard which represents the love between two individuals who belong to the different races. Mira, in such love affairs, has to sacrifice her love because her caste does not approve it.

Premala also sacrifices her love because her husband belongs to western culture. Here, Markandaya has shown us the undeclared war between the freedom-seeking, colonized Indians and the colonizing Britishers. The racial prejudices do not let the Indians and Britishers stay together in a harmonious manner, and result inevitably in disunity and death of Premala, Kitsamy, and Richard.

The themes of love and death interact and intensify each other. The novelist has shown us how national struggle deeply influences human relationship. Even members in a family are allowed to have different opinions.

Kit and Govind are cousins. Kit is thoroughly westernized Indian whereas Govind is truly Indian in his hatred towards the British. Kit and his wife Premala fail to get on well in their relationship as husband and wife because Premala is deeply rooted in Indian culture. There is a clash between two cultures, though both belong to the same nation.

Here, the problem becomes more difficult as Kit being an Indian wants to look more English than a native of England. The personal dissension and discontentment gets complicated with the political happening of the time. For example, the missionary school which was run by Premala is burnt by the violent moves who hated everything of the British. Govind was suspected of murdering Kit as he belongs to that firebrand nationalist. He was ultimately arrested. Mira becomes a victim of the political violence. Mira's confidence: "what matter to the universe if here and there a man should fall or a head or heart should break?" (A. V. Krishna Rao 178)

Mira exhibits open admiration for Richard as he lies on the sand after swimming. He urges her to make love to him. They talk of love and the whole atmosphere seems to be moving and changing. Mira reflects a steady character one among the species and almost predictable. She belongs to a community where male company for a female at pre-marital stage is viewed as abnormal and she is no exception. The physical factor overcomes her cultural inhibitions.

Again she proves her belongingness to the feminine gender, a species-Homo sapiens, by nature looking for sexual satisfaction or gratification or even obligation of attaining complete womanhood motherhood. Finally, she again supplies proof of belonging to a nation and refusing to be in the arms of Richard again. Mira remembers the passionate utterance of Richard: "I am still in a fever for you; he said, kissing me; and his lips on mine were without gentleness and his body against me was no longer passive," (Some Inner Fury 106) shows the deep intimacy that they have developed. Mira and Richard act as unmarried husband and wife. Mira feels: "Slowly my senses awoke and responded, the buds of feeling swelled and opened one by one. In the trembling silence, I heard the blood begin its clamor, felt its frantic irregular beats, and

then the world fell away, forgotten in this wild abandoned rhythm, lost in the sweep and surge of love.”(Jyotsna Sahoo 52)

This love has the capacity to group the gist the central value of a personality in a single perception. Mira was educated, sophisticated, well-informed of contemporary political situation and national happenings, yet she found solace in the arms of a foreigner, from a land towards which all the fury was targeted. She was not able to identify and dissent her personal feelings.

A man was a man for Mira and the carnal desire in her was, above all her acquired knowledge which never allowed mingling with the cultural inhibitions and fear of insecurity. Gradually she became to identify and separate the feelings and summed up courage to admit to her and to suggest that they forgot each other. The fury in her built up by the belongingness to the nation and hatred towards the ruling race, overcame her softer feelings and motivated her so strongly that she was able to speak it out. This is something we can fearlessly level as violence; without a bellicose frontage.

It is the depiction of individuality through sacrifice of egoism. Mira and Richard sacrifice their egoism for the sake of their love. They have given up their pride, vanity and were capable of enriching their love and in the process, enriching themselves. It is sure and certain that the complete fusion of man and woman is possible through sexual union. A marriage without sex is not a platonic or idealistic marriage.

In true sense, it is not a marriage at all. In their happy life, there are many outer hindrances that cause the trouble in their life. They have to face a number of dangers; political, social, and religious. It was the time of political turmoil when their love started. That political turmoil created hatred between Eastern and Western culture. It created disbelief and social unrest. Due to it, there were several confusions in the society. Mira and Richard were compelled to face these challenges. They faced them with great courage.

The struggle against the British rule had already started. In a riot, Mira's sister-in-law Premala was killed. Mira's brother Kitsamy was also knifed in a mysterious situation and Govind, the cousin had been arrested with the charge of Murder. Mira was passing through a period of bitter emotional crisis.

The brother and sister-in-law die. Mira's parents needed consolation. Nobody was there to console them. At this time, Richard came forward to assist and solace them.

Mira remembered, "I felt the abundant flow of his love for me and there was no passion, only this outpouring of an overwhelming tenderness. I lie quietly against him and let it enfold me, this tenderness not of the kind a man brings to his first loving, nor yet the kind that comes after but of a third order, coming gently to enlarge the meaning of love." (S.K. Aithal 49-59)

For the sake of her love Mira. Mira has surrendered herself to Richard in body, mind and speech. Both are happy. Their sexual inclination has made them one. Mira was shocked by the ruthlessness of some of her revolutionary friends and yet her deepest passions were with the Indian in which the British were intruders. The nation and passions were divided into fragments. The prevailing chaotic conditions left a deep mark on the immature mind of Mira. The inputs were violent by nature. Everywhere, violence was prevailed. Mira was deeply affected by violence. Her relatives Govind, Premala and Kit were the victims of this social unrest. They were unable to decide what they must do in such bitter situations. Even Richard had to lose his life. He was beaten to death.

The tragedy occurs in this novel is due to the political unrest. It is politics that causes the troubles among the people. It is politics that did not let the couples live peacefully. Due to politics, several relations were destroyed. Jyotsna Sahoo writes; "Violence may be a good cause for India but it is against all norms and ethics. Political domination in any form is a crime against humanity. So, there is protest from all over India against political domination by the British people. Mira could not support the British and hated English people but at the same time she was unable to leave Richard in whom she found fulfillment." (Jyotsna Sahoo 55)

In those days, 'Quit India Movement' was on the peak. It had engulfed the entire Indian society. The missionary schools and British-properties were burnt down and along with it Pramala achieved fulfillment in her love after death.

"Excitement had sent the colour to her cheeks; and there was something else, less evanescent, above too – a glow a serenity, which had not been there since she came to live in this city, yet it was a serenity of different order-finer more tempered, as if the dross had been taken from its virgin gold in some unknown fiery crucible a serenity that does not come, save in the far side of suffering." (Jyotsna Sahoo 56)

In addition to the political theme, the novelist has tried to analyze the disparities in cultural life and their impact on the nation as well as on the individuals. The fury and

hatred brought about the catastrophe in the lives of Mira and Richard. Mira says: "A whole war lies between us, which had hardly begun when we met and is now a thing of the past, a whole struggle whose beginnings we did not see, which used us and wrenched us apart and is now best forgotten----- when all this is over, we can still be friends." (Jyotsna Sahoo 56)

The worse political conditions damaged the family relationship to a great extent. Mira says: "We waited while the loaded heavy weeks went by Kit, bitter quieter than I had known him to be for a long time, said he had no desire to discuss the matter, Premala had never been one to thwart his wishes in anyway; and so the three of us locked each in our cell of silence, behaved as if Govind were not and never had been one of us. Behaved, indeed as if he did not exist; and this unnatural pretence, bearing mercilessly down upon us, squeezed out such peace as we might otherwise have had, so that at a time when we needed each other most we found ourselves hard put to it avoid quarreling and were left almost rigid with the efforts." (Jyotsna Sahoo 57)

It is clear that a man's primary concern should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heat. His secondary care should too escape the censures of the world. If the latter happen to come into conflict with the former, one should give up the latter attempt—the wish to please the people. But it is better if the man's own judgment is appraised and thus confirmed by the world at large. It is the deliverance of individuality through sacrifice of egoism. It is a sort of liking for someone on spite of weaknesses and the criticism of others. Such was the love of Mira and Richard. Premala's plight is caused by politics. As Fiedler says, "Only a broken heart makes women reformers rather than passive lovers." (<http://www.123helpme.com>)

If Premala had a child of her own, it might have kept her preoccupied and the questions of her adaptation of another and of her social service would not have arisen. It shows that Premala's life was full in dejection. She lived a gloomy and melancholic life.

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Chapter-III

A Thematic Analysis in 'A Silence of Desire' and 'Possession':

Kamala Markandaya's 'A Silence of Desire' is the third novel which was published in 1961. In this novel, Markandaya has presented the story of Dandekar and his wife Sarojini.

The novel shows how men and women embroil themselves and each other by silence at times when their real need is to unburden their hearts. Dandekar and Sarojini live a peaceful life in beginning but due to some confusion, their peace is abolished. A friction develops between both. As being a clerk, Dandekar runs his family in a very simple way. He centers his whole peaceful life around his adored wife and their three children. Their life is so simple that they have never known luxury but they lead a comfortable and happy life. Their needs are no more than the food cloth and shelter. There is a good mutual understanding between husband and wife.

This peace and happiness ends when a suspicion arises in to the mind of Dandekar. At one evening, Dandekar does not find his wife at home. There comes several negative and positive thoughts into his mind. The negative thoughts surpassed the positive thoughts so suspicions arose and confidence breaks. Many doubts develop into his mind. He thinks that Sarojini has cheated and deceived him.

Through this novel, Markandaya has presented a loving picture of a happy marriage in the Indian society; and the tense situation that endangers it become a focus of ancient conflicts- Science against superstition, religion against materialism and Eastern tradition against Western progress. These three are the major themes in this novel. Apart from these there are so many other themes too through which Markandaya has revealed her motif of writing this novel.

Markandaya exhibits her thought that total de-linking from society is impossible. Raja Rao in 'The Serpent and the Rope' (1960) emphasizes the cultural incompatibility resulting from looking upon the partner as the representative of an idea. In 'Combat of Shadows' (1962), Malgonkar portrays the lack of viability in a relationship like that of Ruby Miranda and Henry Winton, an Anglo-Indian and English man. As far as the issue of language is concerned, the strong use of language points to a remarkable development in Markandaya's mastery of images from 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1954).

In this novel 'A Silence of Desire' Longfellow says, "Three silences there are: the first of speech the second of desire, the third of thought." (Jyotsna Sahoo 84)

Dandekar and Sarojini are husband and wife. Their mutual understanding supports them in running their family smoothly. Sarojini being an obedient and praiseworthy wife is always prompt to serve her husband. Markandaya has shown the picture of a male-dominated society. She writes: "She was a good wife, Sarojini good with the children, an excellent cook, an efficient manager of his household, a woman who still gave pleasure after fifteen years of marriage less from the warmth of her response than from her unflinching acquiescence to his demands." (A Silence of Desire 8)

Here, we find the themes of Love and Sex, womanliness and dedication as wife. The fervor of male dominion is quite apparent. It is visible everywhere. Let us see: "Sarojini was serving. Dandekar eased himself down on to his plank, neatly crossed his legs, and as part of the evening ritual began shouting for his daughters. Then he realized no places had been laid for them and he stopped." (A Silence of Desire 11)

Dandekar's affection towards his wife and daughters shows a man's accountability. It shows that a man should have a great heart for his wife and children. Dandekar was very fond of his daughter, Lakshmi whose face always rounded in the contours of childhood. Love, affection and social devotion come in our focus as the themes.

The major theme is domestic problem and the ideological adjustment of an urban middle class couple. Its central character Dandekar works as a clerk in a Government department. He lives happily with his wife Sarojini and three children. He is keenly in touch with the Europeans so he has a scientific outlook on life. His wife Sarojini is a simple and generous woman. She follows all the Hindu traditions and rituals.

Her devotion towards her husband and children is not only an indication of a particular woman but also it is the symbol of all such women of Indian society who live and die for their husband's happiness. Sarojini performs all the domestic duties very honestly. The conjugal bliss for Dandekar and Sarojini depends almost entirely upon the tactfulness of Sarojini. She knows that while he is at home, his entire expectations revolve around her presence, her activities and her attention. When he approaches his house after a day at the office, Sarojini "would be putting potatoes on to fry."

It is truly said that man is the social creature. He fulfills his needs and desires in society. Dandekar and Sarojini also a part and parcel of human society. They are needy persons. Their married life was running smoothly but due to a need of Doctor, their happiness went away. A suspicion created in the mind of Dandekar which could not be washed away by his wife, Sarojini. The perfect harmony of their marriage is shattered. Dandekar begins to suspect his wife having an illicit relation with an unknown lover, a Swamy. Actually, Sarojini goes to Swamy for the sake of her tumor's treatment but her frequent visits created suspicion in her husband's mind. It caused tense and frustration between both. Result is that their peace and happiness shattered.

Rekha Jha remarks: "His middle-class living goes hand in hand with his middle-class predicament rooted in traditional social pattern and culture, yet willing to give it away." (A Silence of Desire 95)

Sarojini's intimacy with Swamy caused several confusions and problems to Dandekar. He was in tight corner and great dilemma. He could not forget the love and affection of his wife, but he could not also tolerate the frequent visits of his wife to Swamy whom. Sarojini had offered her precious jewels which she and her husband had saved for their daughter's marriage.

He came in contact with a man named Joseph who believed in free love and Ghose the senior officer followed the western style of living and wanted to dismiss the Swamy from the town. But SastrididnotliketodismissSwamy. Hisopinionwasquitedifferent. He believed in moral test so he says that Indian women are mostly virtuous. They should not be suspected like this as Dandekar is suspecting Sarojini, his wife. He says: "wives were faithful and virtuous creatures." (A Silence of Desire 23)

Dandekar was unable to decide what to do. He was hanging between his loves for his wife and suspicion. He was full of fear of Swamy who controls his wife. He knows, "He loved his wife he was grateful to her, he was a fool and worse to have doubted her." (A Silence of Desire 47-48)

Before the entry of Swamy, in the life of Dandekar and Sarojini, Dandekar's life was happy and peaceful. Sarojini cared for him by the core of her heart. She came always forward to serve him. She served him hot meal and provided all eatables according to his choice. But now, Sarojini's attitude had fully changed. Her interest in him had gone away. Now, she reluctantly makes meal for him. Dandekar's problem was

that he had never cooked food. He was totally dependent for meal on his wife. Kamala Markandaya writes that he had never cooked a meal never fried a chilly or a potato, "Men never did; unless they were cooks and even cooks would not cook in their own homes." (A Silence of Desire 139)

What is clear about the main characters in A Silence of Desire is that neither of them is trying to rebel consciously. Dandekar's rebellion is merely a withdrawal from a reality which hampers his peace of mind precisely because his psychological cast of mind cannot accept that particular situation. When Dandekar is physically ill, he is even afraid of the light. The banyan tree having the liberty to grow and strike its roots wherever it liked is an image; it also affords the shade that Dandekar relaxes under. It can signify strength and freedom in the positive sense.

The world of 'A Silence of Desire' thus develops in close contact with the reality of a changing India caught between the Eastern conceptions of responsibility to the family, society and tradition and the Western concept of individualism of thought and activity. The portrayal of Dandekar and Sarojini's life is symbolical. As far as the matter of Markandaya's thought is concerned, it comes in our notice that she intends to teach a lesson to her readers to live peaceful life.

Markandaya's sole motif is to establish mutual harmony, reconciliation and domestic peace. She shows us how a peace loving couple has lost peace and happiness. For, Dandekar, his wife was an elixir of peace but he could not make proper balance between his emotions and suspicion. A psychological dual starts and it does not stop till both of them once again united with reconciliation.

Most of all, she is concerned here with exploring the recesses of human thought and sensibility in the particular context of tradition and modernity as well as continuity and change. *Possession* (1963) shows the plight of the artist Val who, enticed into the glittering world of alien values, experiences the resulting conflict between licentious freedom and responsible liberalism in a baffling novelty of atmosphere. The novel dramatises the search for true identity of Valmiki, nature's own gift to the world of art in the traditional South India.

Let us talk about Markandaya's next novel entitled, 'Possession' which was published in 1963. In this novel, Markandaya has presented many aspects of East-West cultures. When she was preparing her mood to write this novel, she was in great

dilemma because the subject she chose for her revelation was so wide that it could not be bind up within some pages of any book. She framed her work-plan and made herself fully concentrated upon that and she got desirable success which was not predicted. East and West represent two value systems, which cannot be apparently reconciled. Markandaya stresses the cultural hiatus repeatedly in this novel. E.M. Forster's 'A Passage to India' (1924) represents the East- West relationship for itself through a pattern of East-West friendship. In *Possession*, on the other hand, the situation of Val is the main focus of the novel which is highlighted mainly through a defined differentiation of the cultural polarities.

In this novel, Markandaya has portrayed a very interesting picture of Val and Caroline, a couple of different continent, culture and language. Val, a young man belongs to India where as his wife Caroline belongs to England. In this portrayal, Kamala Markandaya has revealed not one but many themes like, love and sex, attachment and detachment, cultural clash, deterioration, quest for identity, mental frustration, sexual discrimination, deception and class-discrimination, linguistic problem and so many other minor themes based on culture and climate of the two different continents.

Although Val got success in London but his success was not steady. It was spontaneous. He made friendship with Caroline, an English woman. Love develops between both and ultimately they started in living in relationship. During this love affair, Val was fully relaxed and carefree about his career and fortune. He thought that it was his moral right to enjoy in London what he could not do into India. This confusion caused his failure.

Finally, he abdicates his responsibility in relation to Ellie and their child because it is easier to be apathetic; it is easier for him to be indifferent and selfish rather than fulfill his commitment to her. This is his ultimate degradation; on hearing of this the new beloved, Annabel deserts him:

"You ran away," she said again with a kind of cold vengeance. You got her into trouble and you got out quick before the whiff of suicide could offend your nostrils and curl up those holy eastern sentiments of yours about the sanctity of life. Well, so much for them. So much for decency. More bloody fool I to have thought you had any because..... You wouldn't even know what decency means." (*Possession* 207).

Markandaya has tried to tell us that the things Val was treating as his possessions, were merely his confusion. In fact it was his detachment from his moral responsibilities. He could not understand his responsibilities and escaped himself. He left his country and came to England where he wanted to live a peaceful, happy and carefree life but his dream could not be fulfilled. All his hopes and desires had gone away. He had to fall in to troublesome days where none was to console and assist him save the English people with whom also, he was not faithful.

At one hand Val was immature and inexperienced and other side he was curious to have peace and happiness in the strange continent. In the hum-drum life of London he had forgotten the dust and tranquil restoration of his native country where he did not like to learn anything that might be advantageous to him. Caroline says, "You see," said Caroline. "He has everything he needs, and nothing has come of it" (Possession 46).

While Caroline believes that she has given him the freedom to express his artistic talent, she robs him of his inspiration. What Suya gives in reply to Caroline's uncertainty as to whether Val's inspiration would revive, is in part the truth: "I hesitated, and then I said: 'I don't know how talent works ... does anyone? But some people work best when they have a little peace, and some people only work when they're pushed, when they're under pressure.'" (Possession 47).

The phrase "under pressure" is important. Freedom in the positive sense can function even in restrictive conditions because real freedom is to function with full realization of the total, integrated personality and is not an escape from circumstances. Would Val's artistic genius flourish only under the pressure of circumstances as in his native wilderness or does it require freedom from the authoritarian pressure of Caroline? Though the escape with Caroline is not made of his own will, Val begins indulging in pleasure-loving idleness.

Thus without the maturity to understand himself, he cannot function effectively. With the proper frame of mind, he can function anywhere, even under the "gross, disguising" conditions in his village that Caroline talk of not, only in the comfort of a London home with all the equipment of hand. Caroline tells Suya: "I wanted him to be free to work as he wanted, and never anything else" (Possession 47).

Already, we have known that Val is immature and inexperienced. Due to this reason, he was not properly surviving in London. But, destiny is always accompanied by

him. In London, he meets with a very helping-natured woman who does not only increase her sexual intimacy but also provides him emotional treatment. It is Caroline who comes forward to assist him in the foreign land. Kamala Markandaya, on the other side, has tried to focus on sensibility and sincerity of an English woman. Caroline's deep understanding, her power of endurance, her sympathy and empathy and over all, her psychological support to Val, makes her a pure Shakespearean heroine.

Val wants to live in freedom but he does not want to know about his accountability. About freedom, J. Filella writes, "Freedom is a spontaneous giving of oneself to a task or to the pursuit of a goal thought to be worthwhile." (Filella, Quest 60)

Val is tied down by this intercultural connection with Caroline; he becomes aware of this, shackling of his strength—a Wasteland of the spirit most dreadful for man to inhabit because he cannot compute its term... (Possession 49).

Thus, under the safe and secured protection of Caroline, Val could enjoy the English life-style up to a great extent but his dream of being a successful man could not be fulfilled. In India, he did not make himself capable to do some remarkable task that's why herein new land too he could not do well much more. Gradually, Caroline was being dominant over him so he could easily assume his troubles; the forthcoming sorrows and sufferings.

Now, Val thinks about the other woman and he meets one day with Ellie who increases her intimacy and starts love with him. Here, Kamala Markandaya has shown the irresponsible attitude of a male character who does not care about the woman who is already there in his life. Here, we see Markandaya attacking over the bad and selfish attitude of man towards woman. Ellie becomes a temporary source of motivation to Val. Val, however, violates Ellie's honor; and the pregnant Ellie is summarily disposed of by Caroline. With this Val abandons his moral responsibility to her. Infatuated with the glamour of his London circle and Caroline's parties, he finds it easier to forsake Ellie and the unborn child. At the end, he repents:

"I did not do everything I could, ... I meant to go after Ellie and see that she was all right. I meant to, I talked about it a lot and I worried endlessly but in fact I did nothing because it was easier not to. Can you understand that? It's the easiest thing in the world to let that happen, it only becomes impossible afterwards, afterwards it is the

unforgivable. How could you? How could I? Well I did because I wanted the whole thing to end without bleeding me.”(Possession 207)

Ellie’s departure returns him completely to Caroline and once his artistic sense is cramped, the deterioration continues: “The glitter-dust seemed to fall agreeably on Val. Assiduously attended by slim young women in black, he was floating around the room like an exotic sunflower...” (Possession 109).

As he entangles himself in the pleasant web of sophistication, “most of the uncouthness was gone; and some of the honesty” (Possession 109).

Hence, after Ellie’s departure, Val started again his life with Caroline. But due to his past-deeds, he was unable to live with the complete pleasure, because, he was repenting over his misdeeds committed with Ellie, and her unborn child. In other words, it can be said that Val was burning in the fire of self-guilt. But ultimately, the company of Caroline relaxed him. It was in the company of Caroline that he found mental peace. Here, Kamala Markandaya as revealed a fact that man is safe only under the protection of a loyal and faithful woman.

The situation of Val matches with the situation of Srinivas, a character in ‘The Nowhere Man’ (1972) who can never return to India. Due to several discrepancies and labyrinths, Srinivas remains unable to return India. In the same manner, Val also seems to be unable to go back to India leaving his Caroline and other things of London with which he has had emotionally attached.

The silent agent of Val’s return to a sense of responsibility is the Swamy as in ‘A Silence of Desire’ (1960) in which it is the Swamy’s silent intervention that brings about the resolution of Dandekar’s psychological crisis. The Swamy’s visit to London sparks off Val’s righteous indignation about the forged letters. Val refuses to return to Caroline’s flat for this incident also rouses his moral responsibility to Ellie.

Caroline moves halfway towards Val in an effort to meet him across the chasms of cultural systems that suddenly loom large between them and she even makes him forget every responsibility-even that to Ellie. Val is swept away again by the temptations of luxury and fame and his new-found physical intimacy with Caroline. Again we see the sympathetic attitude of Caroline and change in Val. Ultimately, Val gets mental satisfaction only in the company of Caroline.

This relationship, disapproved by Anasuya and Mrs. Peabody, also fails to give Val permanent happiness. Markandaya wants to suggest us that the permanent happiness lies in balanced mind. If one is not mentally balanced, one cannot hope for a permanent peace and pleasure. Val is seen everywhere in the novel, in the want of permanent peace. This psychological interpretation of Markandaya brings us a true philosophy of human-life. It also results in the circle of party-friends melting away: "With Caroline and Val openly living together, and clearly tranquillizing each other, the contingent of solo performers that had danced round them gradually, with great good manner, melted away" (Possession 186).

The title 'Possession' is quite appropriate and understandable. Markandaya has beautifully, selected it for her revelation of facts. Indeed, Caroline's is a possession of Val that she acquires with confidence, and Val, deep inside him, does not want to be possessed.

With one after another, Val increases his intimacy. He seems to be a woman-hunter. It reminds us the scene of 'Tom Jones' the novel of Henry Fielding in which Tom Jones, the protagonist starts his love with Sophie and continues it up to a woman known as Mrs. Waters. He comes in contact with many women but does not attach himself emotionally with any of them. On the basis of money matter Tom Jones and Val are equally greedy. Tom makes sexual relationship with women only for cultivating money. He does not come in contact with the poor women.

In the same way, Val remains in the company of Caroline till she gives him money. As long as she seems to be turned her face from him, Val also turned towards the other women.

Val's relationship with Caroline is not one that feeds on responsibility that one individual has to another, but on egoistic pleasure. It is bondage of physical relationship that he is to shake off. Val comes in contact with Annabel who is a young woman, lovable and sensible. Val's affair with the young Annabel gives him the release from Caroline's forcible possession. Annabel and Val desert Caroline because the latter's developing hostility to her new rival makes them uncomfortable.

Here, Kamala Markandaya has shown us the selfish attitude of man and woman. She wants to tell us that not only man is responsible for woman's betrayal but also woman as well because without the interference of Annabel, Val alone could not desert

Caroline. In this woman's betrayal, a woman came forward, only then man (Val) could desert her. It happens everywhere in our society whether it is India or England.

Even with Annabel, Val does not exhibit an inclination to make any firm commitment. It is left to Anasuya to wonder if this movement away from Caroline is merely a temporary infatuation or a permanent withdrawal. In fact, the Val-Annabel relationship is fully based on conspiracy against Caroline, money mindedness, and selfish nature of Annabel. Here we come to see cheating, flattery and selfishness as the themes.

In the character of Caroline, we see the power of endurance, supportive nature, and charity. Her inclination with Val was not only for the sake of physical satisfaction. It was for the sake of humanity. Caroline's attachment with Val also exhibits that English women were prompt and curious to see Indian man with hope. This novel shows the cultural relation between East and West.

Further, Val comes in contact with another woman Anasuya, who feels that she is partly responsible for Val's journey to England, finally suggests that he go back to India when he cuts himself off from Caroline and he has no financial resources. Val realizes his own inner degeneracy now, stirred mainly by his memory of Ellie: "Nothing," he repeated. "That is the truth, Suya. If you could look inside me you would find nothing but deadwood." (Possession 212).

At last, Val comes in sense and he realizes his faults and admits that he did not follow the true ideas of Swamy. He thinks Swami is right and he is wrong. K.S.N.Rao states that ultimately Val realizes that wealth cannot bring inner peace and that Val's story shows the belief that creative talent is to be used for the divine if one is to achieve inner tranquility. This episode breaks up a notion that wealth is everything. It gives us a lesson that wealth may be something but not everything.

Ultimately, art is divine; and this is primarily a concept of Eastern origin and is the underlying theme in Possession. Val obtains serenity only after the final act of spiritual commitment.

Val returns to the original springs of inspiration. At the final stage, he regains both faiths in himself and in his art. In England he panders to the tastes and expectations of the flatterers and admirers around him, let us see, what Markandaya says, "providing the

attitudes and postures he was asked for whether or not they were natural to him....” (Possession 159).

As an artist, Val has spent his most precious time in vain. If he had cared and respected his art, he would not have spoiled his character. When he comes in sense, he has had lost much more. Now, he devotes and dedicates himself fully towards his art.

The exploitation of the artistic consciousness of Val is paralleled in many ways by the situation in Henry James’s *Roderick Hudson* (1875). A.V. Krishna Rao compares Caroline to Rowland Mallet, with his “oozing benevolence.” Roderick is the artist with a spiritual refinement but wanting in intellectual awareness.

Val is the same kind of childlike, promising artist. Roderick, however, tries to exercise his individual freedom while Val succumbs, for a long while, to the patronising attitude of Caroline’s. Both are caught in this trap of patronage, because they are reliant of their patrons for money and thereby liberty for their pleasure-pursuits. Both escape from their responsibilities. While Rowland is almost cruel in his final treatment of Roderick, Val is saved from Caroline’s diabolism partly through the intervention of Suya, and ultimately through the power of the Swamy who has instilled into him a deep-rooted spiritual heritage.

Val returns to the final goal of art according to the Indian tradition: dedication unto the divine.

Roderick is overwhelmed by the pleasures of the moment and since he has no spiritual goal or meaning in life, he has no point to which he can turn for refuge. He succumbs to passion—the passion for Christina Light, and he forgets his responsibilities to his patron and to Mary who is waiting for him in America.

But unlike Val, there is no spiritual figure like the Swamy to sustain him. He yearns for a freedom to do what he pleases, which cannot really bring him happiness, and he, cannot, at this stage, distinguish between good and evil.

Val would have run the same course and been ultimately destroyed by Caroline if it were not for the intervention of various other factors—the figure of Ellie which makes Annabel desert him, and Suya herself, who draws him back to India, and the Swamy, his silent mentor. Of course, Rowland is spurred on by a sense of blind affection for Roderick.

Caroline has no real affection for Val. She is selfish in her motive of training him to be a commercial art marvel in London art society. Rowland's advice to Roderick is directed towards the latter's own moral and material good. The technique he adopts is directorial but the end he aims at is for Roderick's benefit.

It is only at the end when he feels that Roderick's irrational interest in Christina is a direct insult to Mary Garland that he expresses his disapproval. Caroline faces Val not only as a patron but also as Ellie's and Annabel's rival to his affections and this jealousy colours the situation.

It is true that only when Val is transferred back to the native ground, he slowly learns his responsibility to the divine and thereby to his own artistic self, not to his decadent one. He thus grows to a better maturity when he realises that sacrifice and suffering can also bring happiness.

As K.S.N.Rao points out, happiness is found in "self-abnegation and non-possession." (K.S.N. Rao 45) Heir to so manyloped-sided values, Val atlast reaches a state where he makes his final choice to remain with the Swamy.

The Swamy represents the ultimate state of positive freedom where he lives in the world and carries out all his functions effectively but is free from all bonds and performs all duties with self-realisation.

Threatened by Caroline that Val would return to her, the Swamy only says that there is no compulsion for Val to stay: "...then he will be free to go, but he will never stay until he has an equal freedom to return" (Possession 232). One is reminded of the Swamy's words in *A Silence of Desire* (1960), where again; the ascetic advocates the ideal of tolerance and freedom. There can be no compulsion laid on one individual by another.

This Eastern ideal is represented through both these Swamis: "Compulsion is the beginning of corruption." Compulsion is an infringement of the other's freedom; this is what Caroline seeks to do.

Val's wilderness appears a wilderness only to Caroline, but for him it becomes a domain where he realises his identity.

The development of the plot and the growth of Val (though depicted only to a limited extent) project the ideal that even if he leaves it now and then, he would return.

His return to his spiritual home brings also the utter disinterest in worldly affairs and goods, as proved in the way he has “placed impersonally side by side without precedence, a ruby ring, a tiny golden column of sovereigns, and a pile of uncashed cheques under a stone weight” (Possession 229-30)-symbols of the kind of strength Val no longer needs.

Val thus emerges as a product of his culture-the culture of a nation deeply rooted in spiritual identity.

Examining the problem of identity in Markandaya's fiction, Harrex states that Val's expiation can best be achieved through the Swamy's way of non-attachment and that this is, in fact psychologically valid and consistent with the novel's moral premises. (Harrex 247-52)

Val, as a temporary expatriate, experiences the identity crises and this again strikes the note of the ambiguity of identity which is a central aspect of the East-West theme.

Though “possessed” by the west for a time, Val returns to his sense of native identity. His crisis is thus representative of the East being possessed by the west until Eastern cultural identity is itself under a threat.

Uma Parmeswaran also comments on the fictional parallel of the England-India connection:

“Lady Caroline Bell is an autocrat, typical of the British Raj in India. -She sets about getting possession of Val with the same dedication and ruthlessness with which the British subjugated India. She moulds him into a man, an artist and a lover after the image which she has in mind, and in the process, ruins him, depleting him of independence and spiritual strength, though in her opinion he gains more than he loses.” (Uma Parmeswaran 239)

Markandaya seems to repeat the dictum that there is almost no meeting-point in this confrontation. Markandaya's employment of capital ‘W’ and ‘E’ for West and East however detracts a little from the presentation and concrete realisation of the, human experience itself.

Val's crisis is portrayed against this intercultural background. Caroline's aggressiveness and Val's submissiveness represent the characteristics of their respective races. Caroline fails to understand the religious and functional value of Val's art and is

unable to grasp Val's identification with India symbolised by the wilderness to which he returns. (Remenschneider 145)

Caroline's possessiveness reflects that of the British for colonial India. Caroline's ruthless Machiavellian desire to possess provokes this outburst:

"She does not care for me. She cares only for what I can do, and if I do it well it is like one more diamond she can put on the necklace round her throat for her friends to admire; but when I do nothing I am nothing to her, no more than a small insect in a small crack in the ground." (Possession 55)

As K.R.S. Iyengar suggested, the plot of the novel shows that it is "in giving that there is fulfillment, not in possessing." Iyengar further suggests that Val's is a return to make his "atmasamarpana" after his escapade to civilization". (K.R. Srinvasa Iyengar 443) Val's escape becomes meaningless when he achieves maturity.

Given the freedom from restrictions of community and poverty to pursue his talents, Valmiki presents the truth that a life of license is not exactly the one suited for fulfillment of artistic visions. He achieves the maturity to face his situation in total freedom where freedom. Freedom is the maturity to understand oneself and the life around.

The way to freedom, then, is not through escape but by learning to live at a deeper level. Maturity is thus a prerequisite for freedom. Freedom, in the Indian sense, is awareness. The Swamy leads Val to this vision without compulsion. He tells him to see the truth and Val ultimately perceives the truth. True freedom is not license.

The Swamy teaches Val the freedom which is pure and untainted by private motives. Artistic freedom also involves a responsibility to one's self and to art. Back at this native place, there is no fame, but there is fulfillment and peace.

-J. Krishnamurti calls freedom a state of mind:

"...not freedom from something but a sense of freedom, a freedom to doubt and question everything and therefore so intense, active and vigorous that it throws away every form of dependence, Slavery, conformity and acceptance. Such freedom implies being completely alone." (J. Krishnamurti 68-69)

Val's final fate is reminiscent of this kind of freedom. Whether he achieves it through effort or whether it is a natural outcome is never projected but left to the reader's imaginative perception.

The monkey Minou extends the meaning of the thematic pattern. The responsibility for Minou's welfare, as Val believes, is his. What he says about Minou is paralleled by the Caroline-Val relationship:

"I bought her, I made room for another creature like her to be brought here, exiled from its climate for life...in the end it is my responsibility....." (Possession 219)

Caroline never experiences this guilt that Val feels for Minou. While Minou's exile from his roots results in death, Val, who is human, makes the choice to return to his own culture.

The Swamy is a figure obviously pitted against the materialism of Caroline and the last scene is representative of the clash of values.

He is the example of the individual who has achieved a measure of positive freedom when he can function effectively through full realization of the total, integrated personality; he can move about freely in the world without making bonds for himself, truly like a "lily on water".

"The embodies the Hindu ideal of self-existence in detachment and yet taking active part in all the activities of the world. The Gita teaches that work is inevitable till we attain freedom and that when we attain it, we have to work as the instruments of the divine." (S. Radhakrishnan 568)

This is directly opposed to the philosophy of acquisition as a sequel to Industrialism in the West. The Swamy represents the Indian ideal of tolerance, because each individual is essentially free and cannot be controlled: "...then he will be free to go.... But he will never stay, until he has an equal freedom to return." (Possession 232).

There is a certain lack of power in the use of language from the earlier novels. The narration is generally filled with clusters of images and is suffused with abstract nouns and the effectiveness of language as seen in *A Silence of Desire* (1960) or *The Coffer Dams* (1969) is absent. This account for the vagueness and the sense of improbability that have been pointed out as the faults of the novel. (P.P. Mehta 275-76)

The money emerges as one of prominent symbols of the book, symbolising the responsibility that Caroline should have for Val and that Val should have in general. Ellie is another symbol, representing the responsibility of society. Crushed by a Nazi boot, she is the proof of the inhumanity of the times. Ultimately it is the memory of her that stirs Val's hard crust of artificiality to make him realise his duties.

Caroline's art world represents the world of immorality, indolence and materialistic pleasure that tempts Val with its glitter-dust for a time.

The wilderness to which Val returns is the apparently tough, challenge locale in which his freedom is realized through duty and freedom which nurtures, not discontent but fulfillment. Caroline's parties are full of colour-contrasts---"brown skin against white clothes", "light eyes against brown skin", "slim young women in black", "gauzy white draperies" and soon,---suggesting the racial contrast.

The cloying effect of Caroline's parties reflects the racial contrast. The cloying effect of Caroline's parties reflects the actual suppression of Val in the glittering atmosphere of vulgar luxury. The contrasting wilderness to which he returns, with its two strange guards and the empty hillsides on top of which is a flimsy tent, is a flimsy tent, is significant. The Swamy says: "Even this wasteland may have something to show, other than what you have seen" (Possession 228).

In Jhabvala's *A New Dominion* (1972), there is the same wilderness where the Swamy lives to which he, the American girl, returns. It seems to contain a hope for her, though it is a wilderness. In this novel, however, the Swamy with his utter sensuality and crudeness is a fake and the three American girls are deluded by him. In *Possession*, the same wilderness is infused with a different meaning-that of spiritual strength that can sustain one even in a wasteland.

The image of deprivation and divestment is seen in the picture of Ellie and of Jumbo, ex-prince. Ultimately, Val -forcibly divests himself of material possessions but his deprivation brings him closer to a spiritual faith, and the valuables -and cheques he displays in his cave are symbolic of the total detachment he achieves from material success.

The image of roots is predominant; for example, "there was their under-the-skin bondage, the joined experience of a calculating, maiming, actively hostile and cruel world; and the joint feeling of being without roots, top-heavy saplings struggling to jeep

a crazy balance in an earth that quivered and shifted recording every move from isolated nobility to a pervading madness” (Possession 115).

Thus the patterns of images and symbols are used to show contrasts and heighten differences of culture which forms the matrix of the novel itself.

Possession brings to light the sharpened contrasts of culture in the depiction of an individual's crisis when forcibly caught in the clash of intercultural values while groping towards some kind of self-existence in freedom; it mirrors the growth to realisation in the mind of Val as he resolves the complex dilemma of personal and artistic freedom and responsibility and return to the traditional values of spirituality and duty which alone give him a true sense of freedom and identity.

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Chapter-IV

A Thematic Analysis in 'A Handful of Rice' and 'The Coffer Dams':

Now, we talk of her next novel, 'A Handful of Rice'. In the novel, Markandaya turns to the urban situation in India for her subject, and more particularly, to the individual's plight in a social milieu governed by economic factors where the topsy-turvy ladder of social re-structuring has threatened the integrity and independence of the individual craftsman. In this connection, Markandaya explores the psychological effects on Ravi—a victim of such industrial changes—as he moves from the position of a vagrant to that of a respectable tailoring apprentice, and the conflicts he experiences in remaining a "respectable" tailor.

For the first time, Markandaya turns her attention to the social set-up in urban culture, and to the various under-currents that could be operating on a superficially stable structure. In the process, she makes us aware of economic forces threatening identities and relationships as they influence the lives of individuals.

Ravi is the prototype of any young man trying to climb the social ladder from its lowest rungs and discovering, at each step, that social forces greater than him resist his progress.

In this desperate climb, he is caught in the tragic dilemma between personal integrity and the success ethic, between the need to be economically independent and a sense of his own conscience. Markandaya makes us aware of the subtle borders that divide these two complex sets of values, and how various unseen forces act and interact on the individual to produce conflicting states of mind.

Thus, the world of 'A Handful of Rice' projects the image of change on the level of urban reality and it projects this change in the form of repercussions on Ravi's life. Does the monster of social change really eat up values and ethics? Are people cowed down by the economic pressures, compelling moral compromises? How far do economic and social forces interfere with moral decisions? Does not freedom for an individual include economic freedom and a right to enjoy the fruits of civilization? Markandaya raises these questions and sensitizes the reader to the subtle pressure of life; she does not give any solution as a didactic novelist does but only tries to dramatise a social problem in the style of a social realist. As K.A. Abbass says, social realism is "the acute awareness of the

social forces that surround the individual, their power to influence the lives of men and woman... and the overall interaction of the individual and society.”(K.A. Abbas 146)

J.P. Stern, in his book *On Realism* (1973) also emphasizes that realism establishes the social truth which insists on the interconnectedness of individual and society. (*On Realism* 77)

In *Nectar in a Sieve*, Murugan, the third son of Rukmani, moves to the city in search of employment. Rukmani and Nathan visit Murugan after three years, but fail to find him.

Ravi's plight can be well be a continuation of Murugan's migration to the city. The flight from villages to towns in search of better prospects was a common feature of the urban life in the early years of the twentieth century, and it still continues unabated. Pre- and post-Independence India reflected the situation as it existed in the early days of the Industrial Revolution in England. In treating the subject, Markandaya shows “creative recognition of the data of social life.” (Shiv K. Kumar 283)

The situation of in *A Handful of Rice* is one where people are forced to make compromises between their personal codes of conduct and the need for survival. Thus, the external conflict of the individual versus the social situation reflects the subterranean clash between the individual's belief in his free will and social conscience. Individuals like Ravi are faced with this clash because, on the one hand, there is the glitter of a prosperous life which one is free to attain if one is willing to forsake one's moral conscience like Damodar in the novel, and, on the other, his ability to listen to his “inner voice”.

While in the earlier novels, Markandaya was preoccupied with the cross-cultural encounter of East and West; in *A Handful of Rice*, she makes no obvious reference to it.

But the Western influence surfaces in the guise of urban culture where the old traditional hierarchies give way to a new social structure with its commercial classes higher up on the social ladder. Ravi's plight reflects the change operating in the urban Indian milieu.

The abrupt change of attitude from complacency to questioning is also a result of the deep dissatisfactions of man's inner world. Markandaya's novel displays the plight of the individual who is in the power of huge political and social collectives, in a

deepening inner despair and of appalling catastrophes in what appears to be a schizophrenic society.

Markandaya's Ravi is a portrayal of the urban helplessness; but the self has to be allowed to have new functions, responsibilities and relationships and therefore has to be bound by new obligations. Ravi's complex character can be studied in the light of these forces. In the hands of a major novelist, society itself becomes an all-important character: Markandaya's novel is a case in point. In this novel she appears to be a more mature artist as there is no oversimplification of themes here.

Ravi's mental agonies are portrayed from his own point of perception but the narrative as such is that of the invisible outsider; and though the third-person narrative technique is used and the author moves about freely from one character's actions to another remarkable control of the narrative technique is in evidence in this novel.

As M.P. Joseph rightly points out: "The author, using the third person method, maintains just sufficient distance from him to analyse his motives and conduct keeping at the same time close enough to identify herself with him in the flow of thought and event." (Margaret 126)

Markandaya has defined her own point of view, her protagonist's point of view, and also the point of view that she herself chooses to take as narrator.

Whatever the point of view used, it seems to be rather exclusive. The novelist may thus examine a "small portion of experience" or choose a larger field. (Marjorie Boulton 29)

Markandaya chooses a fairly small portion of experience to concentrate sufficiently on the inner conflict of Ravi; at the same time, she is able to maintain a detached perspective. What John Stephens says about the omniscient novelist is perhaps applicable here. Such a novelist "claims the privilege of direct access to a character's mind at any moment and he has more time for his investigations. He can thus give a more convincing account of extended and tortuous mental processes." (John Stephens 163)

The movement of the plot is a fluid movement of action and character, interacting upon each other.

When we see Ravi in the opening chapter, he is a vagabond and a scapegrace. Forced out by ‘the relentless pressures of their existence, in the, upsurge of revolt that had begun to dismantle the old pattern of family life first in one village, then in another’ (A Handful of Rice 57) people like Ravi eke out a miserable existence in the cities.

The city assumes the form of a concrete jungle where the law of the jungle only prevails. It is only in the jungle—the city by night—that the defrauded like Ravi can stand on equal terms with the privileged. In the metropolitan, the mighty jungle, the wicked prosper while the meek and the gentle suffer. Ravi is at first a misfit in the city; he then joins a group of vagrants whose values he tries to adopt but in vain. His early life is portrayed in the manner of a flashback. He compares himself to Damodar:

He knew that life was a battle in which the weak always went under; he accepted the fact that the man who did not do all he could to keep on top was a fool. He would never fault Damodar on that score.

His act of breaking into the house of Apu is the starting point of Ravi’s movement towards respectability. Instead of being despised and chased away, Ravi is tolerated because Apu and Jayamma find something in him that is essentially appealing. The chief agent, though in passivity, for the sudden conversion of Ravi to honesty and “respectability”— that label “which distinguished people of the higher classes”— is Nalini, the daughter of Apu. Ravi is attracted to Nalini much in the same way as Frank Alpine is to Helen in the situational parallel in Bernard Malamud’s *The Assistant* (1957). In order to win the desired, Ravi has to traverse the hard path of reformation.

Ravi rejects the world of Damodar, who had seemed the “passport to a world shot with glitter and excitement: a world that revived the incandescent glow the city had once kindled’ (A Handful of Rice 27). Ravi begins by pleasing old Apu with a few bales of material stolen from a warehouse with Damodar’s help.

Though his first step to gain entry into Apu’s house is dishonest he lulls his conscience at the moment and justifies the means by the end— namely, to win Nalini: “Ah, Nalini, he thought, Nalini. She was worth it, worth anything, even worth giving up the sweet life for.

He put it all on her, forgetting the trinity of hunger, drink and misery that had been intermittent companion to his sweet life.” Ravi figuratively hypnotises Apu and thus preparations are made for his marriage to Nalini and “respectability.” With marriage

comes responsibility; and Ravi is actually taking the road of many an idler before him. He exchanges egoistic freedom of living for security and respectability in society and this involves a commitment to his new-found family.

Social injustice and exploitation face Ravi again when he sees how the sincere and hard-working Apu is treated by his uppity customers; he sees the gross inequality meted out to craftsmen like Apu, because the very minimal rate at which Apu does his work is multiplied eight times when the same work is sold in the market.

Besides the unjust social exploitation that Ravi witnesses, there is the miserable existence at home with insufficient food and excessive hard work because the other members of the family—Puttanna, Kumaran, Varma- are all parasites. Burdens are further heaped on him with Apu's death. This is almost the beginning of his moral decline.

Apu, who had been a tower of silent strength, crumbles to nothing and Ravi can no more hold the family framework as Apu had. Increasing financial pressures and unjust treatment by his rich customers arouse helpless despair and Ravi feels the urge to become rebellious. But duty to the family is posed against his personal desire to get easy money with the help of Damodar:

The trouble to him, Ravi, first as city innocent, now as husband and householder- lay in the working out of that "if." Damodar would have had no doubt at all, had never had any. What might be would be if you were prepared to do this, and this, and this.

Damodar makes a dig at Ravi's respectability: "If you like decent money, you know where to come. Of course you'll have to get rid of your beggar mentality first, otherwise you'll never want decent money, will you?" (A Handful of Rice 73). But at each step Ravi's "responsibilities began to press down on him unpleasantly, reminding him of the money locked up in all loose bundles of work that lay..." (A Handful of Rice 119).

Ravi is thus faced with his commitment to his family as its financial provider and the corrupting socio-economic system; and this in turn is a rebuke to his conscience and to the moral integrity which he has unconsciously but not unwillingly developed in himself during all "those years" of "respectability."

Ravi as a young rebel finds it difficult to reconcile his disillusionment and consequent bitterness with the spirit of Apu's resignation.

The alarming disproportion between the life led by some of his richer customers and his own strikes him as unfair. Unlike the customer who could spend fifty rupees for a dress, his family had not been able to afford even a few vegetables for the evening meal. If he rebelled against his customer's economic tyranny, he would only lose them because the tailoring profession was fast becoming the monopoly of huge shops and factory warehouses. Scruples him from accepting Damodar's proposition.

Burdens increase as the child falls ill and the other children have to be provided for. In anger, he clears the house of its brood of parasites. Puttanna has already left, and Ravi sends out Kumaran and Varma.

Eventually he turns to Damodar for help; he feels that he could enter a life which could be "piquant with possibilities" (A Handful of Rice 211). "He was alone in the jungle, within the jungle, one fought. Or died" (A Handful of Rice 211). Angry with society—"They, them," as he calls it—he becomes cruel to Nalini also and forces her to walk out on him. This is the last straw for Ravi. In order to preserve the appearance of, "respectability" he goes to bring her back. "Respectability, he thought, the sense of betrayal like alum on his tongue..." (A Handful of Rice 223).

We thus see Ravi's steady progress toward an acceptance of duty. Raju, his son, dies of meningitis. Nalini nearly suffers a miscarriage because Ravi beats her. Returning drunk one night, he rapes his mother-in-law.

This is the ultimate in his moral degradation. The external behavior patterns are only reflections of Ravi's deep inner conflict. The final deviant act is when he joins a mass movement to loot a granary.

The chaos of the scene blinds him to all the implications of his act; but Ravi manages to save himself from utter misery. This is the climax of a succession of dynamic situations in the novel. P.P. Mehta's opinion that the plot is weak and that it fails to catch the imagination because it lacks conflict fails to persuade us. (P.P. Mehta 227) For there does seem to be sufficient conflict which is dramatised in Ravi's consciousness as he encounters an unjust socio-economic system.

Unlike Rukmani or Mira, Ravi is not a puppet in the hands of Fate. He is "free" to take the plunge into a life like Damodar's but he retains his redeeming sense of moral decency and responsibility. He exhibits a sense of commitment to one's own moral self more than anything else.

The plot in *A Handful of Rice* thus hinges at every stage on 'Ravi's own psychological tensions which are the direct and indirect results of his situational crises. In the retreat into a position of conformity, Ravi only affirms his healthy respect for traditional values. Ravi's situation is analogous to the situation of victim heroes of other celebrated writers. (Examples of Characters)

As Frank Alpine in Malamud's *The Assistant* (1957) tries to reform after the film housebreaking attempt so does Ravi move on, after his treacherous act, from a stance of irresponsibility to one of responsibility.

Ravi enjoys the freedom to do what he wants. Apu's household offers Ravi an identity which he did not have before as a vagrant. S.C. Harrex rightly says that the individual's sense of identity and threats to it are Markandaya's concern and that this sense of identity is most vulnerable when confronted by "internal Indian adversities of a sociological nature." (S.C. Harrex 259)

Ravi experiences the terror 'of losing his identity in an indifferent city which was akin to death'. The conflict of Ravi is within himself. The conflict may be fought in the divided heart of a single character due to incompatible codes of behavior. In the beginning, Ravi is not sure where his values stand precisely but later he develops an understanding of his own self, and this is seen in his final act of withdrawal from the granary scene.

Nalini offers Ravi an identity; she is, thus, along with Apu, the stabilising factor in Ravi's philosophical problem of identity is not just a philosophical problem but it stems from the very condition of human existence.

Unlike the "hairy ape" in O'Neill's play, Ravi is not faced with rejection for his uncouthness. The "excessive endurance" that his family had taught him and got somehow ingrained in him becomes the necessary virtue in winning Nalini. At this point, when he is tossed between two worlds, he is naive enough to believe that "one varied one's criteria to one's circumstance, as any fool knew..." (*A Handful of Rice* 33)

Marriage is his social passport to "respectability." Later, though Nalini manages to remain light-hearted, "the responsibility he had taken on with marriage weighed on Ravi." Ravi's sense of duty to the family which becomes relevant in the context of the particular social structure reminds us, nevertheless, that social structures may

sometimes crush individuality. Monisha in Anita Desai's *Voices in The City*, illustrates the negative aspect of a traditional social structure.

Ravi sheds gradually his initial notions of a comfortable life in marriage. Covertly he had imagined himself enjoying a "cosy magic" but later he is disillusioned. Though he wishes to provide his wife with more comforts, he is helpless. Though he has the urge to rebel to fulfill his financial commitment to his wife and children, he cannot rebel against moral integrity. He is thus a social victim:

But what should he do within the narrow frame of respectability he had slung round his neck like a penance? Rebel, and a contact might be lost, the steady wage would come to an end, and then what of Nalini? He had to think of her, he had to think of himself for that matter. There seemed to be no answer.

Apu's "thorough grounding in acceptance" rates Ravi. Apu's answer to injustice is: "May be, but that's the way it is". (A Handful of Rice 69)

Ravi feels: "He had been too good too long in a rotten world".¹⁶ With Damodar, he feels that that was a lie of freedom. Fuddled with drink, Ravi tries to resolve the dilemma: "How long ago would it be five months, six? Since then he had lost his freedom, tangled himself up with respectability, acquired a wife to support, he scowled in the darkness" (A Handful of Rice 73)

Ravi's choice is governed by a whole host of forces. As Upadhyay says, the "free mind" understands the inevitable in life, - and independent linking and independent decision are the main fabric of our freedom. (Neelmani Upadhyay 49)

For a long time, Ravi could withstand all the threats to his responsible self—Damodar and a life of sin, or Puttanna and a life of sloth. Man, according to Fromm, is really free only under three conditions—economic, intellectual and moral—and in this context he also states that man cannot use the means contrary to the community's ethics to hasten his economic or intellectual liberation.

As Fromm says, whatever the conditions, needs- like the striving for happiness, harmony, love and freedom are inherent in man's nature. When Fromm talks of the worker's alienation from work, he says that each individual can act as a free and responsible agent only when one of the main reasons for present-day "un-freedom" is abolished. the economic threat of starvation, which forces people to accept working conditions which they would otherwise not accept. (Sane Society 76)

The free man, ultimately, is the one who is much and not the one who has much: Ravi grows to a partial realisation of this in the end.

The initial conflict between the innate desire for freedom and the constraints of social milieu leads to Ravi's questioning attitude. Even his relationship with Nalini fails to hold him in the face of an unjust system. He questions Apu's code of conduct.

Apu practices a little bit of flattery and bribery to retain his customers, while Ravi feels that work should pay in itself. Apu is the model of family responsibility in the fulfilment of which he cowers beneath the iniquitous socio-economic structure. Apu liked to tell him: "You are too soft, you and your generation....."; and Ravi's angry retort is: "We don't want to take anything and everything." (A Handful of Rice 83)

Ravi feels unable to grasp Apu's submissive attitude to his superiors.

Roger Iredale speaks of the individual and the dilemma as being at its subtlest in the following novels of Markandaya—Nectar in a Sieve (1954), A Silence of Desire (1960), A Handful of Rice (1966), Two Virgins (1973) and The Golden Honeycomb (1977). Iredale describes the novelist's power to handle character within the framework of societal values. Ravi's rebellion against "wholesale acceptance of life as a culture for the breeding of suffering" (Iredale, Tenor 38-57) expresses itself in petty acts like his disgust aimed at Puttanna Varma and Kumaran.

Ravi protests and his protest is against a whole system. Ravi's yearning for negative freedom leads to the negative manifestation of his' protest: he disposes of the parasites Varma and Kumaran. Kumaran however has his sympathy for a long time and it is only in exasperation at his own plight that Ravi is harsh towards Kumaran also.

Cruelty to the hapless disabled people represents the ultimate moral degradation and unethical refusal of social responsibility in Markandaya's vision. Dandekar's contempt for the dwarf and the ostracisation of Srinivas are parallel situations. Ravi, who had even once goaded Kumaran to rebel against the manner in which the most meagre share was doled out to him, drives the poor deformed creature out of the house.

while Damodar poses the constant threat to Ravi's honest life, Nalini is the constant counterfoil to the dishonest one that Ravi would have otherwise embraced: "I've tried," said Ravi miserably. "You know I have. But now my wife - she - she doesn't want me to do anything dishonest she and her family, I mean, they're respectable." (A Handful of Rice 116).

Ravi's ingrained decency—his sense of duty—has entered the every marrow of his existence by now. Markandaya present this from Ravi's point of view:

What had happened to him, what had happened to these truths of his own experience that he should now be denying them? Was it that he was now so much a member of the tribe of the respectable that tribal faults had to be pretended out of existence? (A Handful of Rice 116).

His responsibilities "press down on him unpleasantly" and remind him that he has a duty to Nalini.

A truly free person works for others. Without one's fellowmen, one cannot raise oneself up. Thus freedom and responsibility go together. To be truly free, one has to mature while serving others. Responsibility to Apu, to Nalini, to his children, and to his own self – faces Ravi at every turn and this unspoken reminder enables him to resist the life – style that Damodar tempts him to. It is by no means easy to resist it. He knew that if he did not, then

He perpetuated the rottenness, this vicious living that had pared them down to one meal a day.... One good meal, and he had to watch his children sucking their fingers, grow silent and anxious, long before the next one was due. This one good meal was not enough for him. He wanted more. It was his right, his children's right.

Roger Iredale suggests that Ravi's "essential decency" is his tragic flaw. (Iredale, Tenor 49) Trapped between "the two visions" Ravi cannot find a firm ground.

Ravi's rebellion is directed silently against a system where only the smart and the wicked prosper. But the only solution he finds costs him his own integrity. Ravi raises existential questions: what is the meaning of his situation? Essentially, he is alone in his rebellion. The older generations in India have always clung together with a lot of "claptrap"—what Ravi calls "a conspiracy of old men to keep young men content with their lot, because they wanted no rebels in their midst". (A Handful of Rice 182)

When rebellion seems futile, and financial insecurity increases, Ravi turns into a wife-beater. Nalini's near-miscarriage fills him with remorse because he has forsaken his responsibilities. Despair drives him to a bar, and he broods over his lot. He walks out of the bar and finds himself surrendering to the world of value he had once despised. Markandaya's style conveys the exact effect of the tensions Ravi suffers:

Beaten her (Nalini), he ought above the buzzing that blurred his thinking but not sufficiently. Taken it out on her, not many times but more than once, certainly more than once. How many more? He crushed his head between his fists, doubled his hands and dug the knuckles into his temples, but he could not extract the information he wanted.

Nalini, on the other hand, is the traditional recipient of suffering. “We’ll manage” is her favourite expression. But for Ravi, the “ring of living” grows tighter round them and what should be an occasion for rejoicing such as a baby’s birth becomes merely an exercise in endurance. Slowly, Ravi begins to feel that life and happiness mean just being content with his wife and children—“the feeling he had wrapped himself in for consolation when confronted and crushed by Damodar’s wealth—that this was ‘what life was about not the riches and luxuries upon which he had once, long ago, set his heart. But it came rarely, and was not always convincing” (A Handful of Rice 196).

Ravi then turns from being angry and rebellious to being pessimistic and spiritless. The threat of ruin drives him again to Damodar, the symbol of social irresponsibility.

In the jungle-like city he loses his personal identity, and this shows the aloneness and insignificance of the individual against a gigantic cityscape. The image of the “jagged” city and the shadow that is Ravi now—all gathered in accumulated force to provide the backdrop for Ravi’s crisis. He becomes “the unbroken rebelling outsider who had opted to come out.”

Even the house, devoid of its members, assumes the image of emptiness and desolation. Once an image of responsibility and family solidarity, the house now signifies disharmony and dislocation.

Ravi progresses to a state of irresponsibility rather than freedom and fulfillment. HE imagines that the “cosy peaceful living” he had allowed to take himself away from Damodar’s way of life is just a delusion and so “ten years late,” there he is, “sitting at Damodar’s feet....waiting to be told what to do” (A Handful of Rice 212). The jungle-image highlights his situation:

“He was alone in the jungle, and in the jungle one fought. Or died” (A Handful of Rice 217). But even at this moment, the suggestion of Damodar to join in the looting of the grain market does not induce Ravi to take the plunge. He thinks it is the

“respectability that had entered his soul” what he calls “the shoddy morality of a hypocritical society”, that keeps him away. Though he does not realise it, it 'is the personal code namely the code of conscience, that is ingrained in him now. In the “long dialogue in his brain” (A Handful of Rice 218), Markandaya poses questions of social injustice and economic inequity. Ravi's conflict is the result of the conflicting forces of his situation—the moral versus the commercial, the personal fulfillment versus the success ethic. ‘Ravi has to choose between “conscience and violence, compassion and cruelty, integrity and cunning”’.

In a fit of disgust, Ravi drives out Nalini who has at last expressed her righteous indignation at his association with Damodar. The rape of Jayamma is the culmination of Ravi's moral degradation.

Whether to consider moral codes and forsake his children's right to the fruit of civilisation or vice versa becomes Ravi's dilemma.

Finally, he decides to choose the former because responsibility to oneself is also important. The last ‘desperate bid to join the mob for looting the granary is an attempt to summon the energy to protest. But at the crucial moment Ravi withdraws. Shiv K. Kumar describes the precise nature of Ravi's plight: “But in the midst of an orgy of mob-fry, Ravi is caught up in an existential moment of soul-searching”

He further comments that Markandaya's characters are caught in the “agony of chasing between spiritualism, sometimes denigrated as ‘passive withdrawal’, and materialism, often glorified as ‘dynamic progress,’” and that the novelist's verdict rings out unequivocally. (Osmania Journal 8-9)

The force of years of conformity and the ingrown spiritual code that had now unconsciously become a part of him prevents Ravi from participating in the irresponsible act of looting. Markandaya thus points out that there are indefinable zones of the spirit where alone abides peace, and rebellion cannot bring about “the peace that passed understanding.

In Markandaya's fictional world, there is no place for irresponsible freedom in the Indian tradition. Even Ravi's questioning attitude in the middle section of the book is not really rebellion. While rebellion has its mainspring in superabundant activity and energy, resentment is passive and always highly flavored with envy. (Albert Camus 22)

Ravi is more resentful than rebellious; but when he turns rebellious in the last scene, he cannot summon enough energy to carry it through.

If the true aim of realism is a conquest of the real world, Markandaya recreates in her novels rebellious tendencies with a notion of plausibility. Unlike in the world of naturalistic fiction, milieu does not dominate here but is held in a fine balance with the self of the individual character.

Ravi's progress, then, is from irresponsibility to responsibility, back again for a time to Irresponsibility and then to a realisation of his duties.

His situation compares appropriately with that in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *The Householder* (1960), where Prem married Indu and, with increasing responsibilities, grows frustrated and lashes out his anger at Indu. The responsibilities of marriage prove too much for Prem. Jhabvala gives a realistic picture of the young couple winning their way to the status of responsible adults.

The minor characters of the novel—Apu, Jayamma, Nalini, Puttanna, Damodar—are presented in sufficient detail, but none of them grows in stature and largely remain rather flat. They exist in relation to Ravi's development.

However, they emerge as representatives of different kinds of character. Apu, for example, represents the paternal figure of conventional and responsible behaviour, while Puttanna and Varma are the prototypes of "lotus-eaters" and their parasitical living invites Ravi's resentment. Kumaran emerges as a symbol of the responsibility one accepts for the weak and handicapped.

Ravi's final decision is not due to his failure but to a growth to maturity when it is learnt that conformity to internalised authority like conscience seems more sensible and freedom is possible only with the full development of the self. Ravi will hopefully progress to a greater awareness of himself.

What A. V. Krishna Rao says about Markandaya's characters as growing into their society, participating in its changes, and after the initial withdrawal from it, returning to its more permanent solaces¹, is relevant here. Markandaya, as in her other novels, is again affirming the value of personal relationship and family bonds. Ravi's "I don't feel in me mood today...." and "But tomorrow, yes, tomorrow..." (*A Handful of Rice* 237) only connotes his unconscious retreat into a safe position of conformity. The unspoken

moral conscience of his tradition would not allow him to take up the cudgels against the prevalent system in a violent manner.

A Handful of Rice thus penetrates beneath the veneer of social respectability to examine the lives of the victims of an unfair social system a sphere in which Mulk Raj Anand achieved a niche. Just as industrialisation assumes the form of a looming threat in Anand (Coolie, 1936 and Untouchable, 1935), social and economic facts threaten Ravi also. While Rukmani of Nectar in a Sieve (1954) is a puppet in 'the hands of Fate, Ravi is portrayed as facing a moral choice.

In the universe of discourse that 'Markandaya presents, there is no total divorce born society. The individual has to find freedom within the fold of society—the freedom to grow within the sphere of basic human relationships and moral codes.

Markandaya's 'The Cofferdams' (1969) is a mature work in which the efficiency of Western technology is pitted against the passivity of the aborigines of a tribal village in South India. The modes in which the traditional moorings of the tribals are upset and the way they are drawn into the vortex of a volcanic change of values and new mode's of living are carefully built into the plot.

Industrialisation is the threat to the traditional cultural life-styles in both Nectar in a Sieve (1954) and The Cofferdams (1969). This novel adumbrates the value of human sensibility and relationships in the face of technological progress.

The plot is centered on the construction of a dam to channelise a turbulent river in a hilly region. Clinton and Mackendrick, the chief engineers of a British Company, work under the stresses caused by nature and the hostile attitudes of Krishnan and his band of Indian technicians and workers. They battle against various impediment accidents, workers unrest official delays—and in the process Clinton neglects human consideration and goodwill. Is the result worth the price? That seems to be Markandaya's open question.

Having undertaken the vast project of constructing a dam, Howard Clinton is determined to finish it successfully. He gives priority to the construction against odds and pressures, even at the cost of humanitarian values. Clinton cannot brook any opposition to his plans or any delay in the schedule. In his system of business ethics, one cannot stop work even if dead human bodies have to be buried. Helen believes, not in business ethics, but in human values; she takes the freedom to suggest human

consideration for the workers. Clinton is, however, adamant, and cannot brook interference, even from his wife: “My work, he said, from mounting conviction, which loomed tall as a mountain now; my dam, my business”.(The Cofferdams 123)

While the “construction” plot focuses on Clinton, the parallel plot centers on his wife Helen. Nevertheless, both the plots are delicately interconnected. The triangular nexus of Clinton-Helen-Bashiam is connected by Helen.

Clinton and Bashiam are initially related in their professional lives. Helen, gradually moving away from Clinton towards Bashiam, brings Clinton and Bashiam closer on a personal level so that Clinton nearly affects the fate of Bashiam. Helen has then to move backwards to Clinton.

There is thus the forward-backward movement as of dance-formations, and the finale is a return to the original positions but with the postures all changed. Helen initially passes through the desire for freedom, the apparent freedom of her love for Bashiam, but eventually returns to a sense of responsibility and of peace with herself and the world including Clinton. Clinton also mellows through the experience and progresses to a perceptible sensitivity to the symbiotic relationship between technology and society. Bashiam, back at the tribal village, is a martyr to the cause of humanitarianism.

Markandaya thus presents a movement in and out of the worlds of duty, of responsibility, of sensibility and personal inclination, and of authority and conformity, and also of stern business ethics and social conscience.

As Caserio says, “Plot may be considered a story-teller’s way of thinking or theorising about the experience he represents; it may even be his way of dramatising and prosecuting theory until he feels convinced that he can substantiate the theory as a truth about life.”(Robert L. Caserio 28) Markandaya elaborates her fictional concerns through her plot.

The two main crises of the novel are the two accidents. The first is the death of Bailey and of Wilkins, and work has to be suspended to give them a “decent Christian burial”; in the second, forty-two men fall into the river and two of the dead bodies cannot be recovered because a boulder has jammed them.

While Mackendrick and the others debate about the possibilities of recovery, Clinton decides that rather than delay the work, the “bodies can be incorporated. Into

the structure” (The Cofferdams 163). Krishnan, the spokesman of the Indian band of workers, says that unless the bodies are recovered and given decent last rites, the workers would go on strike.

This event has two critical consequences: viz., (1) the crippling of Bashiam, ‘and (2) the realisation on both sides that human values should be the basis of technological progress, regardless of the diversity in cultural matrices. The cynical arrogance with which Clinton at first refuses to accommodate the Indian sentiments about the accident victims is indicative not only of the Western “push” in technology but also of the racial prejudice.

Markandaya projects Clinton’s point of view through his own consciousness. She employs the shifting point of view described by Forster as the “power to expand and contract perception, this right to intermittent knowledge.” (E.M. Forster 78) The work of *The Cofferdams* progresses fast at the cost of the sensitivity to human consciousness.

The focus in the environmental encounter is on Helen, caught between two radically different systems of values, beliefs, attitudes. The “forward-surg-ing motion” (Uma Parameswaran 90) of the narrative presents Helen’s story reinforced with those of her husband and the wider social circle of the British encampment and the East-West encounter.

The East-West encounter is not only on the level of people but also on that of ideas. Markandaya presents the cultural clash in terms of the humanistic concerns and technological progress. The values of human relationships and the question of integrity and communication that enters into them cannot be sacrificed at the altar of steel. This, in a nutshell, is Markandaya’s concern in *The Cofferdams*.

Nectar in a Sieve also voices the same concern for human values in the wake of industrialisation, the same humanistic anxiety that Thomas Hardy expressed at the end of the 19th century following the large-scale industrialisation of the countryside and the misery of the defrauded individual.

The Cofferdams (1969) also elaborates on the choices that individuals confront in a changing milieu more and more determined by technology. Helen, Clinton and Bashiam are faced with certain options that become relevant against the backdrop of the construction of the dams.

In the first few chapters, Clinton and Helen are shown happily married, though Clinton never allows Helen to interfere with or influence, his professional activity, and in turn, never thinks of intruding into Helen's privacy.

Clinton is even proud of his wife's individuality that is conspicuously absent in the order English women in the 'camp. Still, there are times when Clinton dislikes 'her spirit of independence-and her unpredictable behavior. His basic desire is that she would completely identify herself with his responsibility to complete the coffer dams at all cost.

Helen, however moves away from the yoke of marital responsibility in search of an illusory freedom. She is impelled by a spirit of exploration and adventure.

The constraints of marital life with Clinton prove -too much for her independent nature; and she desires freedom from them. Clinton's instinctive awareness that she is moving away from him makes the division deeper.

He senses it first when, at the end of Chapter VI, Mackendrick tells him that Helen has not confided in him about it, He smarts in silence: "It would be, it seemed to him, a sleazy parading of the privacies of marriage; a disloyalty to her for him to reveal there were areas in her life born which -she shut him out". Contrasted with Dandekar of *A Silence of Desire* (1960) who realises that Sarojini has been leading a, life which is excluded from himself, and so is reduced to demonstrative anger and cunning, Clinton's sense of hurt is deep and silent.

Clinton's feeling of jealousy develops again with a pang when Millie Rawlings insinuates about it at the party. Though he has inkling that Helen is leading a separate emotional life he can do- linking or nothing about it. His fragmented mind has separate chambers for the personal and professional aspects of his life. This is his idea' of happiness until Helen's slow drifting away from him:

If only you would, he fought, keep away from those bloody aboriginals and behave like the other women on the station do: What then of the non-conformity, 'the unpredictability he had loved in his wife?—well, these qualities were still important to him, it was just that they belonged elsewhere, to another time and country. (*The Coffer Dams*, p.78).

Clinton's portrayal reflects the most devastating alienation which is in the individual's relation to his own self. At first he becomes emotionally separated from

Helen; but it is only after Bashiam's accident that he feels contrite because it also makes him aware of his alienation from his own self.

Helen's movement away from the confines of the British quarters is a rebellion against the Western racist attitudes and behaviour. When Helen begins her search, she is not really and fully aware of what she wants but she gradually develops an increasing awareness. She realises that fulfilment lies in building bridges of understanding. Her perception expands to an awareness of the vastness of the sustaining tribal tradition. She sees beyond the British perception of the natives as mere "black apes"; she sees them as alive, sensitive men and women, and not "blank opacities of total incomprehension" (The Cofferdams 35).

The cold inhumanity in making a whole settlement of tribals vacate a place just to make bungalows with the best view for the British engineers shocks her into a desire to rebel against conformity to the standards of the group.

The tell-tale pieces of cooking pots give her the clue to the mystery of the forceful tribal evacuation. Cruelty to fellow humans is unforgivable in her scale of values. To Clinton and some other Englishmen, the tribals are merely "like animals."

Helen, who needs to affirm herself, moves out and tries to achieve the sense of a full life by living not for public approval and acceptance, but to achieve authenticity. Her interest in Bashiam and the resulting love-affair is a desire for a freedom which cannot ultimately help her fulfil her social responsibilities. It is the result of her urge to achieve a sense of unity with her own true liberal self. She achieves the awareness of true freedom only after her experiences in this quest.

In Markandaya's vision, the Helen-Bashiam relationship is never permanent except on the basis of humaneness and responsibility as in the Srinivas-Mrs. Pickering relationship (The Nowhere Man, 1972). Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) reveals how personal and cultural incompatibility prevents a durable relationship between Rama and Madeleine.

In *The Cofferdams*, the Helen-Bashiam affair is dictated by Helen's longing for freedom, her felt need to redeem herself and her people, as it were, and by Bashiam's carnal craving for Helen. Bashiam is the educated tribal who, though his roots are attenuated, finds satisfaction in the richness of team spirit and professional achievement; his sense of responsibility and devotion to work, ironically, attract Helen.

Helen's need to have freedom is paralleled by similar urges of the female protagonist in Indo-English novels by other women writers such as Sahgal's Simrit in *the Day in Shadow* (1971) and Rashmi in *This Time of Morning* (1965), Mrinalini Sambhai's Parvati in *This Alone is True* (1977), and in Padmini Sengupta's *Red Hibiscus* (1962).

In the interaction with the autochthonic traditions and the development of her cultural consciousness, Helen slowly begins to discover fullness. Her nature had, she feels, been starved in England. Hers is a thirst for the fullness of life which, as Paul Kurtz says in *the Fullness of Life*, is always related to the cultural context we exist in. (Paul Kurtz 100)

In this search for fullness of being men do seek freedom from different bonds at the beginning but most of Markandaya's chief characters progress to at least a partial realisation of the true implication of this fullness.

The "fullness of being" that Kurtz calls happiness is what Helen seeks—"a life in which qualities of satisfaction and excellence are present." (Paul Kurtz 95) Helen seems to say with Kurtz: "The injunction is to be myself, not what others would have me be; I must express my own nature in all its variety and create something new. (Paul Kurtz 101-102)

The ideal of spontaneous activity of total integrated personality is what is actually sought and this, as Helen discovers, is achieved through love for all fellow-beings and through work as creation which also includes love and duty to Clinton.

Helen diverts her surplus energy, then, in the form of benevolent activities towards the tribals in whom she recognises this sense of community and the inherent psychological need to belong. Helen rebels against conformity to the group-standards of behaviour in order that she may fulfill a developing social awareness.

Clinton unconsciously seeks freedom from the restraining bonds of emotion; in fact, the obsession with the construction of the dam is his involuntary escape from a whole gamut of emotions.

He is also the Western pragmatist with no use for humanistic concerns in professional work. Emotions, however, cannot be killed, and they should have an existence apart from the intellectual; Clinton shuns his moral responsibilities to the families of the two dead Indians, to Bashiam before and after the accident.

When Bashiam goes to lift the boulder, he is asked by Clinton, the cunning, who knows that the lugs of the crane are faulty, “ ‘Do you wish to go on?’ ” out of a sense of duty, “so that no man afterwards could accuse” (The Coffey Dams 185). Still voices ‘roared’ in derision within him,—his moribund conscience.

It is typical of Clinton that he does not allow his judgment of Bashiam as a crane operator to be twisted by his “dark emotions” as he calls them.

The Stream-of-Consciousness technique is used well to lay his mind bare. Although Clinton’s fears about the rains are finally justified, the most important consideration seem to be, nonetheless, the value of humanity versus materialism as well as the fact that it is men who do the work, not machines.

Clinton’s near-rape of his wife is at once the symbolic refusal of responsibility and the avowal of a jealous male chauvinism. It also displays his compulsive need to assert his authority.

The emotional cleavage between Helen and Clinton remains unbridged until the arrival of the monsoon, obliterating racial and other man-made institutional differences between the natives, the Indians, and the British.

The modern juggernaut of technological progress is on, despite the tribal attitudes. Helen persists: “ ‘Don’t human beings matter anything to you? Do they have to be a special kind of flesh before they do?’ ” (The Coffey Dams 105). Helen’s motivation for her rebellion against group conformity is thus a positive search for meaning, but ‘the freedom from’ the constraints of social structure, the negative freedom that she assumes, is not a fruitful one in Markandaya’s world. There has to be a return, in maturity, to a greater acceptance of limitations.

Bashiam also moves back to an acceptance of his moral responsibility, because he takes Helen not out of serious emotional involvement with her but because he finds her a willing prey to his lust and a source of confidence.

Though he tries at first to renounce his roots, he has ultimately to return to them. Helen’s friendship with the natives teaches her some “glimpsed truths”, “nebulous understanding no less valid for its lack of form” she learns that sheer dynamism of action alone is not the only means to an end, that there is greater value-of-acceptance, of sympathy.

In the silent wisdom of the headman, in the self-contained strength of the hill-folks, she perceives the force of passive resistance. In the scene that shows Bashiam operating the crane to lift the boulder, the parallel plots merge with remarkable precision.

Areas of experience in one individual life cannot be wholly divorced from one another. For Bashiam, the risk taken is a way of showing his obligation to his people as well as to Clinton. Besides, this is necessary for him to achieve positive freedom, “an easing of the bonds”, as Markandaya terms it.

The quality of mutual respect in the Helen—Clinton relationship keeps them secure even after the drift. Clinton almost confesses his guilt about Bashiam’s accident and this bridges the gap between the couple. Clinton voluntarily says: “ ‘I did not wish to destroy’ ” and Helen responds with: “ ‘if you are says’ ” and he accepts her.

Helen’s progression to the realisation becomes intense—after this meeting with Clinton. She then meets Bashiam, the tribal chief, and Mackendrick. She moves through her rebellious phase to an awareness of the total situation and of her own self in relation to the external world and to an eventual acceptance of her responsibility to Clinton.

Bashiam’s accident leaves him also with a clearer understanding of his situation, and in a few words, he convinces Helen that their relationship cannot be the same anymore; that there are greater obligations and responsibilities; “There are some things which one has to do”, he tells Helen. In the short dialogue between them (The Cofferdams 203),

Markandaya voices her sense of the inevitability of a return to traditional moorings, and to a sense of responsibility with a fuller understanding. Helen’s affair with Bashiam ends with the growth of the individuals and their realisation that escape from any kind of responsibility does not constitute real freedom and that sooner or later, the voices of the majority, convention and society, will have their repercussions on individual destinies.

The symbolic experience of Millie Rawlings also expands the meaning and impact of growth of the individual in relation to an alien culture. Millie also feels the strangeness of the country; she tries to forget it at parties and in her consciousness, on

which impinge the noise, the dust and the stress of living in this mysterious cultural milieu.

All this accumulates into a form of symbolic to convey the collective guilt which Markandaya exploits to convey the collective guilt of the English as a whole.

It is suggested that behind the facade of studied indifference that the English exhibit towards India, there is a sense of guilt about their violation of the native spirit in the name of technological and material progress. Markandaya, like R.K. Narayan, thus exhibits the disturbing trend of recent development in India.

The symbolic scene in which Millie runs amuck into the dark jungle and faints is a vivid depiction of this kind of guilt as one is drawn willingly or unwillingly into the dark recesses of human consciousness and is faced with a revelation. The expression is of a moral development and it also has something to do with the centuries of collective guilt of the Western man in relation to the Eastern cultures.

The advent of the rains is the symbolic backdrop for the quelling of passions.

The rain becomes the cleansing-agent for bitter prejudices and ill-gotten notions. Millie comments on the growth of realisation: “ ‘Something... Something is building up’ ”. The authorial comment is: “All, it seemed, were inching towards discovery” (The Coffin Dams 108). The coffers would have had to be breached to fulfil their responsibility to the tribals if necessary. The tribal chief is used as a ploy to convey possible solutions. “ ‘It is enough to look within,’ ” he says.

Helen grows through the affair with Bashiam and the interaction with the tribals to the acceptance of her marital responsibility that includes tolerance of Clinton, and to the fulfillment of her social responsibilities through full and active realisation of the individual self in love for all men which again means tolerance and acceptance; and in creative work, it would include social concern.

Helen echoes Bashiam: There are some things which one has to do” (The Coffin Dams 219). These “things” enlarge into the unseen responsibilities one has in a community. The tribal chief’s death and his ultimate prediction occur coincidentally.

The ridges rise clear and demonstrate also the clearer vision of Helen and Mackendrick who have been anxious about the tribal settlements in a possible flood.

It also emphasizes the usefulness of language to convey experience. As Lodge says, plot and character in narrative literature are “useful—indeed essential—but the closer we get to defining the unique identity and interest of this plot or that character, the closer we are brought to a consideration of the language in which we are encounter these things.” (David Lodge 78) Helen’s psychological growth is the focus of the novel, and is well depicted through the intense language used.

In *The Coffer Dams*, Markandaya presents the abstractions involved in this return which recalls her earlier novel *Some Inner Fury* (1955). While here the major characters and the protagonist are Europeans, in the other novel these are Indians, except for Richard.

In this novel Markandaya enters the thought processes of Clinton and Helen successfully and her language achieves the powerful complexity of thought process itself. Helen’s search for true freedom involves the initial rebellion against social codes of behavior: for example, even the butler Das thinks that the “present memsahib kept low company” (*The Coffer Dams* 78).

Markandaya focusses on Helen’s quest basically against the background of the changing economic and industrial milieu in India. Clinton’s belief is: “The country’s affecting her, he told himself, it’s getting on her nerves...” (*The Coffer Dams* 105).

Helen’s search for her identity achieves meaning against this particular backdrop. For a time, she misunderstands her freedom and takes refuge in the illicit relationship with Bashiam which proves transient though it does offer her insight into her own self. The tribal headman becomes the symbol of traditional authority which is silent but present.

Through contact with Bashiam, with the headman, with the tribals, Helen progresses to the belief that peace lies within oneself. Before the attainment of peace, there is both conflict and struggle; Helen’s symbolic walk through the jungle captures the experience. Helen realises also her responsibility to the tribal sellers in the event of a Hood though she knows that the British in the encampment could not be careless.

Mackendrick also in the final phase, is one with Helen in the tension due to the experience. He, unlike Clinton, has always been sensitive to the needs of the Indians and has softer business ethics than Clinton. At the final phase, when encountered by Helen, Clinton also admits silently his guilt about Bashiam’s accident. In the final

challenge of human considerations at the onset of the monsoon, Mackendrick compels him to understand the risks the tribals would be subject to, while Clinton is not willing to destroy the coffers. “‘The people,’” says Mackendrick, thus underlining the value of social responsibility.

Clinton fails to be persuaded; and Helen asks; “‘Is there to be,’ she said, ‘no line drawn, at which one stops?’” (The Coffers Dams 217). Clinton has the inner feeling of guilt but does not answer for a time; then steeling himself because, for him the stakes are high, he says, “‘No lines are possible’” (The Coffers Dams 217). However, the opposition he encounters from his own wife and his partner opens Clinton’s eyes to the vaster implications of responsibility and duty; his short silences on Helen’s penetrating questions mark the implied slow growth. Meanwhile, Helen’s open defiance has subsided to a quiet tolerance and a sympathy for Clinton which is the result of greater maturity.

It is worthwhile studying the language of *The Coffers Dams* in itself; as a mirror to the thought processes of Helen, it achieves a remarkable effect.

The emotive impacts of the images in the novel are important. For example, Helen does not smell the rain that Bashiam can. She says that it is as “dry as a bone.” Then she speaks of “pavements” “battered” down upon (The Coffers Dams 138). Images thus built up through associations.

Images of the land, animals, “a pop-up cardboard figure,” etc. end up in “open, weeping sores” (The Coffers Dams 131). The image of the forest highlights the complexity of Helen’s experience: Clinton thinks of bones: “. . . and thought of calcium, the chalk that went to the making of cliffs and the framework of men” (The Coffers Dams 177).

The skin is a prominent image, stressing the racial emphasis on colour: skins had to be “peeled”, and there are “frightened frills of skin and hair” (The Coffers Dams 158). Metallic and engineering imagery, appropriately enough, and also animal imagery occupy a major place in the novel. The jungle (not the jungle-city of *A Handful of Rice*, 1966, but the forest as a subterranean level of consciousness), the land, the rain, the river running at different elevations all images that become symbols by the end of the novel.

The dam itself turns into a symbol. The project, a symbolic link between the East and the West is not accomplished easily:

So that Mackendrick felt that for two pins he would have risen and spelt out DAM, in letters of some white fire that would burn painfully, and perhaps purify, "leaving only what mattered".(The Coffe Dams 178).

The ridges, rising clear, almost solve the threat to block all communication. The rains represent the purifying force; the walk through the forest is hot fruitless-it leads to the restoration through a process of purification, and results in a clearer vision with the clearing up of the monsoon rains.

The very success and strength of technology seems thus to cauterize human sensibility so much that Helen searches for an identity in a world where people have forcibly been torn from their roots. Except to Helen, the tribals are hardly civilized in thought and feeling to the whites. Helen's exploration reminds the whites at the encampment of a probable destruction of the image they have formed of the natives.

One is reminded of Markandaya's words when she speaks of this preconceived image of one nation's individuals by another. Images, are regulators of our conduct towards each other, and through us they broaden to regulate the conduct of nation to nation. These images are basically quite simple. They are my pre-conception of you, and your pre-conception of me, and they are important not because of you or me, but because we, in the mass, become nation-States....They shape the patterns of behaviour of nation to nation...(Markandaya Of Images 78)

Helen reacts in a different and unique way to her environment, but in this self-discovery revolt against social norms is also involved. To begin with, Helen tries to escape, but the later Helen has a more mature outlook.

Thus, the social setting limited to the tribals is most appropriate for enacting the theme of the conflict between Eastern sensibility and Western technology due to the prevailing cultural chasm. The environments is used to determine and complete the individuals who live in it and internet with it. Helen, Bashiam, Mackendrick, Millie—all grow through the effect of the environment.

Markandaya does not display an authorial sympathy with any part of the character's attitudes though she does perceive Helen's growth with more intensity than that of either Bashiam or even Clinton.

The Coffe Dams thus brings to the fore some of the major issues encountered in the process of industrialisation. The rise of a dam means also the imposition of new

values-commercialism, material comfort and alienation from tradition as seen in Bhattacharya's *Shadow from Ladakh* (1966).

The 'Steeltown' of Bhattacharya carries, in its wake, a new scale of values as opposed to the traditional Gandhian system represented by 'Gandhigram.'

The loss of the traditional value of stable continuity and harmony is seen as too heavy a price to pay for the modern industrial progress.

The self-sufficient farmers and villagers, suddenly deprived of their means of income and their contented peaceful life-styles and forced to move to factories and industrial areas, are not only exploited by the higher classes but also compelled to accept a new set of unstable commercial values contrary to the traditional certitudes of cultural stability and of human relationships. Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) is an example of the evils of materialism. The root is the same as in *The Coffin Dams*, though the technique, vision, time and climate do differ.

Markandaya is not against material progress but affirms that, in the process of change, human values should not be lost. Her fictional concern is corroborated by the real-life situations even today. (The Indian Express)

Helen emerges as one of the connecting figures, bridging the gap between East and West—and more specifically, between human values and industrial progress. Helen's conflict between non-conformity and a sense of freedom along with the idea of duty and conformity operates against this background. Her experience of freedom from marital life and from the closed structure of the British encampment is filtered through a keenly sensitive layer of consciousness.

Clinton's near-acknowledgement of his guilt about the false report he gives about the Bashiam affair makes him realise the limits of his separation from emotional influence. He progresses to a gesture of acknowledgement of the sense of responsibility to the other people cutting across caste' and race barriers.

Markandaya's advocacy of empathy in human relations and of concern for fellowmen is part of the spontaneous activity of a fully developed personality. Clinton's professional commitments have to be recognised as different from his responsibility as a human being.

The tale of individuals caught in moments of crisis enlarges into the tale of an encounter between Indian sensibility and Western technology and also between humanistic individualism and routine conformity to the conventional codes of behavior. Through the experiences of Clinton and Helen, the novelist demonstrates responsibility at individual as well as group levels. The final note is one of hope that the individuals would progress to a clearer realisation of their, own true selves, and function creatively with better awareness. Her restless energy spent, Helen can achieve a greater peace now through fulfillment of duty in both marital and interpersonal relations.

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Chapter-V

A Thematic Analysis in 'The Nowhere Man' and 'Two Virgins'

The East-West confrontation is once again the predominant theme in *The Nowhere Man* (1972). It shows Markandaya's continued concern with cultural values in the context of racist attitudes in England following the decline and defeat of the British imperialism. In this novel, she probes deeper than in her previous novel into the actual social interaction below the surface of inter-cultural tensions at personal and group levels.

The experiences of Srinivas, the 'nowhere man', occur against the background of intercultural conflict in the social situation in England and, like in *Possession*, expose the individual consciousness to an alien and hostile cultural milieu. While Val does not choose to go to England, Srinivas chooses to emigrate to England; while Val eventually returns to India, Srinivas dies a martyr's death on the altar of tolerance in the context of apartheid in post-war Britain.

This novel clearly testifies to Markandaya's authentic experience as well as her clear mastery of the technique of fictionalising the outer reality.

Srinivas's problems as he tries to fit into the corpus of the British society form the content of the plot. The cross-cultural situation brings about the feeling of isolation as seen also in Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner* (1968) or Richard Wright's *The Outsider* (1953). All deal with the isolation of displaced persons at social and domestic levels.

However, Markandaya does not give any formula for a better understanding because there is none except humane concern; and this, Markandaya does indirectly through her literature of concern.

Thakur Guruprasad comments that Markandaya's is "a very objective, balanced and truthful account of Indo-British relations—past and present—filtered through the genuine artist's imagination, pointing to the final view echoed half a century later, after the Kipling vogue has come and gone".² He says that in this novel Markandaya has presented the vision of East-West encounter in the specific milieu of Indo-British relationship in a century of chequered history on the pattern "made famous by another, more prestigious creative writer... Rudyard Kipling...(Thakur Guruprasad 200-201)

Uma Parameswaran argues that in her first five novels Markandaya shows a growing alienation from the Indian scene, but that in *The Cofferdams* (1969) and in *The Nowhere Man* (1972) she has come to grips with the problem confronting expatriate writers as well as millions of immigrants and solved it to the betterment of her art (Uma Parameswaran 90).

As Thakur Guruprasad says, *The Nowhere Man* is “a remarkable work of fiction depicting the tragedy of bicultural living in all its harrowing aspects” (Thakur Guruprasad 199). Srinivas, the victim-protagonist, is the prototype of the resigned victim of racial discrimination at the end of the novel; but he is ironically a rebel against it in India.

While Ravi is a more active protagonist who is vehement and protesting at least in thought and speech most of the way, Srinivas is the passive non-conformist who suffers silently for most part of the novel. Although M.P. Joseph comments that Srinivas does not “kick” but contents himself with a passive affirmation of his identity which relates him more to the bewildered twentieth-century hero, (Kamala Markandaya 78)

Srinivas is not an anti-hero. Both Ravi and Srinivas portray the individual crises in the face of conflicting and differing situations, the one in economic misery, the other in social and racial ostracisation. Srinivas is the embodiment of an unconquerable human will for most part of the novel and finally emerges, phoenix-like, as a symbol of cultural integration and peaceful coexistence of races.

As in *Possession* (1963), the East-West racial opposition is the backdrop of the plot. The scene is set in England and the setting of the action is the pre-war and post-war Britain in the forties and fifties until India became free and a few years after.

Srinivas is a victim of oppression; in the wake of the senseless racial violence caused by the misguided British youths, he dies a martyr. Markandaya makes us aware of the subtle levels at which social interaction occurs.

M.P. Joseph is probably a little casual when she calls the book “a documentary on racial prejudice and its origin in colonialism”, (Kamala Markandaya 73) for it is a very satisfying work of art, not a mere “documentary”. Thakur Guruprasad speaks of Markandaya's experiential knowledge of the two cultures—eclectic, mystical, oriental Indian and Christian, post-Renaissance, Protestant, insular and secularised British.” (Guruprasad 199) Markandaya's perceptive vision of the deep racial prejudices helps in

moulding the artistic whole wherein the individual's plight against inter-racial tension emerges in all its subtle nuances.

Against the inter-racial background is set the individual struggle of Srinivas whose experiences emerge as a pattern of escape from conformity, the taste of negative freedom and a return to a mental acceptance of constraints through a greater awareness.

Markandaya highlights the strength of human commitment and responsibility, devotion and love evident in human relationships even in the midst of racial hatred and fury. As William Walsh says, the novelist's "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." (Walsh 19)

Meanwhile, Srinivas narrates the story of his early life in India and his self-exile to England and friendship with Mrs. Pickering.

The narrative incorporates the remote past of Srinivas and helps us trace the line of Srinivas's mental conflicts and dilemmas to his maturity. The narrative then moves again from the symbolic starting-point of the novel through the phase of racial hostility and ostracisation that Srinivas experiences, the monstrous activities of Fred and his associates and the eventual martyrdom of Srinivas.

The point of view that Markandaya employs in this, novel is that of the third-person omniscient author, and here the stance is more or less of the real author herself, though skilfully filtered through the consciousness of Srinivas and succeeding in presenting his point of view also.

As Wayne C. Booth describes it, the omniscient author is more or less a kind of "second self" which is usually a highly refined and selected version of the real self, a self that can see beyond the limited scope of the narrative, wiser than any real man could be. (Wayne.C.Booth 319) More than in *The Coffin Dams*, she polishes the technique of point of view here, and penetrates the consciousness of the protagonist with a more sharpened skill as in:

The new feeling was detachment.

Their world. Mrs. Pickering's world, which struck most strangely of all. To which she, and they, but not he, belonged. Inhabited an area devoid of meaning for him, but

dense with experience for them. It isolated him, cast him in the role of intruder. Intruder, after ten, twenty, fifty years. (The Nowhere Man 173)

Srinivas is, initially, the young man adhering to the familial bonds and duties at “Chandraprasad”.

But when the society in which he lives faces an upheaval in the form of British despotism, Srinivas’s mind begins to fill with the desires to defy and protest against the injustice meted out to the Indians.

But even at this point, he experiences the surging conflict between the desire to get rid of the controls, and the doubt whether it is right. His situation is such that he begins to long for an escape not only from the social structure but also from himself in the grip of a dilemma: “He would have fled from himself too, but he did not know how” (The Nowhere Man 130). And all that he really needs is peace.

“All I want is peace, said Srinivas, staring at himself, stranger in the glass; all I want is peace. Is that too much to ask? It seemed so.” (The Nowhere Man 131.)

The police search carried on at Srinivas’s house is the turning-point in his career. Vasudev, the suspect, locks himself up in a camphor-wood box and dies of asphyxiation. The mean insult directed at Vasantha drives Srinivas to fury.

His father, Narayan, a staunch loyalist, also rebels against imperialism by singing an Indian hymn at the college function. The “pater-figure” who stays a conformist even when all around him have rebelled, Narayan is also forced to defy the British authority at the end.

But the germ of racial hostility begins to creep into England also, and Srinivas feels trapped in an absurd existential situation. The maturation of Srinivas is slow and steady.

Ignoring the politics of imperialism, Srinivas attempts to merge into the society of England by migration and acceptance of the new values.

He finds that even with his ideas of individual freedom and social consideration he cannot live in harmony because of the whole welter of forces like jingoism and racism which can never be completely eliminated and which surface even without provocation.

Thus driven to England with his newly-wedded wife, Srinivas has to carve out a totally different future from the academic one he had once visualised; so he starts an spice business in London.

Once in London, it is Vasantha's grit, her refusal to turn into a Londoner that preserves Srinivas from total alienation and decline. But she is also practical and adopts the efficiency of British methods over the messy Indian ways. She retains her identity at the same time.

Srinivas's questioning quest becomes an existential search for meaning in the face of an absurd situation. All he wants is peaceful coexistence, but peace evades him. Two other novels replicate the immigrant plight.

Vasantha persuades Srinivas to buy the house at No:5, which fulfils the psychological need to establish their identity. Man's innermost desire is to be recognised as one of the herd or to acquire the sense of "I" which is nearly always in relation to the outside world unless one becomes truly free." (Sane Society 63)

In buying the house, Srinivas buys responsibility also. The "house with basement and attic" turns into the symbol of the security that Vasantha desires in an alien land.

Srinivas who thinks that he does not need it is later on attached to it. Ironically, from its secure premises, Srinivas later struggles to escape with life. The house initially means "chains" to him which he wants to escape from—the chains of responsibility:

"Chains, said Srinivas, glum amid the teak chests and buckled fibre suitcases. We have chained ourselves to four walls and a roof." (The Nowhere Man 20).

It later expands into the responsibility towards his tenants, whom he cannot and should not evict at his own pleasure. His final eviction of them veers back at Srinivas in the hostility he encounters in the neighbourhood.

With the death of Vasantha, something vital in Srinivas snaps and he feels the void impossible to endure and survive. She has symbolised for him their cultural moorings which he had once forcibly rejected to carve out a new future.

Now he feels his individual self threatened and he proceeds to defend his self within the security of his four walls. His emptiness is evoked through effective images:

"That period, for Srinivas, was a dust bowl of being. Empty, without meaning, scooped out, picked clean, no climbing up the slippery sides. A skull, from which all

matter had gone. Sea urchin shell, from which the living lights had been brutally plucked, leaving the pearly skeleton to serve as an ornament for the mindless, the surf-riders of life.” (The Nowhere Man 40).

Though he is free from all responsibilities now, he becomes incapable of performance. The will needs to function through obstacles.

Markandaya thus prepares us amply for the plausibility of his meeting and life with Mrs. Pickering.

The theme of this relationship transforms the novel into a perceptive work of art, and not just a documentary. Personal relationships here are on the East-West axis.

The Srinivas-Pickering relationship is founded on a firm commitment to human values; it is indeed based in true freedom. As J. Filella says, true freedom means “commitment without compulsion.”(Filella Quest 60)

This novel holds forth the possibility of an inter-cultural meeting-point in this relationship where the basis of friendship is deep human empathy and compassion. The vital influence of personal relationship even in teaching greater awareness is perceived, as Srinivas begins to realise his responsibilities to Mrs. Pickering in whose care he places himself “in the warmth of human commitment”. (The Nowhere Man 46), and progresses to an awareness of the responsibility to the country he adopts.

Srinivas matures from the initial belief that he can be isolated from imperialism itself by moving away from his motherland. His expanded consciousness underscores social responsibility which, in Markandaya’s universe of discourse, is of paramount importance.

Srinivas has a duty to the society which has given him a refuge. So though hoodlums like Fred Fletcher would rise now and then to torture the immigrants, the latter cannot negatively react to it since they are indebted, and after all remain responsible ‘aliens’. Srinivas does not bargain for such feelings of responsibility when he escapes from British India but now accepts the fact of commitment: “England was becoming his country” (The Nowhere Man 29). One sees the difference, therefore, between the responsibilities that one undertakes and those that are thrust upon one.

Only, this time he was involved. Citizen of a nation which had gone to war without declaring it.

A naturalized Briton, who must needs share Briton's guilt. Citizen, beyond any of this, of a country to which he was bound by loyalty, even love, which had reverted to peremptory imperial ways:" wayswhich had shaped his life, been soil and seedbed for his own past anguish." (The Nowhere Man 93).

He cannot afford to rebel within its premises, though he faces the forces of racism and colonialism. Further, there is the evidence of physical decay with defiance: "He rebelled, and rebellion exacted its own penalty.

His body, disciplined to remain in the background, edged forward and made its grievances known. Aches and pains, quiescent or ignored before, began to claim his attention"(TheNowhereMan170).ThesituationofSrinivasvalidatesthegeneralisation that the contemporary alienation and existential angst of the intellectual is one of the themes of the Indo-English novel.

In Markandaya's scheme of things, defiance as a form of escape does not pay dividends; as A.V. Krishna Rao points out elsewhere, "the return to society is arecurrent pattern and Markandaya has evolved a fictional technique which keeps in balance the realityof the world outside and that of the individual within. Unlike Anand, she lets her characters grow in their society, participate at depth in its changes and transformation and after the initial recoil and withdrawal from society, return and rehabilitate themselves within its more permanent and enduring values and solaces."(A.V. Krishna Rao 138)

Unlike Valmiki, there is no actual physical return to India for Srinivas because he has exiled himself.

However, in his later mental progression to silent resignation to and acceptance of his condition, he moves back to the philosophic attitudes of his culture, Accidentally, in the process of growth, he realises, along with the Taoist sage, that one should be patient at all times.

Srinivas's spirit does not really break, though it strains under the tension of racial torments.Thenovelreminds usofThePlague(1948)byAlbertCamuswherethetheme is exile, but the exile is due to the plague whereas the emotions that accompany it are similar to those that Srinivas experiences in the loneliness of exile from his people.

It is through the spontaneity of love and creative activity that man can progress to positivefreedom.Srinivas,onceheestablishesawholesomereationshipwithMrs.

Pickering, progresses to a greater degree of maturity. This kind of love as the “active and creative relatedness of man to his fellowman, to himself and to nature,” is seen as one aspect of “productive orientation”. Productive love, as Erich Fromm discusses, always implies “a syndrome of attitudes”—of care, responsibility, respect and knowledge.”(Sane Society 32)

The relationship with Mrs. Pickering revives Srinivas who gladly accepts the responsibilities that are implied in his new personal relationship with Mrs. Pickering as his “common law spouse”. The meaning of human existence as responsible existence is precisely love, and the exercise of true love implies freedom.

In other Indo-English novels like Raja Rao’s *The Serpent and The Rope* (1960), the romantic relationship between Rama and Madeleine does not survive.

In T. N. Sanyal’s *The Marriage* (1973), Leela ultimately leaves Roger and chooses the East because the forces that divide her from the West are too strong; again, the colour consciousness prevents a lasting romantic relationship. In anovel like Chaman Nahal’s *Into Another Dawn* (1977), destiny separates the romantic pair of Ravi Sharma and Irene. In Romen Basu’s *Portrait on the Roof* (1980), however, the marriage between Dilip and the Italian Teresa works, showing that East and West can meet through an eagerness to understand, to forgive, to help, and through “caring” for the other.

In *The Nowhere Man*, Markandaya shows how the more mature friendship of Srinivas and Mrs. Pickering can survive through sympathy, mutual concern and care. It survives various inter-racial storms because it is founded not on external fripperies or sex or money but on the compassionate commitment between two mature individuals.

Meanwhile, the phenomena of social change sweep over the environment. One of the predominant changes is the slow, sneaking and insidious hostility towards Asians.

Srinivas becomes the butt of hostility in the neighbourhood, especially from Fred Fletcher, a misguided young man, who assumes that it is his duty to drive out the “blacks”. Prejudice and meanness do not provoke Srinivas to offensive anger.

If he rebelled, he would have to leave the country and he had nowhere to go. Though he feels both anger and turmoil, “Turmoil,” he said wearily. “Anger and turmoil, which I believed belonged to the past” (*The Nowhere Man* 98), he has no protest because the hostility did not have a rational basis:

BLACKS GO HOME, they said, "their fear and hate crystallised into words which opened whole new hells of corresponding fear and desolation in those at whom they were aimed." (The Nowhere Man 168).

Faced with the "oppressive presence of rejection" (The Nowhere Man 168), Srinivas is bewildered. He is now the introspective thinker; apart from his mental inclination to defy the racial hatred, this "stockpiling of rancor" (The Nowhere Man 170), Srinivas does not protest obviously at this stage. He realises that he is dependent and has a responsibility to the country and that he is not free from the society around him.

He undergoes the struggle between the requirements of society and those of human nature but he develops an awareness which enables him to perceive the futility of protest.

It is interesting to contrast Srinivas's reactions with those of Cross Damon the outsider in Richard Wright's *The Outsider* (1953). The reactions of Cross against racial discrimination are violent, as for example:

Then, convulsively, his entire body jerked rigidly to stem a fearful feeling of falling through space. His rebellious nerves twanged with a terror that his mind sought desperately to deny. He shook his head, his body seething with hate against himself and the world. (Richard Wright 12)

Cross is filled with hate. For Cross rebellion seems the only way in his search for freedom. What really worries him is his "non-identity" 30 (*The Outsider*, p.142), and he yearns for freedom but unlike Srinivas, he has not got rid of worldly desires and passions.

Since it is negative freedom that he desires, he finds nothing positive in his search and commits a number of crimes. In effect, he desires escape from responsibility, rather than responsible freedom as Srinivas does. Cross flees, changes his identity and tries to be "outside" the world to escape from "a vast web of pledges and promises which he had not intended to make and whose implied obligations had been slowly smothering his spirit" (The Nowhere Man 375-76).

Like the story of Srinivas, *The Outsider* shows that there is no escape either from the world or from responsibility. Cross is found guilty but is asked to be his own judge; when the world abandons him, Cross realises the ludicrous nature of his protest and that

one cannot be an outsider because the world will have its revenge. He learns that one has to know oneself and that is important, that men must be good to each other. Like Srinivas, Cross learns at the school of life but in a different way. He dies, convinced that being an outsider is horrible.

Srinivas's desire, like Siddhartha's in Hesse's novel, is for enduring peace, which seems to elude him. This quest for peace is the prime search of most of Markandaya's protagonists. Srinivas's silent questioning is a form of rebellion that has no obvious manifestation. Leprosy is used as a symbol of his racial untouchability as well as the indirect manifestation of his revolt.

Learning that violence has no place, Srinivas opts for a new stage of being—detachment. He is the example of the cosmopolitan to whom citizenship extends beyond the narrow boundaries of race and country.

However, in the stifling atmosphere of London, Srinivas is overwhelmed. In *A House For Mr. Biswas* (1961), V.S. Naipaul shows the Tulsi family trying to preserve the Hindu culture in an alien country; the Hindus of Trinidad believe they are the last representatives of Hindu culture and they realise their responsibilities to it.

Like Vasantha, Mr. Biswas believes that he should own a house for stability and he does so at tremendous risk; Dev in Anita Desai's *Bye, Bye Blackbird* (1970) feels, at first, a social alien in England but he becomes, like Laxman of *The Nowhere Man*, a determined conqueror, intent on conquering the hostility of England. But Srinivas, curbed and stunned, descends to the level of an "automaton" (*The Nowhere Man* 183). Consequent isolation is the price that he pays for leaving his country. The symbolic departure from conformity thus results in aloneness and powerlessness that are the characteristics of negative freedom. Srinivas begins to return to traditional attitudes of his culture which is symbolically a return to cultural conformity. This gives him tranquillity.

The pattern of Srinivas's escape, struggle and return is thus more a mental progression; it is only paralleled by the concrete external situation of exile and rejection. His life is a mythical search for new values; and eventually he chooses detachment as the best solution.

Thus when filth is laid at his door, he silently cleans it; when a dead mouse is laid at his door, he removes it without protest. His walking about barefoot in a Muslim hoti

in England becomes only an assertion of his freedom. His death is also an example of the detachment he cultivates; seeing the flames, he goes to set the ladybirds free and is himself taken out in a state of coma.

The rescue of the ladybirds is symbolic; it signifies man's responsibility to the weak and helpless victims of society. It reflects the responsible individual that Srinivas has become. In a sense, it is applicable to the social responsibility that Fred spurns—a responsibility to the weak and helpless like Srinivas. It is applicable to the responsibility that Mrs. Pickering realises in the concern for Srinivas, though an alien.

It is the responsibility that Srinivas feels towards Vasantha when he takes her away from the shame of living in India after her disgrace. It is the responsibility that Mrs. Fletcher shows when her son has been rude to Srinivas.

Srinivas's contraction of leprosy, the deadly tropical disease, is the ultimate test of his spiritual stamina. His stoic indifference to it reflects his mature attitude of acceptance in the Indian tradition. In a sense, the disease and his attitude to it are both symbolic of the social ostracisation and his spiritual response to it. Srinivas's story gains meaning against the background of the irrational racial discord as suggested below:

Fred looked up at him from where he lay. It seemed to him a harmless face, but the colour was wrong. He decided he hated that colour, and the man, and the untold evils he and his kind were letting loose in his country, "his beloved England which he felt he had never loved so much before."³³(p. 165).

The point to which the plot progresses is resonant of the mental strength of Srinivas in the face of the mean hostility of Fred in the symbolic deed of setting fire to Srinivas's house. Srinivas is still alive, physically and figuratively, when he is taken out of the burning house, while Fred is burnt to death inside the very house he has set fire to. Nemesis overtakes Fred, the misguided racist.

Thus Srinivas emerges spiritually triumphant in the bitter aftermath of racial feud. His death is physical; symbolically, it is a spiritual rejuvenation. The finale of racial hostilities is not his destruction because he practises supreme detachment.

While in *A Passage to India* (1924), Forster tries to envisage the possibility of a meeting-point between East and West, Markandaya shows, in 1972, cultural differences leading to racial riots which are to become worse as seen in the prophetic insight of Mrs. Pickering:

“Is that possible? wondered Mrs. Pickering,”³⁴ whose mind was orammed with images, of the fallen weak and helpless, and of their sons, and son’ sons, who would not be content as Srinivas had been but could be trusted to raise Cain—“if Cain had not in fact already been raised.” (The Indian Express).

Mrs. Pickering alone, among the English in *The Nowhere Man*, lives freely with the strength of her own convictions. She performs her duties to Srinivas with sincerity and brings solace and affection to the last lonely years of his life.

Her last sentence “I cared for him”(*The Nowhere Man* 299) is sufficient evidence of the importance of care. In freedom, she accepts responsibility. She, like Mrs. Moore in *A Passage to India*, is the invisible builder of the bridges of spiritual understanding between England and India in a different setting. (A.V. Krishna Rao and Sharon Simon 208-225)

Laxman is a defiant Indian youth in England—self-righteous, assertive and vehement—who fully integrates into the adopted culture and is no more an alien in England. But Srinivas cannot understand him. This situation is corroborated by the study *Between Two Cultures* (1976) which vividly describes the “traumatic clash” between the immigrants and their children:

The parents cannot understand why their children wish to give up the culture they have held for centuries, and the children cannot understand why their parents are old fashioned, illiterate, embarrassing. (*Between Two Cultures* 7)

Like Adit in Desai’s *Bye, Bye Blackbird* (1970), Laxman makes himself at home in England, saying with defiance, “I belong right here”(*The Nowhere Man* 262). However, he admits his filial duty to his aged father and is genuinely concerned that his father has taken an Englishwoman as “common-law spouse”.³⁸

Abdul is the vehement protesting outsider in England who climbs high on the social ladder through sheer grit and enterprise unlike Srinivas who submits to circumstance.

While Srinivas advocates forgiveness and acceptance, Abdul says: “...What I carry on my back, I carry to my grave. I don't forget so easy.” For Abdul, it is self preservation. Laxman and Abdul practise personal and intellectual freedoms even in the restraining circumstances.

Fred is the hostile insider of the new generation, searching for new roots. Vasantha, who is rooted in India, preserves her integrity even in the alien culture unlike Srinivas who flounders for a time. She fulfils her duties to Srinivas until her death.

In language and style, Markandaya far surpasses the earlier novels. Pithiness of style and the force of reinforced imagery heighten the meaning of the theme. Imagery, in general, is Markandaya's powerful tool, both to convey her complexity of thought and to suggest her thematic patterns. As Dorothy Shimer suggests, Markandaya raises the image of "images irrevocably tied to antithetical life patterns". (Dorothy Shimer 361)

Among the predominant images is one relating to bondage "We have chained ourselves to four walls and a roof" (The Nowhere Man 20), "beginning to lose the fetters" (The Nowhere Man 39), "shackles" (The Nowhere Man 46). Rootlessness is another striking image.

The imagery of torture and execution is invoked through the length of the book, leading into images of putrefaction and repulsion. Srinivas feels shafts, "thin lances that cleaved through him, so subtly that the flesh closed over before blood was drawn..." (The Nowhere Man 166).

It shows his mental torture until he becomes numb to pain, and to the darts of racial hostility, "this childish, vengeful mimicry of an execution" (The Nowhere Man 184). Images of putrefaction as seen in Mr. Fletcher's body becoming putrefied with a "furry girdle" sprouting around his "hapless middle" (The Nowhere Man 189) enhance the evil of racial hatred.

Marjorie Radcliffe's repulsion when she sees Srinivas is symbolic of the racist attitudes of the whites like Fred; she felt "her skin creeping, or as close to this phenomenon as she could manage, skin and the silvery hairs upon it undulating, like a crawling caterpillar" (The Nowhere Man 218).

The oppressive nature of the racial enmity is again seen in the

"...Smells, the oppressive smell of decomposing leaves are something hidden and rooting. The odor was everywhere. It hung in the motionless atmosphere but percolated." (The Nowhere Man 237).

and it assumes the shapes of objects like toads or “the tracery of scars of inflicted wounds,” or the sly configurations of insidious disease” (The Nowhere Man 263). The image of violation as of human sanctity is seen in“

...breachingthe reverentmembranethathung,as frail asacaulatimminentbirth, in this hushed house of the dead. (The Nowhere Man 180).

“Sticking out like a sore thumb” (The Nowhere Man 261) and the image of leprosy go together: “...at the point where flesh becomes sludge 126). These point to Srinivas’s isolation in England: pauper’s skin about his rattling bones”(The Nowhere Man 22),and later, poor man’s rattling bones” (The Nowhere Man 28) reflect the decay.

The image of the dead mouse is important and the differences of attitudes of Srinivas and Mrs. Pickering show the general cultural differences:

“Well” she said shortly, from being served, “it was only a mouse”(The Nowhere Man 225) and: “A mouse, eshe felt, when there were other matters.”(The Nowhere Man 226). Srinivas ponders on her attitude:-

“Who could think this, her horizons being bounded, the boundaries those of a narrow white ethos which, unable to assimilate the totality of creation, or perhaps finding it inexpedient, introduced puerility in its own image.” (The Nowhere Man 225)

The imagery of torture culminates in the actual fire of the last pages where Srinivas is literally tortured and burnt in the fire of racial bitterness, and thus becomes ultimately a victim of society:

“Lay, languid, on teak, while smoke came up in little tendrils through the floorboards drifted, and draped the bed legs, and coalesced to form a floating mattress. If he were to step down it would swirl up above his ankles, he thought, and was reminded of sunny childhood days, in a boat, on a lake, on which mists had risen and scudded, suddenly, almost between dipped oars so that the blade that went in clear came up dripping and smoking.”(The Nowhere Man 291).

The passage shows that Srinivas, having reached the state where he is free in the positive sense, is not really defeated and he can still think clearly and be patient.

It is an indication of his new maturity. The ultimate point of endurance is seen in thefillingandstretchingimage.“Ifhedid,hisneck,heknewwouldsnap,likea

pumpkin stalk whose fibers had been blanched and stretched to their limits by the Swollen fruit". (The Nowhere Man 251).

When told of Srinivas's disease, Mrs. Pickering's possible reaction can be one of repulsion and, therefore, of escape. Markandaya subtly suggests this through the image of neat hair flying away from its coils: "Her manner obdurate though wisps were flying, wild gray strands of hair escaped from coils and pins and pitching around in a frenzy. She tucked them back" (The Nowhere Man 194). She then says: "It is curable"(The Nowhere Man 194)—by which she has taken a step different from retreat.

The leading and developing symbol of the novel is leprosy—the leprosy of Srinivas which becomes a factor in his social responsibility. Suffering from a communicable disease, he cannot venture out without the fear of disapproval. His leprosy becomes the outer manifestation of his isolation. It is also a sign of the repellent nature of racial hatred. Fred is haunted; he feels like yelling: "You will never make me a leper" or "I will never let you forget you are a leper". (The Nowhere Man 61)

Leprosy is one constraint to Srinivas's freedom. Dr. Radcliffe expresses his lack of liberty to accommodate Srinivas in his house, and he says: ".but, you see, I am not free, any more than anyone is free" (The Nowhere Man 269).

However, Markandaya suggests that one has to cultivate positive freedom and act with full responsibility as Mrs. Pickering does. The corruption of the English soul is symbolised in the leprosy that makes Srinivas more of an alien:

"I am a stranger he said.

I have been transformed into a stranger, said the unwanted man and examined a pair of hands whose stigmata would be the excuse."(The Nowhere Man 230) and again:

"...and the white drops fell within him where they could not be seen, for the fissure that gaped between him and his flesh, though it could also have been between himself and the country which had, until not so long ago, been loved as his own. (The Nowhere Man 261)."

The rejection that Srinivas faces at the hands of a radical racist like Fred is the objective counterpart of the rejection of a whole race. Markandaya stresses the utter shamefulness of such total rejection through violent imagery.

The cross-cultural impasse which she hinted at in the earlier novels and in *Possession* is now dramatised in the form of open injustice. While in *Possession* she envisages no possible meeting-point as Val goes back to the wilderness and Caroline seeks in vain to bring him back to “possess” him, she projects, in *The Nowhere Man*, a possibility of a meeting in deep human compassion as in the Srinivas-Pickering relationship.

What does *The Nowhere Man* achieve? It brings to the fore, artistically, racial issues founded on illogical standpoints that curb the individual through gigantic forces that compel, divide and destroy.

Destruction of humanity is like leprosy. It is contagious and repulsive. It is the result of abdication of responsibility. When one is a leper, one has the responsibility to prevent the communicable disease of leprosy from being spread. When one evades it, there is a social problem.

Thus, the pattern of responsibility in this novel expands to include the responsibility of races towards each other in terms of communication and concern.

As far as the individual's situation is concerned, Markandaya sees that the individual has no “freedom from” the curbing situation of inter-racial hostility and it is left to him to achieve a degree of maturity as Srinivas does and a sense of positive freedom which helps him to perform his duties within the circle of constraints. Markandaya's sensitive portrayal is of the individual as subject to tensions induced by society because he is helpless in the context of racial relations unless there is a combined effort to achieve a greater degree of inter-racial understanding; and this novel is a call for this kind of concern.

More than other novels dealing with the expatriate experience (like Anita Desai's *Bye, Bye Blackbird* (1970), Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), Timmeri Murari's *The Marriage* (1973), this novel is a realistic social study and is enlightening for the Indian reader who has not been able to view at first hand the racial riots in London. It is also, in a sense, prophetic.

Within the fictional structure of Srinivas's ironical movement from political rebellion against the colonial rule to his migration to the ruler's own country, his deliberate socio-cultural integration into its mainstream culture and his tragic existential

ennui as the outsider in the wake of the sudden eruption of racial violence, Markandaya figuratively presents the issues of personal freedom and social responsibility.

The *Nowhere Man* is Markandaya's artistic adumbration of the need for secular humane concern as the principal integrative ingredient to prevent further fragmentation of our post-colonial schizophrenic world.

'Two Virgins' (1973) is a social realism has been Markandaya's mode through all her previous seven novels except for *Possession* (1963) which is more or less a stylised abstraction on the theme of East-West relations.

'Two Virgins' is an attempt at a socially realistic novel relevant to the changing socio-cultural scene of post-independence India.

Although Margaret P. Joseph says that "the whole novel amounts to "nothing more than a documentary about rural living" (Margaret P. Joseph 80) it does project the individual consciousness and its growth in a realistic frame of socio-cultural context. As a work of art, however, it may not measure up to Markandaya's other novels.

Social realism, says K. A. Abbas, is "the acute awareness of the social forces that surround the individual, their power to influence the lives of men and women for better or for worse—and the overall interaction of the individual and society" (K.A. Abbas 146)

Markandaya shows acute awareness of the social forces that surround the individual, but the interaction of the individual and society in 'Two Virgins' is just reported in a seemingly documentary fashion and is not adequately explored at a deeper level. *Two Virgins* has a thoroughly social basis in rural India and the setting is evoked realistically..

The village in 'Two Virgins', like that in *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), is anonymous. However, judging from the name of Chingleput who is named after his native town, the location can be guessed to be somewhere in South India. Saroja's family is higher up on the social ladder than is Rukmani's in the first novel.

Saroja's father, an active participant in India's struggle for independence, has some modern ideas on behaviour and is liberal enough to send one of his daughters to a Christian school. Consequently, the two sisters grow up with a more liberal outlook than others of their class. Education with Westernised bias brings with it a sense of liberation

and thus the difference between Saroja's family and that of Manikkam, the milkman, is highlighted.

The main focus of the novel is on the growth-problems of two adolescents, but the growth is not explored in its deeper dimensions. While one grows up to accept the conventional codes of conduct, the other grows out of its precincts and away from its restraints.

The narrative technique that the novelist employs in this novel is that of impersonal third-person narrative with Saroja as the undramatised narrator. As Marjorie Boulton says, "following a main character and telling a story in the third person has a measure of impersonation." (Boulton 39)

The narrative is third-person but events are seen through the eyes of Saroja alone, and therefore the point of view is definitely hers. The technique, however, is not utilised to its fullest scope in *Two Virgins* which can be regarded as an experimental novel.

Though Saroja's point of view is used, there is no deep analysis or presentation of the complexities of thought and emotion. Neither is Lalitha's mind presented. However, verisimilitude is supplied by letting a witness like Saroja be the point from which events are viewed.

If the author's purpose is to show the clash between tradition and modernity, Lalitha might have provided a more intensely felt experience.

The story smacks of autobiography but lacks the experiential authenticity and tonal intimacy of the autobiographical form.

Saroja's is an ordinary mind, incapable of deep analysis. Moreover, she is the adolescent for whom everything assumes novelty. She sees things only as they appear to be and tells them in the manner of an "imagist" rather than a critic of life. What is missing, therefore, is both the possible intensity of first person narrative and the possible objectivity of impersonal narrative. In *Some Inner Fury* (1955), Markandaya uses the autobiographical method to distinct advantage and in *A Silence of Desire* (1960) the third-person narrative to the maximum scope.

In *Two Virgins*, Markandaya's technical experiment does not allow the full growth of either Saroja's mind or Lalitha's in the result it produces, apparently, "the effect of a documentary".⁶⁷ She gathers together and describes the disjointed

experiences of Saroja without any particular pattern except as a narrative of incoherent thoughts and memories. The novel is full of staccato-like paragraphs as given below:

God knows best, said Aunt. She was a rash woman. Amma and Appa stopped tearing at each other, went to work on her instead. Aunt Alamelu closed her eyes and rocked, she did it sitting, from the waist, like seaweed caught in a current but rooted in some soggy bed.

Saroja suspected she had sealed off her hearing too because no matter what Amma and Appa threw at her she did not reply, did not rebut or refer to it even, merely kept on with what she was saying totally indifferent as to whether anyone was listening. "God is good, she said, and one (sic) must have faith in his boundless wisdom, and she told them the story of the little boy who had opened his mouth and revealed to astounded onlookers the world entire." (Two Virgins 175)

It has neither the poetic force of Mira's tale nor the simple charm of Rukmani's.

Marjorie Boulton states that the plot is important to a novel much as the skeleton is important to a human body, and though it is simple compared to other systems, it gives the organism its structure and holds it together.

A true plot should have causality; it should contain "motives, consequences, relationships" (Boulton 45)

In *Two Virgins*, the "motives" and "relationships" are not presented in their various angles and the causality of the plot is not clearly suggested. Lalitha, being the true focus of the story, should have been presented with all the complexities of motive and action. Markandaya's plot does not lead smoothly to a plausible end.

The story is of Lalitha; the plot centres on Saroja in relation to Lalitha. Much of Saroja's experience is vicarious. Saroja does not have any intense experience of her own; what is portrayed in narrative form is only her growth through her sister's experience.

Lalitha chafes under the restraints of her family and the village society and through the friendship with Miss Mendoza, she picks up the vanities of the so-called "modern" life. She then wishes for "freedom" from the constraining environs of the village and dreams up fantasies of a luxurious life.

Her progression is, therefore, not towards the betterment of the inner life, but from vanity, flippancy and ambition to conceit, moral decadence and recklessness.

From being a vain schoolgirl filled with fantasies of herself as pretty, she grows up to be selfish and contemptuous of her family and surroundings.

In the end, when she leaves her self-sacrificing parents and affectionate sister, she thinks neither of their happiness nor of their respectability in the eyes of society, but only of herself. Thus she moves towards a negative freedom which is an escape towards license.

The return to security and conformity, in this novel, is executed on the part of the narrator-heroine Saroja who vicariously experiences false freedom, sees the city with all its glitter and sordidness and returns to the safety of the village. Saroja's movement towards the city can be seen as representational of her possible escape to a freedom from conformity but she returns to a state of conformity and to the sense of responsibility to the family.

As for Lalitha, she would either make it for some insignificant roles in minor films which would be obtained only after suffering several moral indignities at the hands of the immoral moneybags and conmen or end up as an inmate of a brothel. This is the ultimate fate which she brings upon herself in the effort to survive in the modern city with its meretricious value system in contrast to the traditional village with its conventional ways of living.

Lalitha pays the price not only with chastity but dignity as well; she escapes into a cage of existential confusion. She is an example of the total betrayal of the traditional values and also of a total lack of a sense of responsibility to herself.

The progress of Lalitha to false modernity begins when she is given a chance to feature in a documentary of village life produced and directed by Gupta who sponsors Lalitha on Miss Mendoza's recommendation.

Gupta and his band return to the city after the shooting of the film. Miss Mendoza then takes Lalitha to the city to view the premiere show of the film. Lalitha returns to the village but only to go back to the city without her parents' consent. She becomes quite defiant and obstinate. A few months later she returns home pregnant.

Markandaya, at this stage of the narrative, does not probe below the surface layers of incident; she does not present the vital dialogues which would dramatise the psychology of the victim and the victimiser. The results are mentioned virtually in a serial order. Lalitha undergoes abortion and when her parents feel that they should all return to the security of the village, Lalitha disappears again into the city because she feels irresistibly lured by the city.

The city, like in 'Nectar in Sieve' (1954) and 'A Handful of Rice' (1966), is the symbolic jungle-city which can make her feel alone and powerless. But owing to her immaturity, bordering on imbecility, Lalitha prefers the superficial and unreal existence of the city to the deeper and higher quality of life in a village. Markandaya's vision, nevertheless, is positive as the narrator and her family return home, helpless but not hopeless.

Saroja views the world and society through Lalitha's experience. She matures through it. Her own experience with Gupta's assistant Devraj who attempts to take advantage of her youth and helplessness also helps in her development.

Her experiences in the city also smack of the indolence and superficiality of city life, but unlike Lalitha, she is repelled and disgusted. She chooses to return to the security and solidity of village life.

The plot in *Two Virgins* is thus a negative movement for Lalitha from tradition to modernity, represented by the images of village and city. She moves away from the traditional life of the village, returns to it, and finally escapes again to the city—a symbol of amoral neutrality and anonymity.

The plot however contains various undercurrents that are not adequately explored for example, the conflict of the individual between the opposite poles of conformity and rebellion, between a sense of freedom and a sense of responsibility, between duty and license, between the dictates of conscience and the call of Westernisation.

The tension involved in this particular encounter of dialectical trends within the individual could have been better elaborated in the novel; nor is the dramatisation of the tension achieved in full.

Saroja is the central character because it is her reactions and feelings which are recorded; it is her perspective that widens and enlarges in the light of her perceptions.

It is a pity, some people are pretty, some people are plain, said Lalitha, examining herself languidly in her hand mirror, "Saroja knew which she was, but she had become used to being plain."(Two Virgins 13)

Saroja is happy and carefree and loves to bounce about on her bicycle which becomes the symbol of independence and progress while Lalitha is absorbed in reflecting about her own physical features and attractiveness. Saroja takes time off to observe the world around her. For Lalitha's notions of life, the village appears to be restricting and cramped, and so she longs for freedom from the rural milieu.

The limits of the growth of individuation and the self as set partly by individual conditions and essentially by social conditions are seen in Lalitha and Saroja. Lalitha is a flippant individual, and the kind of education she receives only succeeds in making her more flighty.

Saroja's growth is also severely restricted by the social conditions in which she lives but her individual capacity for growth and a sober outlook help her achieve a better maturity than Lalitha. Manikkam's wife is Lalitha's teacher on many aspects of nature.

The scene where she delivers the stillborn baby seems to be almost repulsive. Saroja learns of natural occurrences from the milkman's family. She is, like a child, curious about everything. Lachu's perversions and Amma's veiled flirtation with the Sikh hawker also suggest ideas to Saroja.

It appears that Saroja shares a number of characteristics with Lalitha: for example, the curiosity about sex and her initial response to Devraj is much the same as Lalitha's to Gupta.

All this can be traced to the social conditions of the particular place and time the novel is situated in. An imbalanced and wrong model of education leads Lalitha to false aspirations for freedom from certain wholesome restraints, inherent in a traditional culture for the individual's own benefit.

In Urmila Haksar's 'The Future That Was' (1972), there is the growth of the narrator through the conflict of liberation versus conformity—liberation gained by Westernisation and conformity born out of the Indian social custom.

The novelist traces the growth and progress of the character in depth until the character emerges on the path to individual fulfilment. The contrast between the narrator-heroine and her conformist sister is also highlighted in Haksar's novel.

While growth is the theme of both Haksar's and Markandaya's novels, one can see how subtle analysis and deep awareness of the complexities involved make Haksar's fiction a work of art while a dim focus, experimental technique and unsatisfactory treatment make Markandaya's novel a kind of documentary.

In the middle-class Indian society, even with liberal ideas as of Appa's about the need for free intermixing of boys and girls, there is no formal sex education given to children.

As a result, there is an unwholesome conflict between the biological self and the social self. Man is really not infinitely adaptable. Certain basic animal needs such as food, sleep and sex call for satisfaction. The phenomenon of evolution produces such specific tendencies as desire for freedom and hatred against oppression. Education plays a necessary part in moulding character to suit social roles.

Human nature is historically conditioned and man is primarily a social being. Therefore, the individual psychology adjusts, as far as feasible, to the social Psychology. (Fear of Freedom 239-46) It is thus that the desire for freedom can be repressed and can even disappear from the awareness of the individual. In the Indian social context we see girls as shown in *Two Virgins*, torn between the desire for self-expression and the need of social obligations in a given community. Linked to this problem is the conflict between tradition and modernity.

There is a constant contrast between Lalitha and Saroja which highlights their eventual reactions to similar stimuli. The contrast is heightened by a sense of the differences of their temperaments.

Markandaya thus juxtaposes two slightly different characters drawn from identical backgrounds but with a little Westernisation thrown in for highlighting the incompatible elements of character and culture in transition.

It is, of course, likely that even if Saroja were given the Westernised education in Miss Mendoza's school she would come out unscathed unlike Lalitha whose genetically determined temperament only aggravates her predicament.

The genetic predisposition one way or the other is controlled by social codes. The accent, therefore, in *Two Virgins* is on the value of education and the part it plays in moulding the individual's attitudes and conduct. Western values, however good in themselves, have to be introduced to a traditional society with the proper amount of caution, balance and discrimination. Miss Mendoza declares: "We like to give our girls total opportunity, total experience"(Two Virgins 90).

The questions of identity and alienation emerge in the portrayal of the two sisters and their experiences. Lalitha faces the possibility of an identity crisis when she grows up through a wrong exposure to Western ideas about free social intercourse with members of the opposite sex, and the other extreme of conservatism as in the condemnation of the "maypoles" and such activities, represented by the figure of Aunt Alamelu.

Lalitha is not inclined to resolve the crisis but rather deludes herself in her relationship with Gupta. The problem of the sense of identity, as Fromm says, is not merely a philosophical problem but one that stems from "the very condition of human existence".(Sane Society 63)

S.C. Harrex comments perceptively that Markandaya's novels comprise "a wide ranging awareness of the determinants of and threats to identity", and that the sense of identity in her work is noticeably more affirmative in the philosophical rather than the sociological context.(The Fire and the offering 259)

But in Markandaya, it is clear from our discussion, the sense of identity of her characters always comes to be tested against social values.

The sense of identity operates within the social context where the clash of different value-systems and attitudes causes concern. In such a dilemma, conformity is the key to individual happiness. Saroja chooses this solution to her problem of identity.

But Lalitha, back in the city, deludes herself that the glitter of city life is the ideal one for her, and she plunges into its slimy flux and flow. But in the city, she merely drifts and fails to communicate with her family at the village; it reveals not only the insignificance of her position in the city but also her probable guilt complex.

She finds an identity in the city in the end, but it is neither positive nor socially acceptable. What Lalitha can possibly achieve is at best a dubious recognition as a

minor film star with the blessings of Gupta at the expense of her self-respect. In contrast, Saroja returns to her base in the community, assured of a positive identity.

The pattern of homecoming recurs in Markandaya's fiction. It signifies a return, though partial, to tradition, conformity, society or community. In "Nectar in a Sieve" (1954), Rukmani returns to an attitude of acceptance with a sense of resignation. In 'Some Inner Fury' (1955), Mira makes the return home to the fold of her tradition, even if circumstances compel her to. 'Possession' (1963) shows Val's return to the essence of his genius—his spiritual leanings. 'A Handful of Rice' (1966) has no physical return, but Ravi returns to the ancestral spirit of acceptance. In 'The Nowhere Man' (1972), Srinivas achieves his identity in enduring terms through his martyrdom.

The individual character as moulded by the influences in childhood is presented in 'Two Virgins'. Thrown into an atmosphere of conflict between tradition and modernity, Lalitha, for example, does not know how to adapt herself to the new climate of ideas.

"It made Saroja feel uneasy, she kept remembering the looks that Amma and the hawker had exchanged, and tendrils of her hair brushing against him as they bent over his suitcase. It made her feel worse when Amma rounded on Appa, reminded him of his daughters and of the dangers of the free association between the sexes which he was advocating.... There was a lot of flux, a shifting of positions which Saroja found unsettling" (pp.49-50).

Lalitha's defiance of tradition has its roots in her adolescent craving for luxury. Her character is sketched in small touches. She is not only vain and foolish but also contemptuous, of their life at home: "It's barbaric, not having a fridge, said Lalitha" (p.57). She calls the place "this one horse town" (p.84), and says, "The way we live is primitive" (p.87). She makes Saroja do all the work while she preens herself before the mirror. She selfishly exploits Saroja's softness and deference in behaviour. Her opportunism is revealed in her behaviour.

Appa and Aunt stand for the two ends of the tradition-modernity axis. While Appa is a progressive liberal with little concern for the cultural climate in a rural community, his sister Aunt Alamelu stands at the doorpost of custom and social tradition for better or worse.

She has her say in everything whether her advice is appreciated or not. She is also the champion of fate. Everything, to her, is due to Karma: that her husband died, that

Manikkam's baby got the smallpox, that pariahs had to clean filth: "It is their Karma, their fate, Brother!" which rendered him (Appa) speechless"77 (p.39). She believes strongly in the effectiveness of tradition to preserve one from harm. She tells Lalitha:

"It's you that's shameless, said Aunt Alamelu grimly, throwing yourself at him, you're so full of this filmstarnonsense you can't see you're only making yourself cheap to him even if he says you're wonderful.78(p. 104).

Lalitha, in yearning for freedom from the constraints of village life, gives vent to her suppressed fanciful notions and gives herself up to license and vulgarity. Aunt Alamelu disapproves of even the practice of maypoles and taunts Appa:

"Maypoles, she said, dancing around them and such Christian practices, is it a fitting pastime for our young Hindu maidens? no, it is shame-shame, totally contrary to the code of our Hindu decorum which has safeguarded the virtue of our youth for a thousand years. If it's gone on that long it's moldy, it stinks, it's high time it's ended! shouted Appa ."79(p. 176).

Aunt Alamelu thus presents the ideological counterfoil to Appa. For Saroja, she is however, still a part of home and security; the return at the end with Aunt Alamelu standing in the doorway is tinged with sentiment. While Lalitha develops a sense of false superiority through defiance, Saroja definitely turns mature through an awareness of these conflicting values of her Appa and Aunt. Although Lalitha's life is an example of the bad results of half-baked westernisation, good westernised education can be the passport to freedom and individualistic thinking.

The individual and egoistical longing for happiness associated with the individual's flight for freedom is too easily identified with Western ideas. Appa believes in the rights of the individual. M.N. Srinivas considers Westernisation as a socio-cultural fallout of the British rule, as an important influence in modern Indian life. (M.N. Srinivas 46)

Saroja's experience consists of a clash of values—one personified in her sister, and the other in Amma, Aunt Alamelu and the village. She realises the social dangers of unwed motherhood in a traditional community and develops an awareness of the importance of conformity for personal happiness within a society.

As Iredale says, Saroja's interest in the relationship between injustice and the way society is organised finally merges with her pre-occupation with the birth/sex

relationship and leads her to an awareness of the dangers inherent in giving way to overwhelming sensations of desire and lust. The return to the village impelled by her new perception restores her to the true balance required to survive in a limited community. Lalitha provides the other extreme of an escape from this limited community but her happiness can never be predicted as she is likely to be consumed by the octopus of urban society more in the nature of a victim rather than a free, balanced individual.

Saroja does not become the victim even of the rural community. She accepts the code of her community knowing that it also protects the individual. Without this maturity of understanding, freedom has no value; and maturity, in fact, is a function of positive freedom. One's responsibility to oneself is to remain balanced.

The mechanism through which the "anonymous authority", that is why adaptation to the group norms becomes imperative. Otherwise, like Lalitha, one faces ruin or rejection. Saroja integrates herself wisely into the value structure of her society. It is the individual will that matters in responsible conformity. Saroja wills herself to be responsible and this is her final attitude.

The city-village axis is the counterpart of the freedom/ responsibility and the East/West antitheses. Lalitha identifies herself with the city, its atmosphere and its attitudes. The city breeds discontent and frustration.

But Lalitha opts for the city of her own choice, not once but twice, the second time being forever. It is her free choice. Gupta thinks she had been forced into the city the first time. The city and the village as in 'A Handful of Rice' (1966) assume the form of total contrast between states of existence, signifying chaos and peace respectively. In the former, struggle for life and survival of the fittest work while in the latter everything has an ordered place.

The jungle—city devours; the way in which Lalitha disappears into the flux of the city's terrors at the end shows the monstrous capacity of the city. The city and the village are representative of two eras as well as two value-systems of man's civilisation.

Last of all, moral freedom does not mean license. Lalitha chooses to go to the city but this freedom does not imply the license to behave as she does.

At the end, she prefers to merge into the city's amorphous vastness, because she realises that she has lost her place of honour in the village community. Aunt Alamelu calls it putting a "virgin in a whorehouse".

While in Bhattacharya's 'He Who Rides A Tiger' (1955) Lekha is forced into a whorehouse and becomes truly a "virgin in a whorehouse", Lalitha chooses her life in the meretricious film world of her own accord. Markandaya does not give us any conclusive psychological insights to show whether Lalitha achieves a new maturity or identity at the end of her experience but leaves the novel somewhat open-ended.

"It sickened her a little to think of it, because in her mind the baby had become paramount and she could see it had no future in what Appa and the boys called society as it was organised. It made her rebel." (Two Virgins 179).

The act of running to Chingleput on the return home exhibits Saroja's need for communication and consolation when she knows she has left her childhood behind all of a sudden. What she does is that she only involuntarily reminds her of it again. Saroja realises that though it involves turmoil, the calls of the physical being have to be rejected in favour of the social norms. Saroja realises that the social institution of marriage permits the sensual desire to be quenched.

Saroja's return to the village symbolises a return, through greater experience, to tradition and conformity. While the village atmosphere is stifling for Lalitha, for Saroja it is a place where she can breathe freely. In her final note, Lalitha writes that she cannot face "going back to the village : it stifled her, her talents, her ambition" (Two Virgins 236). Appa grants her the freedom to choose. "She chose it, it's her life" (Two Virgins 248).

Lalitha is thus the kind of isolated but unrepentant woman asserting herself in the cultural environment she inherits. Her last withered appearance after the abortion mirrors her existential anguish and angst after her rebellion against the codes of community. In Markandaya's world, there is no room for a totally successful rebellion. .

"For Saroja, the return brings peace: she tells Curly that she longs for "the immutable pattern of her life to resume in place of chaotic flux induced by the city" (Two Virgins 240). Temptation and conflict with Devraj" (Two Virgins 245) lead ultimately to peace through strong decisions: "... something like peace washed over her." (Two Virgins 248). Lalitha is her objectless one.

In 'Two virgins', there are no sustained flashbacks or other technique of narrative as seen in Markandaya's other novels. Her projection of character is through mere commentary and criticism of Lalitha's experience as seen through the consciousness of Saroja. The narrative apparently lacks depth because the author does not recreate the reality of feeling and emotion, though she tells us that it is a traumatic experience for the family. The observer's point of view is probably better realised in 'Possession' than in 'Two Virgins'.

Dialogue is presented without the requisite punctuation marks, because it is accounted through Saroja's reveries and therefore incorporated into the narrative. Language is seen as a fact in realism; the language and the style in 'Two Virgins' are unsophisticated. Local idioms are less in number than found in novels like 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1954). There are improbable phrases used by Indian characters like "What on earth." and "riding your hobby-horse". The limitations of the mental perspective used for the story limit the sophistication of the style.

'Two Virgins' exhibits thus the preoccupation of an Indian woman novelist with tradition and modernity, social evils and tensions, the crisis of character arising from the changing values of modern civilisation in relation to traditional Indian society.

Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* (1977), Padmini Sengupta's *Red Hibiscus* (1962), Nayantara Sahgal's novels, all deal with these themes; and though Markandaya fails in this novel to transpose herself into the minds of the major characters, she still succeeds in striking the note of tradition versus change in the concretised form of the structured society versus the individual in the process of modernisation.

In the effort to mirror this conflict, the novelist again illustrates the limitations of individual freedom if unlimited or unrestrained, and the value of responsibilities and conformity within the structure of a given society.

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Chapter-VI

A Thematic Analysis in 'The Golden Honeycomb' and 'Pleasure City'

Let's talk about Markandaya's strong novel 'The Golden Honeycomb' which is supposed to be a novel of wider range in comparison to her earlier novels. It covers more areas of human existence. Through this novel, Markandaya has stored many things under one roof. This novel is considered to be the mile-stone of Indian freedom movement. It has multidimensional themes like class and creed, clash of two cultures; eastern and western, love and sex, desire and dare, optimism, power of endurance, rebellion; protest against the meanmindedness, set in human minds due to the false notions and so-called traditions that, in actual sense come as the hinderance in the path of human progress and global brotherhood.

The novel has a beautiful love story of Rabi, an Indian boy and Sophie, a British girl. The former is the prince of Devapur, and latter, the headstrong daughter of the British resident. Both are familiar right from their early childhood, so their intimacy increased from friendship to love. Because of many barriers of class and creed, East and West, they face numerous challenges but do not admit their defeat.

Markandaya has told us how the two lovers come forward against the racial barriers. How they protest against the so-called national-feelings prevailed in the both countries. The aristocratic life of Indian Maharajahs haven portrayed in such a manner that it seems that Markandaya has left no stone untouched in portraying the life of Maharajahs. How the Indian society was being governed by the dual system; one made by the Britishers and the other by the Maharahas.

Through this novel 'The Golden Honeycomb', Markandaya has drawn our attention towards the 'Non-Violence Movement' of Mahatma Gandhi, launched for the freedom of India. The portrayal of Delhi Durbar, and the description of the 'World War I' have evolved many historical themes like war, quest for identity, power of endurance, slavery prevailed in Indian society, brutal forces of the Britishers, rootlessness, corruption, cheating, deception, looting, killing, suppression, gluttonous thirst for power from the side of Britishers, etc. Shyamala Narayan writes, "Nevertheless it does contain the sense of historical realism and the events drawn from history sustain the dramatic action." (The Golden Honeycomb)

This blending of facts and fiction, Markandaya's look back of cultural clash, historical discrepancies and labyrinths apparently comes in our limelight. Shyamala Narayan again writes, "The only good portions of the novel are the chapters where Kamala Markandaya depends on historical records for authenticity, as in the descriptions of the Delhi Durbar..... When she relies on her own imagination, she comes up with the tourist's picture of exotic India."(Shyamala Narayan 110-13)

Although 'The Golden Honeycomb' does not claim to be an authentic document of history but it tells us much more about history and historical phenomenon. In the same manner, it does not claim to be the authentic document of geography yet it introduces us with the numerous geographical areas of two continents; Asia and Europe. The depiction of the life of Maharajahs shows us the picture of double-slavery. The story covers the life and lust of the then rulers. Its description matches with the novel of Malgonkar entitled, 'The Princes (1963)'.

The portrayal of British characters like Sir Arthur Copeland and Sophie is an evident that Indian people are sympathetic towards the good fellows of the enemyland; or the land that has swallowed peace and prosperity of India. Here, Sir Copeland and Sophie get fully human-treatment.

The description of the British and Indian ruling classes is replete with the stream of consciousness. It highlights the feelings of Indian society; quest of identity, desire for liberty, ambition of life and progress. Sophie, being a girl of the foreign land wins Indians heart and sympathy, who, breaking all sort of restrictions and barriers come forward to preserve her life in the company of Rabi, whom she has dedicated her soul and heart. The love-story of Rabi and Sophie does not reveal only the hearty feelings of two individuals of foreign lands but also, it depicts the contemporary social, political, spiritual and economic situations.

It draws a live picture of the postcolonial phenomenon. If we talk of the relations between the Indian society and English society, it is true to say that the gulf of hatred between India and England cannot be bridged. Most of the writers of Indian writing in English are seen in favour of this statement. Majority of Indian authors; both in prose and poetry believe that it is impossible to cover up the gulf between East and West. They suggest not to make our best to make bridge between both, but to think and stand separately.

As far as the issue of Indian contemporary scenario is concerned, it tells us much more about the Indian society; social, political, educational, cultural, religious etc. The description of Devapur shows us many things; precious jewellery, man-woman relationship, differences between royal and lay-man. Geographical situations, environmental depiction and historical glimpses set have made this novel a document of Markandaya's artistic evidence. Such the things prove that Kamala Markandaya possesses a technique of high range.

The novel, 'The Golden Honeycomb' begins with the description how the throne of Devapur state was seized and it came in the possession of an ineligible Bania. It is a farcical opening where we meet with Mohini, Manjula, Babajiraj and other characters who form and construct the story of Devapur state. Manjula's husband is junior to her in age. He plays in the hands of Britishers. Under a bitter conspiracy, he was given the throne of Devapur.

Manjula is worried about the future of her husband and that of Devapur. She fears lest her husband should play as the toys in the hands of the Britishers. It is she who makes her best to bring him on the right path. Other side, Mohini, an Indian woman also works on the same pattern as like Manjula does. She comes forward to chide Babajiraj chides Bawajiraj III who is also a puppet in the hands the Britishers.

Both men refuse to believe the fact and are easily duped into an illusion of their greatness. Foolish as they are, these maharajahs succumb blindly to the semblance of power. Pastmasters that the British are at ceremony, they throw some of it to these cringing puppets, who are easily satisfied.

Rabi, the protagonist of the novel is an illegitimate son of Bawajiraj III, but he is contrast to her father. He is full of self-respect feelings. His heart does not allow the slavery of the Britishers. Markandaya has stressed over the portrayal of his mental and moral growth, that's why Rabi has become the central interest for the readers. Actually, Rabi is the mouthpiece of Kamala Markandaya through which, she has shown the consciousness of Indian youth, who believe in freedom. Rabi's mother makes an arrangement for her child's education. She prefers Indian 'Pundit' for tuition instead of a British. Rabi is born in bitter situation. His life is based on the pillars of circumstances. He is replete with the feelings of self-respect like his grandmother. When he comes to know that his father is not free from the clutches of British political enforcement, he

decides not to spend his life in such situation and decides to resist upon such inhuman forces. Rabi is highly impressed with the 'Freedom Movement' led by Mahatma Gandhi and 'The Mill-Workers Strike' of Bombay.

He returns to Devapur and starts the work for the emancipation of the downtrodden people who were facing troubles under the cruel ruling of the Britishers. He comes forward to assist those helpless people who were compelled to burn in the fire of starvation. It was the 'empty-belly race' which was run for the sake of social and economic liberation. Rabi, jumps in to the social movement where he found encouragement from the Gandhian movement.

Kamala Markandaya further in the same novel shows the heroic virtues of women. Through the revelation of Usha's character, the novelist has presented the feminist elements in which she shows the boldness of women. Usha, as being an unfortunate orphan child grows up on her own. Noone comes forward to support her even in her infancy when she was not capable to face bitter situations. As she grows up, her talent increases. She becomes an actor and one day at Dewan Home, she shows her performance as an actor. On the stage, she stages a play in which, the Britishers have been displayed as the monster. As David Riesman states, "There might be great tension between an individual's search for fulfilment and the demands of the institutions in which he had a part."

Rabi is such a man who experiences this tension. Being fit in the mind of self-respect, he chooses for him the life of sorrows and suffering instead of peace, pleasure and happiness. He has had become a hero of Devapur, who spends his whole day in rendering his services to the poor and needy people. He has had become among his people an icon of rebellions. Through this mouthpiece, Kamala Markandaya has focused on many themes like feeling of nationality, dedication, devotion towards nation and society, Detachment from the ruling system, agitation against the authority, revolt against the rulers and over all the feelings of sacrifice; sacrifice of youth, sacrifice of fortune and sacrifice of his time and talent. Among his people, he is a ray of hope that could work against the social, physical and mental slavery. His dedication towards the nation and society brought great awareness among the people. He brought drastic change in society.

Rabi's qualitative deeds proved to be the eye-opener. They, who were slumbering in the prolonged sleep, also started thing in the same line as Rabi was thinking. Under the psychological leadership of Rabi the other people also made themselves busy in finding out the ways and means for their emancipation.

William Walsh comments, "Markandaya's particular strength lies in the delicate analysis of relationship especially when these persons have a more developed consciousness of their problems and are attempting to grope towards some more independent existence.(Commonwealth Literature 19)

Rabi gropes through his social concern and moral duty towards his people, to a more independent existence in the sense of 'freedom' to 'function totally and effectively.'

Here, we find the East-West encounters and the theme of freedom and responsibility. Both these themes are intert-woven very nicely. By portraying the character of Rabi, Kamala Markandaya has presented the picture of such a boy who is born in royal family but spends his time in poors and helpless. Biing the son of Babajiraj, the king, he does not live the life of lust and luxury. Rather, he prefers the company of poor and lay-men.

When Rabi was in his early childhood, he came in contact with Janaki, a sweeper- girl. He was fully aware towards the low-status of Janaki but never liked to betray himself from her company. She instils in him a genuine concern for the "empty-belly race".

Rabi's fostering and taching took place under the shades of Manjula, his grandmother, Mohini, his mother and Pundit, his tutor who teach him the lessons of self-respect and humanity. They left great impression upon his mind and heart. In spite of several differences between, Rabi and Janaki, he does not go back from her. He keeps himself always in the company of his beloved.

Markandaya writes, "Rabi reacts sullenly to the dismissal of Janaki which leaves a scar on his psyche. He wants to be free to choose his friends, but it is difficult to win this freedom. However, Rabi got on, as he had to, with the business of living" (The Golden Honeycomb 185).

Rabi faces numerous challenges; social and emotional. He is tied with his family relations and these family relations do not allow him to love marry with a sweeper girl.

This caste discrimination difference comes as a hinderance in the path of Rabi and Janaki. On the contrary, Janaki was not having such problem. She was a free-bird, could fly wherever she liked. Markandaya writes, “ Janaki, having no bounds or chains and nothing by way of possessions, can move wherever she wants. It enabled her to take off when told to with the freedom of a bird” (The Golden Honecomb 220).

Here, Markandaya picks up the theme of caste-discrimination. She comments on the attitude of the royal class that is also stunned with the dirt of casteism. The Pundit who is an icon of education, bluntly believes in untouchability and caste-system. Manjula, Mohini and Pundit do not allow Rabi to increase love affairs with Janaki.

When he comes in contact with the ‘Delhi Durbar’, he comes to know plenty of things related to his father’s subservience and his false dignity. Rabi’s attitudes get hardened henceforward. Now he starts thinking differently. One side, he is forbidden the intimacy with Janaki, merely because she is a girl of so-called lower-caste, other side, his father’s history is black and replete with black deeds. Even, he himself is an illegitimate son.

In part -2 of the novel, Kamala Markandaya has focused on the growing knowledge of Rabi that ‘Maharajahhood’ under the British Raj is utterly undignified and unbecoming for a decent human being. He begins to wish that Bawaji could be got rid of “so that he could reach the periphery of an understanding of himself” (The Golden Honecomb 227).

When he considers how his family background made him detached from Janaki, various thoughts, or “reverberations,” enter his consciousness:

“The reverberations came all right, but oddly muffled by what had been amassed by secret unremitting processes at conscious and unconscious levels; those doubts, inflections, obliquities, what speech expressed and slurred over. (The Golden Honeycomb 237).

His concentration on his family-history makes him aware of the change in the historical situation. Rabi is in favour of facing challenges instead of surrendering himself before the bitter and adverse situation. He does not like to bow on his suppliant knees before the Monastery. He concludes that because of Britishers forces, the Indian Maharajahs have sold India to the Britishers, merely in lieu of bread, butter and false dignity of ‘Maharajahhood’ and the people like his fathers spent their whole life in vain

in flattery of these helpless Maharajahs. He thinks, “they had all sold their souls” (The Golden Honeycomb 209).

Having been impressed with the virtues and heroic deeds of Rabi, Bawaji comes forward and bequeathes the rich legacy of Majesty to Rabi whom he considers to be the torch-bearer of the royal heritage. Rabi’s thoughts have made him bold and strong. His keen determination does not allow his conscience to be back from his mission. His sense of responsibility has made him solid and fearless. It seems to him as if the “muted years had suddenly begun to bell and toll in his ears...” (The Golden Honeycomb 240).

The majesty and power which Bawajiraj imagines he is bequeathing, takes him in to dilemma whether he should see its dream or not. He did not lose his interest in poor and helpless people so to adopt that way of Majesty and responsibilities, this intense and social dedication would surely be affected. He cannot talk on equal terms with his inferiors. Once, at the hotel in Bombay, he yearns to be friendly to the servant but the servant’s absolute formality, the atmosphere of the scene, a latent reserve welling up in him — all prevent him from easy communication. He would have liked to offer fruit to the servant, but he was “no longer a child.” (The Golden Honeycomb 244)

He frequently thinks that his princehood would surely detach him from the reformative deeds that he has taken in his hands for the sake of the mill-workers’ welfare.

Among the mill-workers, there is a girl whose name is Jaya. She is the second woman who works as a tool of developing the intimacy of Rabi towards the poor and labour class. She is also attached with Rabi; physically and mentally. This attachment also does let him go far away from the mill-workers.

According to Paul Roubiczek to understand man, we have to start from freedom, and the concept of freedom must not be allowed to degenerate into that of license or arbitrariness; it should introduce us to the whole sphere of responsibility, of morality and fundamental values and standards, of trust and love. He writes that we shall remain free only if we choose actions which give substance to freedom and increase it; if we merely act as we like, we shall surely succumb to unnoticed compulsions from within or without and thus bury our freedom again. (Paul Roubiczek 122)

Rabi's sense of responsibility sharpens when he watches the mill-workers' strike: "It's one's duty," he says (The Golden Honecomb 276), and "people's livelihood is our responsibility" (The Golden Honecomb 276).

Rabi, further becomes philosophic when he comes to realize that his intimacy with Jaya only for the sexual satisfaction is not a real pleasure of freedom, rather this is a mental slavery. It is negative phenomenon of the human-mind of which, he himself is a victim. Rabi sees a situation; when the strike is over, the workers go back to the mill because they are conscious of their responsibilities to their families and would "offload guilt onto the innocent shoulders of wives and children". (The Golden Honecomb 288).

Here, Kamala Markandaya has shown us the emotional attitudes of the workers, their conscience of social responsibility, the high thinking of labour class, their understanding of rights and duties and over all their dedication towards their work and family, as the themes, which is rarely found in the people of rich and royal class.

These virtuous qualities of the labour class impress Rabi. His mental conflict has been described in the novel. He keeps himself busy in analyzing the deeds of working class people and royal class and reaches the conclusion that the working class men are better in comparison to the royal class. Let us talk about Bawajiraj who stands for the false prestige and authority. Rabi begins to detest. He even adopts a formal mode of conversation with his father in order to express his anger; Bawaji begins to notice this 'independent streak' in Rabi. Iredale says that Rabi comes to symbolise the "emergent people of the state, the consciously classless new men and women of India." (Iredale Tenor 57)

Having done formal conversation with his father, Rabi decides to undertake the dam-construction work and starts thing ahead by leaving the company of Jaya, which was only a source of sexual pleasure. Now, sex is not his desire any more. His mental satisfaction lies in the mission of social upliftment. This involves mental separation from his father; and though "rubbed up, raw inside, for all the distance that now separated them..." (The Golden Honecomb 358), Rabi assesses his own destiny which lies in his responsibility to his people; and he begins his irrigation project.

The character of Usha impresses Rabi in positive sense. Her involvement in the freedom struggle expands the meaning of freedom in the novel. Usha plays vital role in freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. Markandaya has presented her character

as an inspiring personality. She is the ardent follower of 'non-violence movement' of Gandhiji. The English opinion was that it was not yet time, that it would be an "abdication of responsibility" (The Golden Honecomb 381) to give back India at that hour.

At the same time in Devapur, the people were running movement against the 'salt-tax'. They were also against the Maharajah who was not going against the 'salt-tax'. Rabi's involvement in these movements brought a drastic change in public. He was a role-model for them. His iconic role gave strength to the rebellions; he was loved and respected by all.

Gradually, his attitude towards his father, changes. To Bawajiraj, Rabi's actions appear "both incomprehensible and profoundly irresponsible (The Golden Honecomb 415). Responsibility and dissociation of responsibility are evident on all sides.

What is the true responsibility that Rabi should accept? Is it duty to his father (who stands as a symbol of irresponsibility to his people)? Or, to the people he will be ruling? Or, to a nation under foreign rule? These questions arise frequently in this novel. According to Ralph Linton, Rabi is fond of, "revolt against authority,"

Rabi's target of life is not to go against any individual. His target is to go against the authority whether it is the authority of family concerns or social concerns, whether it is royal or political. Markandaya stresses upon the fact that the individual's position in the social system apparently does more than any other to determine his role in a culture. Next in importance comes his position in the family system. (Linton 44) Rabi's position is important in evaluating his various acts of omission and commission.

Now, we talk of the romantic situation of the novel, 'The Golden Honeycomb' which provides us many other themes like love and sex, entertainment, quest for identity, employment and unemployment, attraction and deterioration, passion, racial and cultural exchange, racial and cultural clash etc. With the return of Sophie, the President's daughter, the romantic element enters the novel. Rabi is attracted to the white-skinned girl and this girl starts her role in modifying the scene and situation of the novel.

When Sophie tempts Rabi to be with her in the higher intimacy, he becomes philosophic and in a very sensitive mood, he thinks about the boundaries between; racial, geographical, cultural, and religious which cannot be surpassed and ignored.

Bing fit in emotions; Sophie could not understand his feelings. Dewan says, "In all this, Rabi, as in all affairs the watchword is discipline." (The Golden Honecomb 433). Though Rabi tells Sophie, "people aren't different, in the things that matter."

Rabi retracts to the safer commitment with the more compatible Usha who is culturally his equal: "a woman who was at one with him, their lives interlocking at more than one level". (The Golden Honecomb 455). It is in the Rabi-Sophie relationship that Markandaya incidentally handles the East-West theme again. The East-West cultural contact is expressed in this novel in such a manner that this novel proved itself to be the mirror of contemporary England.

In the context of the Rabi-Sophie relationship, the claims of culture prove more forceful as with all such encounters in the Markandaya's world. It is also not permanent because a multitude of forces intrude, reducing them to the "compulsive conformity" which becomes a "hateful sense of compulsion" (The Golden Honecomb 405). As Arthur Pollard puts it, the "accumulated colour-prejudice of the memsahibs" wells up in Sophie at the end. (Pollard 25)

Finally, he withdraws from Sophie because she had become "a matter of trust." (The Golden Honecomb 452), which is a sense of responsibility; and though the subterranean desire to forget circumstance, convention and responsibility overwhelms him for a moment, letting loose what he had controlled under 'stretched skin and tension,' he regains his balance and rejects the kind of freedom which is a mere indulgence of desire, "the nucleus of seductions and abductions that had finally claimed his father."

Markandaya presents the words of Rabi in which he encourages his people against their mental suppression and slavery, "You're aware of nothing. The British have tied you up hand and foot and you don't even know it. Do you want me to be shackled like you?" (The Golden Honecomb 32).

Kamala Markandaya presents the plight of Bawajiraj who is faced with the clash between his responsibility to the affairs of the State and his personal longing for freedom to enjoy himself.

Later, he begins to realise that he has a duty to the State and this manifests only in a slow hauteur that expresses itself in his face and demeanor: "the locked gaze of ancestral hauteur." (The Golden Honecomb 306).

In portraying the character of Babajiraj, Kamala Markandaya becomes ironic and attacks those all men who are like Babajiraj, the flatterers and helpless. The irony of his sense of responsibility is emphasized through Markandaya's tone of narrative. He would do anything worse to satisfy his fancies at any other time but he would not allow anything to impinge on his sense of imperial majesty! His feeling of duty to the British crown is also described with iron.

Lady Copeland, who dislikes India because she feels her blood would never mingle there, puts up a brave fight because her sense of responsibility to her husband does not allow her to discard him in the alien land. Shanta Devi represents conformity to tradition and convention; that is her concept of responsibility. She accepts her status of a *persona non grata* and never questions her irresponsible husband.

Rabi alone really grows, in the novel, through the progress of the plot. He passes from unquestioning acceptance of the status quo through defiance, escape, and realisation of responsibility and maturity.

A.V. Krishna Rao explains Markandaya's work "as Projections of the national image on many levels of aesthetic awareness and as uniquely reflective of the national consciousness in its multiple forms." (A.V. Krishna Rao 55)

Now we come on the themes of 'Pleasure City' (1982) which has as its background, the construction of a 'Holiday Complex', near a fishing village in developing India. This enterprise is undertaken by AIDCORP (Atlas International Development Corporation), a multi-national company which has undertaken the assignment to complete the project.

There are two strands of narrative in the novel—the development of Shalimar and the developing friendship of Rikki and Tully. The central idea of the novel is the evolution of the consciousness of Rikki who emerges as an ideal individual out of an East-West encounter on the level of cross-cultural understanding

The novel operates on the same pattern of meeting - friendship - parting. There is still no permanent basis for friendship between East and West, though what the individuals involved gain in the relationship is theirs and theirs alone. Rikki and Tully unconsciously desire freedom from the division of race and class-consciousness.

Rikki is the embodiment of an innocence that Tully feels his people have lost through years of sophistication and civilization. In his friendship with Rikki, Tully

unconsciously attempts to seek a kinship with the essence of his own being. It is believed that the process of industrialization is beneficial to a certain extent but by killing traditions and culture, it is not required.

Tully escapes into an ideal realm where language does not matter, and where he can find kinship of thought, emotion and sentiment. Rikki and Tully, in forming a friendship, go against the dictates of racial divisions fostered by their respective communities, Rikki's out of fear and Tully's out of racial arrogance.

Their friendship blossoms through understanding, and the desire to be of use on Rikki's part. The latter's urge towards friendliness is received with understanding and there is response. Rikki tells Valli, "He is as human," he said, "as you or me." (Pleasure City 73)

The Rikki-Tully relationship is an objectification of levels of communication beyond the merely verbal. Tully says, "What I love about you is the labyrinth you invite me to enter." (Pleasure City 160). Their rebellion against conformity is in search of a fullness of being, of 'simply being'.

"The old man was brought in to consult. He was the headman, to whom should they refer if not him? But Apu's headmanship was based upon a different kind of living. He did not have answers to their questions." (Pleasure City 26).

However, the younger generation of fishermen, such as Rikki, is compelled to accept the new trends due to the economic stringency they face: "Fishermen were pledging their services. They lined up to turn into coolies, at such time as AIDCORP might beckon." (Pleasure City 26). Apu says in vain: "This is our territory. The waters are ours, to a five fathom depth." (Pleasure City 26). While Rikki is charmed and drawn in by the glitter of Shalimar and gives up his fishing occupation for which he was always rather reluctant, Muthu believes that it is impossible for him to give up fishing for anything else.

"The sea is in no mood to give anything", said Rikki". (Pleasure City 61). Thus, Rikki escapes from the constricting frontiers of his closed community when chances for economic betterment open up.

As Tully admits, there is an ocean between them. Rikki goes to the sea and gives "himself up to the sumptuous solitudes of ocean and seashore." (Pleasure City 292).

Later, Tully also reflects, watching the sea, "a mineral sea" which is still until "ruptured by sudden emotion." (Pleasure City 326), which could be his feeling for Rikki.

Avalon, in itself, is a symbolic realm of true understanding which leads to the understanding of the best form of freedom, which is to be free to function effectively with total realisation of the integrated personality.

In spite of the colonial connections, the ruling race had handed down the racial arrogance and prejudice it had nurtured, and that is why even in the atmosphere of Shalimar, it is difficult for the general run of Westerners to look upon the local fisher-folk even as human beings.

Therefore, for Tully, the cultivation of friendship with Rikki is an act against the inherited and confirmed attitudes of his race. For him, however, the affinity to the East and especially to India, is handed down through his colonial ancestors India, both an enchantress and a minx, who can give as much as she can take.

In the characterisation of Rikki, the pattern of freedom and responsibility is much more complex and deeper than in the earlier novels; it is much less explicit. Rikki seeks freedom from the limitations of his traditional community in a bid to join Shalimar.

His friendship with Tully and his entry into Avalon seem the best possible escape. But even this proves illusory and in the end, he returns to Shalimar and accepts the responsibilities there. It is interesting to observe the development of his friendship with Tully and his slow drift away from his fishing community which begins looking upon him as a sort of privileged boy because an Englishman favours him and loads him with gifts and money.

There is no real union between Tully and Corinna though they enjoy each other's company, and differences are somehow heightened in this particular situation in the Indian milieu: "Lacunae remained, and had been pointed up in a different climate, that was all." (Pleasure City 318). While Rikki has entered recesses of Tully's being that Corinna has not seen, Tully knows that there is one part of him she would never touch; and it is on this level that Rikki and Tully gain a mutual understanding.

Rikki allows Tully to share all his experiences and his final act of taking Tully to the former mansion of the Bridies is almost an act of dedication; they had been his passage to Tully, and also to what he considers freedom from traditional bonds: "He

had gone forward, from mangy hut to school-house, to Shalimar when it blossomed, moved on to Avalon, its grave rich heights.” *Pleasure City* (336).

Moreover, Tully feels that he owes something not only to the country but to Rikki also. It is a feeling of responsibility. He tells Rikki, “The most you can throw at me is that I’m paying back some scrap of what I owe.” (*Pleasure City* 61).

Tully’s sensitivity not only to Rikki’s need but also his own need to understand India excludes Corinna for she cannot understand this connection, “Her jealousy flared. She would not have minded a woman, flesh and blood; it was part of the freedoms they allowed each other, and within what she could cope with; unlike this citadel that evaporated before her when she would have challenged its bastions.” (*Pleasure City* 264).

Tully reflects on what Avalon meant, “...more than one quartz, and emotion, and intension, and lucidity, had gone to the raising of Avalon, and into its loving embellishment.” (*Pleasure City* 274-75).

Definite action is submerged, as it were, in sheer consciousness. What is discernible is hence a pattern of thought, emotion and suggestion. The ultimate ambivalence of the Tully-Rikki relationship exemplifies Markandaya’s technical virtuosity in depicting human relations.

The device of diffused illumination of the characters in action helps her achieve a sense of ambiguity in symbolic terms. Concrete and sharp features of the narrative structure seem to dissolve into an abstract and soft but subtly satisfying fictional texture.

Pleasure City illustrates that individuals are bound not only to history but also to socially determined attitudes that create particular situations. The hint of family connections between Tully and Arthur Copeland in ‘The Golden Honeycomb’ (1977), and those between Heblekar and the Dewan family of the same book is a definite indication of Markandaya’s concern with the continuity of historical consciousness.

The experience of Tully and Rikki achieves meaning within a socio-economic situation ruled also by cultural, historical and scientific forces. Corinna concedes, after her accident, that Tully has the freedom to form his own friendships, “I know he...means something to you, Toby. I don't know what, but something.”

Tully's thought is, "She would never know. Rikki, or perhaps the country he was bound up with, were equally outside her reach." (Pleasure City 318). Like in 'The Coffer Dams' where we observe the British conventional bias against Indians, we find here also the general runs of Westerners at Shalimar do not even consider Rikki as a person.

To her, people in India 'were like brick walls'. Mrs. Pearl, on the contrary, is thoroughly fascinated with India and shares with Tully a secret understanding of the people and of the place, and almost 'goes native'. Mrs. Pearl also exhibits positive freedom which enables her to freely adopt the castaway Indian infant.

Rikki's escape is short-lived; economic factors compel him to fulfil his responsibilities to his adopted family. The final note is that he looks forward to a good view from Prospect Point and thereby echoes the note of the future.

'Pleasure City' is thus the evidence of Markandaya's concern for the economic plight of the individual.

Markandaya proves again that the individual longing for self-expression is sometimes overpowered by greater forces of society, to which, be it Rikki or Tully, the individual has to submit. The barriers that divide the races have to be eliminated only by the united efforts of all races; the individual is, at every point, determined thus by his environment. Just as Helen returns to her marital responsibilities, Tully moves away from the "freedoms" of Shalimar while Rikki is at the mercy of Shalimar where he accepts a job.

'Pleasure City' is almost an attempt to connect two different worlds—the East and the West, the technocrat and the colonial, the traditional and the modern—on the level of Indo-British collaboration in the economic development of India. It shows, again, the limitations of the individual who desires total freedom from the burden of tradition.

It is interesting to decipher the associations of 'Shalimar' and 'Avalon'. The former is the name given to the paradise on earth, the Mughal Gardens of Jahangir in Kashmir. It is an Indian version of paradise, while Avalon is the legendary idyllic island of bliss to which King Arthur is taken, something.

'Pleasure City' is a futuristic projection, in terms of a flexible fictional form, of the prospect of prosperity owing to a probable positive cross-cultural collaboration.

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Chapter-VII

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the discussion in the foregoing chapters that Markandaya's fiction is essentially a product of the cultural ethos as it moulds and modifies the individual consciousness in the crucible of time.

It has been seen that the patterns of freedom and responsibility of tradition and modernity in terms of continuity and change, are embedded in the novels of Markandaya as she perceives and presents the ranges of tensions that occur between the individual and the environment.

Markandaya's characters seem to experience the tantalising tensions of a basic opposition between the felt need for freedom from the traditional restrictions, on the one hand, and their social obligations, responsibilities and duties on the other.

This initially results in the individual's defiance of the conventional norms of social codes of behaviour. Faced with the constraints and restraints laid upon her characters by the norms and circumstances and structural organisation of society in a particular cultural context, they initially tend to shake off these constraints since these external forces seem a barrier to spontaneous self-expression as well as to an uninhibited action in response to inner desires.

The mode of escape seems to be an initial withdrawal, in the hope that the escape is durable and meaningful. In this kind of withdrawal the characters are merely trying, in the name of freedom, to escape social or domestic duties or responsibilities. The twin concepts of freedom and responsibility in the context of India's changing tradition are telescopically presented and artistically balanced in Markandaya's fiction as analysed in the preceding chapters.

The result of the withdrawal is a transient deviation into an egoistic indulgence. However, the characters gradually discover that escapism is not freedom and that true freedom is not achieved through an abdication or disowning of responsibility. Confronted with the need for security and a clear conscience, they return to the normally accepted patterns of behaviour within the given cultural milieu.

By the force of circumstance and the process of maturation, they realise that they cannot totally escape from the cycle of events and responsibilities. In the Indian cultural context, an awareness of duty and responsibility underscores the prime norm of social behaviour.

In order to attain psychological security and emotional equivalence, Markandaya's characters return to accept their responsibility to a social group. The acceptance and performance of social duties, obligations and functions is an initial step towards the achievement of true and positive freedom which means full maturity and realisation of one's total integrated personality.

Within the sphere of tradition and conformity, Markandaya's characters grow to a fuller understanding of themselves and their role in society and participate in the tragic-comedy of life. All of them are seen to move thus from a desire for "freedom from" restraints and constraints to a greater awareness of responsibility and "freedom to" function effectively with a fuller realisation of the total integrated self. In the characteristic universe of discourse of Markandaya's fiction, the individual consciousness seeks to get integrated with the social consciousness through the clarifying vision of art.

In *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), Rukmani's growth occurs against the background of a changing rural landscape where metamorphosis bursts into a relatively static society.

The invasion of the tannery brings in new sets of values which disturb the prevalent system of life. Rukmani reacts to the changing economic condition in her own life with a sense of despair and dismay. Whatever she wishes for is not to be had, as ill-luck would have it. She silently defies destiny leading to her flight to the city; she tries to seek a new identity in the 'jagged city of strife and stridency'.

Rukmani finally learns that the individual is in the grip of powerful social forces and that one is truly free only when one accepts the social reality. Rukmani's eventual return to the village with Puli is symbolic of the mental progression to a greater maturity. In this novel the freedom—responsibility axis moves thus on the planes of individual freedom under economic constraints and family responsibilities.

Rukmani does not have any surging conflict, but the concept of freedom and responsibility is seeded here and is developed more clearly in later novels. It is with the

return to the village and calm acceptance of suffering in the wake of irreversible social change that Rukmani gains inner peace and confidence to make a fresh start in life.

In *Some Inner Fury* (1955), Markandaya dramatises the individual crisis in the backdrop of fictionalised history of India's freedom struggle. Mira who belongs to a Westernised Indian Brahmin family, yearns for personal freedom from 'the cribbed, cabined and confined' political environment in order to pursue her personal aspirations.

The novel exposes the limitations of seeking personal freedom for a selfish purpose in the context of a critical phase of India's struggle for political independence from the British rule.

The fictionalised experiences of Mira whose periodical encounters with the frenzied forces of society in the historical context corroborate the view that the freedom of an individual, however eminent, is curbed and conditioned by the compulsions of a culture. Her efforts to escape into a passionate relationship with Richard are thwarted by the larger forces of history.

Although there is no real compulsion from the community and family she belongs to, Mira is still forced to accept the power of the moment of the Quit India Movement of 1942.

The political turbulence and turmoil determines Mira's individual destiny and sets limits to her personal freedom. Mira returns to the fold of her community though she tries in vain to rebel against its codes of behaviour. She perceives and accepts her duties as a member of her family and social class.

Her acquired western habits of thinking and behaviour become irrelevant and transient in the real Indian context. Her subconscious desire is to realise her basic need to belong. There is therefore no true escape from one's tradition; and one's self-fulfilment has to be achieved, in Markandaya's world, within the sphere of society through a return to family and social responsibility. *Some Inner Fury* illustrates how personal freedom can be tragically nullified by national struggle for political independence in a particular historical context.

In *A Silence of Desire* (1960), the pattern operates through the mental growth of Dandekar through the effect of the Swamy on his psyche. Caught in a bad matrimonial situation when he feels that his wife is defying him, asserting her personal freedom and

neglecting domestic duties, Dandekar seeks escape because the situation soon becomes overwhelming for his middle-class mind.

This desire for an outlet, in effect, for negative freedom, manifests itself in Dandekar's nightmarish neglect of home and office, rejection of or flight from responsibility. The dramatisation of his mental state presents the deterioration of will that occurs as a consequence of the indulgence of desire and abdication of responsibility. As Radhakrishnan explains the logic of suffering in his *Indian Philosophy* (1923):

“Morality implies a wrestling with the lower tendency, the pursuit of which appears pleasant. When man struggles to free himself from his natural entanglements, life becomes intense with strife. Suffering is the condition of progress. Struggle is the law of existence and sacrifice the principle of evolution.”(S.Radhakeishnan 243-44)

Dandekar pursues his natural inclinations; the restlessness and peacelessness of his current state lead him to seek solace in some other form. The desire to regain the loyalty of his wife, Sarojini, who symbolises for him security and identity, leads him to the Swamy who teaches him the value of positive freedom and shows him the futility of compulsion in any form.

The infinite in Man, as Radhakrishnan explains, helps him transcend the limitations of the finite. What the Swamy teaches Dandekar is the same; for man's acts to be free they must not be expressive of the mere force of habit or shock of circumstance but of the freedom of the inner soul.(S.Radhakrishnan 246-47)

The pattern of freedom and responsibility in *Possession* (1963) is somewhat cultural.

Val is suddenly transported to England where he gets unbridled access to the Western style of living. He gets the opportunity to be free without any inhibitions. He gets the 'license', as it were, to behave like an Indian playboy of the western world.

Val has grown up in an atmosphere of regulations and constraints of a socio cultural nature in India. Catapulted into a world of luxury, liberty and license, Val becomes rather irresponsible to his tradition, to his art, and to himself. His freedom is thus negative and counterproductive to his development. He abandons the divine purpose of his art and becomes a slave to the superficial aspects of the western modes of living under the tutelage of Caroline.

The Swamy, prime but silent agent of spiritual growth for Val, leads him back to the initial dedication to art. Thus artistic freedom (integrity) is portrayed, not a freedom from constraints but as freedom to control and sublimate one's art through a volitional exercise of discipline and spirituality.

Ravi in *A Handful of Rice* (1966) passes through the moral dilemma of reconciling needs and values.

Initially, like Rukmani, he desires freedom from his depressive economic wants and even considers unfair means to secure material ends. He finds it nearly impossible and certainly undesirable to discard values altogether. The need to achieve the sense of 'I' leads to Ravi's acceptance of the restraints of his position as a 'respectable' tailor.

He thus submits to an internalised authority which also is one of the powers to which the individual submits in a need to win security and status within a society and to be related to the world.

Ravi discovers that submission to conscience and duty seems more meaningful and satisfying than escape from the burdens of economic injustice in illegal activity; and he learns that true freedom is possible only with the expansion of individual consciousness.

The mode of Ravi's progress is through a sudden fear of the extraordinary in action to a readjustment to the traditional value system. Finally, he shows preference to fit himself in the ordinary and the uneventful because that mode offers him emotional security.

When he accepts this responsibility to himself and to his conscience, the ideal growth is to a greater understanding of positive freedom.

The novel is open-ended and suggests ambiguity in regard to the conclusion of dramatic action in the novel. Nevertheless, it is fairly clear that Ravi is no longer an unscrupulous rebel. In this novel Ravi yearns for the freedom from economic want and the model of positive freedom is the ideal that he moves towards at the end of the novel. This novel therefore illustrates Markandaya's discovery of artistic vision through a subtle interplay of man, milieu and the moment.

The scope of the pattern of freedom and responsibility further expands in *The Coffer Dams* (1969) as it dramatises the true meaning of positive freedom with respect

to Helen's ability to communicate spontaneously with the Indian workers and the tribal people.

To achieve this, she defies the constraints of the closed system of British attitudes and values in a cross-cultural situation in building the coffer dams. However, this implies severely strained marital and ethnic relations.

Her felt need is for a sense of belonging at the moral level and she rightly feels she does not really belong to the world of Clinton's values or to the British community as represented at the dam site.

The quest for understanding and relationships in an alien country leads her into the unknown depths of a wilderness in the first instance. Helen finally listens to the voice of reason when she perceives that the mind in itself achieves or does not achieve positive freedom and that, eventually, to be free is also to be responsive to the needs of others, including Clinton. She cannot really disown or in any way negate her status in the social and cultural patterns of identity and affiliations. The pattern of responsibility that emerges in this novel is one of marital responsibility which forms the basis of the inherent need to depend and be depended on.

The meaning of 'freedom' becomes more complex in this novel because Helen desires true freedom to fulfil her urges of social concern and finds that she has to rebel against the dictates of her community in the process.

Her inner desire for freedom from the shackles of her cultural situation is to fulfil herself in the service of a community to whom injustice had been done in the colonial past, and is being done in the technological present.

This compulsive urgency necessitates non-conformity in behaviour. However, as with all quests, Helen has also to drink the deeper waters of evil and her desire for freedom degenerates into a misconceived escape in an affair with Bashiam.

In her liaison with Bashiam, she moves away from her original concern and loses her hold on the reality of her situation. Her sense of history as well as her rationalisation of her conduct remains at best at the level of confused thinking. Through the experience, however, she progresses to a state of maturity which enables her to accept with equanimity, that "there are some things which one has to do"—which include, at the personal level, her responsibility to Clinton and his group of British experts.

The inter-racial situation that provides the backdrop for the growth of Val in *Possession* (1963) enlarges in *The Nowhere Man* (1972) to the wider implications of racism and colonial tyranny. Srinivas's growth to full maturity occurs against this background of inter-racial division. Freedom here begins on the intellectual and practical levels.

Srinivas's flight from the constricting colonial atmosphere in India, where there was no intellectual and personal freedom of action without persecution and prosecution under the British rule, is in search of a more liberal milieu for the exercise of this freedom. In England, Srinivas discovers with shock and dismay that the racial fury torments England as well and that though the Indian immigrant does not interfere in the British social life, he is still persecuted.

Srinivas yearns for freedom from the senseless persecution but matures to realise that true freedom is not external to man but can be found within oneself and that the spiritual self cannot be in bondage even if the material self is. He exemplifies eventually the human being who possesses the wisdom and awareness of human responsibility, who does not persecute or harass his neighbour in offence or defence, but is able to live with his neighbours in a peaceful frame of mind and offer them spiritual companionship and human concern.

Markandaya, through the experiences of Srinivas, points to the need for a better evolved system of social and political values where the freedom that man aspires for can become a reality through practice of humaneness in everyday life.

The situation calls for general agreement among all the human races to be more responsible to one another. Through recognition of this universal need, Srinivas, the nowhere man, feels at home everywhere, owing to his cosmopolitan outlook and spirit of tolerance. He thus gains greater freedom through a conscious cultivation of his spiritual self in the fulfilment of his social responsibilities to his neighbours. Srinivas is indeed a citizen of the world and dies a martyr's death in the cause of cosmopolitan vision and racial harmony. In the character of Srinivas, Markandaya seems to have presented a fictional metaphor of a synthesis of Christian and Gandhian attitudes to fellow humans, by a subtle balancing act in her work of art.

The pattern of freedom and responsibility in *Two Virgins* (1973) is related to the problem of adolescent growth and the formation of adult attitudes vis-a-vis the inevitable conflict between tradition and modernity.

Lalitha rebels against the constricting circumstances of village life because she is dazzled by the prospect of what ultimately turns out to be a false liberty which, without her realising it, degenerates into moral depravity.

She wilfully defies the traditional codes of behaviour of her community. She violates her own conscience too in the act of compromising her chastity.

The consequences of sin are, for Markandaya, quite serious and irrevocable, thus depicting her essentially tragic vision.

Having assumed the negative freedom to pursue her own inclinations of the flesh and passions, Lalitha is compelled to face her guilt in the figure of the unborn child. The desperate flight from responsibility is presented in her eagerness to destroy either herself or the child because she dare not face the consequences of her reckless behaviour. Neither does she acquire the sense of maturity to bear her duty to the child without being troubled by the opinions of others. Thus the essential 'other-directedness' of human action is displayed through the anxiety to appear 'respectable' even when the inner self is virtually ruined. Lalitha's despair engulfs her but when the deed is undone, she returns to the initial defiance of moral codes; however, her underlying feeling is that she has been rejected—rejected by a society that expects and demands of its members strict conformity.

Though the experience is crystallised in Lalitha, the growth to a fuller realisation both of the personality and of the validity of the norms of society is focused through Saroja. Saroja's vicarious experience of negative freedom and the utter peacelessness that goes with it brings her to the recognition of the value of social security, of the responsibility to oneself and to others as necessary for basic happiness and the possibility of growing freely even within the circle of constraints.

To be free is to be free enough from desires and attachments to realise oneself and the value of moral and spiritual integrity in the face of all temptation and dissent. Again, Markandaya weaves the philosophical strands into the exploration of the cultural matrix where the individual is ironically caught in a welter of contradictory forces and influences that tend to confuse his powers of thought,

analysis and judgment.

This is because the harmony that should exist between man and society is absent, producing imbalanced individuals. True freedom is the ability to discover oneself and this, in essence, is the meaning of life: escape in any form signifies a deteriorated state of existence. As the Gita also explains, in order to realise positive freedom, we must control or sublimate the mind which binds us to outer things and makes slaves of us. (S.Radhakrishnan 262)

The Golden Honeycomb (1977) also dramatises the individual yearning for personal freedom in the absence of true political freedom. Rabi's situation is such that he is cast in the form of a social provider in his State, but when he discovers that he is not really free to govern his State as he would like to, he becomes disillusioned with his false status.

He assumes freedom from the restrictions of the authority that goes with his royal status. He defies the British prescribed norms of royal behaviour. The escape into sexual relations with Jaya is symbolic of the pitfalls in Rabi's quest for identity and freedom.

This relationship fails to provide a permanent solace for Rabi because it is essentially hollow. The experience in Bombay, where he sees at first hand the sufferings and miseries of the common people, makes him more fully conscious of social responsibility and of his own role in the social structure.

He grows up to recognise that authority involves responsibility, and that it should be used to further the progress of the people. Though compelled to rebel against the hollow authority of his father, he becomes the head of popular protest seeking the rights and freedoms of the people and works towards their amelioration because this alone could bring him satisfaction and self-fulfilment.

Thus in the pursuit of freedom, Rabi grows to the understanding of his responsibility in the fulfilment of which he progresses to positive freedom. The Golden Honeycomb thus expands the meaning and scope of the pattern of freedom and responsibility.

It is a paradigm of positive freedom in as much as Rabi fulfils his responsibilities through greater awareness of the self.

Responsibility here includes the duty to promote the welfare of humanity. Rabi, at the end of the novel, experiences a full sense of positive freedom—the freedom to

govern oneself and to realise one's individuality within the ambit of moral constraints and bonds —than any of the other protagonists like Ravi or Rikki. Rabi accepts responsibility with a more ready, more mature and more patriotic spirit of avowal than found in the other novels where acceptance is the final state, no doubt, but is forced by circumstances.

Rabi's rapprochement is more on the moral plane than on the plane of self-aggrandisement. In this novel, Markandaya shows, both a respect for India's usable "past and a vivid sense of how it has made us what we are".(Bernard Bergonzi 54)

The pattern of freedom and responsibility does not develop much emphasis in Markandaya's latest novel *Pleasure City* (1982).

Rikki's need for freedom from the constraints of economic milieu is clear; this need finds an immediate outlet in the development of Shalimar where he finds the escape route to economic prosperity, even as Bashiam, the tribal with attenuated roots in *The Coffer Dams* joins the crusade against the tribal culture.

Tully and Rikki, in order to achieve a fulfilling relationship of human understanding, defy the conventional codes of conduct in respect of inter-racial relationships as Helen and Bashiam do, with this important difference that in *The Coffer Dams* the friendship is in the nature of extra-marital relationship. Both the pairs aspire for freedom from the economic and cultural milieu; Rikki and Tully discover soon enough that there is no morally justifiable escape, even in *Avalon*, from the influence of the greater external world and that the individual is almost always a part of society and has to accept greater forces.

These forces do, at first, seem to threaten his sense of identity; but finally help him realise a better sense of freedom for the will needs restraints to function meaningfully. Responsibility means, for Tully and Rikki, professional commitment as well as the responsibility of family relationships.

Realisation of positive freedom is an ideal towards which Tully and Rikki eventually move. They mistake, to begin with, escapism for freedom but finally realise that escapist behaviour is no solution to the problem of personal fulfilment and that there is no realm where absolutely self-centred existence is possible. The symbolic structure of this latest work of Markandaya clearly establishes its central concern in

terms of the concepts of freedom and responsibility and continuity and change in a traditional society.

Absolute individual freedom in the face of socio-economic constraints is extremely difficult, if not impossible to attain, and the realisation of positive freedom and individualism is also bound up with economic and social changes in a culture. Further the psychological problem cannot be really separated from the material or physical basis of human existence, namely, the economic, political and social structure of a society.

Markandaya fictionalises the psychological and material aspects of freedom in those novels (e.g., *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Handful of Rice*, *The Coffers Dams* and *Pleasure City*) where the individual is hampered by the economic factors of a socio-cultural situation. Those novels seem to point to the need for a more wellplanned society so that the opportunity for genuine positive activity is available to the individual.

Markandaya's novels therefore develop within their fictional and artistic scope the different aspects of economic, political, intellectual, artistic, social and personal freedom, and successfully project the ideal of positive freedom.

True freedom as achieved and amplified by the protagonists is identified as the freedom to function effectively through a fuller realization of the total self, as in that state of equilibrium there is no yearning and no desire.

The characters, it is shown, can thereby progress to a more independent existence without allowing the various external forces of constraint to hamper the spontaneous exercise of the self. It is through this mature realisation that peace of mind can become more of a reality.

As the Gita says, the bondage to qualities of the mind causes the feeling of limitedness: the bonds belonging to the mind are erroneously attributed to the self. (S.Radhakrishnan 570) The more man realises his true divine nature, the more free is he, (S.Radhakrishnan 248) and every living soul is potentially free (S.Radhakrishnan 247) because the essence of spirit is apart from the many identifications of the ego. Balanced development of the personality can produce the sense of active relatedness to the world in the spirit of love and work —love for fellowmen and work as creative activity which is the path to positive freedom.

Markandaya's protagonists grow to a better realisation that love of one's family and of other human beings as well as work as service are important. The Gita also teaches social service and work as the path to positive freedom. (S.Radhakrishnan 568)

So long as we perform selfish work, we are subject to the law of bondage. The Isa Upanishad says that what binds us to the chain of birth and death is not action but 'selfish action'. When we perform disinterested work, we reach freedom. (S.Radhakrishnan 245-46)

The whole setting of the Gita points out that it is an exhortation to action. Work is an existential sine qua non till

we attain freedom. We have to work in order to become free, and when we attain it, we have to work as the human instruments of the divine. The free souls have also the obligation to help others to discover the divine in themselves. (S.Radhakrishnan 568)

Markandaya's protagonists grow either to the understanding of love and devotion in the spirit of self-sacrifice and compassion (Rukmani, Mira, Helen, Srinivas, Saroja, Tully and Rikki) or to the true meaning of love as creative relatedness to the other and also to the true spirit of work as devoted creation in the spirit of duty (like Ravi, Dandekar, Sarojini, Rabi, and Val). It is thus through the new perspective of love and work gained through their personal encounters with economic, political, intra-cultural forces that Markandaya's characters progress to positive freedom in the sense of active and creative relatedness of man

to the world through a fuller realisation of the total integrated personality. This equates to the ideal of freedom which forms the cultural ethos that Markandaya's universe of discourse contains.

Thus, negative freedom or escapism emerges as a severely limited sense of freedom from some external power, the attainment of which does not yield self-satisfaction and contentment though it satiates temporary desires and cravings; it succeeds in making the characters more and more anxious and lonely with an acute sense of insecurity, lack of identity and powerlessness, and leading them again to the original circle of conformity with a better frame of mind, now more suited to accept the limitations either of tradition or of structural organization of society in a particular context, and helping them also to perform their responsibilities within this confined sphere of existence.

Maturity is greater awareness when the characters can see above and beyond the limitations of their situations to embrace the vision of a more plausible state of happiness which can be attained through effective performance but not through any form of escape from the centre of activity. Though the characters are not seen as experiencing full positive freedom, it is the goal they move towards at the close of the novels and they definitely progress from their initial attitudes and escapist tendencies.

Markandaya, unlike the majority of Indian women novelists writing in English, expands the scope of fiction beyond the narrow motive of using it as a vehicle to discuss the issue of the position of women in India, to the broader perspective of the individual's plight against the background of a variety of more complex fundamental issues of the human spirit and sensibility.

Her artistic vision moulds the perception of the reality of situations through the realistic mode but at the same time opens up the deeper layers of encounter and experience. She explores imaginatively the matrix of human experiences in a particular cultural context; her fiction is thus deeply rooted in the changing tradition of modern India, her vision being shaped and sustained by her authentic roots in Indian tradition as well as by a deeply sensitive feminine sensibility.

It may be concluded in the light of the present study that the concept of freedom and responsibility which run through all her published work is artistically explored and explicated in a positive sense. Markandaya's work is held together by the creative tension between the two sets of ideas of tradition and modernity — freedom and responsibility—and it projects her vision in terms of an enduring balance and equivalence which synthesise the opposed ideas into one of responsible freedom or a blend of traditional values and inescapable socio-cultural change.

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Chapter-VII

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the discussion in the foregoing chapters that Markandaya's fiction is essentially a product of the cultural ethos as it moulds and modifies the individual consciousness in the crucible of time.

It has been seen that the patterns of freedom and responsibility of tradition and modernity in terms of continuity and change, are embedded in the novels of Markandaya as she perceives and presents the ranges of tensions that occur between the individual and the environment.

Markandaya's characters seem to experience the tantalising tensions of a basic opposition between the felt need for freedom from the traditional restrictions, on the one hand, and their social obligations, responsibilities and duties on the other.

This initially results in the individual's defiance of the conventional norms of social codes of behaviour. Faced with the constraints and restraints laid upon her characters by the norms and circumstances and structural organisation of society in a particular cultural context, they initially tend to shake off these constraints since these external forces seem a barrier to spontaneous self-expression as well as to an uninhibited action in response to inner desires.

The mode of escape seems to be an initial withdrawal, in the hope that the escape is durable and meaningful. In this kind of withdrawal the characters are merely trying, in the name of freedom, to escape social or domestic duties or responsibilities. The twin concepts of freedom and responsibility in the context of India's changing tradition are telescopically presented and artistically balanced in Markandaya's fiction as analysed in the preceding chapters.

The result of the withdrawal is a transient deviation into an egoistic indulgence. However, the characters gradually discover that escapism is not freedom and that true freedom is not achieved through an abdication or disowning of responsibility. Confronted with the need for security and a clear conscience, they return to the normally accepted patterns of behaviour within the given cultural milieu.

By the force of circumstance and the process of maturation, they realise that they cannot totally escape from the cycle of events and responsibilities. In the Indian cultural context, an awareness of duty and responsibility underscores the prime norm of social behaviour.

In order to attain psychological security and emotional equivalence, Markandaya's characters return to accept their responsibility to a social group. The acceptance and performance of social duties, obligations and functions is an initial step towards the achievement of true and positive freedom which means full maturity and realisation of one's total integrated personality.

Within the sphere of tradition and conformity, Markandaya's characters grow to a fuller understanding of themselves and their role in society and participate in the tragic-comedy of life. All of them are seen to move thus from a desire for "freedom from" restraints and constraints to a greater awareness of responsibility and "freedom to" function effectively with a fuller realisation of the total integrated self. In the characteristic universe of discourse of Markandaya's fiction, the individual consciousness seeks to get integrated with the social consciousness through the clarifying vision of art.

In *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), Rukmani's growth occurs against the background of a changing rural landscape where metamorphosis bursts into a relatively static society.

The invasion of the tannery brings in new sets of values which disturb the prevalent system of life. Rukmani reacts to the changing economic condition in her own life with a sense of despair and dismay. Whatever she wishes for is not to be had, as ill-luck would have it. She silently defies destiny leading to her flight to the city; she tries to seek a new identity in the 'jagged city of strife and stridency'.

Rukmani finally learns that the individual is in the grip of powerful social forces and that one is truly free only when one accepts the social reality. Rukmani's eventual return to the village with Puli is symbolic of the mental progression to a greater maturity. In this novel the freedom—responsibility axis moves thus on the planes of individual freedom under economic constraints and family responsibilities.

Rukmani does not have any surging conflict, but the concept of freedom and responsibility is seeded here and is developed more clearly in later novels. It is with the

return to the village and calm acceptance of suffering in the wake of irreversible social change that Rukmani gains inner peace and confidence to make a fresh start in life.

In *Some Inner Fury* (1955), Markandaya dramatises the individual crisis in the backdrop of fictionalised history of India's freedom struggle. Mira who belongs to a Westernised Indian Brahmin family, yearns for personal freedom from 'the cribbed, cabined and confined' political environment in order to pursue her personal aspirations.

The novel exposes the limitations of seeking personal freedom for a selfish purpose in the context of a critical phase of India's struggle for political independence from the British rule.

The fictionalised experiences of Mira whose periodical encounters with the frenzied forces of society in the historical context corroborate the view that the freedom of an individual, however eminent, is curbed and conditioned by the compulsions of a culture. Her efforts to escape into a passionate relationship with Richard are thwarted by the larger forces of history.

Although there is no real compulsion from the community and family she belongs to, Mira is still forced to accept the power of the moment of the Quit India Movement of 1942.

The political turbulence and turmoil determines Mira's individual destiny and sets limits to her personal freedom. Mira returns to the fold of her community though she tries in vain to rebel against its codes of behaviour. She perceives and accepts her duties as a member of her family and social class.

Her acquired western habits of thinking and behaviour become irrelevant and transient in the real Indian context. Her subconscious desire is to realise her basic need to belong. There is therefore no true escape from one's tradition; and one's self-fulfilment has to be achieved, in Markandaya's world, within the sphere of society through a return to family and social responsibility. *Some Inner Fury* illustrates how personal freedom can be tragically nullified by national struggle for political independence in a particular historical context.

In *A Silence of Desire* (1960), the pattern operates through the mental growth of Dandekar through the effect of the Swamy on his psyche. Caught in a bad matrimonial situation when he feels that his wife is defying him, asserting her personal freedom and

neglecting domestic duties, Dandekar seeks escape because the situation soon becomes overwhelming for his middle-class mind.

This desire for an outlet, in effect, for negative freedom, manifests itself in Dandekar's nightmarish neglect of home and office, rejection of or flight from responsibility. The dramatisation of his mental state presents the deterioration of will that occurs as a consequence of the indulgence of desire and abdication of responsibility. As Radhakrishnan explains the logic of suffering in his *Indian Philosophy* (1923):

“Morality implies a wrestling with the lower tendency, the pursuit of which appears pleasant. When man struggles to free himself from his natural entanglements, life becomes intense with strife. Suffering is the condition of progress. Struggle is the law of existence and sacrifice the principle of evolution.”(S.Radhakeishnan 243-44)

Dandekar pursues his natural inclinations; the restlessness and peacelessness of his current state lead him to seek solace in some other form. The desire to regain the loyalty of his wife, Sarojini, who symbolises for him security and identity, leads him to the Swamy who teaches him the value of positive freedom and shows him the futility of compulsion in any form.

The infinite in Man, as Radhakrishnan explains, helps him transcend the limitations of the finite. What the Swamy teaches Dandekar is the same; for man's acts to be free they must not be expressive of the mere force of habit or shock of circumstance but of the freedom of the inner soul.(S.Radhakrishnan 246-47)

The pattern of freedom and responsibility in *Possession* (1963) is somewhat cultural.

Val is suddenly transported to England where he gets unbridled access to the Western style of living. He gets the opportunity to be free without any inhibitions. He gets the 'license', as it were, to behave like an Indian playboy of the western world.

Val has grown up in an atmosphere of regulations and constraints of a socio cultural nature in India. Catapulted into a world of luxury, liberty and license, Val becomes rather irresponsible to his tradition, to his art, and to himself. His freedom is thus negative and counterproductive to his development. He abandons the divine purpose of his art and becomes a slave to the superficial aspects of the western modes of living under the tutelage of Caroline.

The Swamy, prime but silent agent of spiritual growth for Val, leads him back to the initial dedication to art. Thus artistic freedom (integrity) is portrayed, not a freedom from constraints but as freedom to control and sublimate one's art through a volitional exercise of discipline and spirituality.

Ravi in *A Handful of Rice* (1966) passes through the moral dilemma of reconciling needs and values.

Initially, like Rukmani, he desires freedom from his depressive economic wants and even considers unfair means to secure material ends. He finds it nearly impossible and certainly undesirable to discard values altogether. The need to achieve the sense of 'I' leads to Ravi's acceptance of the restraints of his position as a 'respectable' tailor.

He thus submits to an internalised authority which also is one of the powers to which the individual submits in a need to win security and status within a society and to be related to the world.

Ravi discovers that submission to conscience and duty seems more meaningful and satisfying than escape from the burdens of economic injustice in illegal activity; and he learns that true freedom is possible only with the expansion of individual consciousness.

The mode of Ravi's progress is through a sudden fear of the extraordinary in action to a readjustment to the traditional value system. Finally, he shows preference to fit himself in the ordinary and the uneventful because that mode offers him emotional security.

When he accepts this responsibility to himself and to his conscience, the ideal growth is to a greater understanding of positive freedom.

The novel is open-ended and suggests ambiguity in regard to the conclusion of dramatic action in the novel. Nevertheless, it is fairly clear that Ravi is no longer an unscrupulous rebel. In this novel Ravi yearns for the freedom from economic want and the model of positive freedom is the ideal that he moves towards at the end of the novel. This novel therefore illustrates Markandaya's discovery of artistic vision through a subtle interplay of man, milieu and the moment.

The scope of the pattern of freedom and responsibility further expands in *The Coffer Dams* (1969) as it dramatises the true meaning of positive freedom with respect

to Helen's ability to communicate spontaneously with the Indian workers and the tribal people.

To achieve this, she defies the constraints of the closed system of British attitudes and values in a cross-cultural situation in building the coffer dams. However, this implies severely strained marital and ethnic relations.

Her felt need is for a sense of belonging at the moral level and she rightly feels she does not really belong to the world of Clinton's values or to the British community as represented at the dam site.

The quest for understanding and relationships in an alien country leads her into the unknown depths of a wilderness in the first instance. Helen finally listens to the voice of reason when she perceives that the mind in itself achieves or does not achieve positive freedom and that, eventually, to be free is also to be responsive to the needs of others, including Clinton. She cannot really disown or in any way negate her status in the social and cultural patterns of identity and affiliations. The pattern of responsibility that emerges in this novel is one of marital responsibility which forms the basis of the inherent need to depend and be depended on.

The meaning of 'freedom' becomes more complex in this novel because Helen desires true freedom to fulfil her urges of social concern and finds that she has to rebel against the dictates of her community in the process.

Her inner desire for freedom from the shackles of her cultural situation is to fulfil herself in the service of a community to whom injustice had been done in the colonial past, and is being done in the technological present.

This compulsive urgency necessitates non-conformity in behaviour. However, as with all quests, Helen has also to drink the deeper waters of evil and her desire for freedom degenerates into a misconceived escape in an affair with Bashiam.

In her liaison with Bashiam, she moves away from her original concern and loses her hold on the reality of her situation. Her sense of history as well as her rationalisation of her conduct remains at best at the level of confused thinking. Through the experience, however, she progresses to a state of maturity which enables her to accept with equanimity, that "there are some things which one has to do"—which include, at the personal level, her responsibility to Clinton and his group of British experts.

The inter-racial situation that provides the backdrop for the growth of Val in *Possession* (1963) enlarges in *The Nowhere Man* (1972) to the wider implications of racism and colonial tyranny. Srinivas's growth to full maturity occurs against this background of inter-racial division. Freedom here begins on the intellectual and practical levels.

Srinivas's flight from the constricting colonial atmosphere in India, where there was no intellectual and personal freedom of action without persecution and prosecution under the British rule, is in search of a more liberal milieu for the exercise of this freedom. In England, Srinivas discovers with shock and dismay that the racial fury torments England as well and that though the Indian immigrant does not interfere in the British social life, he is still persecuted.

Srinivas yearns for freedom from the senseless persecution but matures to realise that true freedom is not external to man but can be found within oneself and that the spiritual self cannot be in bondage even if the material self is. He exemplifies eventually the human being who possesses the wisdom and awareness of human responsibility, who does not persecute or harass his neighbour in offence or defence, but is able to live with his neighbours in a peaceful frame of mind and offer them spiritual companionship and human concern.

Markandaya, through the experiences of Srinivas, points to the need for a better evolved system of social and political values where the freedom that man aspires for can become a reality through practice of humaneness in everyday life.

The situation calls for general agreement among all the human races to be more responsible to one another. Through recognition of this universal need, Srinivas, the nowhere man, feels at home everywhere, owing to his cosmopolitan outlook and spirit of tolerance. He thus gains greater freedom through a conscious cultivation of his spiritual self in the fulfilment of his social responsibilities to his neighbours. Srinivas is indeed a citizen of the world and dies a martyr's death in the cause of cosmopolitan vision and racial harmony. In the character of Srinivas, Markandaya seems to have presented a fictional metaphor of a synthesis of Christian and Gandhian attitudes to fellow humans, by a subtle balancing act in her work of art.

The pattern of freedom and responsibility in *Two Virgins* (1973) is related to the problem of adolescent growth and the formation of adult attitudes vis-a-vis the inevitable conflict between tradition and modernity.

Lalitha rebels against the constricting circumstances of village life because she is dazzled by the prospect of what ultimately turns out to be a false liberty which, without her realising it, degenerates into moral depravity.

She wilfully defies the traditional codes of behaviour of her community. She violates her own conscience too in the act of compromising her chastity.

The consequences of sin are, for Markandaya, quite serious and irrevocable, thus depicting her essentially tragic vision.

Having assumed the negative freedom to pursue her own inclinations of the flesh and passions, Lalitha is compelled to face her guilt in the figure of the unborn child. The desperate flight from responsibility is presented in her eagerness to destroy either herself or the child because she dare not face the consequences of her reckless behaviour. Neither does she acquire the sense of maturity to bear her duty to the child without being troubled by the opinions of others. Thus the essential 'other-directedness' of human action is displayed through the anxiety to appear 'respectable' even when the inner self is virtually ruined. Lalitha's despair engulfs her but when the deed is undone, she returns to the initial defiance of moral codes; however, her underlying feeling is that she has been rejected—rejected by a society that expects and demands of its members strict conformity.

Though the experience is crystallised in Lalitha, the growth to a fuller realisation both of the personality and of the validity of the norms of society is focused through Saroja. Saroja's vicarious experience of negative freedom and the utter peacelessness that goes with it brings her to the recognition of the value of social security, of the responsibility to oneself and to others as necessary for basic happiness and the possibility of growing freely even within the circle of constraints.

To be free is to be free enough from desires and attachments to realise oneself and the value of moral and spiritual integrity in the face of all temptation and dissent. Again, Markandaya weaves the philosophical strands into the exploration of the cultural matrix where the individual is ironically caught in a welter of contradictory forces and influences that tend to confuse his powers of thought,

analysis and judgment.

This is because the harmony that should exist between man and society is absent, producing imbalanced individuals. True freedom is the ability to discover oneself and this, in essence, is the meaning of life: escape in any form signifies a deteriorated state of existence. As the Gita also explains, in order to realise positive freedom, we must control or sublimate the mind which binds us to outer things and makes slaves of us. (S.Radhakrishnan 262)

The Golden Honeycomb (1977) also dramatises the individual yearning for personal freedom in the absence of true political freedom. Rabi's situation is such that he is cast in the form of a social provider in his State, but when he discovers that he is not really free to govern his State as he would like to, he becomes disillusioned with his false status.

He assumes freedom from the restrictions of the authority that goes with his royal status. He defies the British prescribed norms of royal behaviour. The escape into sexual relations with Jaya is symbolic of the pitfalls in Rabi's quest for identity and freedom.

This relationship fails to provide a permanent solace for Rabi because it is essentially hollow. The experience in Bombay, where he sees at first hand the sufferings and miseries of the common people, makes him more fully conscious of social responsibility and of his own role in the social structure.

He grows up to recognise that authority involves responsibility, and that it should be used to further the progress of the people. Though compelled to rebel against the hollow authority of his father, he becomes the head of popular protest seeking the rights and freedoms of the people and works towards their amelioration because this alone could bring him satisfaction and self-fulfilment.

Thus in the pursuit of freedom, Rabi grows to the understanding of his responsibility in the fulfilment of which he progresses to positive freedom. The Golden Honeycomb thus expands the meaning and scope of the pattern of freedom and responsibility.

It is a paradigm of positive freedom in as much as Rabi fulfils his responsibilities through greater awareness of the self.

Responsibility here includes the duty to promote the welfare of humanity. Rabi, at the end of the novel, experiences a full sense of positive freedom—the freedom to

govern oneself and to realise one's individuality within the ambit of moral constraints and bonds —than any of the other protagonists like Ravi or Rikki. Rabi accepts responsibility with a more ready, more mature and more patriotic spirit of avowal than found in the other novels where acceptance is the final state, no doubt, but is forced by circumstances.

Rabi's rapprochement is more on the moral plane than on the plane of self-aggrandisement. In this novel, Markandaya shows, both a respect for India's usable "past and a vivid sense of how it has made us what we are".(Bernard Bergonzi 54)

The pattern of freedom and responsibility does not develop much emphasis in Markandaya's latest novel *Pleasure City* (1982).

Rikki's need for freedom from the constraints of economic milieu is clear; this need finds an immediate outlet in the development of Shalimar where he finds the escape route to economic prosperity, even as Bashiam, the tribal with attenuated roots in *The Coffer Dams* joins the crusade against the tribal culture.

Tully and Rikki, in order to achieve a fulfilling relationship of human understanding, defy the conventional codes of conduct in respect of inter-racial relationships as Helen and Bashiam do, with this important difference that in *The Coffer Dams* the friendship is in the nature of extra-marital relationship. Both the pairs aspire for freedom from the economic and cultural milieu; Rikki and Tully discover soon enough that there is no morally justifiable escape, even in *Avalon*, from the influence of the greater external world and that the individual is almost always a part of society and has to accept greater forces.

These forces do, at first, seem to threaten his sense of identity; but finally help him realise a better sense of freedom for the will needs restraints to function meaningfully. Responsibility means, for Tully and Rikki, professional commitment as well as the responsibility of family relationships.

Realisation of positive freedom is an ideal towards which Tully and Rikki eventually move. They mistake, to begin with, escapism for freedom but finally realise that escapist behaviour is no solution to the problem of personal fulfilment and that there is no realm where absolutely self-centred existence is possible. The symbolic structure of this latest work of Markandaya clearly establishes its central concern in

terms of the concepts of freedom and responsibility and continuity and change in a traditional society.

Absolute individual freedom in the face of socio-economic constraints is extremely difficult, if not impossible to attain, and the realisation of positive freedom and individualism is also bound up with economic and social changes in a culture. Further the psychological problem cannot be really separated from the material or physical basis of human existence, namely, the economic, political and social structure of a society.

Markandaya fictionalises the psychological and material aspects of freedom in those novels (e.g., *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Handful of Rice*, *The Coffers Dams* and *Pleasure City*) where the individual is hampered by the economic factors of a socio-cultural situation. Those novels seem to point to the need for a more wellplanned society so that the opportunity for genuine positive activity is available to the individual.

Markandaya's novels therefore develop within their fictional and artistic scope the different aspects of economic, political, intellectual, artistic, social and personal freedom, and successfully project the ideal of positive freedom.

True freedom as achieved and amplified by the protagonists is identified as the freedom to function effectively through a fuller realization of the total self, as in that state of equilibrium there is no yearning and no desire.

The characters, it is shown, can thereby progress to a more independent existence without allowing the various external forces of constraint to hamper the spontaneous exercise of the self. It is through this mature realisation that peace of mind can become more of a reality.

As the Gita says, the bondage to qualities of the mind causes the feeling of limitedness: the bonds belonging to the mind are erroneously attributed to the self. (S.Radhakrishnan 570) The more man realises his true divine nature, the more free is he, (S.Radhakrishnan 248) and every living soul is potentially free (S.Radhakrishnan 247) because the essence of spirit is apart from the many identifications of the ego. Balanced development of the personality can produce the sense of active relatedness to the world in the spirit of love and work —love for fellowmen and work as creative activity which is the path to positive freedom.

Markandaya's protagonists grow to a better realisation that love of one's family and of other human beings as well as work as service are important. The Gita also teaches social service and work as the path to positive freedom. (S.Radhakrishnan 568)

So long as we perform selfish work, we are subject to the law of bondage. The Isa Upanishad says that what binds us to the chain of birth and death is not action but 'selfish action'. When we perform disinterested work, we reach freedom. (S.Radhakrishnan 245-46)

The whole setting of the Gita points out that it is an exhortation to action. Work is an existential sine qua non till

we attain freedom. We have to work in order to become free, and when we attain it, we have to work as the human instruments of the divine. The free souls have also the obligation to help others to discover the divine in themselves. (S.Radhakrishnan 568)

Markandaya's protagonists grow either to the understanding of love and devotion in the spirit of self-sacrifice and compassion (Rukmani, Mira, Helen, Srinivas, Saroja, Tully and Rikki) or to the true meaning of love as creative relatedness to the other and also to the true spirit of work as devoted creation in the spirit of duty (like Ravi, Dandekar, Sarojini, Rabi, and Val). It is thus through the new perspective of love and work gained through their personal encounters with economic, political, intra-cultural forces that Markandaya's characters progress to positive freedom in the sense of active and creative relatedness of man

to the world through a fuller realisation of the total integrated personality. This equates to the ideal of freedom which forms the cultural ethos that Markandaya's universe of discourse contains.

Thus, negative freedom or escapism emerges as a severely limited sense of freedom from some external power, the attainment of which does not yield self-satisfaction and contentment though it satiates temporary desires and cravings; it succeeds in making the characters more and more anxious and lonely with an acute sense of insecurity, lack of identity and powerlessness, and leading them again to the original circle of conformity with a better frame of mind, now more suited to accept the limitations either of tradition or of structural organization of society in a particular context, and helping them also to perform their responsibilities within this confined sphere of existence.

Maturity is greater awareness when the characters can see above and beyond the limitations of their situations to embrace the vision of a more plausible state of happiness which can be attained through effective performance but not through any form of escape from the centre of activity. Though the characters are not seen as experiencing full positive freedom, it is the goal they move towards at the close of the novels and they definitely progress from their initial attitudes and escapist tendencies.

Markandaya, unlike the majority of Indian women novelists writing in English, expands the scope of fiction beyond the narrow motive of using it as a vehicle to discuss the issue of the position of women in India, to the broader perspective of the individual's plight against the background of a variety of more complex fundamental issues of the human spirit and sensibility.

Her artistic vision moulds the perception of the reality of situations through the realistic mode but at the same time opens up the deeper layers of encounter and experience. She explores imaginatively the matrix of human experiences in a particular cultural context; her fiction is thus deeply rooted in the changing tradition of modern India, her vision being shaped and sustained by her authentic roots in Indian tradition as well as by a deeply sensitive feminine sensibility.

It may be concluded in the light of the present study that the concept of freedom and responsibility which run through all her published work is artistically explored and explicated in a positive sense. Markandaya's work is held together by the creative tension between the two sets of ideas of tradition and modernity — freedom and responsibility — and it projects her vision in terms of an enduring balance and equivalence which synthesise the opposed ideas into one of responsible freedom or a blend of traditional values and inescapable socio-cultural change.

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A Thematic Analysis in Nectar in a Sieve and Some Inner Fury

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Received: 15 Jul 2022; Received in revised form: 10 Aug 2022; Accepted: 18 Aug 2022; Available online: 25 Aug 2022
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Abstract

Nectar in a Sieve published in 1954 is also known as 'A Novel of Rural India'. It has many themes; major and minor. It shows us a picture of Indian Society, victim under the clutches of industrialization. It has described the bitter condition of Indian people who are facing numerous challenges. 'Nectar in a Sieve' is the first novel of Kamala Markandaya which has received high acclaim from the readers and the critics. The title 'Nectar in a Sieve' has been derived from S. T. Coleridge's famous poem, 'Work without Hope' in which, he writes "Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve" and "Hope without an object cannot live"

Keywords— Indian Society, Victim, Clutches of Industrialization, Indian People, Novel,

I. INTRODUCTION

This couplet of the poem shows us the drama of rural life that the novel presents. 'Nectar' means the drink of the Gods (Amrit). In other words, it is to be said that God has gifted the man with plenty and unthinkable gifts to enjoy but due to the materialism, they remain unable to use those gifts. The drink is the source of joy, peace and contentment. 'Sieve' means a small circular utensil with holes at the bottom. It is used to separate grain from chaff. This 'sieve' symbolically has passed and thrown away all the hopes and happiness. Here in the context of the novel, Markandaya wants to tell us that the rural Indian, living in the beautiful and natural surroundings is expected to enjoy the nectar of happiness, peace and contentment but due to his poverty, all his hope, joy and happiness-the nectar-pass through the holes of the sieve, his poverty. It is futile to collect nectar in a sieve- it will flow out drop by drop.

In this world of materialism, most of the people are not lucky enough to have minimum food, cloth and shelter.

Plenty of people are wandering in the want of their daily needs. The case of Nathan and Rukmani is one of them. Such as the God-gifted nectar is not common to all, in the same way, the nectar - happiness - in the life of an average Indian is short - lived. The present novel, 'Nectar in a Sieve' has shown us the life of Rukmani. It is a novel of rural India. It is not the story of a particular individual and a particular village that is why Kamala Markandaya has not assigned any name to the village. Nathan and Rukmani are husband and wife respectively but these are fantastic characters. Both; the husband and wife are equally fond of each-other. They want to live their life with happiness and contentment. But due to their bitter circumstances, they could not live in peace; prosperity and happiness. They represent the poverty stricken peasantry of India. Nathan and Rukmani enjoy the 'nectar of life' but their nectar flows out from the sieves of their lives. Their happiness, peace and contentment do not go long. In the life of average Indian too so happens. Most of the Indian peasants spend their lives in poverty and starvation. They have to face numerous challenges.

Nathan, Rukmani, Irrawadi or Ira, Arjun, Thambi, Murugan, Raja, Selvam, Kutti, Sacrabani, Kunthi, Kali, Janaki, Old Granny, Ammu, Puli and Dr. Kennigton are the fantastic characters; some are major and some are minor.

Through these characters, Markandaya has beautifully interwoven the story of Indian society, mingling several themes. Rukmani is the heroine of the novel. She is the central figure and the narrator of the story. 'Nectar in a Sieve' is the story of her experiences in life. As a protagonist, Rukmani has shown almost all the aspects of rural Indian society. Rukmani's husband Nathan is a tenant farmer and represents the hardiness of the rural Indian. Irrawaddy or Ira is Rukmani's eldest daughter who is deserted by her husband because she is infertile. The portrayal of Ira's plight exhibits the theme of male-domination. Ira represents all those women, who are infertile. Not only Ira but all such women are compelled to face this social vice. Particularly, in India, such meanmindedness is found everywhere. Take the other case of Arun and Thambi, Rukmani's two elder sons. Here, the theme of unemployment problem is exhibited. Both are in the want of proper profession. To make their fortune, they are first employed in the village tannery and later to go Ceylon in order to work in the tea-plantation. In the other case of Murugan, the third son of Rukmani, Markandaya shows us the frankness and blending of rural-urban culture. Murugan goes to the city and marries a girl there. But, due to his bad habits, he could not live happily. Markandaya has shown us a fact that Murugan did not take lesson from the plight of his sister who was deserted by her husband. He too deserted his wife and children.

This betrayal of his wife and children again shows us the harsh attitude of male dominated society, in which women are used and thrown away like the toys and puppets. Rukmani's forth son Raja belongs to the other aspect of society. He is employed at the tannery where further, he is caught stealing and is killed by the gatekeepers of the tannery. This incident presents many folds of social life; starvation, vicitude, killing, looting and falling of a good boy on the wrong path. The episode of Rukmani's fifth son, Selvam highlits a new way of progress where Markandaya sympathises towards Selvam who gives up farming and starts working as an assistant to Dr. Kenny. Kutti is the youngest son. He dies of starvation in early childhood. This pathetic end of Kutti's life creates a jerk in to the heart and mind of the readers.

Markandaya tells us how a helpless woman falls in to bad company. After, her betrayal by her husband, she comes in the contact of other person with whom she gives birth to an illegitimate son that causes her other social problems. Sacrabani is Irra's illegitimate son. Kunthi is Rukmani's neighbor. She is a pretty woman who later on, takes prostitution. Kali is also Rukamani's neighbor. Kali is good natured and co-operative woman. She comes forward to support Rukmani in her bitter days. Markandaya has highlighted hereby a picture of supporting elements of society. Janaki is another neighbor. She is victim of social forces. Due to her husband's business failure, she is compelled to leave her village where she was very happy. The plight of old Granny attracts the mind of the readers. Being an old lady, she is helpless, always wanders for food because poverty has ruined her. The novelist has provided us pinpoint information of the contemporary society. Old Granny dies due to starvation. Old Granny's tragic death does not only focus on the scene of poverty but also the negative role of society, in which the Old Granny like women live and nobody comes forward to support them. Through the character of Ammu, Markandaya has told us about the betrayal of a woman by her husband, deception, frustration of a woman, her wandering for food, cloth and shelter, and, and vicissitude of male-dominant society. Her husband is Murugan. He left her with no penny. She wanders with her children. Through this portrayal of a helpless and abandoned woman, Kamala Markandaya has shown us the unfortunate condition of women-class and along with this description; she slightly attacks over Indian society which is the sole responsible for such bad happening. The man like Murugan can be controlled ony by the positive action of society. Puli, an orphan boy and Dr. Kennigton, popularly known as Kenny are shown as the virtuous characters. They both come forward to help Rukmani and her husband in their adverse days. Although, Puli is an orhan boy, he himself wanders here and there yet he proves that his soul is full of humanity. Dr. Kenny's attitude shows the picture of good men who come forward to assist the poor and beggars. Here, we find multiple themes like poverty. Indianness, woman-exploitation, problem of unemployment, love and sex, domestic clash, theft and murder, starvation, life- struggle, social-reformation and quest for identity. Apart from these themes, there are so many other themes, out of them some are major and some are minor themes. To find out all the themes, it is required that the readers or researchers should go through the text of 'Nectar in a Sieve'. Let us see the

story in brief – The novel tells the story of Rukmani's life who is a widow. The portrayal of Rukmani's life is so sharp that it does not only portray the life of an individual but also, of the common women who are compelled to live dejected life. Markandaya's keen observation of society brings out the hidden facts of social life. Rukmani is the mouthpiece for her story-telling. She herself narrates the story.

By presenting her life-story, she draws a beautiful picture of Indian rural life. Rukmani is the fourth daughter of her parents. She belongs to a south Indian village. Due to poverty, her father could not seek for her a suitable match, that's why he had married Rukmani with Nathan, a poor. However, Rukmani's three elder sisters were married with sufficient dowry. Rukmani's life is full of tension and frustration right from her marriage-time. In beginning, she was in dilemma that she should adjust with her mis-matched husband or not, but further as soon as she set her mind to establish peaceful relationship with him, the serpent of poverty started to swallow her happiness. Her husband was very affectionate towards her, so, she increased her intimacy, and came very close to his heart. Kamala Markandaya hereby shows us how life changes, how it takes turn, and how the comfort changes in to adversity.

This couple was blessed with a daughter. Her husband wanted a son so she consulted Dr. Kenny who provided her proper treatment which proved to be effective and successful. Rukmani's husband-desire is fulfilled. She gave birth to six children; all were sons. Hence, now, Rukmani has seven children including a daughter. Here, Kamala Markandaya has slightly attacked over the selfish attitude of those men who are burning in the fire of son's wanting. Here, we find Nathan's feeling of gender discrimination. He makes difference between male and female. Nathan, just after the birth of his daughter, was not happy. He always thought of sons and now, he felt happy. There is a big chain of sons; namey known as Arjun, Thambi, Raja, Murugan, Selvam, and Kutti. It was now a large family. The peace and happiness of Natan-Rukmani family came to an end with the arrival of a government project of establishing Tannery which was to be established nearby the village. Here, Kamala Markandaya has discussed about industrialization, employment, poverty, social evils like gambling, looting, corruption, cheating, frauds, and migration. Just after the establishment of Tannery, two types of the situations created; first, an opportunity came to the unemployed people, they could find jobs in

tannery. Second, it swallowed the fertile land, the main source of people's survival.

Along with this, tannery-establishment caused many social vices started in the form of gambling, looting, cheating and threatening. Many hooligans started coming to village so the village-streets lost their peace. In addition to these social problems, many other hidden problems arrived. The environment –problem was one of them. Due to tannery's development, pollution increased. People were compelled to move to other places by leaving their homes and productive fields. Nathan and Rukmani were also compelled to do so. They were, already, poor and burning in the fire of poverty and starvation, upon that the establishment of tannery created other hidden and mental problems that made them fully dejected and several misfortunes continued knocking at the Rukmani's door. The heavy rains had destroyed her crops. The entire family was in tight-corner. Meanwhile, Rukmani's third son Raja was caught stealing skin from tannery. He was killed. Now, Rukmani was helpless. She could not save her son's life. Next year a natural calamity came upon her again. Her daughter Ira was abandoned by her husband because; she was unable to produce children. Nathan and Rukmani went to Dr. Kenny but there was no avail. Kamala Markandaya has beautifully drawn a picture of varied problems; social, mental, and physical. She has shown multiple social discrepancies and labyrinths in which man and woman are badly trapped. The natural calamity is focused here that causes man's damnation. Flood and drought are two natural enemies of the farmers. Like the other people, Nathan and Rukmani face these devastating calamities. Ira became a prostitute because she was helpless. Markandaya has tried to tell us how our circumstances are responsible for our sorrows and sufferings. How society is accountable for that all where a girl was compelled to adopt the way of prostitution. Noone liked to go ahead to save and protect her. Nathan and Rukmani went to the city with heavy hearts and equally feet. They were wandering hither and thither seeking their son but did not get success. They took shelter in a temple where the priest gave them some food. Next morning an orphan boy came ahead to help them. With the help of this orphan child, they could seek the house of their son but here too, nothing was good. Their son had gone away by deserting his wife and children. There was no hope. They met with the wife of their son, but she coldly and bluntly asked them to go away. Once again they went back to the temple and lived on charity like common beggars. This was the worst phase of their life.

One day, Nathan was drenched with rain water, he developed a high fever, soon breathed his last. Poor, Rukmani was left alone. Her little boy Puli came to give her solid emotional support. Rukmani adopted him as her son. They came back to the village and her son selvam and daughter Ira warmly welcomed them. In this way, Rukmani came back to her home and went on living her life in object poverty, suffering pain and agony till, Time, a great healer, healed some of her wounds. She was later able to regain her spiritual harmony and balance. Hence, this is the story of Rukmani's unfortunate life; however, it is not merely the story of Rukmani and Nathan but it is the story of the whole Indian rural population whose Nectar of life flows out of the sieve of poverty and hardship. There are many Nathans and Rukmanis in Indian rural society who are wandering and struggling for their food, cloth, and shelter. This novel contains many themes. Let us see one by one. First of all, we come to see 'Love' theme in the novel. Nathan and Rukmani are husband and wife. They are reluctant on their marriage. Although, in beginning there was no proper love and affection between them but gradually, love developed and they became for each other heartily and mentally. However, Nathan loved his wife by the core of his heart right from the beginning but Rukmani thought that her husband was not suitable to her. But gradually, she started loving her husband in same proportion as her husband loved to her. Mark these lines how Rukmani shows her happiness in her new role of a wife, "While the sun shines in you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you which no one has seen before and you have a good store of grain laid away for hard times, a roof over you and sweet stirring in your body. What more a woman can ask for?" (Nectar in a sieve 30) She makes compromise with her circumstances. She is aware of the two forces- the hope and the fear that govern the life of human beings. She accepts her poor landless husband, loves him by the core of her hearts. She at one place says, "We are taught to bear our sorrows in silence and all this so that the soul may be cleansed." (Rebecca Argom 15). It is the spiritual strength that helps Rukmani endures all her hardships. As A. V. Krishna Rao puts it, "the truth of the novel is the spiritual stamina of Rukmani." (Nectar in a sieve 86-87) Rukmani believes in social tradition. Her meek acceptance of fate and her sacrificing soul is quite visible in the novel. She confronts the Western doctor, Kenny who urges her to stand up against the male dominated society in which several women like her are

facing troubles. Rukmani thinks: "Want is our companion from birth to death, familiar as the seasons or the earth, varying only in degree. What profit to avail that which has always been and cannot change?" (Nectar in a sieve 88). Her passive endurance is simply intolerable and Doctor Kenny is irritated. Indeed Rukmani is an epitome of power of endurance. She faces all type of troubles but never complained. She loves her husband Nathan because Nathan is a man who is poor in everything but rich in his love and care for her. She had happy and contented life. She says, "My heart sang and my feet were light as I went about my work." Rukmani's life represents the life of common woman of rural Indian society. Kamala Markandaya is the only woman novelist who personally went to live in Indian village and chose the theme of rural life. She was deeply impressed with life and works of R. K. Narayan, M. R. Anand, Munshi Premchand and Bhawani Bhattacharya. The impact of these men of letters is quite visible in her novels. The wide spectrum of her novels has given stories with socio-economic and the socio-political themes. They give us a chance of discourse on the socio-psychological issues, socio-religious issues and all those issues that are concerned with the plights of rural men and women. In this concern, Geeta Rani Sharma writes: "They are heterogeneous themes scattered in her novels-the theme of tragic waste and despair, the theme of the East-West conflict and the theme of the psychological maladjustment and social degeneration." (Uma Parmeswaran 184)

Her novels reveal her as a novelist of ethical concerns. The themes of her novels are not only human and interesting but also provides enough outlets to her qualities of understanding the social issues. The other themes of her novels are up rootedness, racial tension and prejudice, conflict between tradition and technology, a search for one's truth self, the experiences of exile and alienation. Her novel 'Nectar in Sieve' presents the tragic story of the unthinkable struggle of an Indian peasant-woman in the face of inundating rains and inevitable droughts and hunger and havoc. This novel belongs to the theme of tragic waste and despair is a deeply moving tragedy. Rukmani's family consists many members who remain always in wants and hunger.

Now, we draw our attention towards the themes of 'Some Inner Fury' (1957), the second novel of Kamala Markandaya in which she has presented the political, social and economic plights. This is also a tragedy like 'Nectar in a Sieve' Mira, Kit, Richard, Govind, Dedama ,

Premala, Roshan, Ricky and Hicky are the major characters through which Kamala Markandaya has focused on the Indian society and plights prevailed in it. In this novel, we find some glimpses of foreign atmosphere. In the beginning of the novel, we find such glimpses as the story begins with the return of Mira's brother Kit with his Oxford friends Richard. However, this novel does not depict East-West confrontation. It shows us national struggle and the plights prevailed in Indian society.

The depiction of incidents starts from the description of Kitsamy who is a westernized son of a forward middle class family from London. He brings with him foreign culture and manners in India. He also brings a British acquaintance Richard Marlowe. Kit's family consists of his parents, uncle and sister Mirabai. He urges to all his family members to receive Richard with courtesy and desirable affection. They do so Richard is received affectionately and lovingly. He gets favorable atmosphere. Gradually young Mira increases her intimacy towards Richard. This increasing intimacy comes in the notice of Mira's mother who is fully old-fashioned lady. She does not like the frequent meetings of Mira with Richard. As soon as, Richard leaves the place to take up his other concerns, the entire family takes a sigh of relief. The family started searching a suitable bride for Kit. Premala is made to go through the unorthodox process of reverse courtship in which the girl comes to stay with the young man's family to be tested and approved by him. Premala is by nature shy and conventional. She is basically Indian in spirit. She bends backward in order to become a suitable match for Kit. She decides to change herself. She moulds herself according to his ultra-modern tastes. This marriage is performed with a lot of fanfare but it reaffirms Premala's simplicity and religiosity and Kit's popularity and impracticality. Roshan, one of Kit's many westernized friends, laid an impression on the people with her unconventionality. Kit takes up a job and settles down in a state capital. He invites Mira, to visit him. The mother slyly delays Mira's journey because she does not desire her meetings with Richard. But Mira gets acquainted with Roshan the Parsi girl, and decides to work for Roshan's paper. She is asked to report on a peasant resettlement in the neighborhood and in the process she stumbles on Richard at the Government House. He takes her to the model village and shows her around and their acquaintance mature into love. Premala is unable to fit into the world of fashion and urban shining. Richard makes his best to show all sorts of modern things like

cinema and markets. He takes her some cloths and other things. Kit wholeheartedly hurts his social sensibility by her indiscretions. Kit suggests that she might find distraction or amusement in a visit to the village in Mira's company. It is thus that Premala comes to get involved in the progress of the school-building, to share in the dreams of Ricky the missionary and to adopt an orphan. Rebecca Angom remarks, "Premala in Markandaya's second novel 'Some Inner Fury' epitomizes the traditional concept of upper class Indian Womanhood. Hailing from a conservative family she tries to remold herself to her husband's Anglicized tastes. Her engagement to Kitsamy, a westernized Indian fixed by the elders of the two families does not offer Premala an equal freedom as it did to Kit as he is called." (Some Inner Fury 218). The marriage of Premala and Kit does not run smoothly. There were several reasons of their separation. Cultural disparities did not let them run as the husband and wife for a long time. It is Premala who tries to bridge the gap but fails. She tries to manage the situations but remains failure. She believes that it is her duty to make peace and compromise but her efforts do not bring her success. She even takes it as a wifely duty to move among the English circle as she says: "I would make a poor wife if I did not." (Some Inner Fury 220)

Hers was a one-sided affair in which she kept no stones unturned to adjust and please Kit whereas Kit remained busy in his own world. Premala goes in to the field of missionary works of setting up of a school for children in a village, helping the English missionary, Hickey. She very interestingly participates in social welfare activities and a small girl-child against the wishes of Kit. Premala feels internal happiness in the company of the adopted child.

The little orphan child gives her peace and mental relax. It fulfills her needs and desires. Premala comes back from her visits to the village. She accepts all the challenges very heroically. Although Roshan, another woman in the novel, also faces challenges but she does not fight like Premala. There is much difference between Premala and Roshan. Srinivas an Iyengar writes, "Silence is stronger than all rhetoric, and whose seeming capacity for resignation is the true measure of her measureless strength." (K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar 441). Further Shantha Krishnaswamy writes, "In Premala, Markandaya shows the insecurity, isolation, bewilderment and vulnerability that the traditionally brought up Indian woman's falls, when she has to adjust to western norms of living, when she has to accommodate the tastes and values of a culture in

flux.”(Shantha Krishna Swamy 49). As being a typical Hindu woman, she abides herself with Dharma which she believes the way of salvation and happiness. Markandaya shows Premala bearing sufferings like Sita, in Ramayana. She is burnt alive while serving in a school run by a Britisher. Her husband Kit does not like her business. Two themes which are closely intertwined in ‘Some Inner Fury’ are love and death or love and war leading to death. It is between Mira and Richard. Mira is an Indian girl whereas Richard is an Englishman. It is between Kitsamy and Premala. Kitsamy is a westernized husband whereas Premala is a typical Indian girl. We find in the both cases, undeclared war which runs between the freedom-seeking, colonized Indians and the colonizing Britishers.

As we know that the racial prejudices do not let the two persons come together who belong to the different castes or community. This racial problem comes as a hindrance in the both cases. The themes of love and death interact and intensify each other. The death of Richard tests the love of Mira and the death of Premala tests the love of Kitsamy. Hence, the title, ‘Some Inner Fury’, is quite appropriate. It indicates, the novel clears with ‘Some Inner Fury’ the passion, love, anger, of Mira for Richard as also with the fury of the Indian freedom fighters up in arms against the colonizing Britishers. The impact of freedom movements in India is quite apparent. It has inculcated the feelings of Indianness within the hearts of youths like Mira and Premala who harbor the quest of freedom. As the wave of the freedom movement lashes the subcontinent, personal relations between Indians and Englishmen are swept away, leaving nothing intact. A.V. Krishnarao writes: “symbolically significant on two levels, first, the emotional inner fury of Mira is completely quenched when her love for Richard results in an ecstatic experience of the sweep and surge of love; secondly, the wider inner fury of the nation at large is fully vented and culminates in the violent demonstration of national indignation at the alien rule, Govind being its focal figure” (A. V. Krishna Rao 30)

According to S.C. Harrex who has been a serious scholar of the writings of Kamala Markandaya, the theme of the novel is “the tragic participation of disunity and catastrophe in personal relationship.” (H. C. Harrex 248). In this way, we can say that the novel, ‘Some Inner Fury’ is a very complex novel worth several themes running simultaneously; it may appear to be a document of East-West confrontation which is illustrated by the love between Mira and Richard which

represents the love between two individuals who belong to the different races. Mira, in such love affairs, has to sacrifice her love because her caste does not approve it. Premala also sacrifices her love because her husband belongs to western culture. Here, Markandaya has shown us the undeclared war between the freedom-seeking, colonized Indians and the colonizing Britishers. The racial prejudices do not let the Indians and Britishers stay together in a harmonious manner, and result inevitably in disunity and death of Premala, Kitsamy, and Richard. The themes of love and death interact and intensify each other. The novelist has shown us how national struggle deeply influences human relationship. Even members in a family are allowed to have different opinions. Kit and Govind are cousins. Kit is thoroughly westernized Indian whereas Govind is truly Indian in his hatred towards the British. Kit and his wife Premala fail to get on well in their relationship as husband and wife because Premala is deeply rooted in Indian culture. There is a clash between two cultures, though both belong to the same nation. Here, the problem becomes more difficult as Kit being an Indian wants to look more English than a native of England. The personal dissension and discontentment gets completed with the political happening of the time. For example, the missionary school which was run by Premala is burnt by the violent moves who hated everything of the British. Govind was suspected of murdering Kit as he belongs to that firebrand nationalist. He was ultimately arrested. Mira becomes a victim of the political violence. Mira’s confidence: “what matter to the universe if here and there a man should fall or a head or heart should break?” (A. V. Krishna Rao 178). Mira exhibits open admiration for Richard as he lies on the sand after swimming. He urges her to make love to him. They talk of love and the whole atmosphere seems to be moving and changing. Mira reflects a steady character one among the species and almost predictable. She belongs to a community where male company for a female at pre-marital stage is viewed as abnormal and she is no exception. The physical factor overcomes her cultural inhibitions. Again she proves her belongingness to the feminine gender, a species-Homo sapiens, by nature looking for sexual satisfaction or gratification or even obligation of attaining complete womanhood motherhood. Finally, she again supplies proof of belonging to a nation and refusing to be in the arms of Richard again. Mira remembers the passionate utterance of Richard: “I am still in a fever for you; he said, kissing me; and his lips on mine were without

gentleness and his body against me was no longer passive,” (Some Inner Fury 106) shows the deep intimacy that they have developed. Mira and Richard act as unmarried husband and wife. Mira feels: “Slowly my senses awoke and responded, the buds of feeling swelled and opened one by one. In the trembling silence, I heard the blood begin its clamor, felt its frantic irregular beats, and then the world fell away, forgotten in this wild abandoned rhythm, lost in the sweep and surge of love.” (Jyotsna Sahoo 52). This love has the capacity to group the gist the central value of a personality in a single perception. Mira was educated, sophisticated, well-informed of contemporary political situation and national happenings, yet she found solace in the arms of a foreigner, from a land towards which all the fury was targeted. She was not able to identify and dissert her personal feelings.

A man was a man for Mira and the carnal desire in her was, above all her acquired knowledge which never allowed mingling with the cultural inhibitions and fear of insecurity. Gradually she became to identify and separate the feelings and summed up courage to admit to her and to suggest that they forgot each other. The fury in her built up by the belongingness to the nation and hatred towards the ruling race, overcame her softer feelings and motivated her so strongly that she was able to speak it out. This is something we can fearlessly level as violence; without a bellicose frontage. It is the depiction of individuality through sacrifice of egoism. Mira and Richard sacrifice their egoism for the sake of their love. They have given up their pride, vanity and were capable of enriching their love a in the process, enriching themselves. It is sure and certain that the complete fusion of man and woman is possible through sexual union. A marriage without sex is not a platonic or idealistic marriage. In true sense, it is not a marriage at all. In their happy life, there are many outer hindrances that cause the trouble in their life. They have to face a number of dangers; political, social, and religious. It was the time of political turmoil when their love started. That political turmoil created hatred between Eastern and Western culture. It created disbelief and social unrest. Due to it, there were several confusions in the society. Mira and Richard were compelled to face these challenges. They faced them with great courage. The struggle against the British rule had already started. In a riot, Mira’s sister-in-law Premala was killed. Mira’s brother Kitsamy was also knifed in a mysterious situation and Govind, the cousin had been arrested with the charge of Murder. Mira was passing through a period of bitter

emotional crisis. The brother and sister-in-law die. Mira’s parents needed consolation. Nobody was there to console them. At this time, Richard came forward to assist and solace them. Mira remembered, “I felt the abundant flow of his love for me and there was no passion, only this outpouring of an overwhelming tenderness. I lie quietly against him and let it enfold me, this tenderness not of the kind a man brings to his first loving, nor yet the kind that comes after but of a third order, coming gently to enlarge the meaning of love.” (S.K. Aithal 49-59). For the sake of her love Mira. Mira has surrendered herself to Richard in body, mind and speech. Both are happy. Their sexual inclination has made them one. Mira was shocked by the ruthlessness of some of her revolutionary friends and yet her deepest passions were with the Indian in which the British were intruders. The nation and passions were divided into fragments. The prevailing chaotic conditions left a deep mark on the immature mind of Mira. The inputs were violent by nature. Everywhere, violence was prevailed. Mira was deeply affected by violence. Her relatives Govind, Premala and Kit were the victims of this social unrest. They were unable to decide what they must do in such bitter situations. Even Richard had to lose his life. He was beaten to death. The tragedy occurs in this novel is due to the political unrest. It is politics that causes the troubles among the people. It is politics that did not let the couples live peacefully. Due to politics, several relations were destroyed. Jyotsna Sahoo writes; “Violence may be a good cause for India but it is against all norms and ethics. Political domination in any form is a crime against humanity. So, there is protest from all over India against political domination by the British people. Mira could not support the British and hated English people but at the same time she was unable to leave Richard in whom she found fulfillment.” (Jyotsna Sahoo 55). In those days, ‘Quit India Movement’ was on the peak. It had engulfed the entire Indian society. The missionary schools and British-properties were burnt down and along with it Pramala achieved fulfillment in her love after death. “Excitement had sent the color to her cheeks; and there was something else, less evanescent, above too – a glow a serenity, which had not been there since she came to live in this city, yet it was a serenity of different order-finer more tempered, as if the dross had been taken from its virgin gold in some unknown fiery crucible a serenity that does not come, save in the far side of suffering.” (Jyotsna Sahoo 56)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An acknowledgement 'Nectar in a Sieve' novel of Kamala Markandaya.

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International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

A Thematic Analysis of Kamala Markandaya Novel 'The Nowhere Man'

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ABSTRACT

The East-West confrontation is once again the predominant theme in the novel. 'The Nowhere Man (1972). The experiences of Srinivas, the 'nowhere man', occur against the background of intercultural conflict in the social situation in England, This novel clearly testifies to Markandaya's authentic experience as well as her clear mastery of the technique of fictionalizing the outer reality. This novel holds forth the possibility of an inter-cultural meeting-point in this relationship where the basis of friendship is deep human empathy and compassion. The Nowhere Man is Markandaya artistic adumbration of the need for secular humane concern as the principal integrative ingredient to prevent further fragmentation of our post-colonial schizophrenic world.

Keywords: East-West confrontation, Predominant theme, Authentic, Adumbration, Post-colonial schizophrenic

Introduction

The East-West confrontation is once again the predominant theme in the novel. 'The Nowhere Man (1972). It shows Markandaya's continued concern with cultural values in the context of racist attitudes in England following the decline and defeat of the British imperialism. In this novel, she probes deeper than in her previous novel into the actual social interaction below the surface of inter-cultural tensions at personal and group levels. The experiences of Srinivas, the 'nowhere man', occur against the background of intercultural conflict in the social situation in England, This novel clearly testifies to Markandaya's authentic experience as well as her clear mastery of the technique of fictionalizing the outer reality. However, Markandaya does not give any formula for a better understanding because there is none except humane concern; and this, Markandaya does indirectly through her literature of concern.

Meanwhile, Srinivas narrates the story of his early life in India and his self-exile to England and friendship with Mrs. Pickering. The narrative incorporates the remote past of Srinivas and helps us trace the line of Srinivas's mental conflicts and dilemmas to his maturity. The narrative then moves again from the symbolic starting-point of the novel through the phase of racial hostility and ostracisation that Srinivas experiences, the monstrous activities of Fred and his associates and the eventual martyrdom of Srinivas.

The point of view that Markandaya employs in this, novel is that of the third-person omniscient author, and here the stance is more or less of the real author herself, though skilfully filtered through the consciousness of Srinivas and succeeding in presenting his point of view also. Mrs. Pickering's world, which struck most strangely of all. To which she, and they, but not he, belonged. Inhabited an area devoid of meaning for him, but dense with experience for them. It isolated him, cast him in the role of intruder. Intruder, after ten, twenty, fifty years. (The Nowhere Man 173) Srinivas is, initially, the young man adhering to the familial bonds and duties at "Chandra prasad". But when the society in which he lives faces an upheaval in the form of British despotism, Srinivas's mind begins to fill with the desires to defy and protest against the injustice meted out to the Indians. But even at this point, he experiences the surging conflict between the desire to get rid of the controls, and the doubt whether it is right. His situation is such that he begins to long for an escape not only from the social structure but also from himself in the grip of a dilemma: The police search carried on at Srinivas's house is the turning-point in his career. Vasudev, the suspect, locks himself up in a camphor-wood box and dies of asphyxiation. The mean insult directed at Vasantha drives Srinivas to fury. His father, Narayan, a staunch loyalist, also rebels against imperialism by singing an Indian hymn at the college function. The "pater-figure" who stays a conformist even when all around him have rebelled, Narayan is also forced to defy the British authority at the end. But the germ of racial hostility begins to creep into England also, and Srinivas feels trapped in an absurd existential situation. The maturation of Srinivas is slow and steady. Ignoring the politics of imperialism, Srinivas attempts to merge into the society of England by migration and acceptance of the new values. He finds that even with his ideas of individual freedom and social consideration he cannot live in harmony because of the whole welter of forces like jingoism and racism which can never be completely eliminated and which surface even without provocation. Thus driven to England with his newly-wedded wife, Srinivas has to carve out a totally different future from the academic one he had once visualized; so he starts a spice business in London. Once in London, it is Vasantha's grit, her refusal to turn into a Londoner that preserves Srinivas from total alienation and decline. But she is also practical and adopts the efficiency of British methods over the messy Indian ways. She retains her identity at the same time. Srinivas's questioning quest becomes an existential search for meaning in the face of an absurd situation. All he wants is peaceful coexistence, but peace evades him. Two other novels replicate

theimmigrant plight. Vasantha persuades Srinivas to buy the house at No:5, which fulfils the psychological need to establish their identity. Man's innermost desire is to be recognized as one of the herd or to acquire the sense of "I" which is nearly always in relation to the outside world unless one becomes truly free." In buying the house, Srinivas buys responsibility also. The "house with basement and attic" turns into the symbol of the security that Vasantha desires in an alien land. Srinivas who thinks that he does not need it is later on attached to it. Ironically, from its secure premises, Srinivas later struggles to escape with life. The house initially means "chains" to him which he wants to escape from—the chains of responsibility. "Chains, said Srinivas, glum amid the teak chests and buckled fiber suitcases. We have chained ourselves to four walls and a roof." It later expands into the responsibility towards his tenants, whom he cannot and should not evict at his own pleasure. His final eviction of them veers back at Srinivas in the hostility he encounters in the neighborhood.

With the death of Vasantha, something vital in Srinivas snaps and he feels the void impossible to endure and survive. She has symbolised for him their cultural moorings which he had once forcibly rejected to carve out a new future. Now he feels his individual self-threatened and he proceeds to defend his self within the security of his four walls. His emptiness is evoked through effective images: "That period, for Srinivas, was a dust bowl of being. Empty, without meaning, scooped out, picked clean, no climbing up the slippery sides. A skull, from which all matter had gone. Sea urchin shell, from which the living lights had been brutally plucked, leaving the pearly skeleton to serve as an ornament for the mindless, the surf-riders of life." Though he is free from all responsibilities now, he becomes incapable of performance. The will needs to function through obstacles. Markandaya thus prepares us amply for the plausibility of his meeting and life with Mrs. Pickering. The theme of this relationship transforms the novel into a perceptive work of art, and not just a documentary. Personal relationships here are on the East-West axis. The Srinivas-Pickering relationship is founded on a firm commitment to human values; it is indeed based in true freedom. As J. Filella says, true freedom means "commitment without compulsion."

Critical Analysis

This novel holds forth the possibility of an inter-cultural meeting-point in this relationship where the basis of friendship is deep human empathy and compassion. The vital influence of personal relationships even in teaching greater awareness is perceived, as Srinivas begins to realise his responsibilities to Mrs. Pickering in whose care he places himself "in the warmth of human commitment", progresses to an awareness of the responsibility to the country he adopts. Srinivas matures from the initial belief that he can be isolated from imperialism itself by moving away from his motherland. His expanded consciousness underscores social responsibility which, in Markandaya's universe of discourse, is of paramount importance. Srinivas has a duty to the society which has given him a refuge. So though hoodlums like Fred Fletcher would rise now and then to torture the immigrants, the latter cannot negatively react to it since they are indebted, and after all remain responsible 'aliens'. Srinivas does not bargain for such feelings of responsibility when he escapes from British India but now accepts the fact of commitment: "England was becoming his country". One sees the difference, therefore, between the responsibilities that one undertakes and those that are thrust upon one.

In *The Nowhere Man*, Markandaya shows how the more mature friendship of Srinivas and Mrs. Pickering can survive through sympathy, mutual concern and care. It survives various inter-racial storms because it is founded not on external fripperies or sex or money . but on the compassionate commitment between two mature individuals. Meanwhile, the phenomena of social change sweep over the environment. One of the predominant changes is the slow, sneaking and insidious hostility towards Asians.

Laxman is a defiant Indian youth in England—self-righteous, assertive and vehement—who fully integrates into the adopted culture and is no more an alien in England. But Srinivas cannot understand him. The situation is corroborated by the study *Between Two Cultures* (1976) which vividly describes the "traumatic clash" between the immigrants and their children:

The parents cannot understand why their children wish to give up the culture they have held for centuries, and the children cannot understand why their parents are old fashioned, illiterate, embarrassing. (*Between Two Cultures* 7)

In language and style, Markandaya far surpasses the earlier novels. Pithiness of style and the force of reinforced imagery heighten the meaning of the theme. Imagery, in general, is Markandaya's powerful tool, both to convey her complexity of thought and to suggest her thematic patterns. As Dorothy Shimer suggests, Markandaya raises the image of "images irrevocably tied to antithetical life patterns".

The rejection that Srinivas faces at the hands of a radical racist like Fred is the objective counterpart of the rejection of a whole race. Markandaya stresses the utter shamefulness of such total rejection through violent imagery. The cross-cultural impasse which she hinted at in the earlier novels and in *Possession* is now dramatized in the form of open injustice. While in *Possession* she envisages no possible meeting-point as Val goes back to the wilderness and Caroline seeks in vain to bring him back to "possess" him, she projects, in *The Nowhere Man*, a possibility of a meeting in deep human compassion as in the Srinivas-Pickering relationship. What does *The Nowhere Man* achieve? It brings to the fore, artistically, racial issues founded on illogical standpoints that curb the individual through gigantic forces that compel, divide and destroy.

Conclusion

Destruction of humanity is like leprosy. It is contagious and repulsive. It is the result of abdication of responsibility. When one is a leper, one has the responsibility to prevent the communicable disease of leprosy from being spread. When one evades it, there is a social problem. Thus, the pattern of responsibility in this novel expands to include the responsibility of races towards each other in terms of communication and concern. As far as the individual's situation is concerned, Markandaya sees that the individual has no "freedom from" the curbing situation of inter-racial hostility and it is left

to him to achieve a degree of maturity as Srinivas does and a sense of positive freedom which helps him to perform his duties within the circle of constraints. Markandaya's sensitive portrayal is of the individual as subject to tensions induced by society because he is helpless in the context of racial relations unless there is a combined effort to achieve a greater degree of inter-racial understanding; and this novel is a call for this kind of concern. More than other novels dealing with the expatriate experience (like Anita Desai's *Bye, Bye Blackbird* (1970), Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), TimeriMurari's *The Marriage* (1973), this novel is a realistic social study and is enlightening for the Indian reader who has not been able to view at first hand the racial riots in London. It is also, in a sense, prophetic. Within the fictional structure of Srinivas's ironical movement from political rebellion against the colonial rule to his migration to the ruler's own country, his deliberate socio-cultural integration into its mainstream culture and his tragic existential ennui as the outsider in the wake of the sudden eruption of racial violence, Markandaya figuratively presents the issues of personal freedom and social responsibility. *The Nowhere Man* is Markandaya's artistic adumbration of the need for secular humane concern as the principal integrative ingredient to prevent further fragmentation of our post-colonial schizophrenic world.

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Chapter-VII

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the discussion in the foregoing chapters that Markandaya's fiction is essentially a product of the cultural ethos as it moulds and modifies the individual consciousness in the crucible of time.

It has been seen that the patterns of freedom and responsibility of tradition and modernity in terms of continuity and change, are embedded in the novels of Markandaya as she perceives and presents the ranges of tensions that occur between the individual and the environment.

Markandaya's characters seem to experience the tantalising tensions of a basic opposition between the felt need for freedom from the traditional restrictions, on the one hand, and their social obligations, responsibilities and duties on the other.

This initially results in the individual's defiance of the conventional norms of social codes of behaviour. Faced with the constraints and restraints laid upon her characters by the norms and circumstances and structural organisation of society in a particular cultural context, they initially tend to shake off these constraints since these external forces seem a barrier to spontaneous self-expression as well as to an uninhibited action in response to inner desires.

The mode of escape seems to be an initial withdrawal, in the hope that the escape is durable and meaningful. In this kind of withdrawal the characters are merely trying, in the name of freedom, to escape social or domestic duties or responsibilities. The twin concepts of freedom and responsibility in the context of India's changing tradition are telescopically presented and artistically balanced in Markandaya's fiction as analysed in the preceding chapters.

The result of the withdrawal is a transient deviation into an egoistic indulgence. However, the characters gradually discover that escapism is not freedom and that true freedom is not achieved through an abdication or disowning of responsibility. Confronted with the need for security and a clear conscience, they return to the normally accepted patterns of behaviour within the given cultural milieu.

By the force of circumstance and the process of maturation, they realise that they cannot totally escape from the cycle of events and responsibilities. In the Indian cultural context, an awareness of duty and responsibility underscores the prime norm of social behaviour.

In order to attain psychological security and emotional equivalence, Markandaya's characters return to accept their responsibility to a social group. The acceptance and performance of social duties, obligations and functions is an initial step towards the achievement of true and positive freedom which means full maturity and realisation of one's total integrated personality.

Within the sphere of tradition and conformity, Markandaya's characters grow to a fuller understanding of themselves and their role in society and participate in the tragic-comedy of life. All of them are seen to move thus from a desire for "freedom from" restraints and constraints to a greater awareness of responsibility and "freedom to" function effectively with a fuller realisation of the total integrated self. In the characteristic universe of discourse of Markandaya's fiction, the individual consciousness seeks to get integrated with the social consciousness through the clarifying vision of art.

In *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), Rukmani's growth occurs against the background of a changing rural landscape where metamorphosis bursts into a relatively static society.

The invasion of the tannery brings in new sets of values which disturb the prevalent system of life. Rukmani reacts to the changing economic condition in her own life with a sense of despair and dismay. Whatever she wishes for is not to be had, as ill-luck would have it. She silently defies destiny leading to her flight to the city; she tries to seek a new identity in the 'jagged city of strife and stridency'.

Rukmani finally learns that the individual is in the grip of powerful social forces and that one is truly free only when one accepts the social reality. Rukmani's eventual return to the village with Puli is symbolic of the mental progression to a greater maturity. In this novel the freedom—responsibility axis moves thus on the planes of individual freedom under economic constraints and family responsibilities.

Rukmani does not have any surging conflict, but the concept of freedom and responsibility is seeded here and is developed more clearly in later novels. It is with the

return to the village and calm acceptance of suffering in the wake of irreversible social change that Rukmani gains inner peace and confidence to make a fresh start in life.

In *Some Inner Fury* (1955), Markandaya dramatises the individual crisis in the backdrop of fictionalised history of India's freedom struggle. Mira who belongs to a Westernised Indian Brahmin family, yearns for personal freedom from 'the cribbed, cabined and confined' political environment in order to pursue her personal aspirations.

The novel exposes the limitations of seeking personal freedom for a selfish purpose in the context of a critical phase of India's struggle for political independence from the British rule.

The fictionalised experiences of Mira whose periodical encounters with the frenzied forces of society in the historical context corroborate the view that the freedom of an individual, however eminent, is curbed and conditioned by the compulsions of a culture. Her efforts to escape into a passionate relationship with Richard are thwarted by the larger forces of history.

Although there is no real compulsion from the community and family she belongs to, Mira is still forced to accept the power of the moment of the Quit India Movement of 1942.

The political turbulence and turmoil determines Mira's individual destiny and sets limits to her personal freedom. Mira returns to the fold of her community though she tries in vain to rebel against its codes of behaviour. She perceives and accepts her duties as a member of her family and social class.

Her acquired western habits of thinking and behaviour become irrelevant and transient in the real Indian context. Her subconscious desire is to realise her basic need to belong. There is therefore no true escape from one's tradition; and one's self-fulfilment has to be achieved, in Markandaya's world, within the sphere of society through a return to family and social responsibility. *Some Inner Fury* illustrates how personal freedom can be tragically nullified by national struggle for political independence in a particular historical context.

In *A Silence of Desire* (1960), the pattern operates through the mental growth of Dandekar through the effect of the Swamy on his psyche. Caught in a bad matrimonial situation when he feels that his wife is defying him, asserting her personal freedom and

neglecting domestic duties, Dandekar seeks escape because the situation soon becomes overwhelming for his middle-class mind.

This desire for an outlet, in effect, for negative freedom, manifests itself in Dandekar's nightmarish neglect of home and office, rejection of or flight from responsibility. The dramatisation of his mental state presents the deterioration of will that occurs as a consequence of the indulgence of desire and abdication of responsibility. As Radhakrishnan explains the logic of suffering in his *Indian Philosophy* (1923):

“Morality implies a wrestling with the lower tendency, the pursuit of which appears pleasant. When man struggles to free himself from his natural entanglements, life becomes intense with strife. Suffering is the condition of progress. Struggle is the law of existence and sacrifice the principle of evolution.”(S.Radhakeishnan 243-44)

Dandekar pursues his natural inclinations; the restlessness and peacelessness of his current state lead him to seek solace in some other form. The desire to regain the loyalty of his wife, Sarojini, who symbolises for him security and identity, leads him to the Swamy who teaches him the value of positive freedom and shows him the futility of compulsion in any form.

The infinite in Man, as Radhakrishnan explains, helps him transcend the limitations of the finite. What the Swamy teaches Dandekar is the same; for man's acts to be free they must not be expressive of the mere force of habit or shock of circumstance but of the freedom of the inner soul.(S.Radhakrishnan 246-47)

The pattern of freedom and responsibility in *Possession* (1963) is somewhat cultural.

Val is suddenly transported to England where he gets unbridled access to the Western style of living. He gets the opportunity to be free without any inhibitions. He gets the 'license', as it were, to behave like an Indian playboy of the western world.

Val has grown up in an atmosphere of regulations and constraints of a socio cultural nature in India. Catapulted into a world of luxury, liberty and license, Val becomes rather irresponsible to his tradition, to his art, and to himself. His freedom is thus negative and counterproductive to his development. He abandons the divine purpose of his art and becomes a slave to the superficial aspects of the western modes of living under the tutelage of Caroline.

The Swamy, prime but silent agent of spiritual growth for Val, leads him back to the initial dedication to art. Thus artistic freedom (integrity) is portrayed, not a freedom from constraints but as freedom to control and sublimate one's art through a volitional exercise of discipline and spirituality.

Ravi in *A Handful of Rice* (1966) passes through the moral dilemma of reconciling needs and values.

Initially, like Rukmani, he desires freedom from his depressive economic wants and even considers unfair means to secure material ends. He finds it nearly impossible and certainly undesirable to discard values altogether. The need to achieve the sense of 'I' leads to Ravi's acceptance of the restraints of his position as a 'respectable' tailor.

He thus submits to an internalised authority which also is one of the powers to which the individual submits in a need to win security and status within a society and to be related to the world.

Ravi discovers that submission to conscience and duty seems more meaningful and satisfying than escape from the burdens of economic injustice in illegal activity; and he learns that true freedom is possible only with the expansion of individual consciousness.

The mode of Ravi's progress is through a sudden fear of the extraordinary in action to a readjustment to the traditional value system. Finally, he shows preference to fit himself in the ordinary and the uneventful because that mode offers him emotional security.

When he accepts this responsibility to himself and to his conscience, the ideal growth is to a greater understanding of positive freedom.

The novel is open-ended and suggests ambiguity in regard to the conclusion of dramatic action in the novel. Nevertheless, it is fairly clear that Ravi is no longer an unscrupulous rebel. In this novel Ravi yearns for the freedom from economic want and the model of positive freedom is the ideal that he moves towards at the end of the novel. This novel therefore illustrates Markandaya's discovery of artistic vision through a subtle interplay of man, milieu and the moment.

The scope of the pattern of freedom and responsibility further expands in *The Coffer Dams* (1969) as it dramatises the true meaning of positive freedom with respect

to Helen's ability to communicate spontaneously with the Indian workers and the tribal people.

To achieve this, she defies the constraints of the closed system of British attitudes and values in a cross-cultural situation in building the coffer dams. However, this implies severely strained marital and ethnic relations.

Her felt need is for a sense of belonging at the moral level and she rightly feels she does not really belong to the world of Clinton's values or to the British community as represented at the dam site.

The quest for understanding and relationships in an alien country leads her into the unknown depths of a wilderness in the first instance. Helen finally listens to the voice of reason when she perceives that the mind in itself achieves or does not achieve positive freedom and that, eventually, to be free is also to be responsive to the needs of others, including Clinton. She cannot really disown or in any way negate her status in the social and cultural patterns of identity and affiliations. The pattern of responsibility that emerges in this novel is one of marital responsibility which forms the basis of the inherent need to depend and be depended on.

The meaning of 'freedom' becomes more complex in this novel because Helen desires true freedom to fulfil her urges of social concern and finds that she has to rebel against the dictates of her community in the process.

Her inner desire for freedom from the shackles of her cultural situation is to fulfil herself in the service of a community to whom injustice had been done in the colonial past, and is being done in the technological present.

This compulsive urgency necessitates non-conformity in behaviour. However, as with all quests, Helen has also to drink the deeper waters of evil and her desire for freedom degenerates into a misconceived escape in an affair with Bashiam.

In her liaison with Bashiam, she moves away from her original concern and loses her hold on the reality of her situation. Her sense of history as well as her rationalisation of her conduct remains at best at the level of confused thinking. Through the experience, however, she progresses to a state of maturity which enables her to accept with equanimity, that "there are some things which one has to do"—which include, at the personal level, her responsibility to Clinton and his group of British experts.

The inter-racial situation that provides the backdrop for the growth of Val in *Possession* (1963) enlarges in *The Nowhere Man* (1972) to the wider implications of racism and colonial tyranny. Srinivas's growth to full maturity occurs against this background of inter-racial division. Freedom here begins on the intellectual and practical levels.

Srinivas's flight from the constricting colonial atmosphere in India, where there was no intellectual and personal freedom of action without persecution and prosecution under the British rule, is in search of a more liberal milieu for the exercise of this freedom. In England, Srinivas discovers with shock and dismay that the racial fury torments England as well and that though the Indian immigrant does not interfere in the British social life, he is still persecuted.

Srinivas yearns for freedom from the senseless persecution but matures to realise that true freedom is not external to man but can be found within oneself and that the spiritual self cannot be in bondage even if the material self is. He exemplifies eventually the human being who possesses the wisdom and awareness of human responsibility, who does not persecute or harass his neighbour in offence or defence, but is able to live with his neighbours in a peaceful frame of mind and offer them spiritual companionship and human concern.

Markandaya, through the experiences of Srinivas, points to the need for a better evolved system of social and political values where the freedom that man aspires for can become a reality through practice of humaneness in everyday life.

The situation calls for general agreement among all the human races to be more responsible to one another. Through recognition of this universal need, Srinivas, the nowhere man, feels at home everywhere, owing to his cosmopolitan outlook and spirit of tolerance. He thus gains greater freedom through a conscious cultivation of his spiritual self in the fulfilment of his social responsibilities to his neighbours. Srinivas is indeed a citizen of the world and dies a martyr's death in the cause of cosmopolitan vision and racial harmony. In the character of Srinivas, Markandaya seems to have presented a fictional metaphor of a synthesis of Christian and Gandhian attitudes to fellow humans, by a subtle balancing act in her work of art.

The pattern of freedom and responsibility in *Two Virgins* (1973) is related to the problem of adolescent growth and the formation of adult attitudes vis-a-vis the inevitable conflict between tradition and modernity.

Lalitha rebels against the constricting circumstances of village life because she is dazzled by the prospect of what ultimately turns out to be a false liberty which, without her realising it, degenerates into moral depravity.

She wilfully defies the traditional codes of behaviour of her community. She violates her own conscience too in the act of compromising her chastity.

The consequences of sin are, for Markandaya, quite serious and irrevocable, thus depicting her essentially tragic vision.

Having assumed the negative freedom to pursue her own inclinations of the flesh and passions, Lalitha is compelled to face her guilt in the figure of the unborn child. The desperate flight from responsibility is presented in her eagerness to destroy either herself or the child because she dare not face the consequences of her reckless behaviour. Neither does she acquire the sense of maturity to bear her duty to the child without being troubled by the opinions of others. Thus the essential 'other-directedness' of human action is displayed through the anxiety to appear 'respectable' even when the inner self is virtually ruined. Lalitha's despair engulfs her but when the deed is undone, she returns to the initial defiance of moral codes; however, her underlying feeling is that she has been rejected—rejected by a society that expects and demands of its members strict conformity.

Though the experience is crystallised in Lalitha, the growth to a fuller realisation both of the personality and of the validity of the norms of society is focused through Saroja. Saroja's vicarious experience of negative freedom and the utter peacelessness that goes with it brings her to the recognition of the value of social security, of the responsibility to oneself and to others as necessary for basic happiness and the possibility of growing freely even within the circle of constraints.

To be free is to be free enough from desires and attachments to realise oneself and the value of moral and spiritual integrity in the face of all temptation and dissent. Again, Markandaya weaves the philosophical strands into the exploration of the cultural matrix where the individual is ironically caught in a welter of contradictory forces and influences that tend to confuse his powers of thought,

analysis and judgment.

This is because the harmony that should exist between man and society is absent, producing imbalanced individuals. True freedom is the ability to discover oneself and this, in essence, is the meaning of life: escape in any form signifies a deteriorated state of existence. As the Gita also explains, in order to realise positive freedom, we must control or sublimate the mind which binds us to outer things and makes slaves of us. (S.Radhakrishnan 262)

The Golden Honeycomb (1977) also dramatises the individual yearning for personal freedom in the absence of true political freedom. Rabi's situation is such that he is cast in the form of a social provider in his State, but when he discovers that he is not really free to govern his State as he would like to, he becomes disillusioned with his false status.

He assumes freedom from the restrictions of the authority that goes with his royal status. He defies the British prescribed norms of royal behaviour. The escape into sexual relations with Jaya is symbolic of the pitfalls in Rabi's quest for identity and freedom.

This relationship fails to provide a permanent solace for Rabi because it is essentially hollow. The experience in Bombay, where he sees at first hand the sufferings and miseries of the common people, makes him more fully conscious of social responsibility and of his own role in the social structure.

He grows up to recognise that authority involves responsibility, and that it should be used to further the progress of the people. Though compelled to rebel against the hollow authority of his father, he becomes the head of popular protest seeking the rights and freedoms of the people and works towards their amelioration because this alone could bring him satisfaction and self-fulfilment.

Thus in the pursuit of freedom, Rabi grows to the understanding of his responsibility in the fulfilment of which he progresses to positive freedom. The Golden Honeycomb thus expands the meaning and scope of the pattern of freedom and responsibility.

It is a paradigm of positive freedom in as much as Rabi fulfils his responsibilities through greater awareness of the self.

Responsibility here includes the duty to promote the welfare of humanity. Rabi, at the end of the novel, experiences a full sense of positive freedom—the freedom to

govern oneself and to realise one's individuality within the ambit of moral constraints and bonds —than any of the other protagonists like Ravi or Rikki. Rabi accepts responsibility with a more ready, more mature and more patriotic spirit of avowal than found in the other novels where acceptance is the final state, no doubt, but is forced by circumstances.

Rabi's rapprochement is more on the moral plane than on the plane of self-aggrandisement. In this novel, Markandaya shows, both a respect for India's usable "past and a vivid sense of how it has made us what we are".(Bernard Bergonzi 54)

The pattern of freedom and responsibility does not develop much emphasis in Markandaya's latest novel *Pleasure City* (1982).

Rikki's need for freedom from the constraints of economic milieu is clear; this need finds an immediate outlet in the development of Shalimar where he finds the escape route to economic prosperity, even as Bashiam, the tribal with attenuated roots in *The Coffer Dams* joins the crusade against the tribal culture.

Tully and Rikki, in order to achieve a fulfilling relationship of human understanding, defy the conventional codes of conduct in respect of inter-racial relationships as Helen and Bashiam do, with this important difference that in *The Coffer Dams* the friendship is in the nature of extra-marital relationship. Both the pairs aspire for freedom from the economic and cultural milieu; Rikki and Tully discover soon enough that there is no morally justifiable escape, even in *Avalon*, from the influence of the greater external world and that the individual is almost always a part of society and has to accept greater forces.

These forces do, at first, seem to threaten his sense of identity; but finally help him realise a better sense of freedom for the will needs restraints to function meaningfully. Responsibility means, for Tully and Rikki, professional commitment as well as the responsibility of family relationships.

Realisation of positive freedom is an ideal towards which Tully and Rikki eventually move. They mistake, to begin with, escapism for freedom but finally realise that escapist behaviour is no solution to the problem of personal fulfilment and that there is no realm where absolutely self-centred existence is possible. The symbolic structure of this latest work of Markandaya clearly establishes its central concern in

terms of the concepts of freedom and responsibility and continuity and change in a traditional society.

Absolute individual freedom in the face of socio-economic constraints is extremely difficult, if not impossible to attain, and the realisation of positive freedom and individualism is also bound up with economic and social changes in a culture. Further the psychological problem cannot be really separated from the material or physical basis of human existence, namely, the economic, political and social structure of a society.

Markandaya fictionalises the psychological and material aspects of freedom in those novels (e.g., *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Handful of Rice*, *The Coffers Dams* and *Pleasure City*) where the individual is hampered by the economic factors of a socio-cultural situation. Those novels seem to point to the need for a more wellplanned society so that the opportunity for genuine positive activity is available to the individual.

Markandaya's novels therefore develop within their fictional and artistic scope the different aspects of economic, political, intellectual, artistic, social and personal freedom, and successfully project the ideal of positive freedom.

True freedom as achieved and amplified by the protagonists is identified as the freedom to function effectively through a fuller realization of the total self, as in that state of equilibrium there is no yearning and no desire.

The characters, it is shown, can thereby progress to a more independent existence without allowing the various external forces of constraint to hamper the spontaneous exercise of the self. It is through this mature realisation that peace of mind can become more of a reality.

As the Gita says, the bondage to qualities of the mind causes the feeling of limitedness: the bonds belonging to the mind are erroneously attributed to the self. (S.Radhakrishnan 570) The more man realises his true divine nature, the more free is he, (S.Radhakrishnan 248) and every living soul is potentially free (S.Radhakrishnan 247) because the essence of spirit is apart from the many identifications of the ego. Balanced development of the personality can produce the sense of active relatedness to the world in the spirit of love and work —love for fellowmen and work as creative activity which is the path to positive freedom.

Markandaya's protagonists grow to a better realisation that love of one's family and of other human beings as well as work as service are important. The Gita also teaches social service and work as the path to positive freedom. (S.Radhakrishnan 568)

So long as we perform selfish work, we are subject to the law of bondage. The Isa Upanishad says that what binds us to the chain of birth and death is not action but 'selfish action'. When we perform disinterested work, we reach freedom. (S.Radhakrishnan 245-46)

The whole setting of the Gita points out that it is an exhortation to action. Work is an existential sine qua non till

we attain freedom. We have to work in order to become free, and when we attain it, we have to work as the human instruments of the divine. The free souls have also the obligation to help others to discover the divine in themselves. (S.Radhakrishnan 568)

Markandaya's protagonists grow either to the understanding of love and devotion in the spirit of self-sacrifice and compassion (Rukmani, Mira, Helen, Srinivas, Saroja, Tully and Rikki) or to the true meaning of love as creative relatedness to the other and also to the true spirit of work as devoted creation in the spirit of duty (like Ravi, Dandekar, Sarojini, Rabi, and Val). It is thus through the new perspective of love and work gained through their personal encounters with economic, political, intra-cultural forces that Markandaya's characters progress to positive freedom in the sense of active and creative relatedness of man

to the world through a fuller realisation of the total integrated personality. This equates to the ideal of freedom which forms the cultural ethos that Markandaya's universe of discourse contains.

Thus, negative freedom or escapism emerges as a severely limited sense of freedom from some external power, the attainment of which does not yield self-satisfaction and contentment though it satiates temporary desires and cravings; it succeeds in making the characters more and more anxious and lonely with an acute sense of insecurity, lack of identity and powerlessness, and leading them again to the original circle of conformity with a better frame of mind, now more suited to accept the limitations either of tradition or of structural organization of society in a particular context, and helping them also to perform their responsibilities within this confined sphere of existence.

Maturity is greater awareness when the characters can see above and beyond the limitations of their situations to embrace the vision of a more plausible state of happiness which can be attained through effective performance but not through any form of escape from the centre of activity. Though the characters are not seen as experiencing full positive freedom, it is the goal they move towards at the close of the novels and they definitely progress from their initial attitudes and escapist tendencies.

Markandaya, unlike the majority of Indian women novelists writing in English, expands the scope of fiction beyond the narrow motive of using it as a vehicle to discuss the issue of the position of women in India, to the broader perspective of the individual's plight against the background of a variety of more complex fundamental issues of the human spirit and sensibility.

Her artistic vision moulds the perception of the reality of situations through the realistic mode but at the same time opens up the deeper layers of encounter and experience. She explores imaginatively the matrix of human experiences in a particular cultural context; her fiction is thus deeply rooted in the changing tradition of modern India, her vision being shaped and sustained by her authentic roots in Indian tradition as well as by a deeply sensitive feminine sensibility.

It may be concluded in the light of the present study that the concept of freedom and responsibility which run through all her published work is artistically explored and explicated in a positive sense. Markandaya's work is held together by the creative tension between the two sets of ideas of tradition and modernity — freedom and responsibility—and it projects her vision in terms of an enduring balance and equivalence which synthesise the opposed ideas into one of responsible freedom or a blend of traditional values and inescapable socio-cultural change.

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A STUDY OF THE THEMES IN THE NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA

Introduction: Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) is one of the most prolific women-novelists in the galaxy of Indian novelists of English language who had left behind her eleven novels in her credit including one published posthumously in 2008. Her works have shown a new path for the present and forthcoming generation; particularly associated with the studies and research in Indian writing in English. Her novels play the vital role in Indian social domain.

The selection of themes and their revelation is an outstanding work that has attracted the mind of modern generation. In this thesis too, a glimpse of multiple themes would be discussed. I intend to focus on the varied themes occurred in her novels systematically. Although some researchers have made their best in this respect but so far no one has systematically made endeavor to do so. Hence, through this thesis, the researcher would focus on the multiple themes of her novels best possibly focusing chronologically and systematic. 'Nectar in a Sieve' (1955), 'Some Inner Fury' (1956), 'A Silence of Desire' (1960), 'Possession' (1963), 'A Handful of Rice' (1966), 'The Coffer Dams' (1969), 'The Nowhere Man' (1972), 'The Two Virgins' (1973), 'The Golden Honeycomb' (1977), 'Pleasure City' (1982), and 'Bombay Tiger' (2008 published posthumously) are her eleven novels, through which she has beautifully portrayed the picture of Indian urban and rural societies in which she herself lived. Mr. Dhawan has also focused upon varied themes in Markandaya's novels. **Review of Literature:** Review of literature is the most important aspect for a researcher to understand the research-problem. It means that a researcher should be fully aware about the works previously done related with the same field on which, he or she is going to do. To meet with this objective of the study, various types of relevant literature have been reviewed. The articles, scholarly written, books, dissertations, conference proceedings, relevant to this area have been reviewed. Some work already done is as follows:

M.K. Bhatnagar writes in his thesis centered on Kamala Markandaya's 'Feminism' that she is an expatriate but one who has had her formative years spent in India. This book has provided solid information regarding the portrayal of East-West cultural clashes. She has shown how western culture dominates the culture of eastern

country like India. 'Nectar in a Sieve', according to Bhatnagar is a true portrayal of woman-predicament. This is the masterpiece of Kamala Markandaya. He has discussed about Markandaya's other novels; 'A Handful of Rice', 'Possession', 'A silence of Desire', and 'Pleasure City' and by going deep in the studies, Bhatnagar has revealed his many thematic elements.

M.K.Naik, in his book, 'Perspectives on Indian Fiction' explains about the multiple themes used by Kamala Markandaya which shows a brief analysis of her novels. **R.K.Dhawan** also writes about the concept of Kamala Markandaya's feminism, her technique, time-used in setting, her power of imagination, use of women-characters, etc in his book, 'Kamala Markandaya: A Thematic Study', writes about the themes of Markandaya's novels. He has discussed about six major themes; hunger, degradation, East-West encounter, fatalism, rootlessness, politics, and human-relationship. **Anne C. Herrmann** (1994) in his book, 'Therring Feminism Parallel Trends in the Humanities and Social Science' has his views about feminism of Kamala Markandaya. **Diane and Robyn Weigman** (1995), write in the book written in their coloboration, 'Feminism Beside Itself' about contingencies. Through this book, the authors have presented their thoughts about the consciousness of feminism.

Objectives of the Work: The objectives of the present research work are to study, identify, discuss, analyze, and to interpret Kamala Markandaya's selected novels and thereby to select them in the belief of Indian English literature.

1. To study the eleven novels by Kamala Markandaya keeping in mind the recurring themes mentioned by the critics and scholars.
2. To identify these secondary themes; cosmopolitanism East vs. West.
3. To study various thematic aspects in these selected novels of Kamala Markandaya.
4. To focus on religious and domestic imagery to explore a sense of identity in the light of Indian English novels.
5. To make an interpretation of special glooms of love in her fiction.
6. To be acquainted with the thrash about women for liberty and impartiality in the Indian society.

Statement of the Hypothesis: The selected novels of Kamala Markandaya reveal various aspects and make available a standpoint of life. At the present lot of research

work is done on Kamala Markandaya but nobody has attempted to study of the thematic analysis; women's image and to compare them to bring out feminine psyche, the changing faces of women and changing relationship between man and woman, including cosmopolitan life and culture. The study of themes in the novels of Kamala Markandaya, has not been done systematically.

Data Collection: The data would be in form of the primary and secondary sources.

A. Primary Sources: The eleven novels of Kamala Markandaya and her other works of short-stories would form the primary sources.

B. Secondary Sources: The reviews and articles published in various journals, magazines and in the books.

Scope and Limitations: Women have made remarkable contribution to fiction in Indian English literature. In Fiction, there is ample scope for the expression of feminine sensibility. Women have inspired literature and the feminine theme has been a pivotal importance too. She is herself a creator of literature and is all pervading. Woman is the cause of all actions. If woman is absent, there is no poetry, no song, no drama, no tears, no laughter, and ultimately no life in this world. But they are still walking on a tight rope to achieve their rights and social justice. Indian woman at the turn of century are in a transitional phase via-a-vis the interface of tradition and modernity. The different aspects of feminism are stressed through many Indian English novels. This study attempts to present various images of women protagonists projected by Indian women English contemporary and modern novelists like Kamala Markandaya.

This research work also tries to study comparatively the female protagonists in these fictions. Kamala Markandaya has written many novels but here it is impossible to analyze each and every novel of her. The present study will focus on only eleven novels.

Research Methodology: The analytical, interpretative and comparative methodology will be used for the present research work. The emphasis will be laid on the close reading of the primary sources and secondary sources, data available on the subject, visit to various libraries for the collection of relevant information. Besides, discussion would be done with the person who has done similar kind of study. Moreover, internet can be used for study. In the light of said methodology, the following tentative chapter scheme will be framed.

Chapter Scheme: The proposed research work is divided into following chapters broadly:

Chapter I: Introduction: The first chapter of this research work would deal with the brief history of Indian English women novelists. The concepts of feminism, cosmopolitanism, feminine sensibility would be discussed. This chapter would also take the sweeping survey of Indian English women novelists such as Kamala Markandaya, R.P. Jhabvala, Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Gita Hariharan, Shobha De, Bharti Mukherjee and other contemporary women novelists.

Chapter II: A Thematic Analysis in ‘Nectar In a Sieve’ and ‘Some Inner Fury’: This second chapter, ‘A Thematic Analysis in ‘Nectar in a Sieve’ and ‘Some Inner Fury’ deals with the thematic analysis of the present novels broadly divided on the basis of the early writing representing the early phase of her writing. In this novel, the writer, Kamala Markandaya tries to explore the themes like childhood, early marriage, family-relations, mystery, alchemy, social identity, revenge, cosmopolitan cultural change, cultural clash, and transformation, exploitation; emotional and physical.

Chapter III: A Thematic Analysis in ‘A Silence of Desire’ and ‘Possession’: The third chapter, ‘A Thematic Analysis in ‘A Silence of Desire’ and ‘Possession’ also shows the multi-thematic handling of the writer. It also reflects the themes like love and sex, violence, childhood, early marriage, superstition, family relations, conspiracy, morality, apartheid, ambition, helplessness, optimism, poverty, greed, sacrifice, myth criticism of social and political system, and transformation.

Chapter IV: A Thematic Analysis in ‘A Handful of Rice’ and ‘The Coffer Dams’: The fourth chapter, ‘A Thematic Analysis in ‘A Handful of Rice’ and ‘The Coffer Dams’ covers the thematic analysis of the various themes that means within the first decade of the 21st century. Bharti Mukherjee deals with childhood, family and family-relations, cultural-clash, lesbian-relationship, supernaturalism, religion, sex and love, conspiracy, killing, bomb-blasting, criticism of social and political systems, marriage, male-domination, starvation, unemployment etc. These all and in addition to these highlighted themes other possible themes also will be analyzed.

Chapter V: A Thematic Analysis in ‘The Nowhere Man’ and ‘Two Virgins’: The fifth chapter, ‘A Thematic Analysis in ‘The Nowhere Man’ and ‘Two Virgins’ deals with diversified themes through her novels. The researcher thinks the following themes

also contribute to her novels along with the themes mentioned by critics and reviewers. The present novels highlights various themes like childhood, family, family relations, alienation, isolation, loneliness, supernaturalism, exploitation, love and sex, conjugal relationships, hidden realities of cosmopolitan life.

Chapter VI: A Thematic Analysis in ‘The Golden Honeycomb’ and ‘Pleasure City’:

Chapter VII: Conclusion: The final chapter, ‘Conclusion’ covers Kamala Markandaya’s various thematic compressions with her contemporary and some women writers with regard to their thematic handling. It takes a stock of the analysis done in previous chapters to evaluate her contribution to English novel as a contemporary novelist and her skill in handling multiple themes contributing to the theme of cultural change and transformation in all her novels.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography would be prepared of:

- (a) Primary Sources (the original works of the author i.e. Kamla Markandaya.
- (b) Secondary Sources (The reviews, articles, postcolonial works published in various journals, magazines, and the books.)