

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion certain conclusions can be arrived at about the nature and treatment of the Indo-British encounter in Kamala Markandaya's four novels *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession*, *The Coffer Dams* and *The Nowhere Man*. The Indo-British encounter has apparently taken the form of the following pattern of the Indo-British relations.

The first pattern in *Some Inner Fury* consists of the Englishmen as 'rulers' and the Indians as 'the ruled' and their relationship is always that of hostility in general. The political relations between India and Britain are shown to be antagonistic and hostile to each other that the gulf between them is certainly unbridgeable and even the personal relationship between the Indians and the Britishers is impossible as S.K. Aithal points out: "*Some Inner Fury* advances the view that the political equality is the main obstacle to durable Indo-British relationships ..."¹

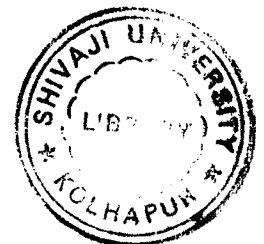
The Indians are fighting for India's Independence and one notices Govind, Mira's patriotic, adopted brother and his activist companions who are genuinely supported by Roshan Merchant, ultramodern anglicised Indian lady, in their struggle to liberate India from the dominion of the British rule. The white people as 'rulers' are ignoble and vindictive. Even Hicky, the missionary who is doing a sort of constructive and humanitarian work, reveals a white man in him when he presents evidence of an eye-witness in the court against Govind who is being tried on the charge of Kitsamy's murder.

Again it may be said that the relationship between the Indians and the English can be possible only at the personal level for one notices that Mirabai and Richard Marlowe, who represent the Indian and the English cultures respectively, are torn apart for political reasons. When it comes to the final step to be taken for complete assimilation, it is the politics that divides the sincere and passionate two lovers. As K.R. Chandrasekharan puts it:

The meeting between East and West is always possible at the personal level. The union between Mira and Richard indicates the possibility of hearts meeting. But political and other forces have the power to estrange and to separate.²

In *Possession*, the English Lady Caroline Bell is presented as the 'Patron' of the Indian artist, Valmiki and the ascetic Swamy as Val's guru-guide-father and so on, and both of them are trying to possess Valmiki's soul. Caroline's 'superiority complex' and 'imperialistic' attitude always goads her to decry the Indian rural life and she tries to establish the cultural and materialistic superiority of the West over the East by possessing Valmiki permanently. But this is counterbalanced by the character of the Swamy who champions the East that upholds her spiritual ways and values, as K.R. Chandrasekharan rightly points out:

The struggle between the Swamy and Caroline for the custody and control of Valmiki truly becomes symbolic of the struggle between Indian spiritual values and the Western materialism for the art or even the soul of India.³



Caroline takes away Valmiki from his simple home and homeland to the dazzling city of London and makes him the most renowned artist, and also has liaison with him. It is a sort of subtler imperialistic exploitation rather than the politico-economic.

In *Possession*, the general relationship between India and Britain is depicted as a sort of "love-hate relationship"⁴ as in the dialogue with Anasuya, Caroline points out that "England and India never did understand one another."⁵ The penultimate sentence in the novel "Caroline came of the breed that ^{never} admitted defeat"⁶ explicitly speaks of the obstinacy of the white race and its dominating nature as Anasuya, the narrator rightly points out:

Caroline thinks Valmiki belongs to her, and in a way she's right. She won't let to. People don't easily give up what they think are their possessions. The English never have.⁷

Finally, it can be summed up with what P.S. Chauvan says:

Establishing triumph of Indian values, Kamala Markandaya has also demonstrated the spiritual poverty of the Western living.⁸

In *The Coffin Dams*, Kamala Markandaya creates a situation, where the Indians and the British are engaged in gigantic and ambitious joint project of building a dam. Apparently both the Indians and the Britishers are on the equal footing as partners in the big project. But one notices that the English are proud and conceited of their scientific and technological knowledge, and also the Indians have a practical wisdom

which is certainly essential in life and work, and consequently expert in their own ways. And yet the individual relationship creates problem and the racial attitudes become evident. Bashiam and Helen become lovers, but Bashiam has to pay the price of his temerity and audacity in loving a woman of 'superior' race. This is, one might say, the fringe of racialism. As K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar rightly points out:

... the novel as a whole is a deeply disturbing protest against the onslaught of modern technological ruthlessness against the humanity of an earlier order of life.⁹

However, the novelist shows that there are possibilities of reconciliation only on the level of joint constructive work, such as the scientific and technological knowledge of the English engineers and the co-operation and labour of the Indians, as is exemplified by the Dam which is the "joint achievement"¹⁰ of the Indian "need, occupation, money, flesh and blood and bone"¹¹ and the British "brain."¹²

In *The Nowhere Man*, the Indo-British encounter is intertwined with the problems of the Asian immigrants in England. The topicality of the theme of the novel was never more relevant than now in *The Nowhere Man*. The antagonism of the whites against the blacks and the Asians is rampant in the contemporary England.

Srinivas, the South Indian Brahmin, with his young wife Vasantha, migrates to England where he builds, 'a miniature India' in his 'Chandraprasad,' and becomes a prosperous trader, but suffers at the instance

of the fascist, racial, arrogant and aggressive Fred Fletcher and his gang. Srinivas's passivity and stoicism infuriate Fred who plans to destroy Srinivas and his property, and sets fire to his house in which he himself is burnt first and after being rescued from the burning house, Srinivas looks around, thanks all with smile, and then passes away. All this indicates, as Dr. S. Krishna Sarma says that - "It is a triumph of his (Srinivas's) attitude to England, and a defeat for the senseless and irrational antagonism of the like of Fred."¹³

Laxman, who is born and brought ^{up} in England, advocates complete integration with Britain. He represents a new generation of the England-born Asians, who are as it were, suspended in midair. They can neither go back to their roots in India, nor can they successfully get accepted and integrated in the British society. This is another aspect of racialism in Britain.

Finally, we can say, in conclusion, that racialism, politics and culture impringe upon even the most personal relationships and divide them, as in the case of Mira-Richard, Clinton-Bashiam, Caroline-Valmiki and even Srinivas-Laxman, the biased British society in London. There are, however, possibilities of harmony and friendship but only on the level of some disinterested, amoral joint development activity, like building of a project - a dam, for instance, and only when both the people - the Indians and the British try to understand and have a correct attitude towards each other.

Kamala Markandaya as an 'insider-out-sider' has the first

hand experience of the complexities of the Indo-British relationships in their various aspects. She is not exactly pessimistic about the future developments in the Indo-British relationship, but her solution is humanitarian values which transcend race, religion, politics and culture - as in *The Nowhere Man*, the relationship between Srinivas and Mrs. Pickering and Helen and Bashiam in *The Coffer Dams*. And this Kamala Markandaya seems to show that only the humanitarian principles - love, mercy, compassion, affection, clarity and above all the service of humanity, if accepted, there will be a genuine union between India and Britain.

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