
STUDY OF KAMALA MARKANDAYS NOVEL NECTAR IN A SIEVE “A THEMATIC STUDY”

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Abstract:

As one of the most prominent female English essayists from India, Kamala Markandaya has a prominent place among Indian English authors. With the publication of her first book, *Nectar in a Sieve*, in 1954, she was able to gain name recognition and reputation throughout the entire world. The goal of the current essay is to focus on the novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, which treats neediness, addiction, and abuse as its main themes. It is a first-person narrative that was written in a nostalgic mood. Rukmani is the story's fearless female author. Rukmani has a peaceful dream about her experience. The story vividly illustrates the bravery and tenacity of Rukmani, a simple labourer woman. After her wanderings, during which she nearly lost her beginning and end, Rukmani has now come home. Markandaya creates a richly detailed character in Rukmani, the protagonist of *Nectar in a Sieve*, whose three-dimensional richness heightens the size of the ideological concerns she incorporates in her.

Keywords: *Starvation, Desperate, Misfortune, Hapless, Rootlessness, East West Conflict*

Introduction

An Indo-Anglian woman novelist, Kamla Markandya, explores a variety of issues in her works. She has produced ten novels to date, making her one of India's most renowned and well-known authors. She depicts real life, focusing on the sufferings and financial struggles of the poor and the downtrodden, on the conflict between traditional and modern values, between spiritual and materialistic values, and on the practise of vice and dishonesty as a ladder to all success in society. The *Nectar in a Sieve* is a social tale of the highest calibre, presenting the issues of the rural world, the unmarried mother, the illegitimate kid, and the poor and destitute

peasant. She talks about the tension between the east and the west in *A Silence of Desire* and some inner fury. A small amount of rice reveals the common issue with conscience that modern men encounter. Concerned with the struggle between good and evil is possession. *The Coffer Dams* and *The Golden Honeycomb* have brought attention to the conflict between labour and capital. *Two Virgins* exposes the multiple corruptions brought on by materialism's allure in rural society. The theme of *Pleasure City* is the invasion and effect of Western technology on traditional ways of life. Nearly all novels address issues of love and sex, fallen women, and the moral double standard that applies to both men and women. As a result, the selection of subjects is not only wide but also varied. She rarely uses the same theme in two of her novels at the same time. She covers several topics in a single book.

Rural Issues

Mrs. Markandaya works with issues that affect the rural community on a daily basis. Her depiction of these rural residents is impartial. As in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* and *Rainbow* novels, where the lives of the farmers are ruined by the negative effects of industrialization on rural beings, she instead creates peasants who show the truly human characteristics of self-delusion, pride, self-destruction, cruelty, mixed with optimism, endurance, and generosity. Her work illustrates the conflicts between tradition and modernity, which stands for industrialization. The industrial revolution's brutal attack on rural society is depicted in *Nectar in a Sieve*. The author of the work explores the detrimental impacts of industrialization on the calming rhythm of rural India through the narrator Rukmani. According to H.M. William, the catastrophes that befall the peasantry "are the product of the combined impersonal forces of nature and industry. The disruption of rural life by the film industry is a major theme in *Two Virgins*. Industrialization not only ruins the natural beauty of the countryside but also causes a number of issues, such as an influx of foreigners, prostitution, labour unrest, and rising costs. Rise in disease rates. The author also discusses the contradictions between urban and rural civilisation in *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Two Virgins*. Her rural inhabitants aspire to live urban lives, while those who were raised in cities choose to live in the country. Rural residents who are perplexed by the hard reality of their existence are impacted by market activity, which is represented by the bustle that builds up whenever they are close to a town and the lights that are strung along the street like a necklace. The author of (*Two Virgins*) goes into great depth to explain rural poverty and starvation. Hunger and poverty are two devils that frequently stalk rural areas. The extreme poverty in Indian communities and its dehumanising impacts on its residents are depicted in *Nectar in a Sieve*. Rural residents are forced to eat grass due to hunger, and Nathan and Rukmani come to the conclusion that "hunger is a curious thing; at first it is with you all the time, walking and sleeping and in your dreams, and your belly cries out insistently, and there is gnawing pain as if your very vitals were being devoured."

East-West Conflict

The Indo-Anglian novelist tends to concentrate on the so-called encounter between East and West, not only at the level of the people but also at the level of ideas. "Mrs. Markandaya born and bred in India, and settled in England is very sensitive to the clash of East and West and the tensions born of clash." (Margret P. Joseph). Though in every novel of Mrs. Markandaya, this problem has been discussed, some inner furry, *A Silence of Desire* and *The Nowhere Man* highlight this problem. Some *Inner Furry* deals with the conflict between the English and the Indians through the political agitation. It belongs to the Quit Indian Movement of 1942. The heroine, Mira, belongs to the class of the ruled, while the hero, Richard belongs to the ruling class. Both of them love each other passionately but the cultural disparity and political agitation brings tragedy to both of them. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes that the novel "ends on the note that East and West cannot meet because the forces that pull them apart, are too strong." "A Silence of Desire deals with the clash between faith and reason. The novelist opines in the novel that the West has withered this faith highlighting it with talk of ignorance and superstitions. In *Possession*, Mrs. Markandaya throws a fresh light, on the East-West theme. She depicts an allegory of the British occupation of India. On every possible occasion her characters use the same expression as were used to signify the relationship between British and India. Caroline who symbolizes the British, comes to the village of Valmiki for some "arak" as the British came to India in the very beginning as traders. But she gets hold of Val who stands for India. Later on Swami, symbolizing the personality of Gandhi makes Val free from the hold of Caroline. Thus the novel basically deals with the East-West conflict. Margaret P. Joseph points out the novelist presents a micro-cosmic rendered of England's possession of India. Throwing light on the racial prejudice of the novel, *The Nowhere Man*, P.P. Mehta points out that it is the first novel of racial problems in England. The tension between the Western and the Eastern outlooks is further describes in *Two Virgins*. East-West conflict is very popular theme of Indo-Anglian novels but Kamla Markandaya depicts this clash more sincerely than the other novelist of her age. R.K. Badal states "No other writers is so much concerned with the difference of ideas, ideologies, thoughts and philosophy of the East and West as Kamla Markandaya".

The Problem of Conscience

Some critics opine that Mrs. Markandaya could not reveal the depth of human nature. In fact this opinion is the result of the lack of sincere study of her novel. This problem of conscience is one of the strongest themes of her novels. *A Handful of Rice* is the fine portrayal between idea and fact. The hero's problems may be called Hamlet's problems but unlike Hamlet, he is not guided by any supernatural machinery; but he became the victim of his own conscience. The Story of his inner struggle makes an interesting and convincing study. P.P. Mehta opines, "it must however be admitted that qualms of conscience with Ravi felt in taking up again the life of degradation have a ring of truth and carry conviction. "The novelist presents the inner conflict between the past and the present existing in human beings. In her novel *The Nowhere Man* Srinivas, the tragic hero of the novel prefers solitude, after the death of his wife. He is torn by the conflict between the past and the present. He suffers till the end of his life due to the problem of conscience. The

novelist realizes the impact of materialism over spiritualism in *The Coffers Dams*. She states how the machines that man made to help him, are governing him. The novelist concludes in *The Coffers Dams* that those who have accepted his vast change, have a continuous disturbance in their hearts that has marred the peace of their mind, and those who have not accepted, are in a state of interruption of peace due to the conflict existing between the spiritualism inside their heart, and the materialism of the outside world.

The Problem of Jealousy, Suspicion and Faith

Another important theme of Mrs. Markandaya's novels is the problem of jealousy, suspicion and faith. *A Silence of Desire* is the most delicate novel in the respect. It describes the decline of a family, its being stricken by jealousy and suspicion. Dandekar and Sarojni are husband and wife. Sarojni has tumor, so she visits a swami because she has faith in him. Dandekar doubts the characters of his wife and under the impact of jealousy he loses his happiness. Sarojni does not want to lose her faith in Swami, so she refuses to stop her visit to swami. In *Possession* we also observe the evil effects of jealousy in the character of Caroline. She tries to possess Val physically and spiritually. The novelist finds that jealousy, suspicion and faith plays an important role in human life; that is why, she makes them important themes of her novels.

Conclusion

The variety of themes in Mrs. Markandaya's books is unrestricted. In addition to the aforementioned elements, she in-depth addressed the issue of the fallen women in her works. She presents the fallen women with empathy and realism. In several of her works, she draws the conclusion that the lack of moral equality between men and women is to blame for much of society's suffering, particularly among women. In each novel, she touches on nearly brand-new themes with only slight repetitions. In the sentences that follow, H.M. William notes her topic. "She (Kamla Markandaya) handles themes of tragic waste, the sorrow of unfulfilled or destroyed love, the agony of artistic aspiration, the search for self-equality and the truth by the young, all themes popular with European and American novelists in recent decades. She has added a modern Indian perspective to these topics, one that is rife with social and political upheaval as well as violence and convulsion. Uma Parameswarah expressed a similar viewpoint when she wrote, "Kamla Markandaya's themes are not new, but this weakness becomes a strength because the Indian setting still has the attraction of novelty for the western reader, and universal themes set against an Indian background are welcomed."

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