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## WESTERN IMPACT ON EASTEN MINDS: THE NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA

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### ABSTRACT

Kamala Markandaya has had a prominent position among Indian English writers as one of the leading woman writers in English. She achieved worldwide recognition and popularity with the publication of her very first novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, in 1954. Indian English fiction reflects a variety of socioeconomic, political, cultural, psychological, and linguistic changes. It also documents the evolving culture and way of life in the village. Kamala Markandaya has been creatively handled the interaction between western civilization and culture. The significant influence of western education and culture on Indians' overall viewpoint has been noted by Markandaya. Most of Kamala Markandaya's novels depict how the west has impacted rural India. The western world is shown in her stories through a variety of individuals who play diverse roles, represent various facets of western civilization, and respond to Indians in various ways.

**KEYWORDS:** Westernization, Modernization, Culture, India

### INTRODUCTION

Indian traditional society was thrown into upheaval by the influence of western education and culture. Numerous material opportunities and conveniences were made possible by the advancement of science and technology. To a significant extent, Indian life and culture have been woven with elements of western culture. In fact, it has increasingly become a part of everyday life in India. Basically, modernization is a result of industrialization and westernization, which created a new type of society. Kamala Markandaya adopted western values as an immigrant who settled in England. Modernity consistently appears as the worst epidemic in contemporary India in her writings.

In *Some Inner Fury* Kamala Markandaya artistically explores the interaction of India with western civilization and culture. The significant influence of western education and culture on Indians' perspectives has

been brought out by Kamala Markandaya. Some characters are so thoroughly swept away by western knowledge that they are unable to locate anything worthwhile in their traditional, ancient Indian culture and way of life. These folks despise their countrymen for being outdated. They have held important posts in the British government in India, which the alien rulers regard as the pillars of strength.

A Hindu family that has undergone some westernization lives in pre-independence India, including the narrator, protagonist Mirabai, and her brother. When we go through the novel, we see that Kitswamy and his English companion, Richard Marlowe, arrive in Kitswamy's home village in India in the first chapter. An Englishman's attempts to feel at home in Kitswamy's presence were skilfully conveyed by the book. The author of the work satirizes the Indians who attempt to mimic western clothing in an Indian climate. These people don't feel proud of their background; they feel ashamed of it. The novelist mocks Indians for trying to emulate western fashion in their native environment. Instead of being proud, these individuals are ashamed of their origins. Kitswamy is so influenced by western society that he has lost sight of his own and adopts an English appearance. His life has been changed by his time in Oxford. R.S. Pathak rightly points out:

“Kit is a typical alienated person, who is only a vine  
clinging to the British Raj, having no individual  
identity of his own.”<sup>1</sup>

The depth of Kitswamy's alienation is considerable. He has absorbed so much of the superficial elements of western society into himself that his household fully reflects and is run in western fashion. Kit is entirely a product of the west, even his name. Kit is from a wealthy, well-educated South Indian family that, despite being westernized, is not sophisticated. Despite Richard, his English friend, having a special enamel bath tub ordered for him from Bombay, it is his anticipation that he will bathe while standing up. Kit desires that everyone adopt his English ways. He disdains the supposed sloppiness and inefficiency of Indians. His social life is structured according to western conventions. When he weds Premala, his residence was outfitted fully in:

“Wilton carpets on the floor, wing chairs and a cocktail  
cabinet in the drawing-room, chintzes in the bedrooms...  
English bone china.”<sup>2</sup>

Roshan is a liberated woman in contemporary India. In the early pages of the novel, she is described as a clever byproduct of western society. Markandaya has portrayed her personality by pointing out:

“It was Roshan who came nearest to him (Richard Marlowe) in liking  
sympathy for the ways of the West; but she belonged to the East too. Born in  
one world, educated in another, she entered both and moved in both with ease  
and nonchalant. It was a dual citizenship which few people had, which a few

may have spurned, but many more envied and which she herself simply took for granted.”<sup>3</sup>

She has dual citizenship and was raised in England with western ideals, and she feels completely at home in both. She penetrates both worlds and moves in both with ease and vivacity despite being born in the East but educated in the West. She is fierce and in charge of herself. She is a woman of strong will and drive who constantly works to build and assert her free personality, and for this no cost is too dear for her. She gives up her parents, her spouse, and her comfortable aristocratic life in order to accomplish her goal. She appears to have a close relationship with certain Westerners, and she has sympathy for the West. Kamala Markandaya says of her that she is as much an East-sider as she is a westerner.

Although Valmiki in *Possession* is meant to represent the Hindu, Caroline's subtle but pervasive influence transforms him into a western. He travels to London with Caroline Bell, who has influenced him, in order to further his artistic skill. He has a naïve faith that Caroline would work in his favor to shape his future, but he is unaware that she is benefiting from him. Valmiki is a completely different person at her company. He progressively and silently embraces British beliefs, standards, and even its painting and exhibiting techniques. His attire has completely altered; instead of wearing a dhoti and kurta, he now wears a shirt, a tie, and a pair of pants. Tamil is replaced by his English. He acquires knowledge of western culture and becomes

“An ostentatious artistic persona, and the kind of artificial, extravagant personality which conformed to the English notion of what an Oriental should be.”<sup>4</sup>

Particularly in his connection with Ellie, he adopts English norms and standards of openness in man-woman relationships. He develops intimacy with Ellie.

Jumbo and Anusuya are examples of westernized Indians. Jumbo, a former monarch of one of India's smallest states, always strives to impress his English friends with the astounding splendor of the regular parties he gives. Unmistakably feeling constrained in his own nation due to the abrupt loss of his social rank and influence, he appears to desire to maintain his illustrious status by courting the English to his filled tables. Anusuya accepts the west on the intellectual plane, whereas Jumbo adapts it on the material one. He travels to London to take part in the glitzy celebrations of the English metropolis in order to escape the humdrum of Indian life. Anusuya travels to London as well, but her primary goal is to gather information for her writings. She is a very successful writer who is capable of leading a decent, respectable life as a woman of money. She demonstrates a respectable existence without a man in her life, much like Mira and Roshan in *Some Inner Fury*.

The title of the novel *The Nowhere Man* indicates the displaced Indian. The life of Shrinivas, an Indian immigrant to England, illustrates the influence of western civilization on him. Shrinivas, who comes from an orthodox upper middle class family in India, settles down in England, but it is sad that the English community

does not fully welcome him. Shrinivas has many fond recollections of his own country, but he has also become accustomed to western life as an immigrant. He feels that England has abandoned him and that his roots are in India. Since Shrinivas attended a school with a British-style curriculum, he has been impacted by his father's western culture. The life of Shrinivas, an Indian immigrant to England, demonstrates the influence of western society on him. Shrinivas, who comes from a traditional upper middle class family in India, settles down in England. Unfortunately, the English community does not fully welcome him. While Shrinivas has many fond recollections of his own country, he has also been accustomed to western culture as an immigrant. He believes that England has abandoned him and that his roots are in India. Since Shrinivas attended a school that was modelled after the British system, he has been impacted by his father's western culture.

Shrinivas was able to adjust to London's new surroundings and westernized society with ease. The sons of Shrinivas and Vasantha are raised in line with the British way of life as they have relocated to a foreign country, and they take up conduct, manners, customs, etiquettes, and ideals from western culture. Sheshu and Laxman attended Christian schools for their education. They did not acquire any Indian characteristics because they were raised in a Christian environment. Laxman and Sheshu serve as an example of the second generation of immigrants who do not belong to either the East or the West; their immigration is complete in that they have completely cut off their roots and assimilated into the new culture.

In *Two Virgins*, Lalitha is portrayed as a young woman from the West. She is modern because of how beautiful she is. She flirts beautifully, is egotistical and selfish, brilliant but shallow. Lalitha, who is being taught by Miss Mendoza, an English-speaking instructor, is drawn to the fortunate opportunity that the city is providing for her. She accepts the shallow way of life, just like every other modern woman. She leaves the bounds of her little, constrained hamlet and dashes into the bright city, where the filmmaker Mr. Gupta takes advantage of her innocence. She suffers the trauma of abortion as a victim. After her first abortion, she no longer experiences sex anxiety. This experience gives her the confidence to tackle the traps and evil temptations of western city life. She is easily seduced by fantasies of her conquests, which materialize in the possibility of her becoming a heroine, as she becomes more conscious of her lovely figure and gains knowledge of sex. Her modernity leads her astray since she is seduced by the external spark of westernization and lacks a strong understanding of being modern like Mira or Roshan do in *Some Inner Fury*.

Kamala Markandaya fictionalises the numerous stages of tyranny and the effects of western civilization on every element of life in her novel *The Pleasure City*. The author of the story uses Independent India as a colonial backdrop to raise the question of how Europe continues to have a cultural influence on newly freed countries. In the book, Rikki illustrates the alienating impact of English schooling on colonized people. Rikki is comparable to Valmiki from *Possession*, whose inspiration and aspiration bloom after he contacts the west, it might be argued. Like Val, Rikki relocated in order to assume a new position. When he interacts with British people, he completely transforms and acquires everything required.

Heblekar, an Indian, fully ingests western culture, similar to Kit in *Some Inner Fury*. Significantly shortening his name reveals the Anglicized initial "Heb." His first exchange with Tully revealed that he appeared to be an anglophile of the Kit sort. He prefers to go by his short name, assuring Tully that it would be challenging to pronounce that many syllables. He belongs to the IAS. He feels embarrassed and humiliated by his conversations with Tully and his participation in Tully's noisy, back-slapping Indian incompetence. Heblekar mimics western lifestyles to insane degrees, just like Kit. Even he gives up being a vegetarian and turns into a non-vegetarian, eating everything the foreign hostess serves him only to appease them. The episode in which Tully asks him to see fish being scaled and filleted is explained, and the outward change in him is revealed:

“It was against his creed to cut short life, even of fishes.

In the Interests of public relations but actually to spare himself embarrassment, he ate what hostesses put on his plate. Prudence warned, however, that the fragile, cultivated ability would disappear, were he to observe the process.”<sup>5</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Kamala Markandaya is keenly aware of the difficulties of modern living. She is well aware of the requirements of modernization that cannot be avoided. She is aware that the world is lagging behind technology and that this shift is unavoidable. The civilization needs to awaken from its slumber and adopt the ways of contemporary Western culture.

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