CHAPTER IV

POSSESSION
Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya.

The man-woman relationship has been delineated in a new light in the novel Possession. What sets this novel apart from other is its urban setting which is not present in ‘Nectar in a Sieve’. Critics have taken this urban setting for their butt of attack. Some of the critics are of the opinion that the novel presents a kind of East-West encounter or sometimes it is contended by them that the East cannot intermingle with the West-this is what, they say the novel presents as its theme. Even most of the critics go to the extent of saying that the novel represents the British imperialism in India and its liberation from the yoke of the Britishers. Whatever may be the arguments and counter arguments of the critics there is convergence of the opinion on the point that the novel presents a wide horizon of relationships particularly among men and women.

It is right that human beings basic instincts are the same, but their thoughts and behaviour are largely determined by the culture, the language and the society in which they are socialised. And it is these things that determined and influenced the man-woman relationship in the society. In the novel, Caroline is a character whose basic instincts like that of emotions, sentiments, love etc. are similar to those of either Anasuya or of Valmiki.

But Caroline differs largely from these characters in a thought and behaviour as she has been brought up in a society which is characterised by materialism and sexuality. Commenting on the character of Caroline Bell Anasuya, the narrator says:

“Lady coroline Bell, so that was who it was? I had heard about her a dozen times in a week I had been in
Madras. She was rich, divorced, well-born, said fashionable Indian society, concentrating upon essentials; really rich, in the English way, with landed estates and money in sterling; really well-born descended from a long line of men who had ruled India in the days of the British Raj, not closely linked to a little known lord by marriage to an umpteenth cousin-which was the more usual cause for are in India: and very boldly and publicly divorced, with headlines in the pupess. She had also been reputed to be beautiful though no great stress had been laid upon this as for as I could recall, probably because even her astonishing good looks lost impact compared to her after spectacular qualities.”

What is stated in the aforesaid situation is that she belongs to the class of people “who had ruled in India.” Therefore she has inherited all the complexes and affectations that the people belonging to rulers class are supposed to have. The critics has rightly called her a “colonizer.” But other critic like Shama A. Agrawala mention that:

“I find that Croline is not a Colonizer.”

What we glean form the character of Croline is that whether a colonizer or not, she is termendously influenced by the Western socio-cultural ethos of her country. Because she thinks that she can purchase human beings into her possession, like commodities. Further, her flair for wine particularly Indian wine is well established. An Indian women perhaps wouldn’t run after wine so frantically as she did. It is her endeavour to test “Arak” that brings her into the village where the small boy Valmiki...
lives. In Keats' poem, "Ode to a Nightingale" the poet wants to be transported to the world of nightingales with the help of wine, but in this novel it is the search of wine which brings Caroline near Valmiki. Like a devil, who compells Dr. Faustus to write off his soul to him, Caroline blackmails the boy to mortgage himself to her for just petty amount of five thousand rupees.

The relationship between Coroline and Valmiki is therefore analysed in the light of this possessive nature of Caroline. In 'Nectar in a Sieve', mutual harmony, trust and equality characterised the relationship between Nathan and Rukmani. But in this novel it is the power of money through which Caroline strives to exercise her control over Valmiki.

Caroline's character is rightly equalled to that of 'Prospero' who enslaves 'Caliban' for his own personal aims. Valmiki is here 'Caliban' and 'Caroline' is 'Prospero'. Caliban is taught language by 'Prospero' with which he could 'curse'.

Caliban says:

"You gave me language and my profit on't. Is I know how to curse. The red plagverid you for learning me your language!"

(Shakespears 'Tempest' i, ii, 363-65)

Caliban can curse because he has been given language by his captor. Valmiki is given a name, fame and status by Coroline. If Valmiki had remained in that remote village, he would have died unwept, unsung, unknown like villagers in Thomas Gray's:

"Elegy written in a country church-yard"
Prospero has done a singular service to Caliban and in this novel Caroline has done similar service to Valmiki. Anasuya states:

"..... this much Caroline had done for him. She had put an end to his half-stomach rice and water diet, and with food and care given him the decency of a healthy body."

Thus the relationship between Valmiki and Caroline is not balanced. The former belongs to the ruled class whereas the latter belongs to the ruler class.

E. M. Foster in his novel ‘A Passage to India’ has conclusively proved that friendship is possible only among equals and in the light of this conclusion, what is found is Caroline and Valmiki are not the equals. Moreover, they can’t understand each other.

In this context a critic Riemenschneider goes on to say that Caroline is materialists and therefore, the fails to understand the spiritual Valmiki.

All Westerners are materialists and all Indians are spiritualists is the refrain of the Western and the Indian writers. Further in this reference a critic Ashis Nandy writes:

"on the one hand the British saw the Indian’s as overly this - worldly - creedingly shrewd, greedy, self-centered, money-minded. On the other hand, they also despised the Indian as overly other-worldly-not fit for the world of modern science and technology, statecraft and productive wrok... Indian is not early its spiritual self... The plethora of empirical studies
done from Marxist as well as structural-functional vantage grounds should have at least made us aware that underlying much Indian spirituality lie this worldly choices, hard self-interest and reality-testing.” 5

Mr. Agrawala doesn’t agree with the view of Ashis Nandy and finds that Valmiki is no way was ‘subjugated’ by Caroline. Because Caroline had not applied any force in weaning him away. Mr. Agrawala writes:

“I do not agree with Dieter Riemenschneider nor does Nandy. Valmiki’s father was given compensation by Caroline for his journey to the west. Valmiki himself was willing to migrate to the west for this “self-interest and reality-testing.” He was neither in communication with the divine nor a geriatrician as to serve his parents and the Swamy. He was in the eyes of the villagers, a wastrel in the wetland, neither a gathered nor money earner. Caroline picked him up to become a first class painter. Hundreds of Indian-poets, scholars, doctors, engineers have achieved fame and name in the west because the west has provided them intellectual climate, financial contentment and social climbing. Caroline ought to be congratulated on the contrary she is condemned by critics.” 6

Mr. Agrawala has rightly commented that Valmiki was a “goathered” in the eyes of the villagers and he was not considered at all useful by his family - as a result he was neglected by everyone. And that is why the
offer of Caroline was happily accepted by them. Valmiki reveals to Anasuya how his father and other members of the family treated him most abjectly. He says:

“When I am small, no I am happy them. But when I am bigger my father with me to work like him, like my brothers. But I am no good, I not do it well, then they are angry and my mother weeps - I hate when a woman weeps.”

The villagers laughed at him and ridiculed his laziness:

“Yes they laugh at me, saying my brain is soft... then one day- it is a bad year. No rain, no rice and my father is full of arak - he shout at me; Go, get out! you no use to me, no use, no work, nothing”

At this moment of universal neglect and humiliation he found Caroline’s coming for his rescue. He accepted it. He was jubilant of idea of accompanying Caroline to London. Anasuya had initially objected to his adoptaion by caroline. She says:

“He’s not a toy, to be picked up now and discarded when something else takes your fancy.”

But for caroline he was not a toy and not an object to be “discarded.” He was for her the ‘Caliban’, who would serve her by way of fulfilling her demands. Caroline thinks a compensation in terms of money for the loss of boy to the family would appeas the parents:

“Tell him I’ll compensate him for his son” said carolien
Offer of money silenced the family members, particularly the father, but mother doesn’t feel comfortable and happy. She says:

“But it is always so, man are ever free and easy with that for which they have neither suffered not laboured.”

When the consent of the family to claim the boy is obtained Caroline feels victorious. The British rule in India was legitimatised by obtaining a “Fareman” from the Indian rulers, Caroline’s possession of Valmiki is legitimatised by way of appeasement of the family of Valmiki through money. Caroline feels extremely exhilarated. Her sense of overjoys is stated by Anusuaya in the following way:

“We went inside and Caroline must have known at once she had won for she put her arm around the boy, as it were taking possession of him in full view of his family.”

It was not a kind of welfare job done by Caroline to uplift the down trodden and neglected Valmiki but it was a kind of fulfillment of her aristocratic bent of mind to appropriate not only human being but also art. A Marxist could interpret this step of Caroline as a ruler subjugating the ruled. The relationship between Caroline and Valmiki is not here depicted as that between a “sufferer” and a “saviour” but as that between ruler and ruled. Caroline desires to commercialise the hidden talents of Valmiki. She thinks that after paying compensation her right over Valmiki is a made absolute. She declares:

“I’m his guardian now and he is to do as I say.”
Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya.

Caroline thinks that she has possessed Valmiki. Now the question arises:

"Is the possession of Valmiki by Caroline physical or metaphysical? Does Caroline want to physical possession to Valmiki? No. Does she want dominate him as Howard Clinton wants to dominate his Indian workers?" 14

Mr. Agrawala has answered these question negatively. He contents:

"To say that Valmiki was uncossetously and innocently possessed by Caroline is to underrate the basic instinct and subtlety of an Indian boy who can fall in love with Ellie and Annabel, who know the difference between "bought" and "compensated". 15

Further, Caroline's presumed absolute possession of Valmiki is challenged by Valmiki, himself.

Valmiki says to Anasuya:

"No, I not crawl out like lice - you go tell her I not lice! She not find me in crevice - she beg me. I come. She not like, I go back to swamy. To swamy, not hole in stone like belly - lizard. You go tell her that." 16

What may be concluded from this examples that the sense of possession and domination cannot determine the harmonious relationship between man and woman. For smooth relationship a kind of mutual understanding and equality is essential. The relationship between Caroline and Valmiki is therefore not balanced, only balanced relationship does
enjoys longlife. But as relationship between Caroline and Valmiki is not accurate it suffers from vicissitudes finally ending in estrangement. Anasuya, the narrator has always come forward for the help of Valmiki. She is concerned chiefly with his progress and well-being. In times of mental turmoil of Valmiki, she has always guided him. When Valmiki desired to abandon Caroline, she had persuaded him not to do so. She says:

“She’s responsible for you. She brought out to England because she cared about you, she’s entitled to know where you’re going and that you’re going simply because of a ship of the tongue, which is all that crevice is” 17

It is apparent that advise of Caroline is accepted by Valmiki. He yields into submission to Anasuya. But discontentment against Caroline is seething in the mind of Valmiki.

He says to Anasuya:

“She doesn’t 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 press 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. It was not a slip of tongue, a manner of speaking. It is what she thinks of me when I am as I am now” 18

This statement of Valmiki makes it clear that Caroline operates her schemes upon Valmiki with the same dedication and ruthlessness with
which British subjugated India. Caroline has subjugated not only Valmiki but also his art. She moulds him into a mass artist and a lover and in the processes she ruins him. Depleting him of independence and spiritual strength. Though in her opinion he gains more than he loses.

Beauty must be shared. Beauty is the handiwork of god and all art is for the glory of god. Regarding beauty the “worm” in Blake’s The Book of Thel says:

“But he, that loves the lovely, pours his oil upon my head.
And kisses me, and binds his nuptial bands around my breast!
And syas, ‘Thou mother of my children, I have loved theel.
And I have given thee a crown that none can take away.”

Art and beauty, as created by Valmiki on the rocks of his village, serves no purpose, because it is not showed nor appreciated by anyone. The imperialists opinion is that beauty and art are for those who dare to take it and it is the god given responsibility to imperialist to bear the black mens burden and therefore Caroline has taken the burden of Valmiki upon herself to provide a proper platform for universalization of his hidden talents.

Valmiki represents the age old rustic community whose members are unaware of the sophistication of the society. He is first the passive peasant’s boy. He is crude, unshaped. He is shy. He is “goat-herd” and “rags”, ‘goat-smell” and all. He is not accepted in his society because he doesn’t conform to the accepted patterns of behavior. Societies are dominated by behavioural patterns and non-conformity to the patterns may entail alienation or ex-communication. Valmiki appears to be an idiot, to his community. He
does not perform his daily chores. He idles his time in wasteful activities such as painting and drawing on walls of the caves. He escapes from conformity through his fight with Caroline. He escapes from the constricting atmosphere at home and of his village and moves to England.

At the beginning Valmiki is not even able to think for himself. He allows himself to be led and he is led by Caroline. His personal liberty and freedom is surrendered to Caroline. She forcibly possesses him. He is deprived of the power to think for himself. Caroline takes his responsibility.

Valmiki’s mother asks Anasuya:

“And she will look after my son, care for him properly”

Anasuya replies “I think so.” 19

Anasuya warns Caroline when she decides to take Valmiki away.

“It will be entirely your responsibility.” 20

Valmiki is innocent and simple at this stage. Hearing that Caroline was going to sponsor him.

“He went over to Caroline who had been watching as intently all this time took her hand and gently briefly laid his cheek against it the way a dog will sometimes thrust its muzzle into your palm.” 21

Valmiki entrusts himself to a stranger who pretends to offer some amount of security to him, but he does not know Caroline’s intention to exploit his innocent genius most ruthlessly.

He goes to England and is amazingly transforms into a sophisticated
chap, who’s artistic genius is shaped into acceptable parameters. The transportation if Valmiki is presented through the symphethetic vision of Anasuya. Anasuya herself goes over to England to find out how Caroline has transformed this rustic into a sophisticated person. Valmiki has been culturally and sociologically conditioned by the west. He adjusts himself with the London life and with Caroline’s life. But basically he is an Indian in spirit. Therefore he is significantly disillusioned. The disillusionment of his artistic talent is observed by Anasuya two years later. What she noticed is that there is apparent waste and sterility of genius.

The artificial London life does no more inspires his artistic genius.

After two years, when Anasuya meets Valmiki in England, she finds him taller, straighter broader in urbanity. Valmiki has learnt to react to Caroline’s subjective vision- that transforms human relationships into a single relationship of utility and pleasure. As Valmiki says :

“But when I do nothing, I am nothing to her.” 22

Lady Caroline, on the other hand, claims to have provided to Valmiki everything that is essential for the flourishing of an artist. But Valmiki has not turned up to her expectations. He returned nothing to Caroline. Caroline is not happy with Valmiki’s developments. During a conversation with Anasuya. Coraline reveals to her :

“You see”, said Coroline, “He has everything he needs and nothing has come out of it.” 23

Against the backdrop of the English upper class life Valmiki appears rather out of place in the beginning. But Anasuya finds him fitting himself into the role he is assigned to play that is the role of a poor artist. Anasuya has her own reading of Coroline - Valmiki relationship.
"Perhaps, indeed, relationship was not the word to describe a terrible possessing which had established nothing so clearly as that there could be no reasonable relationship - merely a straddling of one stranger by another with little out of it for either." 24

Coroline displays Valmiki as an exotic object of interest:

"The most amuzing thing a delicious infant terrible." 25

As a result, the domination of Caroline proves destructive. Caroline seeks to control his movement, his language, dress and she tends to direct his life:

"He'll have to dress better", she said, "That awayrd suit. He simply can't go on wearing it and wearing it out and having it copied and wearing it again." 26

And also regarding control of his language:

"And speaking better English, I've forbidden him to speak anything else. Even to cook. Did you find him more fluent?" 27

Thus, Coroline, knowingly or unknowingly tends to exercise excessive control over Valmiki. Anasuya finds that coroline is inhabit of saying things:

"that showed sounded - atrocious."

While Caroline believes that she has given him the freedom to express his artistic talents - virtually, she has robbed him and his inspiration. What Anasuya gives in reply to Caroline's uncertainty as to whether Valmiki's inspiration would revive, is, partly true.
“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 are pushed, when they’re under pressure.”  

The words, “undepressure” is very significant here. If freedom in given in positive sense it can be fruitful even in adverse conditions. But the freedom, Caroline claims to have given to Valmiki is not the positive freedom. It is freedom, “underpressure”. Valmiki’s escape with Caroline is not made of his own will. It was more a seduction and temptation offered by Caroline to Valmiki that led Valmiki to seek refuge in London. Valmiki lacks maturity at this stage. He is unable to realise his responsibility as a creative artist. Caroline’s exercise of emotional and mental control over him is a kind of compulsion under which Valmiki cannot work. Valmiki is yet to be free. A Critic J. Filela giving a statement on freedom says that freedom is:

“Commitment without compulsion. Freedom is a spontaneous giving of oneself to a fast or to the pursuit of good thought to be worthwhile.”

The irony is that Valmiki is aware of

“shackling of his strength - a wasteland of the spirit most dreadful for man to inhabit because he cannot compute its terms...”

This domination on the part of Caroline doesnot prove congenial to Valmiki artistic progress. Valmiki fails in London. Commenting on this theme Ramesh Shrivastva writes:
“Possession shows the plight of the artistic Val who enticed into the glittering world of alien values experience the resulting conflict between licentious freedom and responsible liberalism in a buffding novelty of atmosphere. The novel dramatises the search for true identity of Val nature’s own gift to the world of act in the traditional south India.”

In the novel the house in which Valmiki lives is shown to be very symbolic. It is a three storied house occupied by Valmiki, Caroline and Cook—the house boy. Valmiki lives in the real imagination and his room like Jim’s cabin in Joseph Conrad’s Lord Jim in “one above”

Valmiki doesnot live in reality. His imagination is suppressed under an alien sky. Therefore the room is significantly “empty”. It contains, “painted desert” on the wall which symbolizes the evaporated talents of Valmiki. Caroline possess the room on first floor. This symbolizes her materialistic urges. She is possessive It is she who influences the thought style of valmiki. The kook lives “one below”. He caters to the animal requirements of Valmiki and Caroline. Therefore, he occupies the lowest room. Precisely, speaking the three storied building inhabited by Valmiki represents the imagination - the worldly and the animal nature of Valmiki where the influence of Caroline is tremendous. Talking about Caroline’s possessiveness Joseph writes:

“Carolines possessiveness is duplicated in Valnikis attitude to the monkey. The words used also express this desire hold, keep, exploit, claim, crave, dominate, mould and caress. Anasuya often stresses “evil” in relation to Caroline. Other hours convey the authority
of ownership: freehold, lease, property rights, a diamond in a necklace, nugget that in polished. Val is treated almost like an animal, for Caroline tugs on his "halter" to remind him that he serves under a "charter". Both he and Ellie share the bondage under their conqueror, employer, patron. Adjectives are selected from the areas of politics and do much to emphases (sometimes to the point of redundance), the power of the British Empire. Than Caroline is imperious fierce, firm, impatient, dismissive, confident calculating. 32

It is clear that Valmiki is a pet to Caroline. In the same way as the monkey is a pet to Valmiki. Both Valmiki and monkey were brought for public shows.

Both of them are cheered, jeered and cajoled by respective dalliances. The monkey is a dear "little" creature that clings to Valmikis's neck in the same way as does Valmiki to Caroline's. Commenting on the relationship between Valmiki and Caroline Ramesh K. Shrivastav writes:

"The words, images and expressions used for Valmiki only strengthess Markandays's anti-patriarchal rage. By stripping Val of his human traits and ties. She reduces an important male character to a fool, a boy, a nugget for which she can take a joney at one time and discard at another. with arrogance and power, Caroline considers others as "little" and uses this expression for the education authority in England for ellie for Valmiki and even for Anasuya." 33
Valmiki dresses himself clumsily for Caroline. The motive behind keeping Valmiki in odd clothes is that no one would take a fancy for Valmiki and he would remain loyal to her. The relationship between Valmiki and Caroline holds that the Valmiki is a parasite upon Caroline and Caroline is a parasite upon parasite. Thus the monkey in the novel symbolises Valmiki and Caroline possessing each other.

“Caroline, come first all in her shining whiteness, leading by the hand Valmiki also in darling white and he leading by its chain tiny monkey wearing a scarlet hip length jacket and gilt leather collar!!”

Valmiki has brought away from his natural habitat. In case of monkey also we find that he has been alienated from his natural habitat. As a result, the original skill of a painter in Valmiki has been depleted.

He has been reduced to the animal level. His animal instincts predominated, his painting sensibilities. Therefore the physical needs of Valmiki objectify those of monkey.

“... he was little better equipped than Mino. Both had grown unfit for poverty.”

Thus the monkey-image plays a very significant role in showing light upon Caroline-Valmiki relationship. The death of Mino symbolised Valmiki’s release from Carolines bondage and curse. As in the poem, “Ancient Mariner” by Coleridge the Albatross falls down from the neck of the mariner and the curse is lifted. Mariner becomes free. The death of the monkey is not lamented but rejoiced by Valmiki.-

“.... isn’t it marvellous? I am hardly make her let go, it is so strong.”
Caroline possessed Valmiki physically and materialistically. But Swami possessed Valmiki spiritually. Swami arrives in England and Valmiki remains under his spiritual influence, though, physically he lives in Carolines house. For Caroline, Swami’s arrival in England is disdainful symbolising that spiritualism is a threat to her physical and material possession of human beings. To use Harish Raizada’s words:

“the conflict between the swamy and Caroline for the custody and control of val truly becomes symbolic of the conflict between Indian spiritual values and western materialistic civilization for the possession of India.” 37

For Meenakshi Mukherji, the conflict is:

“between possession and renunciation, between wealth and fame on the one hand and freedom and obscurity on the other ....” “He spiritual East encountering materialistic West.” 38

Through the relationship between Valmiki and Caroline, Markandaya has given vent to her anti-patriarchal rage. It is out of her anti patriarchal rage that she has presented Caroline as superior to all male members - Valmiki, his father, the headman, the swami and jumbo. Caroline is depicted as superior to Valmiki whose world is confined to village and a cave.

In the patriarchal society, men are allowed freedom to move anywhere as they like, whereas women are confined to home and are permitted limited mobility. As a result thereof women acquire minimum experience and hence are subjugated to men. Men are considered superior and women as inferior. It is against this patriarchal value system
Markandaya has expressed her anger. Caroline takes Valmiki from England to Switzerland, France, Italy, Greece and Nile delta, with the sole intention of denying education to Valmiki in the same way as girls are denied education in patriarchal system.

In the patriarchal value system women’s language is considered as inferior to that of men. In this context De-La-Spender has coined a term called “man made language”. It is considered that women’s language have certain weaknesses and uncertainties and are trivial, in contrast to this, man made language is stronger. It is against this discriminatory value system that Markandaya’s anger is directed.

To take revenge, she projects Caroline as domineering, strong and commanding. It is she who teaches Valmiki the use of English. In such a way that Valmiki is reduced to the traditional place of woman in patriarchal society.

Caroline possesses Valmiki. She is socially and economically superior to him and because she herself couldn’t develop the artistic talents. She exercises the control over this adolescent dark boy. No doubt it is a kind of revenge she is taking against the males. She has challenged the male authority and values systems. She is self-centered and regards herself as the patron and manager of Valmiki. The relationship between Caroline and Valmiki and her latent sexual attraction towards Valmiki is reflected in these lines.

"Were they one flash? were the rimous I had heard in India more solidly based than? Lulled by her series of love affairs, imagined? The thought hammered at me again as I saw her white arm encircle him, holding him as it he were her; and then memory stirred. And I
remembered this was just how she had held him long ago when he was a boy and she was establishing her clawing to him, as plainly as it flag in hand she were registering properly rights. This stance once suggested, there were other reassuring props; the disparity in their ages the difference of race, above all their long association and close peculiar relationship which would bring an unpleasant whiff of incest to a carnal union between them.

What I did not take into account was strength of purchase and the terrible overpowering craving for possession.” 39

The relationship between Caroline and Valmiki is imbalanced. Caroline is aggressive and Valmiki is submissive, which represent the characteristic of their respective races. Caroline doesn’t understand the religious and spiritual values of Valmiki’s art and she fails to identify with India. In this respect a critic like K. R. S. Iyangar suggest that.

“There is fulfillment, not in possession.”

Thus Caroline is finally unable to win the heart of Valmiki despite the fact that she yields to him her body. What Lawrence says is only a balanced proportion of physical and a spiritual love can continue to sustain a longer relationship between man and woman. In this context there is no balance between physicality and spirituality of love of Caroline. Anasuya comments on the nature of Caroline’s relationship to Valmiki.

“My portage — ‘My ward’ — ever ‘my pupil’: these labels, with their imprecise ratios of age, she was
wiling to accept but never one which flooblit with the possibility of narrow calculation the fourteen years difference between Valmiki and herself.” 40

Anasuya notice that when Caroline fails to win Valmiki by controlling his artistic talents, Caroline sacrifices her virginity to him. There is a kind of affectionate, playful talk between Valmiki and Caroline, which is associated with newly married couples only.

The change in Valmiki’s attitude to Caroline changes Caroline also. Caroline is thus totally transformed:

“A new and tender Caroloine, rich from mating, filled with her secret knowledge, bearing on her, the soft bloom of a women taken valuptuously to bed, loins appeased with the urgent flow, body and blood, nourished with the seething impregnation. Expect that Caroline was not only possessed, but had taken in possession.” 41

Carolines desired to possess Valmiki and that is why, when she discovers that there is an illicit relationship between Ellie and Valmiki. She dismisses her from service.

The relationship between Ellie and Valmiki is based on love. Ellie symbolises the rootlessness and disillusionment of modern culture.

“She is “a refugee, a domestic.” and happens to be the “last bastain of the servantless era.” 42

She is presented as very careless type of girl working at the house of Caroline.
"If Ellie was tough the job nearly always had to be done again." 43

Introducing Ellie Anasuya says:

"Ellie was a girl of twenty, but her face was very much older and her body, from its abnormal thinness baked considerably younger." 44

Valmiki is attracted towards Ellie. They develop a close relationship between themselves. Commenting on the Ellie-Valmiki relationship, Shrivastava writes:

"Ellie is the first agent in Valmiki's temporary rejuvenation- Ellie, the defrauded remanent of the ravages of the cruel worked war II. She becomes a temporary motivating force to the revival of Valmiki's art." 45

It is the licence and freedom, granted to Valmiki (which he couldn't get in India) which prompts Valmiki to enter into a passionate exploitation of Ellie. He seek her love first and later explosits her sexuality. He impregnates her and later disowns responsibility. Valmiki does so because he thinks it is easier for him to become apathetic to Ellie and her unborn child rather than fulfill his commitments to her.

But Valmiki doesnot deserve to be blamed for his indifference shown to Ellie's unborn child. Being an Indian, Valmiki had imbibed Indian standards of love. Even Ellie knows that Valmiki loves Anasuya that:

"I do not talk about love, because I don't know what it is"
Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya.

I feel---- but Valmiki loves me. He does not know it but & he does.” 46

Ellie is a foreigner and therefore sex is the only thing which matters for her. Co - habitation with Valmiki is not she experiences for the first time but she is habituated of this. This part of Ellie’s nature is disclosed to Anasuya through a conversation with Ellie:

“First time with Valmiki,” she said carefully.

But in the comp it was every night. They came for us every night. In the begining I would ask than to kill me, but they only laughed ---- It made it worse.” 47

Valmiki really feels for Ellie, when Valmiki gets Ellie impregnated he feels remorse. He is sad at the departure of Ellie. He is shocked at the news of Ellie’s suicide. He confesses to Anusaya:

“-----Suya, if you looks inside me, you would find nothing but dead wood, I didn’t see with my own eyes. I saw with theires. I had no heart. There was no me,” 48

But this confession doesn’t bring him peace. What is most balancing here is that Valmiki himself is a victim first who later on victimises Ellie. He didn’t do it knowingly. It can be strongly said here that had a Valmiki been a foreigner he would have never regreted the loss of Ellie and her unborn child. But simply because he is an Indian he is remorseful.

Therefore Shrivastava is not justified when he says that:

“With this val abandon his moral responsibility to her.
Infatuated with the glamorous of his London circle and
Valmiki transfers his love from Ellie to Annabel. Valmiki is presented as fickle-minded and inconstant in love. Perhaps Markandaya is showing her revengeful attitude to the males. Valmiki turns to Annabel and his affair with young Annabel provides him a kind of relief from Carolines forceable possession. The growing intimacy between Annabel and Valmiki is grumbled by Caroline. Their growing intimacy makes Caroline more hostile to them. Valmiki, doesnot, however make any commitment. Anasuya wonders if Valmiki’s turning away from Caroline to Annabel is a temporary love or a permanent withdrawal. Whatever may be the nature between Annabel and Valmiki’s relationship one thing is certain that Valmiki-Annabel relationship is the source that Valmiki finds depletes Caroline’s power over him. Caroline is extremely shocked with this defiant attitude of Valmiki. She decides to eliminate Annabel finally from Valmiki’s life. She poisons her ears against Valmiki. Annabel feels disgusted when she came to know that Valmiki has disowned Ellie.

Commenting on Caroline’s attitude to Annabel and Ellie Shrivastava remarks:

“Carolines womenly jealosesy for Annabel and Ellie makes her feminine. In Anasuya, Ellie and Annabel, Markandaya has given the traditional feminine traits---- docile, passive, on-aggressive, loving, self surrifieing. If Ellie and Annabels, are poetic inspirations Anusuaya is journalese, and Caroline, hard-hitting. stinging satire----” 50

Valmiki fails in London. He returns to India. His returns to India is viewed by K. N. S. Rao :

A Ph. D. Thesis. S. R. T. M. U., Nanded
“as Valmikis realisation that wealth cannot bring inner peace and that creative talent is to be used or the divine if me is to achieve inner tranquility.” 51

In this connection Shrivastava writes that:

“Ultimately, art is divine, and this is primarily a concept of Eastern origin and is the underlying theme in possession. Valmiki obtained serenity only after the final act of spiritual commitment.” 52

After Valmiki returns to India, Caroline comes along with Anasuya to regain Valmiki. They go to the same cave and find him in the company of the old swami. On entering cave they see a pile of cheques that Caroline had sent to valmiki. Valmiki refuses to yield to Caroline even though Caroline becomes very submissive and leave her possessive over ones.

“There even a quality of loss in her words contradicted by a long tranquil silence that ashered her out.” 53

Naturally, Caroline’s replies in sharply contrasting words:

“Wasted beauty, wasted work, wasted mass.”

In this connection Shrivastava writes.

“The traditional Indian quest for freedom and fulfillment at spiritual pitch seems to her too hardy a shelter, rather than a solution. The novel ends with Caroline and the old ascetic once again confronting each other, the gender, power game merged in the clash of two cultural perspectives.” 54
Notes & References

1. Markandaya, Kamala Possession- (Jaico Publication Mumbai 1963) p. 03
3. Shakespear, W. Tempest - i, ii, 363-65
Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya.

New Delhi)

p. 126.

7. Markandaya, Kamala
Possession (Jaico publication Maumbai 1963) p. 58

8. Ibid p. 58
9. Ibid p. 10
10. Ibid p. 18
11. Ibid p. 20
12. Ibid p. 20
13. Ibid p. 22

14. Singh, P. K.
p 127.

15. Ibid p. 127

16. Markandaya, Kamala
Possession - (Jaico publication Maumbai 1963) p. 54

17. Ibid p. 54
18. Ibid p. 55
19. Ibid p. 19
20. Ibid p. 11
21. Ibid p. 12
22. Ibid p. 55
23. Ibid p. 46
24. Ibid p. 70
25. Ibid p. 108

A Ph. D. Thesis. S. R. T. M. U., Nanded
Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya.

26. Ibid p. 68
27. Ibid p. 68
28. Ibid p. 47
29. Filella Quest No. 54 (July-Sept. 1967) p. 60
30. Markandaya, Kamala Possession - (Jaico publication Maumbai 1963) p. 49
33. Shrivastava, R. K. "Woman as a possessor; A Deflection of Markandaya’s anti patriarchal rage and divided consciousness in Possession. (ed) p. 67.
34. Markandaya, Kamala Possession - (Jaico publication Maumbai 1963) p. 34
35. Ibid p. 220
36. Ibid p. 222
37. Ibid p. 53
38. Ibid p. 106
40. Ibid p. 160
41. Ibid p. 183
42. Ibid p. 71
43. Ibid p. 72
44. Ibid p. 72
45. Shrivastava, Ramesh


46. Markandaya, Kamala


47. Ibid

p. 116

48. Ibid

p. 212

49. Shrivastava, Ramesh


50. Ibid

p. 73

51. Rao

K. N. S. Ariel 8.1 (January 1977) p. 45

52. Shrivastava, Ramesh

'The Novels of Kamala Markandaya - A Critical Study'- (Gurunanak University - 1998) p. 6770

53. Markandaya, Kamala

Possession - (Jaico publication Mumbai, 1963) p. 227

54. Shrivastava, R.

"Male space in female perspectives - Decoding Kamala Markandaya's Possession p. 117