CHAPTER III

‘OF MEN AND WOMEN’

Themes are closely related to characters and so Harry Levin discusses themes in terms of literary characterization (Study of Comparative Literature 55). This explains why we find certain stories associated with heroes that are available from a common social set up. Literary characterization being different from allegorical representation, is embodied in individual characters. The great source of character - creation is of course the novelist’s own self “The artist should be in his work, like God in creation, invisible and all powerful: he should be felt everywhere and seen nowhere” (qtd. in The Theory of the Novel 323). There is some form of self-projection as the writer is living for the time in his characters, re-experiencing as he passes them through his imagination. “One must, by a mental effort transport oneself into the characters, and not draw them towards oneself” (Liddell 104). An author can also observe his characters while in action. Most of the novelists combine the two so that they are actors as well as observers of an action.

The characters in Buck and Markandaya are revealed by action and dialogue rather than by intellectual or psychological exposition. They are simple, ordinary beings who fit naturally into the theme and atmosphere. Pearl has stated
“she is more obsessed by characters than she is by plot” (Doyle 95). This makes her give more importance to people than to form or technique.

Markandaya’s characters like those of Buck are true to life and their innocence and simplicity comes through their interaction with situations and people. Without using psychological probing or modern novelistic techniques, she develops her characters successfully striking a balance between the outer reality and the inner workings of her protagonists. This has made Nayantara Sahgal praise Markandaya’s art of characterization as being excellent since “she develops her characters very well, more so than men writers... her characters seem to be made of flesh and blood” (Span, August 1972. 13)

A survey of the characters in the novels of the two writers reveal a large canvas of memorable figures. Incidentally in both novelists, the women are particularly memorable. The men are drawn from a wide spectrum of peasants, immigrants, Englishmen on contract service in India, political leaders, soldiers and the working class. Yet they are not powerfully delineated. The reason for this could be that most of the novels are told from a woman’s viewpoint. However when the British characters are analysed, Markandaya makes her Englishmen better than her Englishwomen

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The male characters in the novels of Buck and Markandaya have to face and over come many challenging situations. They have been able to focus on
their private worlds and the social problems in the outside world. Some of the
men react instantaneously while others suffer endlessly. The authors with their
sensitivity have been able to give a human touch to these men. The effect of
industrialisation which led to the disintegration of the rural community has
taken its toll on these men.

Women play a predominant role in the novels of Kamala Markandaya and
Buck and hence we cannot ignore the woman subject in these novels. Both these
novelists are concerned about contemporary women’s lives and concerns. They
present the woman’s reactions to the world around her and her achievements in
life. “Self-sacrifice and sublimation of personal desires put her in an emotional
strait-jacket” (The NIE). The women in the novels of Buck and Markandaya
reflect this predicament of women.

Kamala Markandaya and Buck expose the life of Indian/Chinese women
and how they behaved, felt and thought. They deal with the changing social
standards and the changing roles of women. This is probably due to the different
periods in which the two writers produced their works. Neither of the writers
wish their women to be Westernized, though Buck in her book My Several
Worlds speaks of the desire to regain a sense of American culture. Both
Markandaya and Buck feel that the emancipation of woman has been affected by
the imbalances in the economic and social orders. In the later novels of Kamala.
Marakandaya we find women in quest for autonomy which she feels can be achieved only through an imaginative sympathy for the human race. Buck says that "the aim of education should be to enlighten men and women about each other" (OM&W 169-170). In the light of these concepts we find that woman, as she moved into the changed society became more individualistic. These ‘new women’ are to be seen in the later works of these writers.

Originally gender differences did not exist in China and India and men and women enjoyed equal status. According to the Chinese feminine ethics, a woman had to observe three obediences- when a woman is in her maiden home she obeys her father, when married she obeys her husband and when her husband dies she obeys her son (Yu-t’ang 140). In the original Vedic thought there was no particular emphasis on the difference between male and female principles (Talwar 5). But the Hindu edict like Manu Smriti which codified the different spheres of man and woman has, like the Chinese code of feminine ethics, chipped the wings of the Indian woman. She is made to be dependent throughout her life on father, husband and son.

Hence the roles of men and women were clearly marked in India and China. Women were kept ignorant about political, social and economic affairs. It was the domain of men and women learned early in the life not to encroach, "there is a tradition, perhaps not only in India, that women should not be worried,
that the best way to ensure this is to keep them as far as possible in ignorance” (Some 99). Women were assigned a subordinate role as they were involved in housework, preparation of food and care of children which was regarded as unproductive labour. A young girl’s indoctrination into her subordinate status would begin in childhood, usually initiated by her mother, or by a grandmother, aunt, or any other relative. Higher education was denied to the girls and they were taught to comply with the three obediences.

By projecting the pathetic condition of their women resulting from the conventions of traditional society, these writers are trying to emancipate their women. They give their heroines new challenging perspectives that enable them to emerge out of their dormancy into the openness of assertion. Thus they maybe called feminists in the broad sense of the term. They convey the message that women be given equality in man- woman relationship based on the egalitarian vision of humanity.

Buck in her work Of Men and Women speaks of gender roles and suggests solutions for the prejudices that exist. She says that tradition is the culprit for this differentiation on the basis of sex “Tradition then, is the culprit...break it. Being dead, it is always breakable....educate men and women for each other.” (175-176). She says that the true woman is “feminine in every look and word and act”. This ‘femininity’ is her prized possession (My Several Worlds, 193-194).
Markandaya also seems to have a similar opinion as conveyed through her characters. Her novels reveal that she too believes in the greatness of women. Sharon Spencer uses “feminine” to indicate the intimate human relationships and concern with the emotional aspects of life. “The adjective ‘feminine’ when applied to literature nowadays customarily indicates the author’s preoccupation with intimate human relationships, concern with the emotional aspects of life and with the dynamics of the psychic realm of experience”. (American Writing Today II 57). This primary tendency of a woman to be caring and concerned is the noblest feminine instinct, expressed through motherhood. Hence a woman is unable to be unwomanly feels Markandaya. So like Buck, Markandaya also presents the real world of rural, illiterate women who were subjugated in the name of relationships and codes of social conduct as a means of strengthening the myth of the heroic, self-sacrificing woman.

The women in Buck and Markandaya do not try to ape man for she is all woman. Feminine qualities are considered a source of strength. By creating women-centred plots they present the women’s perspective on the different aspects of family, marriage, role of wife, mother and other issues of social concern.

Shanta Krishnaswamy says that according to Mao Tse-tung the Chinese man carried three mountains on his back, while the Chinese woman carried four.
the fourth being the Chinese man (8). This is true of the woman in India too. She has to overcome the legacy of centuries old humiliation, dependence, resignation and silence. All these women are relentlessly in service to a schedule that is determined by society.

Sometimes individual characters because of their outstanding characteristic become types. They become the embodiment of a motif or a character trait. Types are characters in the formative stages and are never individualized. So they intercept between theme and motif. The novels of Buck and Markandaya contain literary representation of types which include peasants, angry young men, missionaries and saints, anglicized Indians/immigrants, Englishmen/women in India, Emperor, Princes and Empresses and mothers.

Buck and Markandaya, present certain peasants who are types. They delineate the rural folk on a large canvas of epic dimensions. These characters who are ordinary village folk, acquire epic grandeur and are devoid of any psychological nuances. These rural characters are predominantly seen in a few novels of Buck and Markandaya. With their innocence emphasized and their superstitious nature well pictured, the portrayal of these characters are true to life. Rukmani and Nathan in Nectar in a Sieve, O-lan and Wang Lung in The Good Earth and the unnamed mother in The Mother are the rustic characters rooted in Indian/Chinese culture and soil. Fear, hunger and despair were the constant companions of the peasant.
Nathan, Apu and Wang Lung, representatives of the old way of life, tend to get displaced when the rural society becomes chaotic and disorderly. Caught in the whirlwind of modernisation and its vicious consequences, they find their lives, culture and values getting misplaced. Their suffering is the result of modernisation and social injustice. Yet they do not falter, rather their noble nature and generous impulses make them accept their sufferings hopefully.

Nathan in *Nectar in a Sieve* appears to be a flat and colourless character in comparison with Rukmani his wife. An average man with no heroic aspirations, is victimised by the vagaries of nature, industrialization and landlordism. As the husband of Rukmani, the narrator, he gains in strength from her dynamic nature. Whatever achievements he had, is gained through Rukmani. A very loving and considerate husband, he cares for his wife unlike the other peasant husbands. Even before marriage he built a hut for her with his own hands. It is no wonder that Rukmani is full of admiration for him even though he is much below her in status. Nathan decides to go to urban country. There this honest hardworking farmer becomes one among the multitude of labourers. Exposed to an entirely new environment and unable to withstand the pressures of his new life and the loss of his land, Nathan dies. As a positive sufferer, he succumbs to his tragedies without rebelling.

As a rural Indian with a simple and plain approach to life, he loves the land from which he derives immense pleasure. The excitement as he sees the
gleaming grains of paddy sends him into raptures. And finally with the coming of the tannery, this same land becomes the cause of his despair. His hopes which soared when the harvests were good and made him think “in a few years we can move- maybe even buy a house” (Nectar 10) were shattered by the deluge and the drought. Added to this the agent of the landlord urges him to pay his dues. Nathan who is in dire poverty cannot even utter a word and Rukmani says “Nathan’s shoulders sagged. He looked tired and dispirited” (77). His sons who he hoped would love the land like him left the village in search of better jobs. Ira, his only daughter whom he loved so much, also brings him despair when she turns to prostitution. And finally when they are evicted from the land, Nathan and Rukmani move to the city. This was the worst blow inflicted on him and he wages a losing battle. The urban squalor, its hectic atmosphere and the loss of his meagre belongings leave him a withered man. As Rekha Jha points out “Nathan is so shattered by the loss of his self- respect, his state of near- beggary and poor nourishment that he dies a broken man” (29).

A tragic victim of the hard realities of rural life, Nathan accepts its curses and blessings with the same resignation. “This is the traditional resignation of people who have for centuries been agricultural, a prey to the vagaries of the climate” (Joseph 18). His patience is the key- note of his character which is commented upon by Rukmani:
What patience indeed my husband must have had, to put up with me uncomplainingly during those early days of our married lives! Not one cross word or impatient look, and praise for whatever small success I achieved (10).

The strength of their relationship is that he never dominates over Rukmani, which can be attributed to his capacity for patience as different from mere acceptance of fate. This sums up the man, a diversified image of the rural Indian rolled into husband, father, and tenant-farmer.

Apu in A Handful of Rice, is another character who like Nathan suffers under the burden of poverty and misery. He is a skilled tailor who struggles hard for survival. He knew the game of business and kept his customers happy. "it was Apu who ran the business, who took the decisions, who held the household together" (Handful 33). Though he works hard and has a stable business, he has to provide for too large a family that consists of too many idlers. This burden is aggravated by the fact that he has no sons to help him. So when Ravi becomes his apprentice, he looks upon him as a natural successor and is glad to give his daughter in marriage to him.

An affectionate father, he desires the best for his daughters. He strives hard to make both ends meet. His wife Jayamma has no love for him as she was much younger and "he (Apu) past his prime, when they married her to him"
(149). He gives practical suggestions to Ravi about the business and makes him understand that his outbursts cannot change the state of society. It was the quality of his work and the low rates that sustained him in business and advises Ravi to follow the same as the raising of rates would only put them out of business. His humility touches Ravi who learns the skill from him. Apu is deeply injured when he is robbed by his son-in-law Puttana. Ravi empathetically shares Apu’s pain and is sad when Apu falls sick. For the first time we see the bitter anguish of Apu when he declares “Fed you, sheltered you... Forgave your follies, asked for no return” (176). This is too much for Apu who falls sick and finally succumbs to death. His death could be seen as a martyrdom as he lived and died for his family. Nathan is a traditionalist unlike Apu who is city bred. But they both die betrayed by their subordinates.

Wang Lung in Pearl S Buck’s *The Good Earth* is a man who like Nathan loves his land and suffers from the vagaries of nature. He is a picture of varied emotions. The entire narrative revolves around this principal character. Like Nathan he loves nature, even the very smell of the air as on the day of his marriage, “A small soft wind blew gently from the east, a wind mild and murmurous and full of rain. It was a good omen” (1). Wang’s sons are not interested in the land as he was. In his love for his family, especially his retarded daughter whom he called the Fool, he is similar to Apu. But like Nathan and Apu, he does not succumb to his circumstances and live in a morass of poverty.
and misery, instead survives with dignity. This is the result of his determination and hardwork.

The portrayal of Wang Lung's character is frank and straightforward. His motives are shaped by his relationship to the land, which has been in his family for generations. Having grown up in an isolated, illiterate community he realizes that survival depends on hard physical labour. A peasant farmer he too has been victimized by flood, famine and other vagaries of nature besides being attacked by bandits. Through all this Wang suffers and ultimately prospers beyond all proportions and lives the luxurious life of a rich man with concubines to please him.

Although he is dominated by his love for the land, he is a many-sided figure. Wang's familiar world is shattered in the last section of the novel. Floods and political turmoil destroy his land and house. Though he survives these calamities he realises "that disaster lies ahead because his sons do not share his commitment to the land" (Conn A Cultural Biography 126). He is a genuine human being with the whims and attitudes that make up an individual. He knew that only the land endures and it represented the sole security in an utterly insecure universe.

Both these men can be gentle and timid, dedicated and industrious. Wang's softness to his retarded daughter and Nathan's consideration towards Ira...
when she is returned by her husband are fine instances of their compassionate nature. Even when Ira turns to prostitution to save her brother’s life Nathan though shocked, forgives her. But these men are easily fooled by women like Kunthi and Lotus. Nathan falls a victim to Kunthi’s sexual advances and Wang is enamored by the charm of Lotus. Thus we see that they are above all human beings with all the whims, fancies and emotions that go to make a living individual.

In *Nectar in a Sieve*, “Rukmani, the Indian woman, sees suffering as good for the spirit and endurances as a necessity” (Landow, online). She has been a source of perennial love and success to her family. This is seen right from the beginning in the way she tends her garden. She nurtures it like a child watching the plants grow and bear fruit. This is symbolic of her nature. It shows how she is eagerly waiting to mother the children she will beget. She bears the brunt of all that happens to her family. Kamala Markandaya has pictured her as the breadwinner through her hard physical labour when they turn to stone breaking in the city. She is an embodiment of motherhood. Even when her peaceful life is shattered, with the coming of the tannery and the outrages of nature, the binding influence of Rukmani helps them to survive the ordeal. Her spirit of endurance does not break down at any point. Her surrender to her husband and children is remarkable. This gives her the strength to go on undeterred even when her husband cannot support her and the older children.
leave home. This endurance comes from her love for nature and earth. Similarly her belief in fate and opposition to modernity make her a typical Indian woman. The mother-daughter bond is very strong in *Nectar in a Sieve*. Inspite of the setbacks suffered by Rukmani, she cares and supports Ira at every stage. Ira too, like her mother is a symbol of endurance. She is a silent hard-working girl helping her mother as she can. Again she proves the mother in her when she takes care of her younger brother who is ill and dying due to starvation. She sells her body to nurture him, but he dies ultimately and Ira is left with the illegitimate child she gave birth to. Rukmani is traumatised by the incident, yet she remains the mother who protects and nurtures her young.

Rukmani believes that life is for living and therefore accepts the inevitable rather than evade it. This helps her to cope with the vagaries of life. Her children too get nourishment from their mother’s ability to rebuild rather than crumble in the face of calamity. In her encounters with the challenges of life, she is able to transform these challenges into finer values and thus make life worth living. Rukmani on the other hand mellows with maturity and becomes more dynamic. She does not become hardened and turns out to be the centre point of her family. In fact she is the mother figure that unites the whole structure of the novel. She is the symbol of endurance, the archetypal Mother Earth from which all can draw sustenance. She is admirable as the mother of six children whose courageous spirit remains undaunted even when threatened from all quarters. She is a good
wife and a great mother whose ambition is, only, the welfare of her children. The most trying situation for her as a mother is when Kenny decides to employ her son Selvam in his hospital. It is difficult for her as people consider it as a favour from Kenny for their clandestine relationship. Here “Rukmani is vindicated not by any social code but by her son’s faith in her” (C.T.Indra 71). This is one of the proudest and most rewarding experiences for a mother.

Rukmani “proves that within the traditional role, she can accommodate her other roles as a human being; and not through alienation and self-laceration, but through expansion and communion a deeper self-knowledge can be attained” (C.T.Indra 71). She is a typical Indian woman without hypocrisy or arrogance. She differs from the other women like Janaki, Kali and Kunthi in that she is educated and believes in educating her children. This education has made her modest. Her integrity is seen in her struggle with the forces that work against her. Markandaya idealises motherhood through Rukmani.

Rukmani’s daughter Ira is married at the age of fourteen but is forced to return to the home of her parents because she is unable to bear her husband a child. Ironically at this time, Rukmani is expecting her youngest child, Kuti. Ira bears no rivalry towards her mother which can be traced back to the tolerant culture in which they live as well as the perfect understanding between the mother and daughter. The youngest child Kuti falls ill and Ira turns to prostitution for the purpose of saving her younger brother.
Ira, Rukmani’s daughter is a well developed character. Like Rukmani she is endowed with an unlimited power of endurance. She has mastered the art of motherhood from Rukmani. Her sense of sacrifice or rather the negation of her own personality to feed her brothers is proof of this. Though she turns to prostitution her inner richness and beauty makes her an admirable character. This maternal instinct, so natural in Ira, comes from her maturity as a woman who has enjoyed maternal nurturance and tenderness.

Rukmani’s daughter Ira too has her share of suffering. She has inherited her mother’s fortitude and is firm in mind. She suffers the humiliation of being rejected by her husband and swallows her sorrow in silence when he takes a second wife. And finally her choice of prostitution in the face of starvation shows her determination to save her family by immolating herself. Ira shows the courage to give birth to the albino child conceived out of wedlock. Though she violates traditional mores, her motivation makes her prostitution justifiable. She is a symbol of endurance, sacrifice and acquiescence. Women suffer mainly from poverty and natural calamities and “their courage lies in meek or at times cheerful way of facing poverty or calamity” (Shirwadkar, 49)

It is worthwhile comparing O-lan of The Good Earth with these two women of Nectar in a Sieve. O-lan is a traditional Chinese peasant woman. She is at once patient and courageous, pragmatic yet noble. Unlike Rukmani who was the daughter of the village headman, O-lan was an illiterate slave in the House.
of Hwang. Yet like Rukmani and Ira, she is a satisfied homemaker, contend with her household duties and child rearing. She submerges her personal desires and is the story's moral centre like Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve*. Again like Markandaya's heroine she accepts her fate and status without complaint and is "a figure of courage, perseverance and instinctive common sense" (Conn *A Cultural Biography* 124).

The very first description of O-lan gives the readers an idea about her:

She had a square honest face, a short broad nose with large black nostrils and her mouth was wide as a gash in her face. ...It was a face that seemed habitually silent and unspeaking, as though it could not speak if it would (*Good* 19).

This is why Paul Doyle says that "her almost interminable silences are constantly impressed on the reader's mind"! (*Pearl S Buck* 43).

O-lan is a strong competent woman essential to the household. Her strength is evident where she picks up the hoe to return to the fields immediately after giving birth to a child. Again in the face of starvation she smothers the daughter as soon as it is born, as another mouth to feed was a burden. Like Rukmani she is the mother, farmer and regulator of the household. As wives of farmers, they are a definite influence on their husband's conscience, fortune and life as a whole.
O-lan represented one of the lowest class of Chinese society as she went from the miserable life of a slave. Later tragedies in life are accepted with mute acquiescence like Ira. The inner strength that she gains from her sacrifice is similar to that of Rukmani's which prevents her from becoming hard and bitter.

Buck's heroine has very few or rather no demands from life. She wants and expects so little that when she expresses the desire to dress her first born son in fine clothes to be taken to the House of Hwang to show them how well her marriage has fared, the reader is touched to the core:

When I return to that house it will be with my son in my arms. I shall have a red coat on him...and will go into the great hall where the Old One sits ... and I will show myself and my son to all of them. (Good 31).

It is through O-lan that Wang Lung prospers. She works beside him day and night and even helps him in looting the rich house at Nanking. From her years of experience as a slave in a rich house she knew where the jewels would be hidden. All through the famine and the revolution it is O-lan's intelligence and will-power that sees them through. She was a loving mother, a practical wife and a considerate daughter-in-law.

Kamala Markandaya has also drawn some rebellious young men in contrast to the passive suffering men of the older generation. Ravi in A Handful
of Rice belongs to this group. The son of a poor peasant in a village, who, tired of his poverty moves to the city with aspirations of a job and a comfortable livelihood. He is English-educated and therefore hoped he would get a good job. Once he reached the city, he realizes that it is full of unemployed graduates. This ebullient rebel now quarrels with the society in which he lives as he feels it is the cause of his poverty.

In his search for a job, Ravi faces a series of trials and is disillusioned. He is exposed to the evil that rages in the city and was fortunate enough not to be caught up in the snares of the criminals. His meeting with Apu the tailor, is a turning point. He is initiated as an apprentice. A parallelism can be drawn between the Christian waif in Bernard Malamud's The Assistant and the petty thief Ravi. Both come to steal, stay on as assistants and marry the daughters. On the death of the master they take on the responsibilities of the house. A victim of social injustice he was sensitive to class distinctions and desired to belong to the upper class. The disparities between the classes widen and it is ironical that the blackmarketeer and the bootlegger thrives whereas the law abiding citizen lives in poverty and misery. In the face of such inequality Ravi fumes and cries out in despair, “The same, same class, same money, even coming from different countries, makes no difference compared to that. Its the sameness that makes them stick together”(153). Ravi is “caught between the pull of the old tradition...
And the pull of the new immorality… Ravi lurches now this side now the other side and has the worst of both” (Iyengar 446).

After Apu’s death business declines and even a handful of rice becomes a scarce commodity in the house. Ravi becomes frustrated and anger swells in him at the disparity between the working class and the upper middle class. This frustration makes him join a mob shouting “Rice today, rice. Rice today, rice (233). His shout is a social protest by which he hopes to change the existing order of things.

Markandaya’s Ravi is a typical character. A hero by all standards, his anger and frustration stems from this vigour and heroism. Uma Parameswaran says:

his story manifests essential tendencies and determinants of his epoch. Migration from village to city; temptations and corruptions of city life; increase of moral depravities and economic deprivations in the life of the common man; and a sense of helplessness and hopelessness that permeated everyday life (Kamala Markandaya 50).

If Ravi rebels against social injustice, Rabi in The Golden Honeycomb protests against exploitation by the West. He is a very fascinating character. The illegitimate son of Bawajiraj III, he grows up in the palace as the heir to the
throne, supported by his mother and grandmother. They, along with the Pundit, help to develop in Rabi’s mind anti-British tendencies. Like his mother he has the spirit of nationalism and social responsibility. He uses every opportunity to mingle with the common people and makes them realize the need to protest against the British. He disapproves of his father’s servility to the imperial powers. His father’s loyalty to the British disgusts him and with the influence of his mother he rejects his princely role so that he would be free to assume leadership of his people against the British.

Rabi is helped in his efforts by Usha, who like him resent the British Raj’s policy of divide and rule. He understands his people and realizes the exploitation of the rulers. It was his efforts which saved the Maharajah from a violent mob of striking workers. He speaks “to them in their language” (261) which the Maharajah was never able to do and his control over his people is complete when he leads them against the British towards attaining freedom.

The fisher boy Rikki in *Pleasure City* responds enthusiastically to Tully and accepts the job of a tea-boy in Shalimar. He has had the advantage of growing up in the natural environment of the sea and the influence of the Bridie’s, the missionary teachers at a very young age. They have awakened his aesthetic sense through books and crafts. This makes him accept the change happening in his village and he is reluctant to go back to his ancestral profession.
as he “acquires new dreams and high aspirations, alienating him from a community of fishing folk whose relentless battle with the elements have deprived them of dreams and hopes” (Maya 173).

Rikki is able to adjust to the ways of the rich and the foreigners as is evident from his friendship with Tully, in whom he has found a bosom friend. “Indeed inwardly Rikki was smouldering seals of wax beginning to melt. After a lifetime, here was another like Mrs. Bridie” (Sinha 99). An orphan, he is adopted by another fisher family as is the custom of the community. Though his new job and education tend to wean him away from his people, he does not sever ties with the sea and his community.

His association with the Bridie’s makes him share their nostalgia for England. This longing is strengthened with the coming of Tully and he visualizes the possibility of a visit to England. Tully being different from the other Englishmen, discourages him as he realises that Rikki is living in a world of disillusionment. This makes Rikki conscious of the cultural differences. “Distance”, said Rikki “there is an ocean between us”, he said flatly (47). Yet in him we have an example of cultural co-existence. The progress in characterization from Ravi to Rikki is the result of the author’s progressive world view. Ravi and Rabi represent the youths’ reaction against the colonial set up, where as Rikki is well adjusted and has no conflicts.
Yuan the grandson of Wang Lung in *The House Divided* is the new Chinese student, educated in the West. The novel opens with this young man of nineteen who has just quarrelled with his father. Yuan is in that youthful period in which he is quite immature and his emotions are mixed. He loves the East but is drawn to the West and is unable to commit himself to either.

As a protagonist he is vacillating and vague. He tried to be the soldier his father wished him to be, but instead finds himself drawn into the Revolution. His imprisonment and subsequent escape to a foreign land and years of study in the U.S winning great honours and a doctoral degree, makes “him neither a real Chinese patriot nor a real American agriculturist” (Stirling 162) Though he admires the material achievements of America, his racial prejudice makes him a chauvinistic Chinese, bragging about his country. His ambivalent attitude prevents him from mixing into American life and for the most part is lonely and isolated. It is his sudden and frequent vacillations- loving his father one moment, disliking him the next, admiring America and immediately hating it and so on which is the cause of his isolation.

As spiritual faith is a part of the Orientalists’ life, Swamis/Priests are integral for its propagation and sustenance. Missionaries with their religiosity and service mindedness work amidst the people, sacrificing the comforts and pleasures of life. These Swamis/priests/Missionaries are types who by their faith, spirituality and concern for human beings, sustain some few scores or hundreds.
of men and women. They are revered and honoured in both Indian and Chinese societies and hence portrayal of these religious men is an integral part of this fiction. Buck’s *Come My Beloved, Pavilion of Women, Devil Never Sleeps* and *Mandala* give us an array of dedicated priests and missionaries as well as the Dalai Lama. In Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve, Some Inner Fury, A Silence of Desire, Possession* and *Pleasure City* we have some well-meaning, selfless missionaries and the enigmatic Swamis.

*Come, My Beloved* set in India has a cast of missionary characters. All of them fail in their vocations and their sincerity is to be doubted. Perhaps they are externalization of Pearl’s dislike for preachers, which started with her dislike of her own father’s missionary work. Thomas Macard proves that he has no genuine interest in India and that his school is “mere exhibitionism, a version of the self-serving philanthropy that plutocracy uses to celebrate its own generosity” (*Come* 110). David may have carried his commitment a little further, but even he proves to be interested in wealth and the status that comes with it rather than the welfare of the Indians. He supports the imperial government and is happy to be one among them. Ted is the most sincere of the three but even his philanthropic sensitivity breaks down when faced with the question of a marriage across racial barriers. Here his belief in human equality disintegrates. “Ted’s refusal encodes Pearl’s unsoftened judgement about the missionary movement... Even at their
best the missionaries remained alien outsiders, condemned to irrelevance.” (Conn A Cultural Biography 332).

Brother Andre, in Pavilion of Women, Father Banion and Monsignor Fitzgibbon of Devil Never Sleeps are spiritual figures who exhibit limitless tolerance and worldly wisdom. They appear as a rebuke to Buck’s other missionaries who were modelled on her father reflecting her dislike for preachers. Though a defrocked priest, Brother Andre still commands respect because he believes in religious brotherhood. His high-minded way of thinking which keeps him above physical wants, makes him an adored figure. Brother Andre’s teachings help Madame Wu to get a new meaning in life and she feels that she must make them immortal through her.

The two Catholic priests in Devil Never Sleeps lived in China when turbulent religious fanaticism was jolting the country. Even in the face of death they practiced tolerance and fraternal love. Ho-san, the Chinese boy whom they brought up joins the revolutionary army and persecutes them. Finally he is purified of his atheism through the love of Father O’Banion. Through these two priests Pearl S Buck depicts her conviction on the need for religious faith and humanism in life.

It is an interesting and intriguing matter that Buck disliked missionaries, but respected priests. This dislike for missionaries and preachers was triggered
off by her father’s profession. Her humanistic vision did not include the missionary zeal of converting people to one’s own religion. The words of Thomas Lask in the New York Times explains her attitude: “She was herself a missionary in the fundamental sense of the word... she felt it her duty to search out and defend the humanity common to all men: orientals and westerners”(40)

Kamala Markandaya’s missionaries are endowed with a sincerity and selflessness which is found lacking in the missionaries portrayed by Pearl Buck. Dr. Kennington in Nectar in a Sieve is an English medical missionary. A genuine philanthropist, his humanitarian concerns made him leave his country and his people to work for the elevation of the starving and suffering Indian peasant. Kenny, as he is affectionately called, is genuinely interested in his work and identified himself completely with the people. He knew the peasants had no social security and urges them to agitate for better conditions. His attitude is not one of the ruling and the ruled. As a kind-hearted and sympathetic medical officer, he gets a hospital constructed for them and even envisages education programmes which will help them to come out of their backwardness. His rational bent of mind makes him disgusted with the fatalism of the villagers. The villagers loved, admired and adored this doctor whose services were rendered with a tenderness and sympathy they had never experienced.

Hickey in Some Inner Fury is a devoted well-meaning missionary who leads an austere and dedicated life among Indian villagers. He builds a school in
the village and unlike Thomas and David, intends to give education and support
to the villagers through the school. Broad-minded and selfless, he works for the
welfare and uplift of the villagers. The catastrophic fire which destroys his
school upsets him and in an unexpected turn of events Hickey is accused of
perjury. When the villagers turn against him, even the readers feel sorry and they
agree with the author’s words:

The black surging mass closed in about that determined handful of
Englishmen in the middle of which stood Hickey, his missionary’s
roles flapping, proclaiming uselessly, that he was not one of them,
that he did not want to be one of them; but you had only to look at
his face to see that he was (Some 241).

It is ironical that Hickey who made no discriminations between peoples was
finally discriminated by them and attacked. The event acquires racial proportions
and Hickey becomes the voice of the empire.

Kamala Markandaya’s Pleasure City gives us a very devoted pair of
missionaries in Mr. and Mrs. Bridie. They belong to post- independence India
and are free of arrogance and racial complexes. They exert a positive influence
on Rikki symbolizing “the impact of western education, cultural values and the
sophisticated sensibility of the west on the average Indian” (Maya 45). They
make India their home clinging on to nostalgic memories of England. Though a
Puritan, Mrs. Rose Bridie was free of racial complexes and accepts Rikki as an
unborn son. Unlike other Englishwomen in India, she had no arrogant airs that created cultural barriers with the natives. Her nostalgic memories of England saddens even Rikki and when she dies of botulism, he mourns for her.

In keeping with the Indian culture and religious concepts, Kamala Markandaya presents two swamis in her novels *A Silence of Desire* and *Possession*. Swamis are a part of Indian religious thought. With their restraint of mind and lofty thoughts, they are intermediaries between humanity at large and the luminous powers. The Swami is a powerful figure in Indian life and Markandaya gives us a very enigmatic figure in *A Silence of Desire*. Sarojini in the novel is carried away by the Swami’s influence, but in the end she learns to be philosophical in accepting events. Even Dandekar who believed he could control his wife learns from the Swami that it is not fair of anyone to impose their will on another. The Swami teaches both of them the three silences, that of speech, desire and thought which is essential in one’s search for self. The Swami whom Dandekar thought to be a disintegrating influence on his family, finally acts as the unifying force bringing both Dandekar and Sarojini together with a new understanding and love. The simple lessons taught by the Swami gave relief and peace to all who came to him.

Again the Swami in *Possession* “was like father and mother and friend” (55) to Valmiki. The Swami nurtures gentleness, love and sacrifice which Valmiki needs. He is the greatest influence on Valmiki both physically and
spiritually. He is a worldly figure who to a certain extent desires to possess Val. His triumph at the return of Val is unlike that of a sadhu. Infact we are left wondering whether he is a fake. Anyway his influence over Val is a powerful one.

Thus we see that the missionaries and the Sadhus have a role and purpose in the scheme of things. But the missionaries with their scientific and rational mind have a more practical and detached view of affairs. This again could be the clash of the two cultures, the Oriental and the Occidental. Despite their innate goodness, the question of racial barriers and cultural dichotomy is difficult to overcome. In this context we find that the Swamis with their instinctive naturalness and total detachment seem to be more involved with the people than the missionaries. Though these ascetics rarely go into their midst, people come to them as it is a natural part of Indian yogic ideals.

Buck presents a very spiritual figure the Dalai Lama in Mandala. The lama episode is a crucial one in the novel. He establishes a direct link with the spirit of Jai. The process of ‘life again’ or rebirth is explained by Him to Jagat and Brooke. According to him the dead passes through three stages before he is “born anew into another human body. It is reincarnation” (207). This Lama a young man of twenty-four, is himself a reincarnation of a famous Lama in Tibet. He has made a study of death and of life again and convinces Jagat that his son being “so young...will come back, he will be impatient to live again, and so he
will not wander" (210) Thus the Lama simplifies mysticism. By explaining the mystery about the separation of spirit and soul and body, the Lama is able to convince Jagat about Moti’s conviction that their son Jai is alive. It is comparable to the situation in *A Silence of Desire* and *Possession*.

Father Dubois, the aged French abbot who taught Moti Catholicism was a benevolent influence on the family. After his death the young English priest father Francis Paul continued to teach Moti. He was “a handsome bearded ascetic whose father had been a Protestant earl” with a “keen English mind, cogent and cool even when it was clouded with religious mysticism” (*Mandala* 8). Peaceful by nature, he lived with the Bhils, the hillfolk and loved them “as human beings with souls” (46). In his humanitarian concerns he is akin to Brother Andre and Doctor Kenny.

Like Brother Andre who exerts a deep positive influence on Madame Wu, Father Francis too has a profound influence on Moti. When she talks of finding her son who is reported dead it is only the priest who can rightly comprehend her sentiments. “I understand you” Father Francis Paul said gently. It is this understanding nature that makes him work for the improvement of the Bhils. He is able to convince Jagat to provide generously to solve the problems of these tribes through education and health. A man with a vision, he succeeds in making
his dream come true and perhaps this is what made Miss Brooke Westley think
"It was the face of a Christ" (147) when she first met Father Francis Paul.

The search for an identity is grounded in the past as is seen from the lives
of expatriates. Transplantation to a new country and an alien culture is a complex
phenomenon that involves a geographical displacement as much as the emotional
severing of bonds from one's homeland. In the process of transformation, the
immigrant / emigrant tries to reinvent his / her identity using memories from the
past. The first generation immigrants need only effect changes in their life styles,
language and dress. The identity crisis that stems from isolation is more severe in
the case of the children of these first generation immigrants. They suffer
problems of dual identities and affiliations.

The novels of Buck and Markandaya convey the problems of these
characters in an alien land. An array of Indian and Chinese immigrants/
emigrants are featured by the two authors. They also feature the second
generation immigrants as well as westernised Indians / Chinese who experience
cultural clash. What makes the analysis interesting is the fact that some of these
characters adjust well to both ways while others caught in the pull of opposing
loyalties, rarely find the courage to plunge into either. The conflict of the two
cultures put them in a transcultural dilemma where they struggle to accommodate
the two selves into a single identity. Srinivas and Laxman in The Nowhere Man,
and Rennie in *Letter From Peking* are some of the characters who represent this painful search for cultural identity.

“In portraying the tragic victimization of Srinivas to social antagonism, Kamala Markandaya adds a new dimension to the culture-conflict suggesting the rootlessness and total alienation of man that it can lead to” (Maya 182). He is a displaced man, disowned by India, the land of his birth and in the alien soil of England. He reaches London not by choice but by chance and this alien power curtails the youthful vigour of Srinivas who belongs to a well-to-do Brahmin family. In the alien soil Srinivas is isolated and becomes a victim of racial prejudice. The death of his son and his wife drive him to further isolation and he seeks refuge in the four walls of his house. Again post-war Britain with its problems of immigration becomes an unsafe place and he is shocked when Fred tells him “you got no right to be living in this country”. (*Nowhere* 164). Suddenly he finds that he does not belong to this country nor can he go back to his land of birth- he has ‘nowhere’ to go. He lives in his memories, resorting to contemplation rather than action. As pointed out by V. Rangan: “Srinivas represent millions of men who for some reason or other leave their own roots and fail to strike roots in the alien soil, and die as rootless and restless individuals” (192).

Laxman, Srinivas’s son is a typical second generation immigrant who has roots nowhere. Culturally the present day expression ‘ABCD’-American Born
Confused Desis- best suits him. He disliked everything Indian. The way his mother dressed, did her hair and the suit Srinivas wore, were shortcomings he could never tolerate. And when he says it is “a pity” to have his son resemble him, we understand the transcultural dilemma that he is undergoing. He married an English lady Pat, hoping his children would take after her and thus sever all roots with India.

Pearl S Buck presents Rennie, the son of a half-Chinese father and an American mother in *Letter From Peking*. It is this racial difference that becomes the cause of his isolation. When the circumstances in China force him to return to America with his mother, he finds himself different from the Americans. As he grows up in America, he realizes the discrimination that existed towards a boy of mixed blood and is angry with his father for this. He asks Elizabeth “…Mother, why did you let me be born”(93). This agony is further intensified when the girl he loved rejects him for the same reasons. Frustration and despair follows when his mother tells him that it would be same in China too. He realizes he is neither a Chinese nor an American and hence a “nowhere man”. Rennie is not just a victim of racial differences and cultural dichotomies but also of interracial marriages.

Vasantha in *The Nowhere Man* lives rooted in Indian values and even her daily routine in England is very much Indian. Unlike her husband and sons she can never belong to this new adopted country. The handful of Indian soil and
Ganga water, which she keeps preciously are both realistic and symbolic. Her
dress, habits and cooking are Indian though she claims she makes English
breakfast. She always wears a nine-yard sari and does her hair in the traditional
Indian way fastening it with hairpins much to the chagrin of Laxman her elder
son when he visits them for the first time with his English wife Pat. She and
Srinivas remain strict vegetarians and perform puja and prayers.

Yet we see that inspite of her submissiveness, she has been a powerful
influence on Srinivas. It was at her insistence that he bought a house in London
because as per Indian tradition everyone possessed a house and only vagabonds
shifted residence often. Moreover as a typical Indian mother she has definite
plans of her sons marrying and staying in the same house so that she could enjoy
the company of her children and grandchildren. Hence it is only natural that she
went to pieces on receiving the telegram announcing Laxman’s marriage to Pat.
And with Seshu who “had been the apple of his mother’s eye” being killed in
war, her world is shattered.

Vasantha is essentially Indian in spirit, in her way of being and even in
external aspects. She retains the Indian attitude to marriage and family and is
surprised when, as grandmother she desires to see her grandchild, Laxman puts
her off on the pretext that they do not have an extra bedroom. She cannot
understand the logic behind this as she is willing to sleep on the floor, since the
grandchild is more dear to her than personal comforts and wonders, "Is a room essential? I would have slept anywhere. In a corridor, or the kitchen. Just to see the baby" (35). Here we are reminded of Pearl's mother in The Mother who after suffering tragedy after tragedy is filled with hope and joy on seeing her grandson. The promise of a new life is conveyed through the birth of the child.

Vasantha, here is a typical Indian grandmother and Laxman keeps her away because of this very Indianness. But this does not make her change her identity and she remains wholly Indian to the day of her death. She cherishes the Indian custom of filial love and cannot understand this culture which separates mother and son. At the same time, she adopts certain aspects of the British on a limited scale, "not wholesale, however, nor without propitiation, and some hauling in of God's name" (Nowhere 20). She refused to change her slippers, stuck to her religion and religious practices and could not respect Christianity, as she felt it to be "excellent for ten-year-olds" (19).

A very practical woman, Vasantha is caught in the harrowing aspects of bicultural living. As a first generation immigrant her adjustment to England is superficial. With the estrangement of Laxman, and with Seshu's death, she desires to return to India, which is now free from foreign rule. "We must return to our country. There is no reason, now that India is free, why we should not. Nor... is there anything, really, to keep us here any more" (Nowhere 38). But even this is impossible as she dies of consumption in an alien land. And
like a typical Indian wife who desires nothing but her husband’s happiness, she assures Srinivas on her deathbed that she has had a happy married life. After her death, Srinivas misses her all pervasive influence and feels he is a nowhere man.

Besides these characters we have a few westernised Indians/ Chinese who experience cultural clashes some adjust well to both ways while others are misfits. Markandaya gives us Indians who are Westernised through their education abroad and the contact with Western civilization. Kitswamy in Some Inner Fury is an Oxford graduate. Having spent a number of years in England he feels alienated from the grim realities of India. Always impeccably dressed in suit and tie, his house was furnished in the European pattern and “there was nothing that was Indian” (Some 97) in it. Belong to an elite, cultured South Indian family he “has no patience with the so called Indian sloppiness and inefficiency” (Almeida. 348 ). Even his name was anglicized to Kit. He holds an important position in the British administration and is loyal to the imperial government.

Kit’s anglicized attitude alienates him not only from his country and countrymen but also from his wife Premala who is Indian in spirit. In his treatment of his wife he is a typical Indian husband as observed by Meena Shirwadkar. (Image of Woman in the Indo-Anglian Novel 56). Though not an ardent practitioner of the religion “at any slight to Hinduism, even the slight implicit in the preaching of another religion., it was Kit, who came bristling to its defense” (Some 154). As Meenakshi Mukherjee says Kit is entirely, a product
of the West and emerges as a stereotyped ‘burra sahib’ (The Twice Born Fiction 83).

*Pleasure City* gives us a westernised Indian Heblekar who like Kit shortens his name to Heb because he felt it was difficult to “manage that many syllables” (31). He too belongs to aristocratic stock and as an IAS officer, is ashamed of Indian’s inefficiency. He takes to anglicized ways of life giving up his traditional food habits and manner of dress. Like Kit, the transformation is superficial. His wife, like Premala is shy and reserved, dislikes her husband’s social gatherings but does the best to please him. As Kit supports the Hindu religion, Heblekar retains his Indianness during auspicious occasions discarding “his frayed Levis and floats, very Indian, very graceful, in a cloud of pure white mull with resplendent gold edgings” (*Pleasure* 98).

Dandekar in *A Silence of Desire*, is a city dweller working as a government clerk. His rational way of thinking is the result of his western education. As a government servant his contact with Europeans has made him so. In his love for his family he represents a typical middle class husband. This new outlook of Dandekar’s clashes with his wife Sarojini’s view of life which draws “deeply from the past”. Dandekar on the other hand is “chiefly initiated by a scepticism mainly western in propagation” (Thumboo, 121). This makes him treat his wife in the same way as Kit did. And when he finds her visiting the Swami clandestinely he has only one conclusion to make about it which turns out
to be a jealousy combined with possessive love for his wife. With this his domestic life is shattered as “his logic is faulty”. He becomes “a victim of indecision, totally failing to concretize his vague thoughts based on reason and science, heavily weighed down by an indefinable silence.” Ramachandran Nair. Indian Women Novelists II. II. 243).

Caught in this conflict he felt that “his sense of identity began to slip, he knew who he was- I am Dandekar he said to himself, but the words had no reality” (Silence 80). In his eagerness to find out about his wife’s visits, he forgets himself. His progressive education has made him blind to all that lies beyond reason. Hence he cannot understand her devotion to the Swami and how a touch from him could cure her. For the rational minded Dandekar even the tulasi which holds a very significant position in an Indian household is nothing but an ordinary common plant. Under the circumstances it is only natural that he suffers an identity crisis.

Unlike Markandaya’s western educated men, Buck’s western educated physician in East Wind: West Wind and Gerald in Letter from Peking, are able to adopt the good in both cultures. In East Wind: West Wind, the husband of Kwei-lan, though Chinese is western—educated and does not want his wife to be subordinate to him but his partner. Deviating from Chinese traditions, he takes his wife out to meet his western friends and encourages her to voice her opinions.
Probably this is why the novel was originally named *A Chinese Woman Speaks*. As a mark of granting emancipation, he unbinds her feet freeing her from the needless pain she has suffered. Gerald, a half-Chinese, is educated in America where he meets Elizabeth. They fall in love and marry and return to China because of Gerald's affinity for the country. In him Buck gives us a positive blending of the two cultures, Gerald's goodness and sincerity makes Elizabeth appreciate and accept the Chinese way of life.

Kamala Markandaya portrays a number of Englishwomen in her novels. Most of these women were symbols of Western culture and projected the socio-political values of the West. Some of them cling onto colonial attitudes while a few others are de-colonized. It is in *Possession* that we come across an Englishwoman for the first time. Pearl S. Buck presents very few Englishwomen in her writings. In her American novels, the women are part of the American culture and have no conflict with Chinese culture. But Buck believed the Chinese women were stronger in mind and body than the Americans. In her non-fictional work *Of Men and Women*, she says that Chinese women survived with dignity whereas American women were wasting their potential through their sedentary lives. The Chinese woman “...came out poised, assured, self-confident, accustomed to executive responsibility...” and she expected women in America to be even more assured and competent. But she says she was surprised at the true state of things and she says: “Where I had expected in a free society to find
women working everywhere as men worked, ... I found them actually less influential by far than women had been under the traditional scheme of life in China" (14-16).

Buck classifies the American woman into three categories, the first being the talented woman, to which belongs her heroine Susan Gaylord, Mayli, Jane and others. Then there are those who are satisfied with home-making, the domestic type, Elizabeth, Jade are some of them. And the last category of women she calls "the gunpowder women" as they are so privileged that they have surplus time, energy and ability, which they do not know how to utilize. Being privileged, they are denied the chance to realize themselves, at the same time are intelligent and educated to realize their discontent.

As a contrast to these American-women, Buck speaks of the Chinese woman, who at one time enjoyed a superior position to man. In fact she says when modern China gave complete equality to the woman it was a step forward for the man and a step backward for the woman. She was strong, tough, executively able and mentally shrewd (OM&W 30). Buck's Chinese women belong to this category. The Indian women portrayed by Kamala Markandaya also exhibit the same fortitude. As Shanta Krishnaswamy says "the woman in Kamala Markandaya's fictional world is on a quest for autonomy" (163) and in the process suffers. By this "they prove Kamala Markandaya's theory that the
woman's suffering stems not because of her but because of inherent imbalances in the social order" (180). In this respect Roshan is the first of Kamala Markandaya's feminists who is followed by Sarojini, Anasuya, Mohini, Manjula and Usha. By making their women strong and independent both Buck and Markandaya can be termed feminists and we get a composite picture of the ideal woman from the various women they portray.

Taking the Englishwoman portrayed by Kamala Markandaya it is worthwhile to remember that they are Victorian women who lived according to the restrictive conventions of Victorian morality. They lived their English lives, away from contact with the natives and were unprepared for the cultural conventions of India. And so, as observed by D. Maya "some are made a tool in the hands of the decolonising Indian artist to assert the superiority of ideal Indian womanhood" (60). Uma Paramaswaran says that "Markandaya makes her Englishmen good and admirable and her Englishwomen bitchy and dislikable" (Kamala Markandaya 231) probably for the same reason. This contrast between the Englishwoman and the Indian woman is portrayed in Possession through Caroline Bell and Anasuya respectively.

Caroline, the daughter of a British resident is an autocrat. "She is a formidable lady of iron and steel" (Sinha. 33) cold and intolerant, manipulating everything and everybody for her needs. It is this mercenary side of her nature that makes her want to possess Valmiki, the young shepherd boy, physically,
morally and spiritually. Nothing can stop her. She buys Val from his parents, takes him with her and does not stop until she has made him a successful painter. She does everything to keep him under control tolerating his moods and forgiving his mistakes. Caroline also knows that the Swami is a powerful influence on Valmiki even goes to the extend of forging a letter on behalf of the Swami. This is because she, "the inheritor of the British art of diplomacy and cunningness can adopt any means to achieve her end." (Uma Parameswaran, Kamala Markandaya 35). She is a true imperialist, exercising her power over everyone making them dance like puppets to her tune with the arrogance of the colonizer.

Caroline’s impact on Valmiki withers his talents instead of nurturing him as a painter. The proud possessive, authoritative spirit crushes him and she fails to recognize the human element in him. H.M. Williams has rightly described her as “a monster of possessiveness” (Indian Women Novelists. II. 27). This life of possession is threatened by Ellie the Jewish girl, who gets intimately close with Valmiki. When Ellie gets pregnant, Caroline cunningly drives her to suicide. Similarly, unscrupulously she eliminates Annabel too from Valmiki’s life when she feels their relationship would be a threat to her power over Valmiki but the greatest challenge to Caroline in this respect is the Swamy.

In sharp contrast to Caroline is Anasuya the Indian woman, who is also a writer. She is cultured, talented and helpful. She belongs to the class of educated
Indians like Roshan and Mira. Belonging to the upper middle class, she has a
decent respectable existence. She is free and frank in expressing her feelings. It is
interesting to note that she does whatever Caroline demands of her, acting as
mediator, translator and even taking her to a village because Caroline wants
country liquor. Yet she is able to resent Caroline’s jibes at Indian punctuality and
can assess her possessiveness: “Caroline thinks Valmiki belongs to her and in a
way she is right. She wouldn’t let go. People don’t easily give up what they think
are their possessions. The English never have” (Possession 198).

Anasuya’s relationship with Caroline is one of love and hate. She
admires Caroline, at the same time her resentment grows stronger at her growing
possessiveness over Valmiki. Like Roshan she is able to accept the East and
West which again reflects the tolerance ingrained in the Indian culture. She is
the central consciousness of the novel and it is to her Valmiki confesses his
predicament “She [Caroline] does not care for me. She cares only for what I can
do” (55). She is a typical Indian woman of understanding and hence she is able to
intervene for Annabel against Caroline’s wrath and lend a helping hand to
Valmiki to meet his spiritual guru. Through the confrontations between Caroline
and Anasuya, Markandaya shows us the arrogance with which British ruled over
their colonies. Anasuya represents the generosity and hospitality of the Oriental
which is often exploited by the West.
Markandaya’s *The Nowhere Man* gives us a number of English women who portray the typical English culture. Mrs. Pickering, Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Glass, and Mrs. Radcliffe. Mrs. Pickering is a poor divorcee, who was a nurse formerly. Her meeting with Srinivas is of great significance as it is the meeting of two lonely souls. Their acquaintance grows deeper but it lacks the intimacy Srinivas had with Vasantha. Gradually she moves into ‘Srinivas’ house and her goodness is appreciated by Laxman, Srinivas’s son. Srinivas’s psychological need for a companion is fulfilled by Mrs. Pickering. She is also able to bridge the gap between Laxman and his father by filling in the long silences with meaningful words. Her enterprising nature is revealed by her innovation in converting some of the rooms into flats and letting them out.

Mrs. Glass and Mrs. Fletcher give us the native’s opinion of how immigrants are viewed. They have not been able to accept the fact that an Indian family could live so comfortably in an alien land, which they could not. Mrs. Glass is a gossiping elderly woman who is also waiting for juicy rumours. In this she is similar to Kunthi in *Nectar in a Sieve*. Mrs. Fletcher is a better lady and does understand the goodness and the difficulties of an immigrant. The feeling of racial hatred exists inspite of their friendliness and consideration. It is an irony that when Mr. Fletcher dies, it is Srinivas and Mrs. Pickering who give company to Mrs. Fletcher. Her son, Fred hates Srinivas, making life miserable for him. Even his mother cannot understand the cause of his hatred towards Srinivas.
Mrs. Radcliffe, the wife of Dr. Radcliffe is a cantankerous woman who is never satisfied with what her husband does. She makes life unpleasant for her husband by always wanting to be one up on the others. In the midst of these unfeeling and selfish women, Mrs. Pickering is a consoling factor. Through her relationship with Srinivas, Markandaya is trying once again as through Richard and Mira, to drive away the barriers of race, culture and religion. Inspite of racial differences, she cared for Srinivas and so when he died she was able to accept his death without sorrow.

*The Coffer Dams* gives us Millie Rawlings who believes in conveying her racial superiority and hardly considers the natives as human beings. She has come to India as the wife of a technical expert and prefers to play the part of memsahib. Rekha Jha says that Millie with her “past experience of a colonial life” perceived only one relationship between colonists and natives that of “overseer and serf”(35). Her superiority complex makes her conscious of differences of race and colour so that she is often heard uttering words like “niggers” and “blacks”. She makes all efforts to keep her attempts to keep her English cult intact and never makes attempts to understand the country or its people as she feels her Englishness may get contaminated. Through her aloofness, she becomes bored and frustrated. The greatest shock she experiences is when she comes to know of Helen’s attempts “to go native”(40) as this was the worst thing to happen. As Margaret P Joseph says “she reminds us of the
white women in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* who say they “don’t see why they can’t have separate days for the natives’ to go shopping” (132).

In sharp contrast to Millie, we have Helen who is the focal point of the novel. She is a personification of humanitarianism. Her love of people makes her move out into the jungle to meet the tribals and their hospitality is most heartening for her. This behaviour of hers is most impolite and paves the way for gossip. Helen’s relationship with the natives teaches her greater values of acceptance and resistance. “In the silent wisdom of the headman, in the self contained strength of Bashiam, in the suffering of the hill folks, she sees the force of passive resistance” (A.V.Krishna Rao and K. Madhavi 177). This awakens her sensibilities from the deadening influence of her civilisation. Her temporary relationship with Bashiam maybe seen as a black mark in her character, but her return to Clinton redeems her.

In her desire to be one with the tribals, she learns their language so that communication becomes easy. As in *Some Inner Fury* she finds the distinction between “these people” and “my people” working its way into her mind. But instead of succumbing to this colonial prejudice she purges it out of her system:

So it’s getting me too, that old indestructible Indian bug, she thought with icy dismay. But these people aren’t different clay, they’re like me...What is for me, is for them, there’s no other kind of yardstick that’s worth anything (*Coffer* 48).
Helen’s progress to realization makes her overcome the problematic phase of her life and leads her to the eventual acceptance of her responsibility as Mrs. Clinton. She does not belong to the class of stiff-necked memsahibs. Her mental growth and progression is a journey towards de-colonization. The contact with the tribals seems to be an enlightening experience which takes her away from the world of scientific truths and sophisticated civilization to the world of nature and natural instincts. Her moral and social commitments make her an idealist. She is “the new Englishwoman, devoid of colonial prejudices and racial complexes” (Maya 78).

Markandaya’s Pleasure City provides an array of Englishwomen. The relationship of the Indians and the English is presented with better understanding and acceptance. The novel presents a host of characters who come to independent India. Carman the Spanish dancer, represents the positive effects of cultural dualism in her interaction with Valli, the local dancer. Corinna, the wife of Tully Copeland, is a smart independent English lady who is unable to establish an emotional rapport with India. She is a contrast to Helen though they do share a sense of adventure, love for the sea and enjoy bird watching. She is ravishingly attractive and her skill at surfing wins the admiration of Rikki, the fisher boy. Being typically English, she cannot comprehend Tully’s involvement with India or his love for Rikki. As an honest person, with no pretensions she achieves an inner growth. Towards the end of the novel when she defies nature and decides
to go surfing, Rikki saves her life by risking his own. This leads her to a realisation of forces beyond human control. She also becomes aware of the bonds of love and loyalty, which humbles her. Corinna’s innate goodness comes through and though she may not be able to identify herself with the alien Indian culture “We perceive in Corinna a new humility that India through Rikki has taught her” (Maya 79).

Mrs. Pearl is a further advancement of Mrs. Bridie in that she loves India so much that she breaks her chords with England and settles down with her adopted Indian child. Here we have the rare occurrence of an Englishwoman making India her permanent home. In R.K. Narayan’s Waiting for the Mahatma, Mathieson also makes a similar acceptance of India. Mrs. Pearl’s choice of India as her home happens naturally. Her kindness of heart, warmth of feeling and nobility of mind frees her from any sense of superiority which enables her to encompass India and Indians whole heartedly.

Mrs. Adeline Lovat is an eager tourist who comes to India to write a book about India and Indians. Her prying nature is resisted by even Rikki who wonders how she could write books without a sense of imagination: “Could she not imagine? How then did she get to her truths? He began to wonder about the books she wrote (Pleasure 155). “The dichotomy between the eastern and western approach to life”(Maya 80) is revealed through this relationship. By
remarking subtly that Mrs. Lovat’s books were popular everywhere except in India, Markandaya is probably hinting that the foreign tourists were unable to capture the spirit of India and hence could write only about the surface reality.

Kamala Markandaya’s Mrs. Lovat reminds us of Buck’s Miss Brooke Westley, who belongs to an entirely different category of English women. She came to India on the basis of a mystic statement that she had read while vacationing at her grandmother’s house:

The antipathies and sympathies of Today [sic], the sudden affinities like falling in love at first sight, and the sudden hostilities that apparently had no sense – all were due to relationships in some buried Yesterday [sic], while those of tomorrow could be anticipated and so regulated by the actions of Today [sic] (Mandala 120).

Following the sympathies she came to India in search of reality as “she had come to believe at last that reality was to be found only in a very old country, the oldest of countries, and so she had approached India, the mother country of ancient Asia” (Mandala 119).

Brooke is shown to have strong connections in her previous life with the palace of Prince Jagat in Amarpur. She tells Veera “I have a feeling that I knew your father before, and this I had at the very first time I saw him in the hotel in
New Delhi” (170). She is seen as the reincarnation of the Greek girl brought to the palace by Jagat, but died soon after. The glass-room scene brings her to this reality. As she identifies with the girl in the reflection she realizes that “truth is reality about myself, about the world, and life, and past and present” (133). This takes her to her previous self, the self of the Greek girl. With Brooke’s self-identification, the purpose of her visit to India is fulfilled as she was able to find her own being.

The Englishmen who came to India were part of the imperial machinery. The problems of alienation suffered by those who could not identify with the new milieu and the cultural tensions issuing from the encounters with the Indians are well pictured by Markandaya. Imperialist attitudes persist in some even after independence and they feel they are authorised to govern. The British tutors who train the Indian princes formed part of the imperial strategy. Richard Marlowe, Sir Arthur Copeland, Tully, Mr. Buckridge and Clinton are some of the Englishmen portrayed by Markandaya from the colonial perspective.

Richard Marlowe like the other English characters in Some Inner Fury is a pleasing young gentleman. Kamala Markandaya has endowed him with warm, friendly human qualities that make him different from the other Englishmen who are cold and aloof. He fulfills his official duties with the Englishman’s perfection, but outside he sheds all formality to the extend of flouting all customs. This helps
him to enjoy life as he wants and Mira feels happy and proud to see him sitting cross-legged on the floor of a Brahmin restaurant: “There is no one like Richard, no one at all like my love” (Some 161). This is unusual in the imperial set up and the reader begins to admire this Englishman.

Unfortunately, he becomes a victim of political hatred and is forced to make a choice between the British and the Indians which causes a chasm in his relationship Mira. When he falls a prey to racial allegiance which overrides personal feelings one is reminded of Srinivas, who is similarly isolated, persecuted and preyed upon. Both meet with death in alien soil inspite of their efforts to break away from the cultural aloofness that existed and have a sympathetic understanding and consideration for all peoples.

Sir Arthur Copeland in The Golden Honeycomb is the Second Political Agent of Devapur state. Belonging to the ruling class, he has to negate his human impulses. The official status of his position makes overt demands on him to be authoritative and rigid to safeguard imperial interests. He enjoys the company of Waji and the minister but insists on educating Rabi by a British tutor so as to instill loyalty to the British in the mind of the young child.

The dilemma that Sir Arthur suffers from is best seen when Waji visits his home. In keeping up the grandeur of his position as the Honourable Resident he has to curb his emotions. He feels guilty as he is not able to reciprocate the
affection that Waji exudes. A man who accepts social and political changes, he willingly surrenders to public opinion. Through his actions, he wins popularity and is able to set “an example to the English community of essential humanity triumphing over staunch imperialism and narrow racism” (Maya 92).

Along with Sir Arthur, Markandaya presents another political agent Mr. Buckridge who is a symbol of unsympathetic imperial authority. He is a contrast to Sir Arthur and is determined to exercise his aristocratic arrogance. The fact that he comes after the outbreak of hostilities between India and Britain, makes his position a very difficult one. Fully aware of his duties and responsibilities he imposes tax on salt, the only commodity not taxed yet. All his encounters with the Indians end unpleasantly and the only fear he has is the infinite spiritual faith the Indians had: “there is something about the Indian Mind that is Absolutely Unintelligible” (348).

Through Sir Arthur and Buckridge, Markadaya brings out the difference between the imperialist who has adjusted to the role and the other caught in the conflict between the ruler and the ruled. “Whereas Mr. Buckridge revels in the use of powers and exercises authority with sadistic pleasure, Sir Arthur is extremely cautious in indulging himself”. (Maya 29).

Tully in Pleasure City is an advanced version of Richard and Sir Arthur. He loves India and as Rikki discovers he is human to the core. His acceptance of
the fisher boy as a friend is an indication of his open mind. As he is devoid of racial prejudices, he accepts the natives which is a rewarding experience since he is able to communicate without the corrupting influence of culture and race. This makes him different from other Englishmen and he treats Rikki with equality. He understands the Indians and is at times even sarcastic about the British.

Clinton in *The Coffin Dams*, is the picture of imperial values asserting itself. Like Tully, he comes to India after independence. But unlike him Clinton imposes his authoritarian rule on the tribals as in the days of the colonial rule. He prefers to preserve his Englishness while ignoring native customs, or sympathize with their feelings. His racial prejudices are so deep rooted that he cannot view the Indians on equal footing. Markandaya brings out through the attitudes of Tully and Clinton the different states of mind of the two Englishmen, one tolerant to both cultures and other exercising authority with pleasure.

Buck and Markandaya present several princes and princesses in their works. Markandaya's *The Golden Honeycomb* gives a colourful portrait of the opulence, extravagance and affluence of the royal family of Devapur. Buck gives a very strong and powerful portrait of the Empress in *The Imperial Woman*. She writes at length on the lavish lifestyle of the royal family of China. In *Mandala* it is the palace of Prince Jagat and the royal family of Amarpur in the post-independence era that she gives us. Just as *The Golden Honeycomb* tells us about
a certain period in Indian history, Buck's novels too deal with Chinese history and the life of Indian princes after independence.

Dowager Maharani Manjula, the Grandmother of Rabi is an elderly, impressive lady who helplessly watches the exploitation by the British. She realises that her husband and son Bawajiraj III are loyal slaves of the British. Manjula feels ashamed to see her son entertaining the British authorities to rifle shooting and game hunting. She remains free in spirit and "decides to bring up her grandson Rabi into an understanding of the plight of the people under the oppression of the princely government, the result of court luxury and British 'Protection' " (C. Anna Latha Devi 140).

As Rabi's grandmother, she considers it her moral duty to shape the boy's life. In this she has the whole-hearted support of Mohini, Rabi's mother who is free in spirit and body. Maharani Manjula has a strong will power that is similar to the warrior queens portrayed in history. She narrates these legends to Rabi and her strength is seen in her act of poisoning her husband, who has had an accident, as part of their contract of love. She does this unflinchingly and then participates in the funeral as a widow should. Death to her is part of the routine and Rabi too realizes this. As she lived free and brave to the end of her days, she died bravely too and "so without fuss, he (Rabi) lit the pyre" (376).
The Empress Dowager in Buck’s *The Imperial Woman* is a strong-willed woman who with her determination and will-power rises to the level of Empress from an ordinary woman. She is a combination of Maharani Manjula and Mohini in *The Golden Honeycomb*. These are spirited modern women with a high sense of nationalism. They are liberated in the strong sense of the term and excel as mothers and empresses. Pearl’s Empress is a woman of great spirit and fire is modelled on Empress Dowager, Tz’u-his who ruled over China for as long as forty years and was one of history’s most powerful women. The last sixteen years of her rule was witnessed by Pearl as a child and this childhood fascination stayed with her so that “Pearl’s mediations on gender, status and authority led her back to the Empress Dowager, T’zu-his” (Conn *A Cultural Biography* 338).

The Empress Dowager had come to the court as a girl to be appointed as the Emperor’s concubine. Very soon she became the favourite concubine of the Emperor and when she bore a son, she was raised to the rank of western Empress while his consort was the Eastern Empress. So tactful and clever was this Empress that she had a graceful relationship with the Eastern Empress and there never was a moment of jealousy between the two. Pearl’s empress is ambitious, but she gives us a balanced, admiring portrayal of the lady.

With the death of the Emperor, she assumed control of the throne as the Eastern Empress was quiet and retiring. “The Western Empress, who became the
regent after the Emperor’s death, was a good executive, active in many ways, and interested in political life” (My Several Worlds 31). Thus she ruled for forty years, manipulating events and situations to her benefit, surrounded by thousands of courtiers and eunuchs. She set her son, still a baby, on the throne as heir and ruled with firmness as the times were dangerous. The Emperor’s cousin who was too able a man was deposed of by her as she felt him to be a threat to her ambitions. This craftiness and intelligence is what raises this peasant woman to the status of Empress, a position she could never have achieved otherwise.

The fictionalised story of the Empress given to us by Pearl is one of achievement on an unprecedented scale. Buck gives us a woman who has dominated her times and has risen so high against all odds. Even when the Emperor, her son, was taken prisoner she sends out edicts in his name as she had cleverly snatched the imperial seal. Her wrong doings may have caused a tragedy but “her strength and tenacity, her gift for leadership, and her earthy wisdom” (Conn A Cultural Biography 341) are to be appreciated. Even decades after her death people in interior villages thought the Empress was still alive and was frightened to hear she was dead which Buck feels is the greatest judgment of a ruler.

Moti in Mandala is a very progressive young lady. Married to the Maharana of Amarpur, she does not settle down to a sedentary life of royal
comforts, but exhibits a desire for learning. She has mastered English and French and when the story begins she is reading a novel by Jean Paul Sartre. Yet she refused to visit any foreign land or to give up caste prejudices. Traditional at heart, she cannot accept the modern ways of the young. She is not willing to allow her children to choose their own life partners even though they have been given western education.

As a mother, Moti could be compared to Rukmani in understanding her childrens’ feelings. She refuses to believe her son is dead though the reports are to the contrary. She tells Miss Westley “there is something inexplicably close between a mother and her son. If my son were dead, I would know it throughout my being”(155). And all she asks of her husband is that someone go in search of him and is happy to let Brooke accompany Jagat on the search. The mother in her only desires to know about her son and clandestine relationships do not figure amidst this motherly concern.

Maharajah Bawajiraj III in The Golden Honeycomb and Maharajah Jagat in Pearl S Buck’s Mandala are two Indian princes who were influenced by western civilization. Unlike Bawajiraj who was exploited by the British rulers, Jagat remains an Indian. Bawajiraj has received European education under a British tutor because “a particular representation of facts is required to produce those attitudes of esteem and admiration which in time will result in loyal and
acquiescent Rulers” (Golden 17). Thus he becomes a puppet in the hands of the British, totally ignorant of India and the plight of the people. “The British have taken from him his birthright” (34). He is a prototype of the native prince, always willing to please the British. “He was moulded into a perfect British stooge to whom the Durbar in Delhi was ‘a most important affair’ (Rekha Jha 28). But he is unaffected by the sorry plight of the mill workers. “The political animosity of the British makes him lose his identity as an individual, ruler and Indian”. (Anna Latha Devi 191). Bawajiraj whose loyalty for the British was deeper than that of any sepoy or prince for the British, is jolted out of his loyal allegiance by his son Rabi who takes up the leadership of the freedom struggle.

Buck’s Prince Jagat unlike Bawajiraj belongs to the Post-independence era after the princely states were abolished. He has no undue respect or loyalty to the British and is free to rule and live as he wishes. In keeping with the trend taking place in several parts of India, Jagat too was planning to convert one of his palaces into a five-star tourist hotel. Though he is western-educated he is deeply rooted in India, its people and its culture. He adopts only the western material progressiveness being firmly planted in Indian spirituality. The death of his son and his daughter’s love for an American are major setbacks in his life but the Oriental sense of acceptance helps him tide over these events and retain his respect as a leader.
The importance given to motherhood in traditional society is retained by these novelists. Oriental culture and literature has eulogized this all through the centuries. The role of woman in the family and in society is delineated by these novelists through their presentation of the feminine response. This is revealed through her emotions, her relationship with the family and society and her encounter with the male ego. “The air of ‘freedom’ which touches the women is like the kite though flying yet, being stringed into the manipulative and manoeuvring hands of their men” (Indu Prakash Singh 8). Traditionally the Indian and the Chinese woman are contended, in the belief that a woman needs a home and so the mother is treated most venerably. She accepted the framework of the family and was never rebellious. She was capable of incessant suffering, self-sacrifice, love and patience.

The women are first and foremost mothers and then wives. This is because the image of woman as conceived by the East and West are different. Swami Vivekananda explains this “The ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood- that marvellous, unselfish, all suffering, ever forgiving mothers... In the West woman is wife” (Swami Vivekananda 10-12). The Chinese too believed that “of all the rights of women the greatest is to be a mother” (Yu-t’ang 152).

As mothers Rukmani and O-lan excel. They are basically mothers before anything else and their nurturing influence protects their children through all hardships. This is especially evident in the case of Ira. She is able to perform
those functions that transform "a woman from childhood to womanhood in an emotional and psychological sense, such as the mothering gestures..." (qtd in Helen M. Buss 15). These mothering gestures are rooted in the mother daughter relationship. If this nurturing and protection is absent from a girl’s life, she fails to become a truly adult woman capable of offering love to those around her.

So we find that O-lan and Rukmani and to a larger extend Ira accept their status without complaints, suppressing their personal desires. At the same time they are the story’s central characters showing indomitable courage, instinctive common sense and perseverance. In a way they represent the feminist affirmations of the authors. They also depict the self-sacrificing nature of these women and their devotion to their husbands.

The unnamed mother in Buck’s *The Mother* is a universal figure with whom everyone feels a sense of identification. Paul Doyle feels that “this narrative was intended to give a universal portrait of the eternal mother, to presenting various cycles of her life, and to capture some of the timelessness of her existence” (71). The universal suffering of the woman, varies in different countries, races and cultures. It is obvious that the Chinese woman shares with her Indian counterpart the erasure of her individuality and her subordination to patriarchy. They have always carried the burden of the family at the expense of self-denial. Platonism insists that “the real is what is common to all individuals.
of a class, that is, the concept or universal which is beyond the world of sense” (Kaminsky 215). Conceptual realism is a pervasive influence in literature that helps to expose universal truths. Buck’s mother is an universal figure in this respect.

Buck admits that in *The Mother* she “portrayed the life of a Chinese peasant woman”, which she hoped “was the life of such a woman anywhere, who has been given no fulfillment except her own experience and understanding” (*My Several Worlds* 295). The material for the novel “in the very rough” was one of the faithful woman servants in Buck’s house, Li Sau-Tse, who was a widow and had come to serve Buck.

Buck’s ‘mother’ figure is an embodiment of endurance, sacrifice and fortitude. O-lan, due to her oppressed background lacks sentimentality and motherliness. She was clearly bound by a sense of duty. The mother, like Rukmani, is the universal mother and the agonies she suffers is of a different kind. She too experiences poverty, famine, death of a son, her daughter’s blindness and loneliness. But she suffers above and over the others in being desolated by her husband.

Added to these tragedies, she also had to save her face at being pregnant in her husband’s absence. Unlike Ira, whose parents protected her, this mother had to resort to crude abortion with the help of her cousin. As Adrienne Rich points out “... motherhood is ‘sacred’ as long as its offsprings are ‘legitimate’-
that is, as long as the child bears the name of the father who legally controls the mother…” (42). The death of her daughter is much more than she could take and though she is angry with her son-in-law’s family at first, she later accepts it with the same fatalism with which Rukmani accepts Raja’s death. “The maid is dead and not all the angers in the world nor any words can bring her back again” (Mother 158). Rukmani tells the officers from the tannery “What compensation is there for death” (Nectar 91).

The mother’s sorrow is further heightened at the thought that she might never become a grandmother as her elder son’s wife has not conceived and the second her favourite refuses to marry:

Since sorrow follows me and everything goes wrong with me, I fear sometimes it is that old sin of mine that the gods know about—perhaps heaven will not give me grandsons (Mother 163).

The exhilaration on hearing about her daughter-in-law’s pregnancy is dashed to the grounds by the news of her second son’s death. The world around her shatters. Here she is like Margaret Laurence’s Hagar in The Stone Angel who doted on her second son but looses him to fate and has to live with her elder son and his family. Her sorrow is boundless and she fears that one by one all her joys are being taken away. The expectant grandson too is threatened she feels, as she laments, “But where is any perfect woman and who is without any sin, and why should I have all the sorrow” (Mother 180). Which mother can resist from crying
with her or keep from feeling the joy as she laughed, at the first sight of her grandson, holding him tight in her arms.

The blind girl in *The Mother* reminds one of Buck’s own retarded daughter. Both Buck and the mother after the initial shock, think positively about what could be done. The blind girl depends on her mother entirely and this is in a way a triumph for motherhood. Inspite of her blindness, the girl is shown to be clever in familiar surroundings. Woman in her mothering role is the direct link with culture as it is her function to change individuals into socially acceptable people. She develops capacities for nurturance, dependence and empathy and this maternal metaphor identifies her relationship with her son or daughter. It takes on a different role in the East and the West. In the Indian /Chinese tradition motherhood is a sentimental, protective, reverential one. She is the giver and protector hence respected and worshipped.

The mother-son relationship is one of the most touching and obsessive relations. It is so personal and crucial in the formation of the individual. In fact history has pointed out that she finds in him her reason for existence. As Adrienne Rich observes “The relationship between... mother and son... furnishes the purest examples of unchanging tenderness, undisturbed by any egoistic consideration”(qtd in *Of Woman Born* 186). When this relationship crosses the egoistic boundaries, it tends to become unhealthy.
However Buck’s and Markandaya’s mothers have the best of relationship with their sons. They are able to encourage them in every instance and take pride in their achievement. Giving them their due freedom as they grow up, they stand at a distance, full of compassion and love. Pearl S Buck’s ‘mother’, fulfills her maternal duties with a certain toughness and power of endurance. She can be compared to Rukmani or even Ira in her maternal instincts and womanly prowess. Two other similar mothers can be found in John Steinbeck’s Ma Joad and Bertolt Brecht’s Mother Courage.

Mothers and daughters exchange a very sublime relationship, a “knowledge flowing between two alike bodies” (Rich 220). In fact the knowledge a woman has of love and disappointment, power and tenderness is from her mother. The closeness a daughter feels for her mother is soul stirring during one’s pregnancy and child-birth. In such circumstances “It was not enough to understand our mothers; more than ever, in the effort to touch our own strength as women, we needed them” (Rich 225). Hence “there is no indifference or cruelty we can tolerate less, than the indifference or cruelty of our mothers” (Rich 231). And so the essential female tragedy “is the loss of the daughter to the mother, the mother to the daughter” (Rich 237).

Besides Rich, Nancy Chodorow and Luce Irigaray emphasise the pre-Oedipal attachment between mother and daughter. Chodorow feels that:
the mother, while regarding her son as an autonomous individual from a relatively early age, tends to cultivate a symbiotic bond with her daughter since she seeks unconsciously to recreate the intimate bond she enjoyed with her own mother. (Contemporary Women's Fiction 114-115).

This is probably why boys grow up possessing a strong sense of autonomy while girls feel a greater sense of interdependence. Irigaray also describes the mother and daughter as two ‘living mirrors’ each reflecting the other.

Again in keeping with the Oriental tradition, the mothers are often protective in their relationship with daughters. Though they suffer shock after shock, the mothers in Buck and Markandaya retain love towards their daughters. The mothers’ feelings about their daughters is sensitively portrayed by these writers. Rukmani, Mira’s mother, Sarojini and the mother in Two Virgins, are varied portraits of mothers presented by Markandaya. O-lan, the mother in The Mother, Ai-lan’s mother in A House Divided, Elizabeth represent different aspects of motherhood as presented by Buck. Here the mothers are very much concerned with the problems of girls rather than merely enjoying pride of place as the mother of sons.

In A House Divided, Buck has portrayed a strong and powerful lady, the step-mother of Wang Yuan. She is a learned lady, the wife of Wang The Tiger.
Being educated, she wants her daughter too to be educated and comes to Shanghai for her schooling. The greatness of this lady is evident in the perfect mothering she gives Yuan. It is to her he comes seeking help and comfort as any son would go to his mother. His obstinate father wants him to marry a girl of his choice which the lad dislikes. This lady is ready to help Yuan and promises to convince his father against the marriage in spite of the fact that Wang, the Tiger neglected her and her daughter completely.

Though born into another age, she is not all reluctant to accept modern ideas. She respects an individual's individuality and hence forces nothing on anyone. So she agrees with the modern view that a boy and girl can choose their partners. She believes in the dictum ‘give respect to gain respect’ and thus earns Yuan’s love and respect. As a step mother this is a tremendous achievement which she has earned through her good approach.

The lady again wins the trust of Yuan when she requests his help concerning the involvement of her daughter with a married man and he readily does what he can. She is determined to save her daughter and bring her up as she would a son freeing her from discrimination. Though the novel is weak in theme and structure, Buck has brilliantly portrayed this lady, the step mother who with her fortitude and sincerity rises herself up to the glorified position of the mother of Yuan. She ran a foundling home for the care of new born female foundlings.
It is a venture by this lady, to teach and to provide a home for these children. These children deeply loved her. This woman who was usually quiet and reserved laughed heartily in the presence of children. She exhibits a capacity for compassion and gentleness towards them which perhaps their own mothers would not have done.

Madame Wu in Pavilion of Woman is a very thoughtful woman who presides over a large, prosperous family. She is the central figure of the novel who manages the household and looks after the agricultural functions of the family. Being a wise and intelligent woman, she has performed her duties as wife and mother faithfully. But as she realizes later on, she has never loved anyone, even her husband though she has succeeded in binding her family to herself. On her fortieth birthday she decides to “live for herself”, and spend the rest of her life in cultivating her mind and spirit. To free herself totally she even provides a concubine for her husband and sets about to develop her individuality.

Madame Wu’s search for self-sufficiency finds meaning only through Brother Andre, an excommunicated Catholic priest. She respects Brother Andre’ and his teachings because he preaches a humanitarianism which crosses all boundaries of religion. He softens “the hard edges of Madame Wu’s unyielding individualism with his generosity” (Pavilion 349). Through this man’s worldly wisdom and tolerance she learns the meaning of love. He makes her understand
the need to subordinate herself from the superior position in which she had placed herself.

With this new enlightenment Madame Wu is able to understand her unhappiness. As she has never loved anyone, she has been quick to find out their faults and weaknesses. Hence no one has ever pleased her. And now when Andre explains to her that “love thy neighbour as thyself” is to “…comprehend his hardships and understand his position, deal with his faults as gently as with your own. Do not judge where you do not judge yourself…”(270), she is able to comprehend the sense with clarity. With this realism she learns that love and understanding knows no boundaries of ethnic, cultural and sexual difference.

After Brother Andre’s death, he becomes her guiding spirit and she attempts to put his ideas into practice. She amicably settles the problems in her household and finds immense pleasure in being with the orphan children who were adopted by the priest. In one of the poignant scenes we even find her assisting a friend in child labour, which she would never have done earlier. All this shows her increasing consideration for others and allows love to dominate her existence. She no longer retains a dislike for human beings and is happy and contented.

Madame Wu who had been a sceptic in religious matters is now convinced about the immortality of the soul. She believes that Andre’s soul lives
through her and after her death her soul will continue to live. “love has raised her to mystical heights”(Doyle. 134) and this is a personal view expressed by Buck in her non-fictional work *A Bridge for Passing*. In this work Buck speaks of the death of Richard Walsh and expresses her faith in the immortality of the soul.

*Lett er from Peking* is told in the first person by Elizabeth Kirke, an American woman. She has been separated from her half-Chinese husband Gerald by World War II. The novel is heart rending and poignant in describing Elizabeth’s loneliness and yearning for Gerald’s presence. “… Last night I was too lonely. Oh, there is a loneliness which befalls me now and then, and it is something more than death, I am still a wife, but without my husband...If her love has been great enough, a part of her dies…” *Letter* 19).

Elizabeth falls in love with Gerald Macleod during their college days and though her mother did not approve of Gerald because of his Chinese background, they finally get married and he takes her to China. The revolution forces her to return to her native country. Back in America Elizabeth spends her years hoping to be reunited with Gerald.

Elizabeth’s love for Gerald is so deep and endearing that her loneliness is even worse than death. “I am still a wife, but without my husband”( 19). Neither is she a widow. Added to this she faces the task of pacifying Rennie which is the necessity of the moment. Her loneliness and sorrow intensifies as she realizes
that Gerald is forced to take a Chinese wife for political reasons. In the midst of her tragedy she is able to guide Rennie through his first love Allegra, who proves to be a pretty, but shallow girl and therefore unsuitable for Rennie. Elizabeth could help Rennie because she had experienced the intensity and depth of true love and was now languishing in the memories of those moments. She knows that he needs someone who can understand him, accept him and love him deeply. The depth of Elizabeth’s love for Gerald is seen when the Chinese wife writes to her secretly keeping her informed of Gerald’s life.

Critics feel that *Letter From Peking* fictionalizes the affair between Hsu Chih-mo, a Chinese poet and Pearl. Through Elizabeth, Pearl describes her feelings for Hsu who died in a plane crash. Rennie the half-Chinese, half-American son of Elizabeth is probably the son Pearl never bore.

Besides these wonderful mothers the works of Markandaya depict grandmothers who figure as protectors and sustainers. Being mature and experienced they have a sense of power and authority. They can be seen in characters like Dodamma in *Some Inner Fury*, and Alamelu in *Two Virgins*. Though they do not economically support the family they are symbols of stability and dependability to the younger generation. Dodamma’s concern for Mira and Alamelu’s support towards Lalitha and Saroja is proof of their protective love towards their beloved children. As custodians of culture, they transmit tradition and culture to their charges infusing in them a sense of identity. These grand-
mothers are also found in Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock* and Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*. Buck does not deal with these substitute mothers in her novels.

The foregoing survey of women in the novels of Kamala Markandaya and Buck reveal the powerful female characters created by them. Instead of initiating radical changes, Buck and Markandaya’s kind of feminism looks for a broader cultural transformation. Markandaya’s women maybe assigned traditional roles but they are made to face modern predicaments. All their women characters are highly intelligent, deeply sensitive and bear a striking resemblance to the authors.

Susan Gaylord in *This Proud Heart* is a splendid unique woman who seems to be a reflection of the author’s American self. Like Buck, she is an energetic career woman who exhibits an inner conflict between an artistic self longing for dedication and an essentially personal self longing for satisfying love at home. Theodore F. Harris points out that Susan “had to be based firmly in reality in order to serve the author’s need for self-expression” (1. 210).

Both Buck and Susan are women with varied interests. Susan is one of Pearl’s extraordinary creations exhibiting the author’s vitality and diverse skills. Anything comes easily to her. She could do everything a little better than others and this is what made her different. Her capabilities were far above those of an average individual and she recognises her commitment to herself and her art. The public adore her works and even her identity as a sculpturess is grudgingly
acknowledged by critics. Though it is not a woman’s field of art, she excels in it so that her teacher David Barnes encourages her to leave clay and work on marble, the toughest medium even for men.

This novel is Pearl’s first attempt at creating an American woman. Through her the novelist tries to show the American woman’s predicament. Like Buck, Susan too is famous in her own way and do not wish to benefit from her husband’s fame. Buck ends the novel on a philosophical note as she realises the truth that certain events in life are inescapable. Sorrows are a part of one’s life and as Susan says: “yes, she would grieve sometimes, at night perhaps, but in the morning she would get up and go to work, and then she would not grieve. She would forget to grieve”(This 371).

Susan Gaylord belongs to that class of women “who often suffer at the hands of men who cannot acknowledge and frequently do not even comprehend their emotional needs” (Conn, A Cultural Biography 62). Her inner debates over the authentic identity of a modern woman makes her reclaim her independence. Susan puts into practice Pearl’s dictum “Tradition is the culprit. Break it”. This alone would give women a chance to test their talent. Through Susan Gaylord’s life Buck tries to show what the new woman was. She could demand same opportunities and responsibilities as men. She coupled gender and race in her egalitarian vision of a free and democratic society.
The ending reverses the conventions that usually governed the lives of women in romance fiction. Instead of collapsing into marital reconciliation, Susan Gaylord pledges herself, to a life of work, sculpting the women of her American procession. Pearl's sister Grace Yaukey wrote that "women who read the story of Susan understood and loved her, and men who read it wondered sometimes why she must want to use all her gifts and not be content with husband and family. The distinction had a relevance to much of Pearl's work" (Conn. *A Cultural Biography* 207).

In this context it is worthwhile mentioning the resemblance Markandaya has to Mira in *Some Inner Fury* and Anasuya in *Possession*. Autobiographical elements are evident in the love relationship of Richard and Mira though not as obvious as in Buck's work. Anasuya, the journalist is a projection of Markandaya's own self. She had worked as a journalist in London before her marriage to John Taylor.

In *Dragon Seed*, Pearl through the personalities of Mayli and Jade shows that courage belongs to men and women alike. Mayli is an attractive, independent, well-educated, willful girl who represents a stronger version of Roshan in her patriotism and stubbornness. She was the daughter of a Chinese official in a foreign capital. In the wake of the Japanese aggression on China she decides to return to her country to help her people. Unlike Roshan she had no compromising mentality and the East and West never mingled in her scheme of
affairs. Acquiring a teaching position in a girls’ school, she fights with the American principal over the insignificance of her Chinese students having to memorise an English poem eulogising an English soldier. She felt it an insult to the brave Chinese soldiers who were fighting for their country: “What trash—what nonsense,” Mayli cried out “Paul Revere’s Ride—when every day our own guerillas fight like heroes!” (Dragon 273).

If Roshan preferred non-violence, Mayli demanded a more militant and guerilla-minded method of warfare against oppression. This desire is satisfied through Lao San, who is a ruthless guerilla leader. She gets to meet him and together they forge a ceaseless campaign against the Japanese war machine. Lao San who was extremely handsome, courageous and intelligent scorned ordinary women. He found his match in Mayli who proved to be the only girl who could meet his extraordinary demands. This romantic turn of events is a surprising part of her nature.

Jade, the wife of Ling Tan’s second son Lao Er, is another courageous female character in the novel. She appears to be a combination of Roshan, Mira and Premala. Independent and free thinking, she is proud of the fact that she has learned to read. Though she belongs to the modern China, she believes in being loyal to her husband and family. Independence to her is not breaking away from tradition and conventional ties that bind human relationships. Jade is therefore a combination of old and new China, enjoying her home and domestic tasks.
Mohini in *The Golden Honeycomb* is a willful, spirited woman who refuses to be married even at the price of being a queen. Even when she is with child, she objects to marriage as she does not want to become either a princess or a queen. She preferred the status of concubine as it granted her freedom: "I don’t want to be your queen. I want to be free" (32). Bawajiraj III has fallen in love with a common girl with fire in her mind. And with the birth of a son she is raised to a position of dignity from that of concubine. By refusing to be the Emperor’s second wife, she refuses to be another docile Shantha devi as well as get “a status that guarantees to her the freedom to bring up their son Rabindranath as she desires” (A.V. Krishna Rao 80).

Bawajiraj’s riches and royalty cannot tempt her to change her mind. She is intelligent and understands the political intricacies and does not want her son to be a victim of the same. Manjula also encourages this. As against the tradition followed, a Pandit is engaged to teach Rabi instead of a British tutor. This angers the British, but Mohini and Manjula are adamant. Together with the Pandit and the Dewan they inculcate nationalistic feelings in the child. Thus Mohini educates her son in such a way that he would never become a dummy ruler in the hands of he British.

Mohini is a tower of strength not only against the Maharajah but also towards anyone who tries to restrict or takes undue freedom. Sir Copeland, The
Resident, the Dewan and many others come under the fire of her anger. And finally when the protest march is carried out, Mohini gives courage to the Maharaja to go out and face his people. She reminds him that “They look on you as their father. Why can’t you behave like one” (457). The Maharaja wins the approval of his people in averting bloodshed by making a decision of his own for once. This was possible only because of Mohini’s encouragement and support and she has a sense of fulfillment in it. Though her husband is westernised, she refuses to be so and is nationalistic to the core. She also shapes her son to be more conscious of Indian nationalism so that the new generation under him will not be victims of exploitation by foreign rulers. As observed by P. Geetha Mohini “retains her identity throughout and never allows herself to be controlled by the foreign imperial touch” (Beyond Spaces of Silences 133).

Along with Mohini and Manjula we have another bold, courageous and wise woman in Usha, the Dewan’s daughter. She fits perfectly into Rabi’s life with her love for India. Usha too like Mohini feels that the British are here only for financial and territorial benefits and not for the good of the people. Hence she gives all support to fight for the people against the exploitation of the Colonial powers. In this Usha and Rabi share the same, democratic ideals and dream of freedom for the country, the people. Rabi finds Usha:

A woman of a pared and lucid grace with whom he [Rabi] could talk, or be still, who could move him, and move with him,
effortlessly picking up where he left of their common strand. A woman who was at one with him, their lives interlocking at more than one level, with whom it pleased him to feel, he could wait, or not, to come together. In their own country, in their own time (Golden 455).

And unlike when Rabi had an attraction for Sophie, Sir Arthur’s daughter, he was warned against by his mother as Sophie belonged to “a pagan race, not one of us”, here Mohini of the relationship with Usha as she knows very well that Usha is capable of standing up for the welfare of her people.

Usha “symbolizes the radical aspiration and idealism of an awakened people” (Anna Latha Devi 164). She is clever in setting her plans into action and awakens in them the desire for freedom. Through Gandhian principles of non-violence, she teaches them to resist exploitation. In fact she is the agent that heralds a change in the political scenario while retaining the cultural traditions of India. At the end of the novel as the powers of the British diminish, we see a triumphant Usha who shares this triumph with Rabi.

Roshan the rich mill owner’s daughter who is educated in England is the most sophisticated progressive and flamboyant character in Some Inner Furry. With a streak of stubbornness she appears a rebel. A born leader, this England returned Parsi girl desires her country’s freedom and believes in non-violence.
Inspite of her unusual nature, she is liked by all. As different from Premala, she represents the virile and wily side of a woman. Her sensitivity and inner strength makes everyone admire her as Mira admits:

There was something about her that was turbulent and unafraid which you sensed beneath the light, sparkling surface she presented; and I admired her because she stood alone and thought nothing of it" (Some 49).

Roshan had a “dual citizenship which people had, which a few have spurned but many have envied”. (Some 143). She remains an Indian at heart while drawing inspiration from her English education. She feels at home in both worlds and moves with ease between the East and the West. She is a success in whatever she does and is equally comfortable wearing the best of clothes in Western taste at a party or in prison with the cheapest of Indian sarees. No matter in what company she was, she arrested everyone’s attention. This is true of Buck the novelist also. Perhaps this quality is what made her create such powerful women in her novels.

Roshan’s sensitivity and compassion for others made her resort to non-violent means in the freedom struggle. She could re-mould herself and re-educate those around her so that she leaves a mark on the people of India. She inspires the people with her strong patriotic views which she publishes in her own paper.
started for the cause of the nationalist movement. Roshan plays a major role in the freedom struggle but unlike Govind in the same novel, is not a terrorist. Govind feels that he needs her for his activities and she willingly helps him. Her courage and strength is seen when she bails out Govind who is arrested for terrorist activities by lying that he had been with her on the night of the incident.

Roshan’s frankness, honesty and liberated attitude appealed to the young, though the older generation did not approve of it. She deviates from all conventional codes of living, believes in freedom and does not allow prudence to take the better of her. Even Mira’s mother who could not appreciate a woman living away from her husband, decides to accommodate her. This is because she does not irritate or behave aggressively towards others.

Roshan is a model for all women. In fact she puts her dual citizenship to good effect desiring the well being of fellow human beings. In her quest for freedom, she transcends all barriers of sex, religion, politics and economic conditions and goes to prove that she is part of a larger design by Kamala Markandaya as far as women are concerned. She transfers this spirit of freedom to the other women in the novels as well as to the readers.

Markandaya’s *Some Inner Fury* presents three women whose lives are disturbed by uncertain political circumstances. Mirabai, Premala and Roshan are
so inter-related yet their characters and fate are extremely distinct. Mira is the most important character she narrates the story objectively. Yet at times she gives expression to her sympathies and feelings. It is through her consciousness that we get to know the other characters. A well developed character she belongs to a wealthy aristocratic family and is privileged to have a good education. She is fortunate in her birth and upbringing as she belongs to a westernised Indian family.

Mira’s life becomes a tragedy as a result of the havoc caused by the national struggles. She has to witness the death of her English lover Richard, her brother Kit and her adopted brother Govind being arrested for murder. Richard is attracted towards her lively, alert nature. She is timid and at the same time emotional and contemplative. In her love towards Richard she has to resist parental authority. Theirs is a love that Kamala Markandaya nurtures in Indian soil, irrespective of racial differences. Though their love transcends all racial and religious barriers they are never to be united in life. Torn between political agitation and cultural disparity, Mira realizes that they belong to the class of the ruler and the ruled. She defies her mother who disapproves of her going out with Richard and remarks”...I do not remember having crossed her [mother] before”(61). Yet she does not forget her traditions and knows the position of a woman in an Indian family.
The young girl of sixteen matures gracefully into womanhood conscious of her loyalties and priorities. She knows she belongs to her family and the traditional Indian life. At the same time her western education makes her accept both Roshan and Premala warm-heartedly. Even when she leaves home to be a journalist, her desire for freedom does not make her give up her family. She is capable of immense love and compassion and is not emotional and sentimental. So when anti-British feelings flare up she chooses to be loyal to her country and her people. Richard is an Englishman against whom the ire of India is directed and she decides to forsake him for her country. Through their estrangement the novelist emphasizes the gulf between the East and the West:

...you belong to one side, if you don’t you belong to the other. It is as simple as that... There is no in between. You have shown your badge... But it was there in your face, the colour of your skin, the accents of your speech, in the clothes on your back (Some 218).

Her heart pines for Richard, but her country, her people and their independence is stronger in her mind than her personal desires. Her spirit of nationalism and the fury of the national struggle makes her break her ties with Richard, though of course it broke her heart. Her cry at the end of the novel is pathetic:
...still my heart wept, tearlessly, desolate, silently to itself. But what matter to the universe… if now and then a world is born or a star should die; or what matter to the world, if here and there a man should fall or a head or a heart should break (Some 285-286)

Thus Mira who defied parental authority, returns to her family under pressure from circumstances beyond her control. Hence the tragic fate to which she surrenders is more painful and one is left thinking that she deserved better.

Jane Earl, the brilliant scientist in *Command the Morning* is presented from a feminist perspective like Roshan and Mohini. The widespread feeling that women were inferior in science provoked Pearl to invent such a character. Jane though an American was reared in India and has assimilated the Oriental sensitivity for human beings. Hence she protests the use of the atom bomb as she feels it to be immoral. As a scientist, she is ambitious but does want her science to be destructive. Jane Earl’s opinion is rejected by the male scientists proving that, as in every field, men ignore the feelings and opinions of women. Even the quiet and domestic Mollie Hall, wife of the civilian head of the project turns hysterical and violent on discovering what is happening. Through Jane and Mollie, Pearl is trying to convey her opposition to nuclear weapons.
Pearl S Buck’s very first novel *East Wind: West Wind* which speaks of this cultural dichotomy presents a very traditional yet modern Chinese girl Kwei-lan. Her mother has prepared her for life in the conventional role of a Chinese wife but she finds that her western educated husband wants her to be different. He does not want her to be submissive but his equal which is a suffocating dilemma for her. Like Premala in *Some Inner Fury* she accedes to her husband’s demand. Kwei-lan unlike Premala, succeeds in her efforts because the demands of her husband were unlike the superficial and artificial demands of the purely westernised Kit. She is one among the several Chinese women who are strong but ill-adapted to the changing circumstances and so find themselves groping in the dark.

Kwei-lan’s first visit to a western house is an instance of cultural shock as she sees the difference in dress, colour of hair and the manners. But gradually she learns that they also have a culture of their own and as advised by Mrs. Liu who is western-educated, learns to adapt the good that she finds in the western civilization, “as the young Chinese woman struggles toward modernity, she proves herself to be a person of dignity, high principles, and good judgement” (Conn *A Cultural Biography* 84).

Premala in *Some Inner Fury* is a representative of the traditional Indian woman. She too belongs to an aristocratic family and is well educated adapting
quickly to the westernised way of life in Kit’s house. She is basically Indian in spirit and shy by nature. Though she admires Roshan for her assertiveness and independence, she can never be so in her life. Like Kwei-lan she adjusts to her life with Kitswamy even though it is against her taste. Kit is an anglicised Indian officer who wants his wife to be similarly modern and westernised.

The gentle, modest and docile Premala does not fit into Kit’s world. She tries to win her husband’s love failing which she grows lonely and miserable. Shanta Krishnaswamy says “Her tragedy is brought about not by timidity but the very traditional sense of duty and devotion” (185). She finds relief in helping a missionary to start a school and even adopts an orphan which was not appreciated by Kit.

Govind understands Premala and even loves her. But Premala never thought of returning Govind’s love. As a true traditional Indian wife she remained loyal to Kit. Her acceptance of the conventional Indian life and Kit’s distaste of it alienates them. She is highly religious and believes in the sanctity of marriage. She is not appreciated by Kit as he feels she lacks the social graces he demanded.

It is at this juncture that she takes up teaching at the missionary school run by Hickey. This community service makes her happy and the little orphan girl
she adopts is a source of great pleasure as her heart was longing to give motherly love. Her involvement with the school makes her risk her life when there is a fire. This streak of heroism in one who was meek and timid always, is remarkable. Perhaps this is what made Prof. Srinivasa Iyengar describes her as the sweetest and the most heroic character of the novel (56). Her inner strength is first seen when she measures upto Kit’s demands against her own convictions. This innocent and docile woman appeals to every one so that her death is seen as a relief rather than a tragedy. It is therefore proper to agree with Meenakshi Mukherjee when she says that Premala is idealised even to the extent of being unreal (The Twice Born Fiction 83).

Nalini in A Handful of Rice represents Indian ideal of womanhood. Despite inhuman ordeals, she is bound to her home. She represents the lower middle class wife, if Rukmani is the prototype of rural peasant class. She is passive by nature and suffers the atrocities by her husband. His ill-treatment causes her to go and stay with her sister. She is an embodiment of virtue as an obedient daughter, faithful wife and mother. Ravi’s first impression of her “Take a girl like that, and half a man’s troubles would be over”(25) sums up the goodness innate in Nalini. Endowed with the Indian concept of wifely submissiveness, she stands by her husband in the face of poverty. “Nalini acts as the emobling influence on Ravi and she appears to be the only sheet anchor of his life”(P.Geetha II 13). The thought of Nalini keeps him away from immoral
acts and she is happy as long as her husband appreciates her. She is beautiful, soft-spoken and good-natured and so she is able to see the reality of life. When Ravi is angered at the exploitation by the rich she consoles him saying “they’re a different class, that’s all...ordinary folk like us can never be like them” (Handful 75). She dislikes the rebellious side of his nature and keeps him under check.

Nalini learns to be content with her lot. Even when she leaves the house in protest, she harbours no hatred towards Ravi and she dutifully returns with him. She knows he is a discontented man for whom life is governed by money. She is, on the other hand, a warm-hearted person, who loves everyone. As a sister she cares for Thangam and is concerned about her father as a daughter should. But she is not like her mother Jayamma who “outlined to Ravi a husband’s responsibilities, the duties he owed to mother-in-law and [his] wife” (55). Nalini has a profound capacity to put up with life’s hardships patiently. She is able to bring peace and harmony to the family through her virtuous and passive nature. Her moral strength gives her the power to tide over any adverse situation.

Tradition and economic dependence weigh these women down to their roots. “Woman has traditionally been seen as either saint or devil...Virgin Mary or Eve” (qtd in Shirwadhkar 4). She maybe respected as mother, but deployed for her weaknesses, especially as seducer of man. When she acquires diabolical powers as witches and seductress she is despised and rejected. Kunthi, Kali,
Jayamma, Lotus are representatives of women who are foils to the mother image that is venerated.

According to Sydney Janet Koplan the term, ‘feminine consciousness’ differs from ‘female imagination’, because it does not imply any inherent characteristics in women authors. Instead it refers to the methods created by women writers to depict the internal life of female characters in the process of self-discovery (“Varieties of Feminist Criticism” 48). Being women writers Buck and Markandaya are able to depict the joys and sorrows of their female characters with conviction.

Thus we see that both Pearl S Buck and Kamala Markandaya write about a culture that is male dominated. They expose the oppression of women engendered by patriarchy across countries and cultures. Through their women they seem to suggest that what is needed is the same emancipation for the female as for the male. They seem to emphasize the need to recognize the existence of a female culture as “culture is male” and “our literary myths are for heroes not heroines” (qtd.in Shirwadkar 3). It is only Mohini in The Golden Honeycomb and Susan in This Proud Heart who are treated as equals in all matters including the nation’s government. This is the kind of emancipation envisaged by the two novelists. But the Indian and the Chinese woman have a long way to go before they attain this self-sufficiency. Buck’s traditional heroines adjust with the
modern husbands. But there is ambiguity in the case of Kamala Markandaya's women characters. P Geetha in her article “The novels of Kamala Marakandaya” sums up this ambiguity thus:

[In Markandaya's novels] There is reassessment of what woman in the Indian cultural context aspires to. At the same time Kamala Markandaya does not want her characters to part with the past and their ancient heritage. That amounts to a fundamental dualism in her novels- she tries to criticise the tradition which she has inherited, but at the same time in a sense tries to renew it (Between Spaces of Silence 137).

Buck and Markandaya are adept at characterization. The major characters and minor ones serve as mouthpieces of the society to which they belong. These characters are torn by conflicts between good and bad, reason and faith and other dichotomies. The Indian/Western/Chinese characters are so well drawn that they seem to be around us. Holy Men as custodians of spiritual faith find a place in the novels of these writers. Buck and Markandaya seem to seek an altered social milieu for their characters. The character types delineated by Buck and Markanday are categorized in the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Type</th>
<th>Pearl S Buck</th>
<th>Kamala Markandaya</th>
<th>Trait</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peasants</td>
<td>O-lan, Wang Lung, the mother</td>
<td>Rukmani, Nathan, Ira</td>
<td>Endurance, inner strength, love for family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry young men</td>
<td>Yuan</td>
<td>Ravi, Rabi</td>
<td>Protest against society, economic disparity, patriotism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionaries/Priests/Saints</td>
<td>Brother Andre, Monsignor Fitzgibbon, Fr. O’Banion, Dalai Lama, Macard Family</td>
<td>Swami, Kenny, Mr and Mrs Bridie, Hickey</td>
<td>Genial, humane individuals who are deep-rooted in spirituality- missionaries are service- minded and their innate goodness sets them apart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants/Anglicized-</td>
<td>Yuan</td>
<td>Srinivas, Laxman, Valmiki, Anasuya, Hebelkar, Kit</td>
<td>The characters of Markandaya are unable to adjust to the alien culture. Some of them prefer to be anglicized. In Buck they absorb cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians, Chinese</td>
<td>Gerald, The doctor in <em>East-Wind: West Wind</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Englishmen/women</td>
<td>David, Elizabeth, Miss Westley, lady teacher in <em>East-Wind: West Wind</em></td>
<td>Richard, Sir Arthur, Mr. Buckridge, Clinton, Helen</td>
<td>Some of them are able to resolve the conflict while others remain aloof and suffer the agonies of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Type</td>
<td>Pearl S Buck</td>
<td>Kamala Markandaya</td>
<td>Trait</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Emperors/Princes/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Representatives of royal life in all its opulence and grandeur.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empresses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women of the royal family powerful and strong willed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Women/ mothers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ideal mothers who have the best of relationships with sons/daughters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emperors/Princes/</td>
<td>Jagat</td>
<td>Bawajiraj</td>
<td>more progressive. Buck’s Susan and Markandaya’s Mohini and Roshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empresses</td>
<td>Moti</td>
<td>Manjula</td>
<td>are “liberated” women.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empress Dowager</td>
<td>Empress Dowager</td>
<td>Maharani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emperors/Princes/</td>
<td>O-lan</td>
<td>Mohini</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empresses</td>
<td>Madame Wu,</td>
<td>Manjula</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emperors/Princes/</td>
<td>Ailan’s mother</td>
<td>Usha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empresses</td>
<td>Kwei-lan</td>
<td>Rukmani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emperors/Princes/</td>
<td>the mother Susan</td>
<td>Nalini</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empresses</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Roshan, Ira</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emperors/Princes/</td>
<td>Mayli, Jade</td>
<td>Premala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empresses</td>
<td>Moti</td>
<td>Mira</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emperors/Princes/</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Anasuya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empresses</td>
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<td>Vasantha</td>
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</table>
The table clearly shows that a theme can be identified with a particular hero type. In literature, normally, living persons are converted into myth. In modern novels like Joyce’s *Ulysses*, on the other hand, classical heroes represent different themes. But Pearl S Buck and Kamala Markandaya, being naturalist writers present characters with universal human traits, who can be regarded as “thematic modes”. These individual characters, because of their outstanding characteristics can become “types”. These type characters are not the types E. M. Forster talks about. They are professional groupings (Peasants, Missionaries/Priests), social classes (Immigrants/ Anglicised Indians, Empresses and Princes), figures representing specific attitudes to life and society (angry young men, archetypal mothers). Raymond Trousson and Prawer theorise on this aspect and these character types are best suited for analogical studies.