Chapter Four

Trauma of the Male Mind

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august, how complicate, how wonderful is man! distinguished link in being's endless chain! midway from nothing to absolute! an heir of glory! a frail child of dust! helpless immortal! insect infinite! a worm! a God!

Young

In the rigidly formed and tradition bound societies in India, men have to face and overcome too many challenging problems. The indifferent society is often cruel and so merciless that it assaults man and 'wounds' him. The Greek word 'trauma' means "an injury," wound or shock, most frequently physical or structural, but also mental in the form of an emotional shock, producing a disturbance more or less enduring, of mental functions" (James Drever, Penguin Dictionary of Psychology). If the individual happens to be very sensitive, intellectually ill-equipped to openly defy any oppression, he is permanently scarred by traumas of external forces. In such a traumatic
condition he suffers mentally and physically. The related suffering often assumes pathetic proportions.

Kamala Makandaya is not only skilful in presenting the feminine response to life in her novels, but also the trauma of the male mind with sharp focus on their private worlds and the social imperatives in perspective. Some of the men suffer the pains of repressions silently for ages and others rebel instantaneously. Through the trauma of the male mind, the novelist reveals the intensely meaningful emotional experience of the man. The natural sensibility of Kamala Markandaya has imparted a human touch and a psychological depth to these men.

Like the women characters, the men characters can also be classified into three categories. The first group consists of the older generation of passive sufferers like Nathan in *Nectar in a Sieve*, Apu in *A Handful of Rice*, Srinivas in *The Nowhere Man* and Bawajiraj III in *The Golden Honeycomb*. The first pair of men Nathan and Apu are victims of social injustice. Srinivas and Bawajiraj III are exploited by the West. The second group is formed by ebullient rebels who belong to the younger generation, Ravi in *A Handful of Rice*, Krishnan and Shanmugam in *The Coffer Dams* and Rabi in *The Golden Honeycomb*. A trio of Indians,
Kit in *Some Inner Fury*, Dandekar in *A Silence of Desire* and Laxman in *The Nowhere Man* form the last group. They are westernised and they exploit their own lot and they become victims of cultural dichotomy. Valmiki in *Possession* is a unique adolescent who bridges the older and younger generations. Though influenced by the West, he returns to India because his roots are firmly laid in Indian spirituality.

Exploitations of various kinds collectively cause the trauma in the male mind. The result is familial disharmony, rebellion, separation and death. Kamala Markandaya does not induce the trauma by a liberal display of wildness and fury; nor does she awaken the interest of the readers by the horrid spectacle of the mind in ruins. She cleverly and tactfully deals with noble nature and generous impulses cruelly despoiled by the exploitation syndrome.

Nathan in *Nectar In A Sieve* is traumatised by the vagaries of nature, industrial economy and landlordism. Nathan is far from heroic and he is an average man, a simple fatalistic creature of the soil. It is from the land that he derives all his material and spiritual stamina. It is the same land that gives him despair, sorrow and fear. He goes into ecstasies as he handles the harvest.
He is in raptures as he allows the gleaming grains of paddy to flow through his fingers. At the same time his mind foresees the turmoils of nature as Indian Agriculture is the gamble of the monsoons. Rukmani pathetically describes the state of Indian farmers:

Hope, and fear. Twin forces that tugged at us first in one direction and then in another, and which was the stronger no one could say. Of the latter we never spoke, but it was always with us.

Fear, constant companion of the peasant . . .

Fear ; fear of the dark future; fear of the sharpness of hunger; fear of the blackness of death. (NS 83)

He hopefully thinks, “in a few years we can move – may be even buy a house” (NS 10). He tells his Ruku endearingly, “such harvests as this and you shall not want for anything (NS 10). But his hopes are shattered as he is buffeted about by the vagaries of nature. The deluge and the drought prove more than a match for him. He has to live from harvest to harvest, toiling, praying and waiting in suspense. Once the family suffers hunger due to excessive rain. Nathan and Rukmani watch the waters rise and
submerge their paddy. Rukmani recalls the flooded scene:

It rained so hard, so long and so incessantly that the thought of a period of no rain provoked a mild wonder. It was as if nothing had ever been but rain... Nathan and I watched with heavy hearts while the waters rose and rose and the tender green of the paddy field sank under and was lost.

(NS 43-44)

The devastation caused is too much for Nathan to bear. The tragic role of nature spoils the sweet harmony of the peasant's life.

At another time crops fail due to drought. The scorching sun kills the crops as well as his hopes. Fears assail Nathan. He miserably fails in his duty as the provider of the family. This injures his mind and he suffers silently. Being wedded to the land indissolubly, Nathan accepts its frowns and smiles with the same equableness. "This is the traditional resignation of people who have for centuries been agricultural, a prey to the vagaries of the climate" (Joseph 18). His heart bleeds to see his children suffer the pangs of hunger and this leaves him a shattered man.

"Dreams reflect the unconscious desires and anxieties of
the individual" (Wilfred L. Guerin, A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature 155). According to psychology too, a man's unfulfilled wishes which are consequently repressed and pushed into the unconscious are expressed in dreams. In his mental stress about the food crisis Nathan has a dream. He says sweating, "I saw the paddy turned to straw, the grain lost ... Oh God, all was lost" (NS 84). This is the result of an overburdened spirit, a trauma in his mind. It is true that in the agricultural economy, the vagaries of monsoon can produce distressing situations.

Added to these overwhelming difficulties, the agent of the landlord urges Nathan to pay his dues. He is in utter poverty. He stands there "sweating and trembling" (NS 77), groping for words. Rukmani says, "Nathan's shoulders sagged. He looked tired and dispirited" (NS 77). Mentally and physically he feels injured because of his helplessness. Realising the situation his sons desert the soil and seek better prospects. When Thambi expresses his and his brothers' desire to quit the land which does not belong to them, the father's reaction is described, "Nathan said not a word. There was a crushed look about him which spoke
of the deep hurt he had suffered more than any words could have done” (NS 56).

The behaviour of his sons is a rude shock to him and it leaves the old man in downcast spirit. The death of his sons affects him and sorrow stares at his face. Hence he is “thin and drawn, with thighs and arms so puny that no muscle showed even when he flexed them” (NS 97). His only daughter Ira’s moral degradation shatters Nathan. When Ira is defiant, as a helpless father, “the veins in his forehead were standing out, on each temple a pulse throbbed fiercely” (NS 103). He suffers endlessly. The birth of his albino grandson leaves him ashamed and Nathan feels “the heaviness of spirit” and he is “the most burdened” (NS 119).

All these sinister events in Nathan’s family have arisen because of the tannery. To crown all these miseries he is asked to vacate the land. Nathan cannot contemplate a life away from his beloved land in which he has sweated for thirty years. This has effaced all his hopes and “Nathan opened his hands, trembling, impotent” (NS 134). Initially the industrialization has brought some prosperity to the village and Nathan too joins the chorus of universal exaltation, “it is well to accept these things” (NS 32). He
bends before the winds of change until the tannery devours his land. The rural life undergoes a total revolution and all the old values become ineffective. Nathan is forced to forfeit his traditional role and its simple dignity. The economic repression forces Nathan off the land. The wound caused by the tannery in the mind of Nathan deepens as time passes by.

As a victim of industrialization he has to tear off from the land to seek new pastures. In the evening of his life his exodus to the city in search of his son is futile. The urban squalor, its hectic atmosphere, the loss of his meagre belongings leave Nathan a withered man. Emaciated and old, the strain of the job as a stone breaker makes Nathan collapse. The forces that attack Nathan are too hard to stand against and he wages a losing battle. His life is a saga of suffering, failure and disappointment. As 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)

Nathan does not rave, does not rant, does not shout. He is not sentimental or emotional. His suffering is silent though he is the target of attack from all sides. That is why Srivastava points out, "Living in a village, these people have learnt from nature to mould themselves according to the changed circumstances
whether it be the sun or the rain, good times or illtimes” (139). His mind is overwhelmed with tensions of various kinds and the rifts vividly reveal the cuts, injury and wounds that Nathan has received in his perilous attempts to survive. His body aches and his spirits droop. Economic insecurity and social changes are the causes for his trauma. Exploited by modern industrial society, Nathan is confronted by inexorable forces which are outside his comprehension.

The tragic plight of Nathan is reiterated by Kamala Markandaya in Apu, the tailor, in A Handful of Rice. Here again is the picture of a man who sinks deeper in the morass of poverty and misery. His body and soul are falling apart under the continuing pressure of want and privation.

Apu as a provider struggles hard for survival. He is a skilful tailor with a large family to support. “It was Apu who ran the business, who took the decisions, who held the household together” (HR 33). It is the quality of Apu’s work and low rates which have sustained him in business. Ravi describes Apu’s skill:

He also doubted whether he would ever match Apu’s skill in cutting out and in copying patterns.
Nothing seemed too difficult for the old man. He would carry away a fashion plate cut from one of those sumptuous magazines, and his gnarled shaking old man's hands would grow steady as he chalked and cut out the pattern, adroitly adapting it to measurements often far from ideal. (HR 85)

As he works hard, Apu stabilises in business but his hard earned income is used to feed his joint family consisting of pests and parasites. He refers to them as "Idlers, Idlers all. Che!" (HR 39). Working and feeding these men at his old age is tiresome for Apu. His worthless son-in-law and his pelican daughter Thangam swallow Apu's earnings. He is pained by the behaviour of his family members who refuse to work at all odds. He calls them, "jackals" who are waiting for Apu's death.

Like any Indian father he longs for sons to assist him and to perpetuate his line. On the contrary he has two daughters only. He is really sad about this but silently bears his disappointment. When Ravi becomes his apprentice first and then his son-in-law he tells him, "a man needs sons" (HR 39). He trusts Ravi and says, "What I need is a man, someone to carry on when I'm gone, someone who would learn from me in a spirit of humility as you
might" (HR 39). Though this seems to be an old man's woes, the trauma in Apu's mind gets well pronounced.

His wife Jeyamma has no love for Apu and she considers him as "mouse-like husband" (HR 33). Apu senses Jeyamma's attitude to him. Though there is no disharmony in their family life, there is no lasting love between them like Rukmani and Nathan. Jeyamma is indifferent to her husband because he is "a good deal older than herself, preferred staying at home to jostling in a crowd" (HR 47). Apu's inability to make his wife love him is indeed a blow to him but he never makes any attempt to either appeal to her or care for her love. He is an introvert, silently scarred by his wife. The reasons for the rift in the family is:

She [Jeyamma] had been young, he [Apu] past his prime, when they married her to him. She did not love him then, she did not love him afterward. She did not even know that she didn't because she did not know what it meant . . . . She was then in the prime of her life. (HR 149)

True to his nick name Apu who is injured, silently hides in his mouse hole.
Rising price of rice and dwindling of income explode all the calculations of economics and Apu strives hard to make both ends meet. There is ruthless exploitation of the poor by the rich. The insensitiveness of the affluent, their hardness of heart, and their air of contempt are silently borne by Apu. When he understands that they are unjustly exploited by “Eve,” the readymade shop, Apu with his worldly wisdom tells Ravi, “they get twenty times what people like us get. That’s because they’re not people like us” (HR 69). He makes it clear that the outbursts of Ravi cannot change the state of society full of inequalities. They cannot but stitch the clothes for low price because there is fierce competition even among the poor, each trying to edge the other out of business by hook or by crook. Increase in their rates would mean loss of business to the competitors who always hover for an opportunity. Apu holds the traditional values in spite of his inability to provide two square meals to his family. The economics of urban life is beyond his understanding.

Apu’s traumatic condition is aggrevated by the theft of his life long savings. As soon as Apu realised that his entire saving is lost, he gave “a loud cry, a sound of panic and rage that trailed away into an incoherent whimper of loss” (HR 174). In the
presence of his dependent joint family members he raves and shows his disgust towards the parasites who suck his blood. Apu expresses sadly and angrily:

Every pie has gone, my entire life's savings, the money upon which we all depended, and it is one of you that has done it, one of you in this house, in this room . . . . One of you here, with patience and cunning . . . but there is no hand that does not leave an imprint . . . (HR 175)

As an old man he cannot be silent when he is deeply injured by his own son-in-law Puttanna who has stolen his precious money. He has saved every penny like an ant that saves its grains for the rainy day. The anguish of betrayal is so great that Apu bitterly declares at Puttanna, "Fed you, sheltered you . . . forgave your follies, asked for no return . . ." (HR 176). Apu exhibits not only the anguish of betrayal but also the rancour of all those long parasitical years of Puttanna's stay in his house. His family members on the other hand are the supporters of Puttanna and they seem to justify his evil act by saying that Puttanna needed capital. The blame falls on old Apu because he
has hoarded his savings in an old pillow.

After his recovery from the paralytic attack, the loss of his savings greatly damages Apu both mentally and physically and this hastens his death. Without proper food, with a hand that is rendered useless by paralysis, the old man struggles against all odds of life. The grim fight for survival continues till his death. Apu represents a view of life and his experience is a form of martyrdom.

Srinivas in *The Nowhere Man* is traumatised in his native soil of his birth and in the alien soil of his settlement by the British. Whenever there is a confrontation, Srinivas resorts to contemplation rather than action especially during his miserable days in India and in England. He is denied the tenderness of the mother soil and he is victimised in the alien soil.

The alien power has curtailed the youthful vigour of Srinivas in India. The families of Vasantha and Srinivas are opposed to British arrogance in India. The two families are victimised in the British rule for the suspected underground activities against the British. Through Srinivas' grandfather's teak forest, the British Government laid road and so the family has lost their invaluable property. Being an Indian, Srinivas' father
Narayan is deprived of all his promotions in a government college. He is never given top priorities. Narayan shows his resentment by singing an unscheduled Indian song at the Chancellor’s reception. The Governor brought his hand firmly on Narayan’s shoulders. Srinivas jumps up on the dais and retorts, “your Excellency, take your bloody hands off my father” (NM 147). Thus the father and the son become culpable in the eyes of the British authorities. With circumspection and cunningness the British brand Narayan a lunatic and Srinivas is expelled from the college. Young Srinivas gets a terrible blow in his life.

He also with nostalgic hurt remembers the youth who has been manufacturing country bombs. Once an English police sergeant humiliates Vasantha in public and that leaves her dazed and makes Srinivas’ blood boil. But he is unable to do anything. His youthful soul wants to escape the oppression and his father has pointed out:

There is no future left for you here. You will be black-listed in every school and college throughout the country. Government service is out too . . . . You could still have a career elsewhere. They say that England is not a bad place. Platt says in
many ways it is better than here. Especially for someone like you. (NM 148)

Srinivas understands the tragic fact that his mother soil is denied to him. His trauma begins here. This leads to his self-exile.

In the alien soil Srinivas becomes a victim of racial animosity sweeping the whites of Britain with its obscene slogan, "Hang the blacks" (NM 186) and he faces all the injustice of mob fury and prejudice that follow. The causes that lead to his trauma are two deaths, one, of his favourite son and the other of his beloved wife and the callousness of his live son. All these push him into isolation and he seeks refuge in the four walls of his attic. His chance meeting with Mrs. Pickering sets aside the empty phase of his life. But he tastes the bitter fruit of racial hatred and he is tarred and taunted by Fred Fletcher and his companions.

The post war Britain with all its immigration problems is not safe for people like Srinivas. The insecurity arises from the economic pressure faced by England. With the loss of the colonies, the British have started looking upon the immigrants in London as intruders. Young men like Fred, Mike, Joe and Bill who experience the strain of this pressure begin to turn hostile towards the immigrants. Fred is a representative of the British antagonist against coloured people.
Obvious discrimination is shown against the blacks in pubs and restaurants. The British look up and down at the coloured immigrants and harden up with cold deadly looks. Fred tells Srinivas, “You got no right to be living in this country” (NM 164).

Srinivas who has a sense of belonging to the country of his adoption is greatly shocked by the colour consciousness. Abdul of Zanzibari asks Srinivas to go back to his own country. He finds himself an unwanted man. He gets a stunning blow when he realises that he has “nowhere” to go:

Nowhere, he said to himself, and he scanned the pale anxious eyes which were regarding him for reasons that might drive him out, a nowhere man looking for a nowhere city. But his eyes wore a film, a watery film that gave him back his own anxieties. (NM 166)

Srinivas is unfortunately not fully accepted by the English community. He becomes dispossessed of India and disowned by England. It is a search for identity in the alien environs. In his frustration Srinivas says:

I am a stranger.

I have been transformed into a stranger . . .
An alien, whose manners, accents, voice, syntax, bones, build, way of life – all of him–shrieked alien. (NM 230)

His lack of action encourages the evil forces of racialism to disorient him. He bears every infliction. Prema Nandakumar comments:

The age of violence has come even to a ‘bland’ country like England. Fifty years ago he had fled from the brutal violence of the rulers in India, now he was once again being assaulted by the ruling power of white pigmentation. (“Swim against the Tide” 79)

Unlike Abdul, Srinivas does not fight back either mentally or physically. “The recognition of rejection fills him with loss and incredulity” (Joseph 137).

Srinivas’s initial rebellion subsides and his anger ends in despair. The injury is so deep that he suffers aches and pains. His state of alienation is described:

Not that severance from the material which belonged to the domain of spirit, but a human cut-
off engineered from without that made him uneasy, made him peer at the faces going by which had once been familiar but now were remote, belonging to denizens of a world different from his own. Their world . . . an area devoid of meaning for him . . . . It isolated him, cast him in the role of intruder. (NM 173)

His mind felt bruised, as if it had been isolated. The realization of being unwanted in the country of his adoption projects itself in his growing leprosy, a tropical disease. It is symptomatic of his physical and emotional isolation. Knowing about his disease, Laxman, his son thinks in disgust:

Coming to a country, he said to himself, doing his best to offend it. Sticking out like a sore thumb, instead of decently integrating . . . .

Crowning it all by contracting, of all things, this medieval disease. (NM 261)

In this context Williams points out, "The leprosy that cuts him cruelly from the English is a kind of psycho-somatic projection of
his inner isolation as well as having . . . symbolic value” (“Victims” 119).

Assaulted on all sides by problems of survival and disease, the ostracised man Srinivas cocoons himself in his memories. Srinivas ceases to be lonely when remembering things past as the old companions become alive and cluster around him. These journeys in the backward abysm of time make him appear shorn of wits at times. His mind moves forwards and backwards like a shuttle weaving a subtle pattern of mental process. This pushes him to near insanity. The workings of his unconscious self show that his wounds are too many. His mental strain is reasonable for bringing about his collapse and Dr. Radcliff cries out, “He is dead, and we have all had a hand in it” (NM 298). Fifty years ago he had fled from the brutal violence of the white rulers in India and once again he is assaulted by the white for his colour. V. C. Sudheer remarks that, “the monstrosity of the narrow human prejudices” is the cause of his emotional upheavals and finally his death (“In Search of a Nest: The Nowhere Man” 203).

At the rational level Srinivas accepts his cultural transplant but at the transrational level he remains true to his culture. His wrath and rancour coil upon the chambers of his mind. His
repressed impulses find themselves relieved in imagining situations for their free play. The denials and deprivations of the outer world squeeze himself and his fancy fabricates situations so as to satisfy his wounded ego. In his trauma Srinivas unconsciously attempts to escape from the enemy world into himself so that his thoughts might be severed from grief. "Srinivas represents 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" (V. Rangan, "The Nowhere Man: A Critical Analysis" 192).

The trauma for Bawajiraj III in The Golden Honeycomb is the loss of identity. He too is an inert character. As the ruler of Devapur he is an "expensive cipher" (GH 49), and is merely a rubber stamp of the West. He is a puppet in the hands of the English rulers and he hangs on their apron strings. He grows into a great loyalist of the British, and hence there is a wide gap between the rulers and the ruled.

Though the trauma in Bawajiraj III is not very pronounced, he is lacerated by his dissatisfied family members such as his mother, concubine and son. The threefold attempt alerts Waji's conscience and in the end he shakes off his mask of a Maharaja
and for once in his life becomes the spokesman of his people.

In the princely states of the British Raj, the Resident plays a key role more prominent than the native ruler. Bawajiraj commonly known as Waji does not understand the sad plight of the people of his state under the oppression of the princely Government. The double pull of East and West, of rags and riches cannot rouse Waji from his blind bondage to the West. Even as a boy, Bawajiraj III is placed in the care of an English tutor and given an English schooling that alienates him from his own people. He turns out to be a sort of brown Englishman. His thoughts are very dissimilar to those of his mother Dowager Maharani Manjula or his mistress Mohini.

Manjula, the Queen Mother and Mohini, the mistress of Bawajiraj III play pivotal role in guiding and shaping his destiny. The Queen Mother schemes to bring her son up with his individual identity. But she fails miserably. Moreover, her husband Bawajiraj II persuades the queen to accept his value system. So using Mohini as a tool, she tries to coax her son to realise the loss of his identity. With the strong backing from the Dowager Maharani, Mohini refuses to be Bawajiraj III's queen but is willing to remain as his mistress. This decision of Mohini hurts
him terribly. He is obliged to marry Shanta Devi, a colourless princess of a neighbouring state who bears him only daughters. He has an illegitimate son by Mohini and this ironic turn too is responsible for his trauma.

As against the royal custom Mohini brings her son Rabi up as a man with distinct Indian identity. Both the mother and the son try to lacerate Waji by presenting the whole concept of the native states and his limited power as the British approved Indian ruler. They help Waji to disintegrate the golden honeycomb which has cocooned him. Rabi tells his father how irrelevant the princes and the Englishman are when Devapur is struggling for survival. Leaning on his loyalty to the British, he leaves things to go on as such. “Political overlordship provided the English the prerogative to impose new systems on India which were not always in consonance with the spirit of India and crippled its economy” (Jha 29).

Waji is instructed by Sir Arthur Copeland to send him away from home on the pretext of education, to be made a loyal subject of the British crown like his father. His only aim is to establish kinship with the English and he does not understand the reality of the situation. Mohini who is worldly-wise dismisses this idea
and with the help of the Maharani, she employs an Indian Pandit to teach Rabi. Waji is pained at the turn of events but he has to bear his disappointment. In order to educate the boy, the two women take him on a tour around the state, to have a first hand knowledge of his people. This again is a shock to Waji. The first world war drew from him a very enthusiastic response in terms of men and money. He volunteers his own services and wants his son to be enlisted in the force. But “His only son . . . cheerfully declined all invitations” (GH 313) because Mohini does not want her son to become another British approved and supported ruler. This attitude of his son “quite stung” (GH 313) Waji.

Bawajiraj III is very proud to be in magnificent Durbars, colourful parties and in adventurous shoots and hunts. But the sorry plight of the mill workers does not affect him. “The mill strike, throwing a wide lariat, also roped in the Maharajah and the Maharajkumar. Bawajiraj bore visible scars” (GII 304). Though physically scarred he bears the same loyalty to the British. In the final crisis, when the multitudes of people are sitting in silent protest besieging Palace and Residency, Bawajiraj and Rabi confront each other. The Maharaja is hurt by the behaviour of his son and he asserts that his people have not
forgotten, although they may have to be reminded, where their allegiance lies. In spite of confrontations, lacerations and rifts, Bawajiraj’s “loyalty was deeper than any of the sepoy for British or prince for British” (Pollard 28). He tells his son, “In the process you will tear the state apart” (GH 416). It is with a heartache that he understands “that he had on his hands not an errant heir but a disruptive subject on a scale and of an order worse even than anything he had suspected” (GH 416). Waji’s son and the Chief Minister’s daughter are the ring leaders. This is a shocking truth not only to their parents with British allegiance but also to the British rulers.

Waji III is a prototype of the native rulers in the British Raj. The political animosity of the British makes him lose his identity as an individual, ruler and Indian. He does not protest against the British. Like Nathan, Apu and Srinivas, Waji too, though a ruler, has passed a traumatic period at the various stages of his life as a ruler.

There is an underlying pattern in these men characters. All these men are passive sufferers. Though they are victimised either by the society in which they live or by the alien power, they ceaselessly endure their bitter cups. Their voice just smoulders
inside as their spirit is subdued by endless hardships. Moreover these men are the head and the provider of the family or state. Hence they represent the Father figure but are inadequate as fathers as they are exploited. Their trauma is internalised and their suffering is silent.

Unlike the men belonging to the older generation, the next group consists of ebullient rebels. These men have an unresolved quarrel with the society in which they live because it is the cause of their exploitation. Their impressive tirades are no doubt concerned with the debased values of modern life, social question of class system and cultural dichotomy. These rancorous men rise in rebellion against the existing order because they look toward a void in future. They shout at an intolerable general syndrome of the society caused by exploitation. “These conflicts and traumas become too pronounced at a particular point of time in their life when a part of their psychic apparatus refuses to submit to repression” (M. Rajeshwar, “The Inner World of Indian Women : Neurotic Characters of Indian Women Novelists” 1 : 49). As the elders accept the exploitation inherent in society, the younger generation try to set it right by kindling an awareness in the minds of the people.
Ravi, the son-in-law of Apu in A Handful of Rice is a rebel who is a victim of social injustice. The society in which he lives exploits him because he is in its lowest strata. Unlike Nathan and Apu, his father-in-law, Ravi who belongs to the younger generation rebels against the unjust, inhuman restrictions of a society that condones social evils, hypocrisy and cruelty. The older generation of Apu accepts suffering fatalistically but Ravi "voices an element of protest against it" (Avadesh Kumar Singh, "The Element of Protest" 121).

Ravi is disillusioned by the post-Independent urban Indian society with all its anti-social elements. The smugglers, bootleggers, black-marketeers and hoarders continue to thrive and live in plenty. But the respectable law abiding citizens live a life of poverty and misery. Their plight is desperate. Their body and soul fall apart under the pressure of want and need. In such a society riven by marked inequalities the struggle for survival is very hard. Ravi fumes, rages, and nags at a world where there is no fibre or filament.

Ravi with poor elementary education is a young man who has rushed to the city looking for a white-collar job. His father, a poor peasant who has no worldly wisdom, is proud of his son's
education and considers it "as a key to the power of earning which was the broad base of a man's pride" (HR 27). But the city is full of graduates looking forward to getting employment and Ravi is unable to get a "job for him between coolie and clerk" (HR 27). He strives hard for his betterment. Ravi is an example to show how man can stoop low in his struggle for a handful of rice. Writhing in pangs of hunger he breaks into the house of the tailor Apu and later becomes part and parcel of the poor tailor's household. The rising price of rice and his dwindling income do not match and it is difficult for him to feed his family. The fire of discontent remains smouldering in his heart. Describing his mental condition in the period of his unemployment, the novelist writes:

Tight-wound coils of feeling inside him insisted on this, rebelling against wholesale acceptance of life as a culture for the breeding of suffering with the wild energy that sometimes made him want to break and tear whatever upheld it, and sometimes actually, physically ill with rage. (HR 49)

Failure and ruthlessness of life make Ravi wage a war in his mind. He finds it difficult to understand the dimensions of his
desires and aspirations. He is very sensitive to the class structure and wants to reach the status of the rich by fair or foul means. He is disillusioned to see the rift between the rich and the poor. The rich always live in plenty and luxury with “silk hangings and tall windows, gleaming floors and fine furniture” (HR 83). Though the poor are honest they are always in need. Ravi remembers the pathetic condition of the poor:

As far back as he could see they had all lived between bouts of genteel and acute poverty – the kind in which the weakest went to the wall, the old ones and the babies, dying of tuberculosis, dysentery, the ‘falling fever’, ‘recurrent fever’, and any other names for what was basically, simply, nothing but starvation. (HR 12)

In a depressed state, he becomes aware of the rise of his friend Damodar by his underground activities. Damodar and his gang squeeze people's throats to acquire their luxurious mansions, innumerable mistresses and expensive wines. Damodar tells Ravi that in order to become as rich as himself he too should be a partner in his underground activities. These words of Damodar stun Ravi. G. Nageswara Rao opines “The spirited hero Ravi confronts not the elements but urban man-
made penury and all his moral integrity and stoic endurance collapse before the ruthless black marketing ("Betwixt Negation and Affirmation" 163). After Apu’s death, the business declines and his earnings are reduced considerably. Hence rice becomes scarce in the house and his gloom thickens. In a fit of rage he disintegrates the joint family in which he is the head. “Inside Ravi, the gall rises and embitters his life” (I. K. Masih, “A Handful of Rice: A Perspective” 97).

Ravi rants against Memsahibs, rich people and against any form of aristocratic gentility. But his invective is part of a plea for human honesty and dignity. His ire against the memsahibs is only because they are his customers who behave in a high and mighty manner. They make him use the backstairs, underpay him, treat him cruelly and hurt him badly. They are cold and aloof because of their superior social status. “The class-structure of the rich and the poor has taken firm root and disparities widen with the poor being deprived of basic essentials of food and proper medical care and housing . . . ” (Jha 31) After Apu’s death the rich women rave at him for his delay in delivery of the stitched clothes. A smouldering anger rises in him. When he does not stitch a costly blouse properly the rich woman shouts at him,
"Fool! Wretch! Call yourself a tailor? A barber would have done better..." Rogue! you have ruined it completely, such expensive material, do you know how much it cost? Fifty rupees a yard, fifty... (HR 185-186). Ravi immediately gets angry and he thinks of his poverty. The young tailor wonders at the whims of the ladies who wear silks and brocades while his kind has hardly anything to put on.

As a result Ravi is frustrated and jealous. He is unable to understand Damodar's profiteering by dishonest means. Ravi has turned his back on the life of crime which he knows will be condemned by his wife. He becomes maimed in body and bruised in soul when his first born son dies without proper medical treatment. So he lashes out at those who are closest to him especially his wife in a vain effort to assuage his sense of futility and stalemate.

One principal reason for Ravi's anger seems to be the disparity between his own working-class origin and the wealthy upper middle class. In other words, he is conscious of class distinction of which he strongly disapproves. Another cause for his dissatisfaction is that he is leading a routine pauper life which offers him no excitement or even variety. His need of a bed, a
bicycle and a proper room remain just unfulfilled dreams. He becomes bitter because his wife is devoid of any kind of enthusiasm. He is really hurt by her emotional nullity. Ravi is convinced that the poor always go under.

Ravi feels that his frustrated anger and his prolonged waiting for better prospects in life must be broken by means of a demonstration or a shout. Having no other place to go, his poverty and rebellious nature make him join a mob shouting “Rice today, rice. Rice today, rice” (HR 233). The mob in a frenzy goes to the godowns and pulls out the gunny bags of rice. The angry crowd throws stones at “Eve” that has exploited Ravi.

As an exploited youth, Ravi sought to disturb and destroy the existing order of things. He thinks that with his shouts he may construct and create a superior world of just moral and social values. In his cry, a note of social protest is distinctly heard. His anger is against those economic factors which cause division between man.

As a contrast to his father Bawajiraj III, Rabi in The Golden Honeycomb rebels against the exploitation of the West. The hold of the West on Rabi, the illegitimate son of Waji is very strong. But
his mother Mohini and grandmother, the Dowager Maharani help Rabi into an understanding of the plight of the people of Devapur under the oppression of the princely government. He realises that “the British gradually, carefully and craftily nibbled away at the strength of India and made her a vassal of the crown by schemes and a catch 22 arrangement” (N. Rao, “England” 7).

Rabi has a spirit of nationalism and social responsibility. He belongs to the group of “the large number of national leaders in India, who succeeded to wrest power from the British imperialist” (Harish Raizada, “East-West Confrontation in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya” 42). In order to awaken his people against the victimization of the West, he arranges meetings at various places with the help of Usha. He wants to make it very clear to the people that they are exploited by the British policy. By this system the British controlled India and the native princes complied with the English polices. Bawaijiraj III, the father of Rabi is a typical example of the native princes who are under the control of the West. A word from the British rulers is just god’s dictum for Waji. He bows to the Viceroy in the Durbar of 1903, and backs away like a slave. From his behaviour Rabi is well aware of the superiority of the West. His father's loyalty to the British is very
deep. This awareness and the influence of his mother, and his Pandit, lead him to a rejection of his princely role and the assumption of the leadership of popular protest. His tour with his mother to see the condition of the people of Devapur, and his visit to Simla with his father gave him a complete picture of the richness and the court luxury. As a contrast the poor do not have one square meal a day or one new piece of cloth each year. If his father along with the British rulers exploits the natives, Rabi in his turn tries to provide peace and progress to the people. The British attempt to make Rabi a ‘bania’ is a failure. He refuses to become the British approved and supported ruler like his father. He along with his people rises against the British, marches towards the dawn of freedom.

Just like Rabi, Subramoniam, Krishnan and Gopal Rao in The Coffer Dams voice their protest against the British. Race prejudice is an unsurmountable barrier. While working together on the same construction project, the British and the Indian technicians remain hostile to each other. This is because the thought of the imperial arrogance of the by gone days haunts them and they give vent to their rancour on and often.

Young Indian technicians rebel against the exploitation of
the British bosses. Krishnan, the young stern faced engineer disagrees with Clinton on the construction programme of the dam. As the leader of the engineers deputed by the Indian government, he feels bitterly hurt when Clinton is indifferent to his suggestion. He says in rage:

Brush us off like flies . . . despise us because they are experts and we are just beginning. Beginners . . . barred from knowledge and power as from the secrets of a master guild; and the memory of those neglectful years lay in deep accusing pools in his mind. (CD 23-24).

Krishna rebuffs Helen when she is surprised at the strange “flyaway foundations” (CD 51) on which the tribesmen build their whole lives. “Of course they seem flyaway to you. You are used to better things. Unfortunately our people are not. They’ve become used to being done out of their rights” (CD 51). Again, when Helen questions the servile attitude of the tribals, Krishnan bitterly remarks, “. . . the British had eaten it away during the centuries when they were rulers and Indians the ruled: it would take a century to form again” (CD 83). The bitterness has its origin in the
past and it has a historical perspective. The author reasons out:

... its sour origins in past and present, from the noxious emotional caldron that Britain the ruler and India the ruled had kept on the boil throughout the term of an imposed overlordship, to the humiliations of being an underdeveloped and pauper nation. (CD 51)

Krishnan, unable to bear the victimization, has tried twice or thrice to stimulate the thick-skinned labourers to strike work. But each of his attempts is aborted. He cannot concentrate the labour power because it has fragmented before his eyes. The novelist's comment is illustrative of the affairs. She says, "that strike-breaking machinery existed, in the shape of an underemployed army that would swarm up the hill at first beckoning by Clinton Mackendrick ..." (CD 81).

In order to slight the Indian technicians, Clinton and his companions use nick names for them. Gopal Rao referred to as "the Mud Inspector" is a man of twenty one with delicate features and brilliant eyes. He is bullied by the English engineers about the loans that an underdeveloped India never repaid to the
countries of the West. In his fury, Gopal reminds them of Kohinoor, the biggest diamond in the crown of their queen, which has never been returned. The overlordship of Britain is seen in Clinton's treatment of Shunmugam and Gundappa.

The British spurn the presence of Bashiam, the local technician cum tribal crane operator. He is considered as "some one who doesn't count" (CD 56). Clinton makes him do dangerous work at the risk of his life but he has not a single word of appreciation for him. He considers him merely as a stone-age dweller hustled into the twentieth century. Rowling, his prejudiced companion, does not want Bashiam to handle the machines. They consider colour of the skin or race to be the criterion of competence. "These biases hamper communication among races and cultures and natural development of the deprived lots" (A. K. Singh 122).

The racially induced superiority complex of the British is resented by the young generation of Indians. Hence there is conflict between the British and Indian officers. Both have a positive hatred for each other. Perpetual political wranglings prevent cordial relations.

The cause of trauma in the younger generation is the
pattern of society which abounds in social disparities and inequalities. Seeing these evils, the young blood boils and rebels against exploitation unlike the men belonging to the older generation. They are not introverts like their fathers. They rave and rebel against the abundant social evils found in the society. Finally they realise that man is a fool who does not do what he can to keep on top. Through their capitulation, the novelist mounts a scathing attack on society which has exploited these men.

The next group consists of three men, Kitsamy in Some Inner Fury, Dandekar in A Silence of Desire and Laxman in The Nowhere Man who are westernised Indians. The impact of western education and civilization has anglicised them. They look down upon their countrymen for their backwardness. As they are swept off by the western influence, they find nothing valuable in their own ancient culture and the mode of life. They even occupy high positions in the British administration in India and they are considered as pillars of strength for continuing the British rule in India. These men exploit their own fellowmen. In the case of Kitsamy and Dandekar, they exploit their own wives because they have a feeling of superiority over the natives, like the British.
Because of cultural contrasts, the westernised Indians not only exploit their own lot, but also become victims of their own self-assurance and their prejudice. They are hurt not by what Indians do to them but by what they do to themselves. Native consciousness with the consciousness acquired from western civilization is causing traumatic experiences in these characters.

Kitsamy, commonly known as Kit in Some Inner Fury is Oxford educated and he is thoroughly westernised. "Western culture has gone deep in his blood and he has a genuine respect for it" (Raizada 42 - 43). His sister Mira points out his attitude to the western ways of life:

Kit did not merely participate in it: he was a part of it; his feeling for the West was no cheap flirtation, to be enjoyed so long, no longer, to be put aside thereafter and forgotten, or at best remembered with a faint nostalgia. It went deeper: it was understanding, and love. (SIF 142)

He tries to ape the western style of dress in the Indian climate. He dresses like an Englishman, with "collar and tie and suit, in brown leather shoes and a pork-pie hat" (SIF 11).
Kit's westernised attitude makes him an alien in his own country. As "he is entirely a product of the West [he] becomes... a stereotyped burra sahib..." (Mukherjee 83). Hence he fails to understand his countrymen especially his own wife who is oriental in spirit. He wants her to dress and behave like an Englishwoman and to play the role of a fashionable hostess. She is a poor victim of her husband's Anglo-mania and she is made to wear shorts, play tennis and throw parties. Kit once said that she can be a good tennis player and added, "Only, your sari does seem to get in the way" (SIF 52). With great embarrassment she wears shorts. He expects his wife to be modern and westernised but treats her as an Indian husband might treat his wife. Kit's attitude towards her is mixed and Premela suffers because of it.

By his westernised temperament and his high position, Kit is often at the centre of social activities. But Premala is a misfit in his anglicised world and she hurts his social sensibility. Kit insists that Premala should attend the party at the Government House. Even though Premala has little liking for such a social get-together, she obeys her husband. When she writes a hurried note and leaves for the village, Kit is traumatised. He becomes furious. Kit says angrily, "she says she's had to go—she doesn't say why-
and she hopes to be back in time . . . but of course she won't be able to make it - I shall have to go without her . . . . It's so awkward". (SIF 226)

He feels badly let down by Premala. His westernised outlook makes him an un-Indian and alien in his own house.

Kit exploits his adopted brother Govind too. There cannot be any compromise between an Anglophile like Kit and an Indophile like Govind. Both have their own way of life. Unlike Kit who is a slave to the West, Govind stands as a strong supporter of India and her independence. He takes to civil disobedience and he becomes a votary of violence for the cause of his country. These two men represent the two different attitudes found in the Indian society at that particular disturbed period of time. Kit is often impatient with Govind. He is unmindful of the inconveniences or hurt he is causing to Govind. Mira wonders, “What quality was there in Kit that could affect him so? What black power lay between these two men, who were my brothers, that could turn them into strangers?” (SIF 116). The reason is the two varied attitudes in these two men.

Again Kit tries to exploit Govind by using his power as a
District Magistrate. Kit says that he has heard of his secret activities against the British Government. Kit does not like Govind being a member of the Independence Party and organising civil disobedience against the government.

Later when Premala dies in a fire accident, it is Govind who reveals the real situation to Kit. He says with firm conviction:

She loved you . . . you never loved her–you do not even know the meaning of love. You gave her nothing – not even a home. You drove her to the village – you drove her to her death. (SIF 240)

Kit is unable to hear and sense the meaning of Govind’s words. His own hurt was too deep, the blood flowed too freely . . . ” (SIF 241)

Dandekar in A Silence of Desire is another example of a man who exploits his wife Sarojini. The relation between him and his wife has been harmonious for fifteen years. But they represent two different ideological stands. He stands for modern westernised thinking and she for traditional religious ideas. The diverse attitudes—one for faith and the other for reason are seen in the very first paragraph of the novel:
The six rooms that they rented were built round a courtyard, a square of about eight feet with an uneven cement floor in the middle of which stood the divine tulasi that his wife worshipped . . . . Dandekar did not pray to it, he was always careful to say it was a plant; one did not worship plants.

(SD 5)

Sarojini represents a view of life, drawing from the past and Dandekar the relatively “new” and “chiefly initiated by a skepticism mainly western in propagation” (Edwin Thumboo, “Kamala Markandaya’s A Silence of Desire” 109). In spite of ideological differences they are perfectly happy together enjoying domestic bliss.

The orderly pattern of their relationship is disturbed because of the belated arrivals of Sarojini in the evenings. When she hides the purpose of her errands and the destination of her outing, his mental equilibrium is jolted. Sensitivity gives rises to hurts. “Hurts pile up unarticulated, and inarticulation always builds a wall be it inarticulation of love and loyalty or of suspicion” (Parameswaran 106). His suspicions are confirmed when he finds the photograph of an unknown person cherished
and worshipped by Sarojini. He shivers because, "here was something he did not understand, and it frightened him a little. Sarojini had lied to him . . . . He began to sweat, floundering the depths which he felt were beyond him. Beyond him, and unfair to him" (SD 56). Like Othello, Dandekar is torn between love for his wife and jealousy for the unknown man.

Dandekar, though a westernised Indian treats his wife like the typical middle class Indian husband, Kit. His male ego is affected because of the absence of his wife from home. He expects her to fulfil only his needs. For instance, when she hears his step in the courtyard she begins to fry the potatoes. Usha Pathania is of the view that Dandekar is a "male chauvinist for whom the wife like a robot or some mechanical device for the fulfillment of his needs" ("Rejection of Silence in A Silence of Desire" 33 : 21). Though he cares for Sarojini, he shows scant interest in her response, thought and emotions. After his office hours, he relaxes in his easy-chair in the courtyard and Sarojini joins him for the evening chit-chat. He exploits the moments of togetherness, mainly for the narration of his deeds during the day. "He was not really interested in Sarojini's day, and he was always grateful to her for keeping her account of it brief" (SD 28). He usually repeats
the office conversation to her. But he cannot digest any intelligent point raised by her.

As a Hindu wife, Sarojini cannot do anything contrary to her husband's ideas. It is his westernised thinking that makes her hide her suffering lest he should force her to undergo an operation. This fear on Sarojini's part testifies that she is an exploited woman. In spite of what modern science has to say, Sarojini believes in a faith healer to get well. Dandekar believes only in modern medicine and he mistrusts the concept of faith healing. When he hurls the worst indignities on her, she reveals that she is not well. Sarojini says, "I go to be healed, so do the others whom you saw, I have a growth in my womb" (SD 86). But she does not expect him to understand her problem.

It is her husband Dandekar who goes through the fires of hell, first plagued by suspicion and then by the shocking revelation of his wife's illness. He has built a secure world around him. He is traumatised when it appears to be falling apart. The truth stunned him. He tells her "I was mad. I went mad because I loved you. Is that a crime? Is it possible to love without jealousy?" (SD 87). A traumatic period follows in Dandekar's life. In the process of persuading his wife to see the truth, he himself
undergoes a total transformation. Anita Mahajan remarks that he is changed "from a sceptic to a man feeling spiritually elevated" ("Tradition and Modernity in Markandaya's A Silence of Desire" 141).

Dandekar is "a victim of indecision, totally failing to concretize his vague thoughts based on reason and science, heavily weighed down by an indefinable silence" (Nair 243). Kamala Markandaya has placed Indian life in the perspective of western notion. It is obvious that there is an incessant conflict between Eastern tradition and Western progress. Religion and science work as antithetical forces, and thus insist upon the essential cleavage between the East and the West.

Laxman in The Nowhere Man is the anglicized son of Srinivas and he exploits his father. Srinivas' sense of alienation is due to racial discrimination and it is intensified because he is very conscious of the inequality between himself and his westernised son. There is a wide gap between the first and second generation immigrants and Laxman reflects the second generation ethos as he is born and bred in England. He considers the alien country as his own. Kamala Markandaya portrays the distance that has developed between the Indian parent Srinivas and his Anglicized
son Laxman. He is "a pale brown Englishman with a pale pink wife" (NM 33). He does not like his mothers hairstyle with a bun, her Indian way of dressing and her Indian-English accent. As Hena Ahmed points out he is a typical example of:

The contrast between first and second-generation immigrants . . . [Laxman] is the second generation immigrant who, in his desperate effort to belong to the white social class, completely denies his Indian connection and conforms to the social values he sees around him. ("Kamala Markandaya and the Indian Immigrant Experience in Britain" 145)

Laxman, unlike his father has learned the ways of the West and knows how to fight for his survival. He wants his parents to assimilate British culture because it is the best way to belong and be accepted by the adopted country.

Laxman’s "voice, syllables, accent, syntax, the clothes he wore, his manners [and] his style" (NM 258) proclaim his identity with the alien soil. This causes his filial insensitivity. He does not like a family reunion with his Indian parents even after the birth
of his child. The English community has refused to absorb Srinivas into its main stream. His son Laxman also views him with suspicion and anger. He is disgusted with his father because of his oriental disease. If Laxman had not deserted his father because of his western identity, Srinivas would not have felt lonely.

He rejects his father, and is rejected himself by the racist. Laxman has never known India. He is born and bred in England and has been studying in a Christian school. He has fought in the war on behalf of the British. He has married an English girl too. He has complete identification with the English culture and western ways of life. He is an employer of thousands, a member of the hospital Management Committee and a pillar of the nation. Therefore the racial question of “them” and “us” shocks him deeply. He muses over the situation:

Whatever anyone might say or think or do he knew he belonged, and where he belonged. To the country in which he was born and lived and labored, not in some reservation rustled up within it. Whatever fathers of sons or sons of bitches
might think, suitable inmate for a ghetto he was not, and did not intend to be. (NM 259)

In these three men characters Kit, Dandekar and Laxman, Kamala Markandaya has portrayed the inter-cultural relationship. They are the victims of the cultural class of the two modes of life, the Eastern and the Western. Kit, Dandekar and Laxman are the exploiters and the exploited. These men are examples of the paradoxical hold which the west could exercise on an Indian by birth. She looks at the problem of westernisation in its varied aspects. She is the living example of mixed allegiance and so she has depicted with discernment the impact of the west on the Indian mind. It is the racial animosity that keeps the Orient and the Ocean apart. Sharp political disagreement, and cultural pride widen the gulf between the two.

Valmiki, commonly known as Val in Possession is an adolescent, a unique character who stands in between the older and younger generation of men. He shares the quality of patient suffering along with the men of the older generation and also rebels like the men belonging to the younger generation against the exploitation of the West.

Val is a goatherd of fourteen and he paints in the
wilderness using mud walls for canvas and mixtures of flower and herb paste for paints. Caroline Bell, a typical example of the western pride and snobbery is impressed by his talent. She sees in him potential material gains. Without caring for any one's feelings, she buys him for a sum of money. As a teenager he does not feel the pangs of pain in parting from his family. The reason that he gives is "I not happy there. I not live with them always, only sometimes" (Pos. 58). He has not received love from parents, brothers or sisters. He is not good at work. Even the villagers laugh at him saying his brain is "soft." He recollects painfully the mental wound he suffered when his father chased him out of the house along with the goats. Val is seen as the wounded child, permanently scarred by traumas of hatred and violence from parents.

Caroline exploits Val for her vicarious pleasures. the novelist comments:

The East was too strident, too dissonant, too austere, too raw; it had to be muted, toned down, tarted up – its music larded with familiar rhythms, its literature wrenched into shapes recognised by Western tradition, its dances made palatable by
an infusion of known idioms... Undilute East had always too much for the West; and soulful East always came lap-dog fashion to the West...

(Pos. 109 - 110)

There is an inherent dichotomy in the Val-Caroline relationship. She treats Val as a business proposition and wants to make a successful artist out of him. She introduces him to the western world of aristocracy and splendour. His journey to England and his travel around do not sharpen his artistic sensibility. Instead, the alien surrounding seems to have strangled his talent of painting.

But Caroline does not want to lose Val. When he becomes refined in his dressing and speech, she wants to possess him absolutely. Her desire for possession takes on a physical dimension as well. Anasuya, the narrator suspects an unholy relationship between them. She contemplates:

Were they one flesh? ... The thought hammered at me again as I saw her white arm encircle him, holding him as if he were hers... and she was establishing her claim to him as
plainly as if flag in hand she were registering
property rights. (Pos. 111)

Caroline has successfully made Val a painter and her paramour.

Val’s accomplishment in the western ways is simply external. Away from his cave and his spiritual mentor the Swamy, Val’s inspiration to paint evades him. Inwardly he remains deeply Oriental. “Cut off from his moorings, he floats [and] flounders” (Parameswaran 101). Hence she fictitiously connects him to the cave and to the Swamy by faking the Swamy’s letters. She has exploited his gullibility. As he is intuitively connected with the Swamy, his Indian patron, he believes he is “always near in spirit to him” (Pos. 61). Hence Val is able to produce excellent work of art.

The Swamy’s visit to London and his revelation that he has never written to Val highlights the reality of the situation. “Valmiki, raging, the thin skin of civilisation sloughed roughly off” (Pos. 145), wants Anasuya to clarify the matter. At that time “he looked ill with anger and misery; speechless, finished with words” (Pos. 146). Out of jealousy Caroline puts an end to Val-Ellie relationship and Val-Annabel affair. Val, deeply hurt, understands
that he is a misfit in the sophistication of the West and he wants to return to his own land. He tells Suya, "if you could look inside me you would find nothing but deadwood" (Pos. 212) Tragedies, heart-aches, and the traumatic experiences suffered by Val are too much for him to bear.

When Val wishes to return to India, Caroline is furious. She does not want to loose her hold on him. Parameswaran is of the opinion:

She sets about getting possession of Val with the same dedication and ruthlessness with which the British subjugated India. She moulds him into a man, an artist and a lover after the image she has in mind, and in the process ruins him, depleting him of independence and spiritual strength, though in her opinion he gains more than he loses. (99)

She tempts him with the charms of the West. Her attempts to keep him under her heels go awry. She says with cold bitterness, "A waste . . . wasted work, a wasted man" (Pos. 231). According to K. R. Chandrasekharan, " . . . India can be redeemed and her soul
saved, only by a return to her ancient spiritual ways and values” (“East and West in the novels of Kamala Markandaya” 330).

Val's perilous attempt to free himself from the powerful West is indicative of his firm rootedness. In spite of the temptations and the lures of the West he returns to India with a determination never to return to England. As she belongs to an imperial breed that has never admitted defeat, she is sure that Val will go back to her. In the tug-of-war for the possession of Valmiki she stands on one side and the Swamy on the opposite side. She is supercilious in her challenge to the Swamy that she will come back to claim Val. But he has realised that “from his own people, poor but human, he could derive real inspiration of art” (R. S. Singh, Indian novel in English 139). It is ultimately with his Indian mentor, the Swamy and not his English patron Caroline, that Val attains satisfaction and is at peace within himself and the world. The spiritual power of the East finally asserts itself over the West's possessiveness and the ultimate spiritual legacy of the East triumphs. Val is torn between two worlds, one too powerful to dominate, the other though powerless is struggling to be free from the strong bonds of the foreign dominance.

Kamala Markandaya reveals the chain of the society
binding the individuals and families, and the exploitation of the East-West confrontation and how various allied causes lead to the trauma in the male mind. She does not present any radical change or solution to the problems that are projected by the male characters. Some of the characters bear the victimisation silently and others protest against exploitation and established institutions. However futile and tragic this confrontation may be, it pictures the turbulence and laceration in the minds of all the dispossessed and dislocated masses of the land.