INTRODUCTION

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Vision and Background

Critics have explored the four major themes in the novels of Kamala Markandaya which are the theme of hunger and poverty and the resultant dehumanization of man, the stirring of rural India into a new life under Gandhian influence, the essential incompatibility between tradition and modernity, and the east-west encounter. A brief overview of her novels reflects her dilemma that all Indo-Anglian writers experience while dealing with the themes of colonial/post-colonial periods. But Markandaya’s novels are the novels of difference in the sense that the theme of incompatibility born of cultural, social, moral and religious disparateness becomes less a harrowing experience then it is manifest in others’ writings. She is born in a South Indian Brahmin family and is settled in a country which once ruled her own country. But it is the interfusion of her South Indian identity and expatriate sensibility that coalesce to form her philosophy of life and art which is essentially of integration and compromise. As such, any significant episode constituting the centrality of action is a reflection of her life and thus realism comes in.

The Indo-Anglian writer, has his own problems. While abroad, he finds himself stationed between the two contrary pulls – one which is his own and the other which is acquired but not wholly subsumed. The situation thus grows highly comic when in a bid to explore the untrodden frontiers the self is exposed to losing its own identity. There is a wide, much-misconceived criticism that the Indo-English writer by virtue of a ‘mixed’ and ‘impure’ sensibility cannot do full justice to the
issues he undertakes to deal with which can be partly true in certain measures. But the reply to such subjectivistic criticism is as simple as the criticism itself is and thus to answer this question we should ask another question: does the knowledge of the two cultures not help the writer to enlarge his area of human understanding and develop a broader world-outlook which otherwise is not possible in case he happens to be shut in within a narrow sheltering ivory tower? There can be a grain of truth that the western concept of individual is alien to Indian mind in that the Indian is less free than a westerner counterpart to live life from a particular viewpoint. Either for his imperfect vision he feels hard to rise above the socio-economic constraints and falls a prey to stifling inertia or he develops a nihilistic attitude to life accepting the medieval notion of destiny and thus becoming desiccated to shake off shackles imprisoning the self.

In the existing situation the issue of commitment becomes an intellectual checkmate. The artist cannot fully extricate himself from the native sensibility and the total absorption into a non-native milieu remains quixotic dreaming Markandaya as a social realist has her philosophy of novel writing which, she feels assures full opportunities for the proper study of the growth of self. Such a view is akin to that of Forster:

"But in the novel we can know people perfectly, and, apart from the general pleasure of reading we can find here a compensation for their dimness in life. In this direction fiction is truer than history, because it goes beyond the evidence, and each of us knows from his own experience that there is something beyond the evidence, and even if the novelist has not got correctly, well – he has tried. He can post his people in as babies, he can cause them to go on without sleep or
food, he can make them to be in love, love and nothing but love, provided he seems to know everything about them, provided they are his creations. That is why Moll Flanders cannot be here, that is one of the reasons why Amelia and Emma cannot be here."¹

She is committed to the value of literature of concern sharing the belief that solutions are possible and wrongs should be righted by diagnosing the socio-moral malaise and suggesting the cogent measures to reconstruct a value-pattern in the larger interest of humanity as a whole. Literature as she believes should aim at revealing the essential structure of our being as well as those of others for the creation of value-structure concerning all. She is aware of the socio-psychological significance of the artistic creation and fully supports the existential premises that "one of the chief motives of artistic creation is certainly the need of feeling that we are essential in relationship to the world."²

And, therefore, in the construction of her conviction and philosophy of art, Markandaya is aware of this painful paradox shared by Eugene Ionesco's viewpoint that

"... a work of art is the expression of an incommunicable reality that one tries to communicate and which sometimes can be communicated. That is its paradox and its truth."³

She does not subscribe to the concept of 'art for art's sake' rather her belief is grounded in social reality. Art and literature, if extricated from the social context and a purposive direction, tends to be mere sterile philosophizing. She calls her novels the products of "Literature of Concern" and "Socio-Literature" and defines herself the implication of the term to explain as to what she means by the social context of art.

"The literature of concern has a part to play, therefore, and will be more effective than other media such as a television. For news is often forgotten, or people develop a kind of defence mechanism that shuts off unpleasant truths. Socio-literature erevents, this for 'it tells what it is like' to be there and feel it happening to you."1

Hers is the belief that the confrontation will lead to disintegration of self and the philosophy of the reconciliation will create a vision of paradiso. This is manifest in the concluding paragraph:

"...any one can bang a drum. Other media probably do it louder and better. But literature provides the resonance that lingers in the mind long after the last headline, the last communiqué from your own correspondent, have fled the memory. While it lingers, there is neither black nor white, nor capitalist, nor communist: there is only the human brotherhood."2

For William Walsh, Markandaya is "the most gifted" of the contemporary Indian Women novelist and one of the most distinguished writers on the Indian literary scene. The writers who happen to be expatriate or who have been abroad suffer from a sense of crisis of identity for the fact that they are "made aware of their Indianness as well

2. Idem.
as of the difference in the two systems of values: one rather acquired, the other inherited and taken for granted."¹ In Harrex this quest for identity becomes philosophical involving the clash between orthodoxy and progress and the sociological in character showing man's heroic endeavour to come to terms with reality in face of poverty, hunger, outside the terror of history. During the process, the writer himself becomes a victim of anti-human forces and their threats to his own individuality. What ails Markandaya's characters besides compulsions of politico-religious and socio-economic forces is "the east-west clash of codes that is part of modern India."² Margaret Drabble discovers the impact of socio-economic and political happenings on the progression of self in her novels. The critic contends that "the impact of new economic and political ideas on traditional Indian society is Markandaya's main theme."³ The resultant conflict results in the overwhelming sense of "anguish"⁴ and "despair"⁵. The pilgrimage of the self is frustrated in the wake of the clash between the medievalistic and modernistic outlook on life in the early phase but later the vacillation between the dubious prosperity and integrity of self disappears during the process and it

comes to terms with the reality by surmounting the threats of racialism, colour and nationality.

Others have praised the structural craftsmanship fulfilling Aristotelian requirement of an ideal plot: the structure grows with the theme and the balance between form and content is seldom lop-sided:

"The plots unweave at a sure and swift pace. There are no secondary plots, no political or philosophical digressions, no lyrical descriptions or extraneous characterizations. The narratives are continuous and the lapses of time between incidents are often dismissed in a phrase. This gives forward surging motion to the stories."

K.S. Narayan Rao reads her novels as the deep broodings of the novelist on the problem of evil and the agnostic view of art. The individual is destroyed in the fire of revenge but the passion keeps throwing its lurid gleams to suggest moral imperfection and sorrow: "A narrative unit might be over but the life's narrative does not end. The novels conclude but they are not quite conclusive, obviously for an intended artistic effect." The freshness of the appeal of her novels is partly due to the story - element spun out of the staple and the social ambience she is conversant with. Thus the first person narrative technique which she has employed in her first novel Nectar in a Sieve, though it has its flaws contributes "much originality to the indo-Anglian novel."

The recent criticism hinges on a paradox which is adumbrated in Walsh. They hold that her "too long stay in the west." has destroyed her view of reality. There is a wide gap between the contemporary Indian reality and the realism as reflected in her picturisation of the kaleidoscopic view of Indianness. In comparison to the novelists of stature, such as Bhabani Bhattacharya, Mulk Raj Anand, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Markandaya's novelistic universe suffers from the characteristic mark of Indianness. That is the novelist is less conversant with the fast changing socio-economic structure. But such a view is hardly convincing. The novelist, it is true, faces the same dilemmatic situation, the choice between the two sets of values that confronts his protagonist's progression toward self-realisation. What saves the artist is the vision to create the image of self which ultimately becomes the vision of the protagonist as Colin Wilson has rightly pointed out that the novel is

"...an attempt to create a mirror, in which the novelist will be able to see his own face. It is fundamentally an attempt at self-creation. 'Describing' 'Reality' and 'telling the truth' are only secondary aims, the novelist's credentials his authority for demanding the reader's attention. His real aim is to understand himself, to grasp his own purpose, and in doing so, to enable the reader to understand himself and grasp his own purpose. This is not to say that the novelist's aim is not ultimately 'truth'; but this truth can only be achieved through the clearer and clearer definition of the self-image."\(^1\)

The Indo-English writer is bound by a tradition -oriented society wherein the individual's effort to create his own private world incurs the

wrath of a stifling system. But he never grows oblivious of the ethical imperatives of man's social behaviour and responsibilities. If man has his own rule and his own end and if the ends are open, then it does not mean that everything is permissible and moral. The strength lies in the authentic portrayal of human reality, keeping in view the certain cardinal issues which keep the self closer to vision. The emphasis is on affirmation through acceptance of the conditions of living: that to exist is to act and to act is to choose. It is in choice that all values are created and creating is doubly living as Camus philosophises. The self seeks fulfillment by gaining realization that the existence of others has as much a reality as his own.

The 'term' defined

In spite of the fact that Kamala Markandaya occupies a special position among the women novelists in India, no full length study of her novels is made to explore the theme of progression of self in the context of Sartrean ontology of the Being and its coming closer to evolving a fundamental spiritual vision in the absence of any built-in-pattern of human perfectibility by way of transcending the inadequacies that denies its authentic selfhood. The protagonist rejects the existing view of human reality and struggles to rise above the moral menace unleashed by the politico-religious and socio-economic forces to evolve a strategy based on human decision. The state of insentience is replaced with stirring and activation. Knowing that there is no salvation outside it's ownself, the cognitive self moves to make a realistic appraisal of the human condition and by gaining, during the process, an awareness of its
potentialities and limitations proceeds within their orbit to accommodate its interests and appetencies with those of the other numerous selves it comes into contact with.

Markandaya's philosophy of life and art is of integration and compromise which is indoctrinated in the philosophical formulations of the existentialists and of the humanists. As such, she rejects the romantic liberation of self knowing that thrusting one's will against the will of society will destroy the moral climate. Nor does she share the view of the nihilistic theoreticians who project the littleness of man undermining the human potentialities: man can be wretched, miserable but not small. He has the capacity to look for the spiritual aspiration beyond the materialistic concerns. And thus the strength of her novelistic universe lies in asserting the power of human intellect and capabilities to reorchestrate the pattern of value system, not in abstraction but in close association with the society at large. This in Markandaya becomes the core thesis to study the progression of self and show its arriving at illumination by transcending the trivialities of race, colour, nationality and above all the east-west dichotomy which, is a subject that "seems almost inescapable."1

And in the evolutionary graph of the progression of self the consciousness plays a vital role. During the process, the possibilities to develop insights into the complexities of the forces of disorientation are opened up which has its genesis in the imperatives of the philosophy of

humanism and the existential view of man, especially of Sartre's ontology of the Being. The doctrine of existentialism for its priority of existence over essence has had its criticism that it fosters a creed of subjectivity. Sartre himself had to roll away the mist saying that it is the principle of subjectivity that makes the self to endeavour to be what it is not, man being a "project" becomes of himself. And thus it is not the existential thought alone but every doctrine that involves the growth of man "affirms that every truth and every action imply both an environment and a human subjectivity"\(^1\) to render human life possible. That is it is the subjectivity that holds man wholly responsible for his acts and like Camusian rebel in fashioning his own image, fashions an attitude of "All or Nothing" which implicitly justifies that the existential strategy is not individualistic.

The term 'humanism' was used for the first time by a German educationalist, F.J. Neithammer in the context of the Greek and Latin classics as writings promoting the larger human interest. Later, it began to denote a doctrine taking "human experience as the starting point of man's knowledge of himself and the work of God and nature."\(^2\) The most common formulations of the humanists are the belief in the human potential and the rejection of any system that denies any meaning to life and looks upon man as depraved only to be saved by divine grace. The

central concern of all humanists is "for man, his growth, fulfillment and creativity in the here and now." There are various schools of humanism which differ in the treatment of man's place vis-à-vis his universe but its two prominent category are theocentric/theistic and anthropocentric/atheistic. The first recognizes God as the center of the universe and man, as Christianity would have it, a sinner but can seek salvation by grace. The later view believes that man is his own center and therefore the center of all things. It implies a naturalistic conception of man and freedom."¹ What connects the two schools of thought – humanism and existentialism – is the theme of freedom and choice. The theistic existentialists grant freedom to man by first regarding God as ultimate reality, the atheistic humanists deny God and regard man as "the measure of all things." The word 'measure' implies standard of truth of all things which man tries to evolve and endeavours to gain realization of the possibilities in him. It is "the reflection of this effort in literature, literary criticism and art which constitutes humanism in its oldest sense"² and thus the humanist's belief that God be defined "wholly in terms of human ideals and social principles" is the view shared by the liberal bishops in the Middle Ages. They brought down the humanism of the Greeks by establishing good libraries stuffed with works of classical antiquity. It is designated as Christian Humanism and is "not anti-God but pro-man, it did not deny 'life eternal', but was preoccupied primarily


². Hunter Mead, Types and Problems of Philosophy, USA, p. 415.
with this life."¹ This also finds reflection in Renaissance philosophy of this 'worldliness'. In the wake of this view the Church rituals, if found not relevant to human needs and are sterile to promote the central concern of humanism for man which is his "growth, fulfillment and creativity in the here and now"², are imperfect and need rescrutiny.

Man for the ethical humanist is "a goal-seeking organism" but his values are not arbitrary, they are to be deduced from human situation, its need and history and thus the stress, what Edward L. Ericson holds, is on the twin principles of human responsibility and personal worth as the foundation of ethical humanism.

/Authentic moral freedom derives from the nature and creative activity of man himself, from the interplay of his social feeling and rationality (the ability to foresee consequences and consider conflicting ends) combined with the drive to achieve meaning and wholeness in personal and social life."³

Thus the ethical humanist is for the creation of an orderly process of constitutional democracy and "subscribes to the use of democratic methods and the avoidance of authoritarian and terrorist means, whether exploited by left or right, which break down the relationships and trust upon which mutual help and civilized standards rest."⁴ The humanist temper is "man's awareness of a sense of human dignity and power and a sense of responsibility for cultivating and

2. Idem.
4. Ibid., p. 57
maintaining it, and for achieving an integrity and wholeness of human life."¹ Thus the stress is on "the autonomy of the moral life." It is the fusion of freedom and obligation which alone can enable man to create his own values to live by. The value of obligation, Friess states, lies in the "curtailment of the freedom to do wrong."² For the ethical humanist what is of primary significance is the emphasis on right relations between the people involving the notion of human responsibility which is at the center of the philosophy of humanism. Thus humanism, instead of defining man in terms of universal given ends, calls him to a human programme based on certain intrinsic values of life for bettering human lot.

"Acceptance of interdependence and the solidarity of interests as the basis of human relations means acceptance of a share in joint responsibility for creating for all the conditions of a life worthy to be called human, a human providence in which each may be his own end without mockery."³

Both the theistic humanists and the atheistic humanists are committed to the attainment of the truths about man. Theirs is the philosophy of belief. Their faith in man's imaginative power generates waves of hope rather than despair: man by virtue of his power of imagination and intuition chooses to act and impose his own pattern of value preferring the rebel's point of view - 'this is how I want things to be' to 'this is how things should be'. The atheistic humanist views man

2. Idem.
as a product of evolutionary process, it is man who can assign a
meaning to the random, fortuitous occurrences taking place in the
universe. Humanism as humanity-centred philosophy excludes any
ethical and moral postulates if they encourage the authority of
supernatural mandate in place of being grounded in human experiences.

"Man must learn to exercise a high ethical policy toward the earth on
which he lives, toward the multitudinous plants and animals inhabiting
it with him, toward his fellow human-yes, and toward himself as well—
or cease to survive."¹

The existential humanists seek to redefine man as a cognitive
subject in relation to the world wherein he, as a free individual, is
abandoned to create his own pattern of living. The world he lives in is a
naturalistic environment in which he, once freed from comforting
illusions, is free and responsible for framing his own nature. He gains
an awareness that the exit lies in freedom to be human which is shaped
not by any extraneous agencies governed by socio-politico-religious
imperatives but by his own decisions and choices. There is every
possibility that what he chooses to act could be a demonstration of
purely a self—anointed philosophy of morality that Satan, contrary to
the morality of heaven, chooses in hell which is—'Evil be thou my good'
Thus the stress of the existentialists on the twin principle of uniting
freedom with responsibility and obligation is similar to the temper of
humanism which involves "an attitude toward and an appraisal of the

Alternative: Some Definitions of Humanism, pp. 81-82.
native and possibilities of man and his essential needs."¹

In historical perspective the existential view of man owes its origin to the philosophy of Heraclitus and Socrates: that man can work out his salvation through the personal efforts. Heraclitus was preoccupied with the problem of self-analysis or the consciousness of human existence. The Upnishadas too emphasise the act of knowing the self by insight which is not only intellect but a principle that can make the self assign a rational meaning to the universe. Sartre, Marcel, Jaspers and Camus have interpreted their view of man, sharing a common belief that the meaning be assigned to the opaque nature of the world which seems elusive to human understanding. For an existential humanist what comes first is the thing, not the idea, "neither God, nor logic are anywhere except, perhaps in man. Instead of saying that the universe is all meaning he says that the meaning does not exist anywhere in it except perhaps in so far as man, all alone in an absurd universe is able to lift himself by his own boot-straps and create what does not elsewhere exists."² In Jaspers the value is created not in isolation but in close association of the self with something other than his ownself:

"Man, however, is not a self-sufficient separate entity, but it constituted by the things he makes his own. In every form is his being man is related to something other than himself: as a being to his world, as consciousness to objects, as spirit to the idea of

¹. John Herman Randall Jr., "What is the Temper of Humanism", in Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, p. 58
whatever constitutes totality, as Existenz to Transcendence. Man always becomes man by devoting himself to this other."1

It is this interaction between a self and a self that assures greater degree of freedom and responsibility in terms of multiple choices. Contrary to it the romantic egocentricity and directionlessness destroys the insight to be aware of the world around. "If man wants to grasp himself directly, he ceases to understand himself, to know who he is and what he should do."2 Man, Jaspers continues cannot comprehend on the basis of himself. The discovery of the self and the process of transcending its limitations takes place in a world of intersubjectivity which shows that even what is individualistic and particular becomes universal and comprehensive to every man. The self in state of interfusion and communication becomes aware of the communal existence:

"The individual cannot become human by himself. Self-being is only real in communication with another self-being. Alone, I sink into gloomy isolation – only in community with others can I be revealed in the act of mutual discovery. My own freedom can only exist if the other is also free. Isolated or self-isolating Being remains mere potentiality or disappears into nothingness. All institutions that maintain soothing contact between men under unexpressed conditions and within unadmitted limits are certainly indispensable for communal existence; but beyond that they are pernicious because they veil the truth in the manifestation of human Existenz with illusory contentment."3

2. Ibid., p. 174
3. "Existenzphilosophic", p. 168
Gabriel Marcel and Martin Buber too support Jasper's thesis and stress the need and genuine communication between the self and society. As it is for Kierkegaard, so far Marcel, the act of formulating any abstract system in a universe which lacks a rational explanation of human existence is meaningless. The meaning does not consist in things seen but it is to be created out of the conditions of living through personal experiences so as to transcend the complexities involved in inter-subjective relationship.

The process of transcendence of self so as to attain the spiritual vision does not come as a revelation. It has its stages and a philosophy which Sartre explains in the en-soi versus pour-soi position of the self. Man as a helpless victim of socio-biological forces is left to his own resources in a universe appearing as a 'hall of mirror' to affirm his humanity by exercising his freedom to choose and live without illusions. The self looks for a set of formulations to be conscious of the morality of his acts so as to affirm the meaningfulness of human conditions in an otherwise meaningless universe. But what happens during the process is that the cognitive limitations of self, as Kant insists, makes realization vague and the position of self is very much like the shadow of an object in Plato's - cave-imagery. It is the faith in one's potentialities and an awareness that human reality is determined by freedom that the self overcomes this vagueness and arrives at illumination to distinguish between reality and shadow of reality. Thus the process of transcendence is studied in three stages which constitute the broad features of the project. They are
i. Inertia and resignation
ii. Stirring and beyond
iii. Illumination and transcendence.

The three stages are matched with the modalities of the Being: Being-in-itself, Being-for-itself, Being-for-others. The concept of the Being in Sartre is not as Plato’s ideal Being but a Being which is always in the state of becoming and progression. It is full of negation and thus the transcendental being is beyond any final interpretation and the act of assigning a meaning to it would be arbitrary. When the self is always in the state of creation, a definite assessment of the future historicity of human existence will be falsifying and inadequate. Sartre’s word ‘project’ sums up the essence of human reality: man outside the cosmic and the biological determinism, grows out of his actions and thus he will be what he makes of himself. This duality of the Being—the state of en-soi and pour-soi— is the core thesis of the Being and Nothingness. Sartre got the two terms from Hegel’s an-sich and fur-sich. Both are interlocked within each other but one cannot be the other. What separates the unconscious Being (Being-in-itself) from the conscious Being (Being-for-itself) is the consciousness which is the consciousness of Nothingness: “man is the being by whom Nothingness comes into the world.” That is man is himself Being and Nothingness. One can ask: how man in Nothingness can be responsible for the upsurge of Nothingness into the world?

“Nothingness is revealed to us most fully in anguish and that man generally tries to flee this anguish, this
Nothingness which he is, by means of "bad faith," The study of "bad faith" reveals to us that whereas Being-in-itself simply is, man is the being "who is what he is not and who is not what he is." In other words man continually makes himself. Instead of being, he "has to be"; his present being has meaning only in the light of the future toward which he projects himself. Thus he is not what at any instant we might want to say that he is, and he is that toward which he projects himself but which he is not yet."¹

Since the state of In-itself precedes the For-itself and the later is dependent on Being-in-itself both in origin and its continued history, man's persistent endeavour to make himself is the view of For-itself as a pursuit of Being in the form of selfness. This involves the possibility of the value related to the basic concept of the For-itself which is an internal negation of Being-in-itself. Thus the For-itself is without any of that fullness of the Being which we call the In-itself, but as a nihilation it is which is made possible by consciousness. Consciousness is the consciousness of a transcendent object, consciousness in its primary form "is a non-positional self-consciousness which follows that "consciousness of an object is consciousness of not being the object."²

The protagonist in the first phase has a glimmering notion of reality and thus the self by virtue of moving away from the profound truths of life remains passive. If there is any stir, it takes place only in the inner state of mind and in case there is any realization, it is purely self-centred, no barriers are pulled down to transcend nature. As such the distortion comes in and the protagonist loses the sense of

2. Ibid.
discrimination between the ideal and the real. It is not that he is unaware of the reality that the world is disjointed and irrational but what he lacks is the understanding and vision to comprehend the nature of reality. And the value-pattern he involves is highly subjective for being failure to go beyond which is everywhere. The situation which Rukmani (Nectar in a Sieve) faces after the rise of the tannery is not something that she cannot overcome its moral hazards. It signifies the march of history. It raises its ugly head to devour the "green open spaces, polluting the clean, wholesome atmosphere and tempting simple, gullible peasants into greed, ambition and immorality."¹ The loss of Ira's innocence at the hands of the townsmen crowding the tannery, the failure of rains and the resultant famine and scarcity of food, the eviction and the resultant humiliation and shame create a socio-moral ambience in which Rukmani fears the disintegration of her ownself and of the family:

"Ira had ruined herself at the hands of the throngs that the tannery attracted. None but these would have laid hands on her, even at her bidding. My sons had left because it frowned on them; one of them had been destroyed by its Ruthlessness."²

Rukmani's struggle is with the vagaries of nature and the most degraded form of poverty that forces the peasants to "feed on whatever we could find, the soft ripe fruit of the prickly pear, a sweet potato or two, blackened and half rotten, thrown away by some more prosperous hand... Sometimes from sheer rebellion we ate grass, although it

². Nectar in a Sieve, p. 136
always resulted in stomach crampts and violent retching."¹ Nalini is Rukmani in *A Handful of Rice* but the cast and the setting changes. If the tannery representing the town-morality begins to devour like a python the idyllic existence and the placid rhythm of life, it is the very town as metaphor of evil that destroys the freshness and the beauty of Nalini. It is again poverty, hunger as the word 'rice' in the title suggests that create the moral menace more after Appa's death when Ravi fails to cope with the demands of the customers. There is a point beyond which his imagination does not stretch and he can not rise above his weaknesses. In *The Nowhere Man*, the scene shifts to a non-native milieu, London is the setting where virtually the existence of Srinivas and Vasantha is reduced to 'nowhereness'. It is true that Rukmani is weak to fight nature and the evils of a feudalistic order but her resigning to fate "we're in God's hands", can not be taken as a humanistic gesture to transcend the threats of the impersonal absurd forces imprisoning the self. Her acceptance of fate is tantamount to pessimism. She cannot look beyond that there are left other realms also for human imagination to explore. Ravi is Nathan in a new setting and his tirades against the evils of economism and its offshoots draining the essence of conjugal happiness is also a sign of the self moving in a wrong direction. Instead of looking for the means to overcome the financial drudgery and improving the skill to conduct the tailoring – craft with perfect ease and tenability he indulges in activities which are highly irresponsible and drift him away from self-realisation. The passive suffering of Srinivas in

¹. *Nectar in a Sieve*, p. 95
London and the destruction of the flat in the wake of the anti-black upsurge can not evolve any worthwhile strategy of survival.

In the second stage, the Being becomes the Becomer an avoider of the impassive existence. The fact is illustrated by the changing pattern of value-orientation of the protagonists of the four novels\(^1\) which are placed thematically in the scheme of the study to show the stirring of the self to be what it is not. It begins to experience flashes which make it understand the weaknesses of Cartesian Cogito “I think, therefore I am” on the plea as Sartre would have it, that the consciousness which says “I am” is not actually the consciousness which thinks. It is the state in which the self comes in clash with the harsh realities of the conditions of living and looks for opportunities to concretize its existence by placing faith in the cry of Camusian rebel, “I rebel, therefore, we exist.”\(^2\) The realization of the value of a concretized collective existence makes the self grow restless to fill the ‘lack’ and be of itself. Man as a conscious existent shares Heraclitus’ view that “a man’s character is his fate.” The change from passivity to stirring brings illumination in that the self becomes aware of its limitations and develops an insight that it is by accepting these limitations that it can keep its promises for its ownself and for the good of total culture of the community. The self is not deluded, the fog disappears and by experience it has known its ‘lack’ that it is not what it is. Sarojini’s morality of faith (\textit{A Silence of Desire})

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{A Silence of Desire}, \textit{The Coffer Dams Possession}, \textit{Two Virgins}
  \item \textit{The Rebel}, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975, p. 28
\end{itemize}
clashes with Dandekar's morality of skepticism and rationality but her outlook on life gets enriched during the process which is reflected in her readiness to have the growth of tumour cured by operation. The holy man's ouster, Dandekar feels would alone enable him own Sarojini's self which can be partly true from the viewpoint of a worldling but on the level of transcendence, the self is yet to rise above its inadequacies. Sarojini's outlook is medievalistic that a man is because he believes contrary to the renaissance world outlook that man is because he thinks. Nevertheless there is no clash of the two in case there is understanding, involvement and reciprocity.

It is again the experiencing self of Valmiki that succeeds in extricating itself from Caroline's colonial hangover to possess the otherself without understanding the secret of the metaphysics of the self that one can possess the other's self when he sees in him his own self. Caroline's vision is myopic and her failure is the result of her imperfect understanding of the rising graph of Valmiki's self in the making. That is why the swamy's spiritualism which brings Valmiki's self close to vision comes in clash with Caroline's imperialistic prejudices. Howard Clinton (The Coffer Dams) is Caroline's domino. His attitude to the tribal population is a characteristic mark of the British approach to India. The completion of the dams, has irony about its construction in that it is the failure of the spiritual completeness as a whole which his wife, Helen, attains by way of transcending those barriers which obscure his vision.

In the Two Virgins the antagonism of the contrary forces is replaced with contrast which is reflected in the attitude of the two virgin sisters, Lalitha and Saroja, to seek fulfillment. One believes in the
romantic liberation of self and thus her pilgrimage from the village to the city brings moral ruination and the loss of virginity and the vision. The other’s journey is in accord with the spirit of the Christian pastoral from ignorance to knowledge, illusion to reality. Saroja succeeds where her sister fails to transcend the moral hazards associated with a culture which is both corrupt and corrupting.

The third stage of the Being is designated as Being-For-Others which is the essential structure of the Being and which establishes the truth about man, being a ‘project’. Man cannot be the same at all moments or in given situations. When locked in conflict with destiny or with the socio-moral ambience, he, by virtue of his sub-angelic character, has the capacity to rise above the limitations to create a meaning in life. But the transcendence cannot take place in isolation, nor it is effected through some super-naturalistic agency, rather it comes, as Sartre, says “by making explicit the pre-ontological comprehension which I have of myself that I apprehend being-with-others as an essential characteristic of my being.”

The Being in the third stage of transcendence gains illumination that the ‘other’ is the measure of the ‘Being’ and thus what constitutes the human reality is the transcended relations with the others. The trio in Some Inner Fury, Mira, Premala, Roshan Merchant, are the cases of the transcended self. ‘Mira-Richard’ alliance is a positive demonstration of the novelist’s vision of a culture in action. The pilgrimage of the self is not thwarted by the considerations of race, colour and nationality.

1. Being and Nothingness, p. 245
Richard as an alien is as much at ease in non-native surroundings as Mira. Premala has no problem to get along with Kit's westernized ways of living and his attitude to human relations. The act of adoption of a waif is symbolic of seeking self-fulfilment and rising above the religious position of a woman in state of childlessness. Her traditional upbringing is no physical or psychological threat to the self that has fully known itself. It is the terror of history, not the cultural disparateness and colour discrimination that destroyed Richard and Premala when the demonstrators set Hickey's missionary school on fire.

In *The Golden Honneycomb*, Markandaya sets before us a muster of characters of divergent rank and status but there is hardly any case of confusion or misunderstanding and if there is one, he is pushed wide of the mark for want of precise understanding and knowledge. Jaya and Janaki, the two representative of commonality do not look to be strangers in Rabi's company, the would be heir to the state of Devapur. Mohini, the concubine, has developed insights to look beyond with the understanding that if the beyond is not anywhere then it is nowhere. The interfusion of a self and a self leads to perfect harmony in relations. If Shanta Devi, the legitimate queen of Bawajiraj, feels jilted in state of desertion and remains a case of disenchanted self it is so because she is ignorant of the ways of the world she is placed in. She is dispossessed of the Summer Palace for Mohini which is no doubt a princely whim-wham in that the Maharaja could have constructed an alternate fairy dome for Mohini. But Shanta Devi's reaction to this act of moral tyranny speaks of her imperfect understanding and disillusionment. The self is shrunken, the anger is apparent: "It is for her. A love nest for her and
her son in which you will be welcome. That’s what you want. Take what you want. You always do."¹

Thus it is wrong to say that the politico-religious or the socio-economic factors tend to be more ruinous to frustrate the progression of the self. Rather the truth is that the individual has to build his own Jerusalem by surmounting the fate he is condemned to by the cosmic/biological determinism and gain lucidity that saves Sisyphus from the terrible punishment of futile labour.

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1. The Golden Honeycomb, p. 245