CONCLUSION
The foregoing examination of Kamla Markandaya's novels amply substantiates her concern with the process of realization of self and its coming closer to the vision, first by making it locate its identity in being with itself in the process of growth and then by discovering its social identity in a new kind of closeness and solidarity without eliminating its own individuality. The progress from self to social concern is hampered for a number of individual and social considerations of race, colour, nationality, thereby driving the self in state of powerlessness and isolation. The individual, irrespective of rank and class, has to evolve a spontaneous relationship to man and nature so as to surmount the antagonistic forces to find itself in the outer ambience. The primary ties assure security and the fundamental relationship with the world outside oneself.

The process of transcendence is matched with the growth of a character's growing awareness of individuality. The individual as victim of the forces of history, religion morality, racial discrimination and cultural disparateness loses sense of direction and accepts the archetypal fixedness as the ultimate destiny. The state of passivity and inertia becomes its hamartia which it has to transcend by way of seeking illumination. The protagonists of the early stage of the novels are imprisoned in a universe which is at once stable and silent to human call. Life as they live is poor, nasty and dessicated. Social evils, such as child marriage, dowry, the desire to have a male-child, lure of a city and above all man's inhumanity to man turn life into a harrowing experience. For the poor, the birth of a female child is taken as a
judgement and thus marriage is looked upon not as a mark of civilizing nature but an added fear to survival for want of means of sustenance.

The birth of Irawadi (Nectar in a Sieve) tends to be a sad experience for Rukmani and Nathan simply for the sole reason of securing a suitable dowry in a traditional society. The family is already in the teeth of hunger, poverty and want, because of the failure of rains. The survival in Darwinian sense, becomes an ordeal to the degree that women are forced to sell their body for feeding children. Ira’s nightly escapades have their own morality since the need is to feed Kuti who later dies. Contrary to it, Kunthi is a prostitute by choice whereas Ira is helplessly driven to it by the social forces. Rukmani’s disinterestedness in Ira’s birth is manifest. “I turned away and despite myself the tears came, the tears of weakness and disappointment. Nathan had wanted a son to continue his line and walk beside him on the land.” Rukmani nearness to Dr. Kenny is exploited by Kunthi who herself is a case of moral lechery. Equally Nalini’s child dies of earache for want of timely medical aid and it is poverty that evaporates the joys of Diwali celebration. Appa decreed that “there were to be no new clothes for any one this Deepawali” whereas the novelist tells that the “children were agog and looking into their bright expectant faces.” Kumaran did not mind since he was never given new clothes, it was always cast off for him.

And thus in face of humiliation and shame the woman loses sense of direction and power of will and initiation. What they have known of life is one-point devotion to their lord, the husband and a slight departure from the orthodox morality would turn the moral universe
upside down. Rukmani (Nectar in a Sieve) Nalini, (A Handful of Rice), Sarojini (The Silence of Desire), Vasantha (The Nowhereman) accept their fate with stoic endurance without questioning the values of orthodoxy and the stubbornness of the system. And if there is any attempt to cease to exist as a cog in the system, the rebellion is marginal. In such a situation, the woman loses sense of ‘feminine consciousness’ and her actions are never approved by the author.

In the second stage, the woman steps out of the threshold of tradition and orthodoxy and the self shows sign of progression. Helen (The Coffer Dams) is a victim of male-chauvinism. Howard Clinton is to build a dam across one of the turbulent rivers in the valley and nothing is going to prevent him, the sullenness of the workers, nor the fury of the monsoons. His spirit of industry and perseverance is not destroyed by Helen’s dynamism. Helen’s graph and stature of vision grows with the progression of action of the novel. Kamala Markandaya is preoccupied with the theme of compromise, and thus Helen’s advances towards an Indian tribal engineer, Bashiam is a part of her aesthetics. She is aware of the danger of the loss of self in state of alienation. She thus acts a votary of the cultural synthesis which is manifest in her coming close to Bashiam.

What Helen believes, in Sartrean sense, is that man is a “project” and he will be what he makes of himself. But Caroline Bell (Possession) suffers from the sense of overpossessiveness and thus destroys her own Jerusalem, the ideal she aims at by way of possessing Valmiki’s body and soul. Her attempt to overcome the spiritual scar in the grip of materialism tends to be a mirage for its imperfect vision and morality. It
is not human to seek one's happiness by crushing other's happiness. Both Annabel and Ellie are as much victim of Caroline's machiavellian—egocentricity and over ambitiousness as Valmiki. Valmiki's return to the native soil is symbolic of the self gaining awareness to find itself. When Caroline asks Valmiki as to why he has not got her cheques cashed his reply has the force of crushing realization that "they make excellent exhibits". This has a shattering impact on her mind. And to her second question, "what do they exhibit". What do they exhibit: my greed, meanness? Awarice? Cruelty? Which of the great iniquities would you lay at my door?" Valmiki's answer speaks of the enrichment of the self that one and one iniquity is that she "wanted to own me, and it is not an uncommon iniquity". Caroline, as non-native does not seem to share the novelist's philosophy of compromise, hence moral disaster.

Lalita and Saroja (Two Virgins) are also the specimen of a self in the making. But what destroys Lalitha's pilgrimage is what Spinoza terms as "scientia intuitive"—the intuitive apprehension. Her quest is cynical and self-centered. The self proceeds from finite to finite, thereby escaping the higher truths of life, the fundamental spiritual vision. It is unwise to isolate the self from the roots and identity with something which is tantamount to overreaching. A leap in the dark, leads to defeat and decayed hopes. Which is manifest in Lalitha's failure to attain her goal. And contrary to it, Saroja is more a case of enlightened self and her return to the original milieu is an affirmation that the self is not a slave of the will, rather it is with the power of intellect that it has gained through experience that registers its victory over will. While departing from the city, her Amma asks as to how she feels about the city-life her
reply is not that of confusion and puzzlement. "I’m all right. I’ll be all right again when we’re home". She escapes the onslaught of male-oppression and the moral filth as represented by the city. The world of ‘Gupta-Devraj, has no fascination for her, nor does it strike alluring with the promise of a rainbow –world. Her mind and eyes begin chiming together to resume a positive functioning when she reaches back. She says to herself, “I’m coming alive. It seemed quite a feat. She would not allow it to intoxicate, however, permitted only the traces of contentment, as she watched the macadon landscape retreating.” The world ‘alive’ has not only physical but spiritual connotation.

The characters in the third stage are the cases of realized self. Mirabai, the narrator, Premala, Roshan Merchant and even the whiteman ‘Richard (Some Inner Fury), Manjula, Mohini, the illegitimate Maharaj Kumar, Rabi, Usha, the daughter of the Dewan, and Jaya and Janaki, the two commoner girls (The Golden Honeycomb) are the illustrations who transcend the barriers of disruption to keep their identity protected. Their tragedy is instrumented by the fury of the impersonal absurd forces – the terror of history – that destroys Hickey’s missionary school. Richard is also destroyed in the court compound in the melee of the mob gathered to set Govind free. The three women – Mira, Premala, Roshan never let allow the forces of race, colour, religion, nationality overwhelm the self in them: they are at ease with both the worlds being represented by the east and the west. What is crucial for them is to keep the self above wallowing in the hell of one’s own moral inadequacies. The religion they worship and the philosophy they espouse is the cult of humanism. The demoniac forces are weak to
corrode the finer values of life. Mira is as much a case of transcendence as her lover Richard, and so are Premala and Roshan.

Mohini, the concubine is the object of Bawajiraj’s pursuit of love and not that she runs after the royal privileges. She refuses to marry the Maharaja to keep the self alive to its dignity: “I don’t want to be your queen. I want to be free.” Nor do Jaya and Janaki ever show any sign of moral vacillation. They are not led away by the temptation of the wealth and glory associated with the princely life of Rabi. Their association with him is human based on understanding and reciprocity. Manjula’s dislike of the whiteman is symbolic of her protest against the imperialistic design of the Britishers and their ambivalent attitude to freedom. Rabi, his mother Mohini, Usha and above all the Maharani, Manjula represent the forces of democracy and freedom and thus they are aware of their identity. They are the initiates to set the terms of life. Janaki’s dalliance with the prince and Jaya’s escort of his in Bombay are the instances to signify the purity of passion and innocence. If Shanta Devi, the legitimate queen of Bawajiraj is thrown out of favour for the fact that she fails to beget a male-heir it is not doubt something which has been playing havoc with a woman’s predicament in patriarchy. But the state of childlessness (Ira’s case is an illustration who is deserted by her husband) or the failure to beget a male-child alone are not responsible for a women being reduced to the state of non-entity. It is her courage, initiation and a vision that can make her rise above the inadequacies of self.

Markandaya shows concern with the preservation of self so that
the trivialities of life and make the self come closer with the otherselves for the evolution of a final world outlook. She has shown the characters seeking harmony even when the environment happens to be uncongenial and stuffy and is vitiated by the considerations of race, colour and nationality. The antagonism of the forces of tradition and modernity, spiritualism and materialism, faith and science, involvement and non-involvement cannot destroy the world outlook and there can be no room for fear when the self gains illumination to find itself.

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