CHAPTER-III

THE WAY THEY BLOSSOM

As character is destiny, destiny does take

Endless forms and play countless roles

In the helpless life of Man.

One of Kamala Markandaya’s commendable gifts is her skillful characterisation. The special feature of her characterisation is her ability to portray with a high degree of credibility the growth and development of her characters if they are individuals and to highlight with uncanny accuracy their symbolic significance if they are types.

Kamala Markandaya has deftly delineated fully developed and charming characters in all her novels. Her characters are typical sons and daughters of the soil who undergo noticeable changes with the change of place. Kamala Markandaya’s characterisation evinces development with the advancement of her career as a novelist. She has shown great dexterity in the portrayal of her characters.

Kamala Markandaya shows exceptional interest in bringing out the motif of growth in the delineation of her characters. This sort of developing a novel giving paramount importance to the growth and development of the protagonist is known as bildungsroman in German.

M.H. Abrams defines bildungsroman and kunstlerroman:
Bildungsroman and Erziehungroman are German terms signifying "novels of formation" or "novels of education". The subject of all these novels is the development of the protagonist's mind and character as he passes from childhood through varied experiences—and usually through a spiritual crisis—into maturity and the recognition of his identity and role in the world. . . . (112-13).

In A Dictionary of Literary Terms, J.A. Cuddons defines the bildungsroman;

Bildungsroman (G 'formation novel')

This is a term (more or less synonymous with Erziehungsroman—literally an 'upbringing' or 'education novel'). Widely used by German critics, it describes a novel which is an account of the youthful development of the hero or heroine. ... (67)

P.S. Chauhan says that the careers of many of Kamala Markandaya's heroes "follow the pattern of a mythical hero's life," and, in a footnote, he quotes Joseph Campbell's definition of "the common pattern of a mythical hero's life, 'which mentioned' the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation, initiation, return." (137).

In order to elucidate the bildungsroman strain that can be traced, particularly in the later novels of Kamala Markandaya, it
becomes necessary to outline the progress of the protagonists of the novels from their earliest stage of growth to their maturity. So the novels that are projected as having the bildungsroman strain are going to be dealt with giving importance to the growth motif of the protagonists. The dreams of the protagonists of these novels are realized to a certain extent and they inevitably lead to their attainment of maturity and enlightenment as keeping with the concept of the growth motif.

Critics have looked upon Markandaya's *Possession* from several angles but they have not paid proper attention to it to perceive that it has the characteristics of a bildungsroman. However some critics have fortuitously commented on certain aspects of the novel which are characteristics of the bildungsroman; they are Valmiki's original status of a savage or a dunce, his early grooming at the hands of the Swamy, his going forth into the unknown world of Caroline, his grooming and formation under the watchful eyes of Caroline, the psychological process involved in his development, the corrosion of his soul, his various errors, the awakening of his conscience in a crisis, his return to his roots, his rejection of the commonplace life and his resignation to his role in the world.

The protagonist of Kamala Markandaya's novel *Possession* is Valmiki. He is introduced as a "simpleton" and a "goatherd" to Anasuya, the Narrator, by a village boy. He takes her to the Swamy's
cave where she meets her English friend Lady Caroline Bell, who is under the effect of rural arak. With the pride of someone who has discovered something hidden so far, she speaks to Anasuya in a perfectly clear voice:

"Look," she said. "He paints. He's got nothing, nothing of anything he ought to have, but he can paint. Can you see? Do you see?" (90).

Caroline implies that she has seen what others have failed to see. She feels that Valmiki is wasted there. She has decided to take him to Paris or London. She seeks Anasuya's help to get his family's permission to take him with her but Anasuya refuses to help her as she is afraid that "he should not be lifted too high, let fall too far, for he was neither old enough nor calloused enough to bear it." (12)

Valmiki is stimulated to know Caroline's interest in his painting. He knows from Anasuya that Caroline plans to meet his family, and he happily consents to take her to his home. Anasuya realises that the "few grains of admiration she had proffered might well be food and drink to him, after the simpleton's fare with which he had so far been fed." (12-13)

Sometimes later Anasuya learns from Caroline that Valmiki's family considers him a simpleton and good-for-nothing. Caroline gives his father five thousand rupees to compensate for Valmiki's labour and get his consent to take Valmiki with her. Valmiki insists that he
must see the Swamy before leaving. At the place of the Swamy, he shows Caroline and Anasuya his paintings of scores of gods and goddesses clearly defined.

Going to the Swamy, Valmiki touches the Swamy's feet and the Swamy's hands rest briefly and gently on his bowed head; Valmiki asks the Swamy if it is right to go with Caroline, adding that more than anything else he wants to go; in that case, the Swamy advises him that he should go for his peace of mind and others”; he adds that, after going, he will know whether to stay or return; he asks Caroline to take care of Valmiki and he adds, “He is too young and no shell has formed to protect him yet”(30).

Thus Valmiki leaves his native village with full of dreams of becoming somebody different from the goatherd he has been known to the villagers. He does not have even a definite dream for his future. Anything that is a different from his present situation is a welcoming state to him.

Caroline’s sympathy towards Valmiki and her urge to help someone whose talent is wasted for want of opportunities is instinctive. Initially, she does not have any specific plan to make Valmiki a great artist.

In Madras, Anasuya lets them use a small house of her own; after a month, she finds that Valmiki has changed; he can speak English and write his name; Caroline is proud of “her creation”. At the
time of departure, Anasuya reassures him saying that he can come back if he is not happy in England.

Two years later Anasuya goes to London. Caroline complains that Valmiki does not paint and she exasperatedly asks if she is to return him to the exact crevice in the rocks she found him in. Valmiki enters and Anasuya notices that though his dress is not up to the mark, he has a presence and bearing indicating the knowledge of his powers. Valmiki confesses to Anasuya that he has not painted at all and he asks her if Caroline has written to Anasuya about it. When Anasuya denies it, Valmiki seems relieved that, in that case, the Swamy has had no occasion to know that he has not painted anything. All the while Caroline observes his relief closely.

When Valmiki asks if the Swamy is well, Anasuya says that she has not met him at all and at his Valmiki’s face becomes wretched. Caroline asks Valmiki if the Swamy means much to him. Valmiki declares that he Swamy was like father and mother and friend to him and that he had helped him in many ways. He says that if the Swamy told him that he painted well he could paint well indeed. Caroline asks if her words did not have the Swamy’s magic, Valmiki repentantly throws himself sat her feet and “with the unconscious dramatics of a child” hammers his head against the arm of her chair, “as if the infliction of pain were the least he could offer in atonement”. Anasuya reassures him that the power will come back.
When Anasuya leaves, Valmiki rushes after her and she takes him to a café and buys him a cup of coffee. Valmiki expresses his anguish in bitter words:

"She [Caroline] does not care for me. She cares only for what I can do, and if do it well it is like one more diamond she can put in the necklace round her throat for her friend to admire; but when I do nothing I am nothing to her, no more than a small insect in a small crack in the ground (55).

Anasuya realises that Valmiki longs for human love. She reminds him of Caroline's faith in him in the early days and of her concern for him in not leaving him alone for even one night when no one would take both of them in. Forgiving Caroline he goes back to her.

After a few months Valmiki visits Anasuya. He tells her that he does not miss his family because he was not happy there. He reminds her that his family does discriminated against him even in the matter of food because he could not work, though all the time his mind was working. He bitterly relates that his father, after seeing his painting, spat at called it nothing and useless and upbraided him as mouth to take from his fields, giving nothing back. He says that then they sent him to the hill with the goat.

He recalls that one day the Swamy came, saw his painting and he did not spit. And after that whenever he wished to see the Swamy,
if he searched, he found him. He says that the Swamy is always near
him in spirit, even in England, and that he has said so in his letter.
Then he shows her a letter in which the Swamy exhorts him to work
hard at his paintings. Anasuya perceives that Caroline has forged the
letter purporting to be from the Swamy. Though she questions him
about it skeptically, Valmiki insists that the letter is indeed from the
Swamy. Valmiki says that he now feels good and has resumed
paintings. He informs her that there will be an exhibition of his
paintings in autumn. Though he is happy he has become thoughtful.
Anasuya understands that some part of their conversation has
disturbed him.

After a month Caroline calls on Anasuya and speaks of her
plans to groom Valmiki. She says that he must only talk in English
and learn French. She plans to take Valmiki abroad and hold
exhibitions.

Caroline appoints a servant Ellie, a Jewish refugee who has no
papers, no parents, no flesh and no personality. Learning about her
sufferings in the concentration camp, Valmiki becomes devoted to her
and even shares her work. Ellie’s hand and mind mend gradually.
Valmiki becomes absorbed in Ellie and stops painting. Caroline
watches it patiently knowing that he is not depressed this time.

Valmiki begins to take Ellie out and buys her food. One day in
the company of Ellie Valmiki calls on Anasuya. He tells her that he is
back at work again. He displays a deep contented pleasure and Anasuya returns to India wondering about Valmiki's future.

One day the Swamy comes to the hotel where Anasuya is staying, to give audience to his rich devotees. When Anasuya fears that Valmiki will be a misfit if he comes to India, the Swamy declares that one can never be a misfit in the service of God. He recalls that Valmiki was his "disciple, during his formative years", which he asserts, "nothing will touch". He adds that Valmiki will return, not to a "joyless void" as Anasuya imagines but it will be a "homecoming".

Anasuya returns to London and attends a cocktail party in Caroline's house. Caroline leads Valmiki by the hand, proud and proprietorial. She also suspects that Caroline has become Valmiki paramour, as it was rumoured in India. When Ellie enters the hall Valmiki presents her to the party. When she gets tired, Ellie informs Anasuya that Valmiki has forced her to pose in the nude for many pictures and she takes Anasuya upstairs and shows her the portraits.

Anasuya notices a portrait of Ellie showing a slightly enlarged belly. When enquired, Ellie tells her that she is carrying Valmiki's child and that Valmiki too knows it. She does not know what she is going to do or if Valmiki is going to marry her. She says that she and Valmiki have come together only once. She says that she has conceived only because she has feeling for a child. Ramesh K. Srivastava says: "Slowly and imperceptibly, Valmiki adopts the
English language, values, standards and even its method of painting and exhibition. His English replaces Tamil. He accepts alien values in man-woman relationship, particularly in his relationship with Ellie. . .” (29).

Success embraces Valmiki, the artist and many of his pictures are sold. But he refuses to sell many of Ellie’s paintings because “he could not abide by being parted from what was a slice of himself” (206).

Ellie says that his flesh and blood are in his pictures because “he did not eat or sleep, except a little, while he was working”. The critics are mostly favourable. Valmiki grows impatient with Ellie’s dullness at parties. Now he cherishes friends, having rethought his values. Anasuya observes that Valmiki has become malleable enough to Caroline’s system. Caroline is proud of her triumph and she totes Valmiki as her discovery in a cave. Slowly but surely, Caroline gets hold of Valmiki from the Swamy. Then carefully she trains, develops and grooms Valmiki. Krishnaswamy says that Valmiki is “transformed” by Caroline (201). William says that Caroline takes Valmiki to England “to remake him in her image of the great Indian artists. It is the Pygmalion theme” (86). A.V. Krishna Rao observes:

She [Caroline] grooms him into a smarmy smartaleck; doubtless, she justly claim to have ‘civilized’ a village idiot, a mere goatherd, but her civilization is
fundamentally apocryphal. Her sagging sense of values dehumanizes the personality of Valmiki no less than her ‘terrible overpowering craving for possession’ which finally kills the artist in him... (10)

Anasuya comes to know that Ellie has left. Valmiki and Caroline say that she has left because she wanted to think things out, because she is going to have a baby. Both of them seem to be too corroborative. Anasuya suspects that Ellie has been edged out. When the Swamy arrives in London, Valmiki shows him proofs of his success with a childish pride. He almost ignores Caroline and she is enraged and calls it “seduction”. She is afraid that the Swamy might take away Valmiki from her.

Valmiki tells the Swamy about Ellie. The Swamy advises him to seek the truth from Ellie herself. Anasuya tells him to ask Caroline about Ellie’s whereabouts. But he refuses to meet Caroline because he feels that she has used him like a fool by forging those letters. Anasuya patiently persuades him to meet Caroline but he falls ill. Caroline informs him that her agent Leon wants him to exhibit in Boston. She proposes that they should go to America at once. Valmiki’s interest is stirred. Valmiki feels relieved and he goes with Caroline. Valmiki and Caroline go to America. An exhibition is held and critics are mostly favourable. His pictures appear frequently in
news papers and Anasuya is happy to read critics talking of Valmiki’s inner eye.

Anasuya returns to India and meets Valmiki’s mother who is ill. When she informs about this to Valmiki, he refuses to meet her. Valmiki and Caroline return from their tour of America and Bahamas. Anasuya goes and meets them in London. Now Valmiki appears to be the “finished article”, having mastered the social arts which Caroline has patiently inculcated in him.

One day in a party given by Caroline, Valmiki meets Annabel, who is a distant relative of Caroline and a painter of sorts and a rebel. She is eighteen years old, small, slim and ordinary looking. Valmiki and Annabel enjoy each other’s company to the displeasure of Caroline.

Valmiki and Annabel are seen together on many occasions and at many places by Anasuya. One evening, she is surprised to see Valmiki and Annabel making love inside her flat to which Valmiki also has a key. Valmiki says her that he loves Annabel. Anasuya wonders what he will do with Caroline.

Valmiki talks to Caroline of his love for Annabel, she asks him to wait. Valmiki sleeps in the same bed with Annabel by day and with Caroline by night. After some days, Annabel persuades him to move out. They find a dingy room in a poor section. Though Valmiki has no money and he can not paint in that room, both of them are happy.
After a few days, Caroline invites them for drinks. Though Valmiki feels relieved Annabel is indifferent. Anasuya also is invited. At the party, Caroline cleverly steers the conversation to Ellie and her pregnancy. Then she declares that Ellie has committed suicide and to prove her story true, she shows them a newspaper clipping. Annabel is horrified and she wants to know the truth. Valmiki confesses that it was his child but he did not know that she was going to commit suicide. Annabel blames Valmiki for letting go Ellie with his child inside her.

Anasuya relates Valmiki’s confession:

“I did not do everything I could” he said huskily, but with a terrible clarity as if to be done with shame once for all, whatever the consequences. “I meant to go after Ellie and see that she was alright. I meant to, talked about it a lot and I worried endlessly but I did nothing because it was easier not to. Can you understand? It is the easiest thing in the world to let that happen, it only becomes impossible afterwards, afterwards it is the unforgivable. “You ran away.” Annabel’s face was dry and tight, the skin stretched taut like membrane of a drum and underneath the colour was blotched and uneven. She looked unbearably ugly.
"You ran away," she said again with a kind of cold vengeance. "You got her into trouble and you got out quick before the whiff of suicide could offend your nostrils and curl up those eastern sentiments of yours about the sanctity of life. I'm getting out before my stink sends you out scuttling as hers did, poor little shrimp- -getting out now while still I can."(207-08)

Valmiki goes to Anasuya's flat with his pet monkey. Then he moves to a basement which is fowl smelling, damp and stuffy. He refuses to take any money from Anasuya. Having finished her work in England Anasuya asks Valmiki to return to India with her. But he refuses to do so because he has no money to pay for his travel. He also refuses to take any loan from her.

Anasuya narrates Valmiki's feelings of guilt:

"I loved her", he did and he began to tremble, the continuous tremor of an old man. "She knew it before I told her. I think she loved me in her own way; she did everything she could to make things easier for me, right up to the end. What did I do, I gave her up, because she was not quiet- - simply not quiet. She couldn't dress and she couldn't talk - - well, they don't teach that kind of thing in concentration camp. And what did it matter? It didn't matter to me, but when there were other people I
did not see with my eyes, I saw with theirs, I had no
heart, there was no me, then it became very important.

Two lives snuffed out. Hers. My child's... (212)

Valmiki's guilt suffocates him and he reverts to his native
Tamil, which he has not used for a long time. When Anasuya talks of
Caroline's power, Valmiki says "People do not have power unless you
allow them to have it" (213).

To raise some money to help Valmiki, Anasuya wants her
portrait painted by Valmiki. As Caroline is reluctant, she goes to her
house in person. Caroline is away and Mrs. Peabody gives her the
portrait she wants. She takes it to Leon and he writes out a cheque
for it.

Valmiki's pet monkey is seriously ill. In spite of Anasuya's
showing the cheque to him, Valmiki refuses to go to India untill the
monkey gets better. But after a few days the monkey dies.

Valmiki leaves England once for all and he reaches India in the
company of Anasuya. A telegram from the Swamy informs him that he
is waiting for Valmiki and Valmiki goes to the Swamy.

After some time Caroline comes to India. Only with the
company of Anasuya can she get access to Valmiki. She tells Valmiki
that her driving him back to the wilderness was a crime. But Valmiki
says that the wilderness is no longer terrible as it used to be. The
Swamy says that the waste land may have some thing to tell them.
Moving to another cave to see some of his paintings, Caroline makes a last attempt to arouse Valmiki’s passion by linking her arm to his, but he withdraws from her. He accuses her of wanting to own him. Calmly he takes her hands in his, kisses them and he turns and leave her.

Anasuya sees abundant proof of Valmiki’s mature art. She observes:

Valmiki had heretofore had worked abundantly, or not at all. Now he seemed to have achieved a middle stage of serenity, avoiding both the frenzied labour that had eaten up canvas as well as the fallow terms when he had been incapable even of looking at his paints with out hatred. There was, too, a change in his work, so subtle it might easily have been a flight of fancy: but to me there seemed to be a moving, extraordinary yearning in the human countenance he had depicted, upturned, groping towards the light, a quality of compassion and profundity in his divine images, that had never been apparent before. (231)

Caroline says that all this work in the cave is a waste, “wasted beauty, wasted work, wasted man”. The Swamy feels that she is insulting “what is most precious to him”. He angrily says that it is blasphemy to say that, “the work a man does to glorify his god” is a waste. He explains that Valmiki now works for a divine spirit which “gives men satisfaction so rich they cannot explain it, and mostly they do not even wish to.” Caroline says that Valmiki has been hers, that
she will take care to make him want her again and that, on that day, she will come to clime him. The Swamy doubts if that day is ever likely to come and Caroline assures that it will.

The trait that is followed in the development of the character is that of the mythical hero. Valmiki who is regarded as a simpleton by his family and the village actually resembles the folklore dunce. His going forth into the world, to unknown foreign lands is an adventure. He learns wisdom the hard way, through trials and sufferings. Then he returns to his native soil. His grand dreams of success as an international artist are over. His errors of passion are also over. His sufferings and sense of guilt are past. He is now at peace, engaged in serving god through his paintings.

The development motif of the novel is explicit throughout the novel. The slow process by which Caroline trains him is described. Valmiki’s gradual growth into an acknowledged artist is also traced. Valmiki’s training disciplining at the hands of his original mentor is also recalled. As a result of his success in material progress, there is a corresponding decay in the spiritual values ingrained into him by the Swamy. This leads to his countless errors and callousness. Eventually the revelation of Ellie’s suicide jolts his conscience and opened his eyes. Thus comes the moment of his spiritual crisis.

Deeply hurt by his guilt, he manages successfully to come out his materialistic bog. He even goes back to using his native tongue.
Once for all, he returns to his native land and to his spiritual mentor the Swamy and his cave in the wilderness.

*Possession* tells the story of the development of an artist. Valmiki’s inherent but crude artistic genius is shown to develop and blossom under the patronage of Caroline until he earns a name as a talented and an internationally acknowledged artist. The triumph makes him erroneous but it is followed by the awakening of his conscience. He throws away the ostentatious world of Caroline and goes back to the Swamy’s cave to seek satisfaction in the service of god. This haughty rejection of the common place life is the typical kunstlerroman ending. The Swamy’s revelation that a life of usefulness lies ahead of Valmiki becomes true, as Valmiki has now recognized his identity and his role in the world, like the typical protagonist of a bildungsroman.

Ramesh K. Srivastava observes that Valmiki is a stereotype of “the noble Indian savage” (41).

Ramesh Chada observes:

His [Valmiki’s] is the odyssey of an innocent and unexposed boy led astray by temptations but returning to a life of serenity and tranquility after a chastening cycle of experience . . . . Valmiki leaves the Swamy, indulges in carnal pleasures, and returns to the Swamy eager to pursue his spiritual life with a steady mind, dedicating
his talent in painting to the divine spirit of the Universe . . . . (126)

*Possession* presents Valmiki’s development as a whole. Usha Bande warns that any judgment of Valmiki must take into account “psychological changes wrought in him by the conditions he is thrown into” and she also points out that, as a result of his defeat at the hands of Caroline, he passes through “a psychological crisis” 78.

Parameswaran, says, “She [Caroline] moulds him into a man, an artist and a lover after the image she has in mind, and in the process ruins him, depleting of independence and spiritual strength, though in her opinion he gains more than he loses” (99). Williams says that Valmiki becomes the artist Lady Bell intends but at the expense of nearly destroying his soul” (860).

The process of Valmiki’s development reaches a point of absolute disillusionment. It is followed by his awakening, realization, regeneration and the return to his native roots. K.S. Narayana Rao remarks, “A final repudiation of the life of passion is possible only after Valmiki goes through the mud and mire of life” (74). Joseph states, “Finally, he is made aware of his deterioration and in this moment of humility, begins the regeneration of his character” (122). C.V.Venugopal asserts that it is ultimately with his Indian mentor that Valmiki attains satisfaction “and is at peace with himself and the world” (152).
From the textual analysis and the critical comments presented above, it is traced that Kamala Markandaya's *Possession* is bildungsroman. The novel portrays the development of the mind and character of the protagonist, Valmiki, the uneducated village boy of fourteen, commonly regarded as a simpleton but patronized by the Swamy. He is discovered as an artist by Lady Caroline Bell, who later takes him to England, grooms and develops him into an internationally renowned artist. Accordingly, Valmiki confirms to the role of the dunce who goes out into the world in search of adventure, undergoes varied experiences, has grandiose dreams, commits foolish mistakes, suffers painful disappointments, learns wisdom the hard way, acquires maturity and responsibility and rejecting the commonplace life, resigns himself to a life in the service of God. Accordingly *Possession* fulfills the definitions of the bildungsroman and qualifies as a bildungsroman.

Thus the dreams of Valmiki to become a success in the materialistic world have been destroyed by the strong current of the courses of life. The realities of life that have shattered his dreams have encountered him in many forms; the death of Ellie and his unborn child and later on the abrupt ending of his affair with Annabel. His love for Caroline and his trust in her also has been devastated by Caroline's acts of forging a letter from the Swamy and in sending Ellie
mercilessly out of her house and also her cunning act of severing the relationship between Annabel and Valmiki.

Caroline's dream of making Valmiki a great artist and to make him her possession has been fulfilled to a considerable extent but her grooming of him after the model of a westerner has proved to be utterly destructive in respect of developing his character and as well as his soul. Furthermore, her chief goal of possessing Valmiki has been upset by the incorruptible values that the swamy had inculcated in him during his formative years. In order to have a life-long possession of Valmiki she takes the ordeal of coming to India to persuade Valmiki to go with her. She even goes to the extent of challenging the Swamy proclaiming that definitely one day or other Valmiki will come to her for the comfort and the pleasures she has shown him. Thus Caroline, who is well-off, powerful and who also has all the resources at hand to carry out her plans and fulfil her dreams cannot stand against the strong current of reality.

Kamala Markandya's novel *Two Virgins* portrays the story of two sisters Lalitha and Saroja. Besides themselves, the family consists of their father and mother, called Appa and Amma, their mother's widowed sister aunt Alamelu, and two elder brothers who are reported to be working in the nearby town.

This novel is a strong representative portrayal of the youth who are misled by the lures of the modernistic world. Though the
protagonist of the story is Saroja, most of the action centres round her sister Lalitha. Though Lalitha belongs to a family of lower means she is educated in a convent school. Her surroundings and her connections with Mrs. Mendoja give her an illusionary and sophisticated view of life, which she foolishly follows to the point of absolute self destruction. Lalitha's story is a sheer case of shattering of the dreams of the innocent who are devastated by the crude realities of life.

The novel deals with the formation and development of the mind and character of Saroja, as she grows from adolescence into maturity. The environment in which she grows up and the events that she witnesses around her play a major role in moulding her plastic mind. The story is narrated by an omniscient third person narrator, but the point of view is consistently that of Saroja.

Appa is a former freedom fighter who has been rewarded by the new government with an acre of land and probably, a pension. He is unreasonable, naïve and talkative. He hates the British and denigrates them at every possible opportunity. He is fond of criticizing the society. Amma is a contrast to Appa. She is neither foolish nor talkative. She takes special care of her body and its appearance. She often quarrels with Appa. Both of them lack sense of decency and speak about sex without any restraints in the presence of their
adolescent daughters. In Saroja’s perception, Amma is guilty, somewhere down time, of some moral aberration.

Lalitha is beautiful, and she is already sought after in marriage. She is proud of her long and lustrous eyelashes, and fond of showing it off. She goes to the Mission High School, which is expensive, while Saroja goes to the State School, where schooling is free. Lalitha has scant regard for her parents, and laughs at their quarrels, because she knows what they do in private at the end of such quarrels. She loves self-abuse and also encourages Saroja to try it. She is brave and hard, she also knows about sex and family planning. She loves to watch the village loafer Lachu, and her face turns “hectic and secret” when she does. In order to keep herself slim she refuses to take sweet meat. She is the favourite of her school teacher Miss. Mendoza.

Aunt Alamelu is an orthodox woman with conservative ideas. She is a childless woman, dependent on Appa and Amma and she has no status. She often makes a martyr of herself, drudging for the family that supports her. She is extremely caste-conscious, and she attaches great importance to a woman’s good name.

Chingleput, the sweet vendor of the village, with a crippled foot, is Saroja’s confidant, adviser and friend. He is about Appa’s age and he is always gentle with Saroja. Their neighbour Manickam is a poor milkman and farmer. His wife Gangamma is unsophisticated but she is honest. She is a fecund woman with a large brood of children and
she is also a paid wet nurse to several children not her own. She has no inhibitions and she readily talks and shows things which Saroja cannot learn about in her household.

Surrounded by these people, Saroja grows and so does her mind and character, amidst quarrels, scandals, opinions and attitudes which impinge on her consciousness inexorably. She observes every one and every thing, paying special attention when told not to pay attention to something. She understands a few things while a few other things are not clear to her and this makes her feel that she is missing out. She learns from her experiences and assimilates the knowledge into her mind and character.

Alice Drum says that *Two Virgins* is:

a contemporary account of the mythic adolescent quest that leads the protagonist from childhood into adult society . . . . Traditionally, the protagonist in the quest tale is a young man who undertakes a journey that, no matter what its original goal, leads ultimately to his maturation. (324)

Maturation is clearly the central theme of *Two Virgins*, yet the protagonist is not a man but a young woman, Saroja, one of the virgins of the title, who must undergo the adventures and the trials that have classically preceded initiation into adult society.
The second part of the novel throws light particularly on Lalitha. Her nature and upbringing has engendered in her a predilection for exercising her physical charm and enjoying physical pleasures. Now enters Gupta in their lives, and he ushers in potential danger for Saroja too, whose consciousness is enlarged and extended day by day by several incidents and experiences.

Saroja is horrified to hear from her brothers about cattle farms in the west, where calves are fed forcibly on corn, fattened and then slaughtered – all for money; she feels that caves have a right to the cow’s milk; her brothers say the way society is organised there are no entitlements; and, at this, Saroja feels that society must be reorganized.

One day, the film director Mr. Gupta comes to their house, in the company of his assistant Devraj and Miss Mendoza. Mr. Gupta says that he is making a documentary film showing village life as it is and he says that he can use Lalitha in the documentary. The shooting is disturbed by the arrival of the monsoon. When the monsoon is over the filming resumes. There are several shots of Lalitha. During this period Mr. Gupta pays several visits to their house always bringing presents to everyone. Devraj also comes with him and Saroja is attracted toward him. Aunt Alamelu warns them that Mr. Gupta is after Lalitha and also she accuses Lalitha of throwing herself at him, making her cheap to him. Lalitha tells Saroja, “I feel like a dove on the
wing, I could soar away like an eagle to the top most peak of the sacred mountain.”(105) When the film is over, Mr. Gupta comes to take leave of them. Lalitha says good-bye to Gupta and Saroja says good-bye to Devraj.

The third part of the novel records further development of Saroja’s character and consciousness. Waiting for Mr. Gupta’s call to view the film, Lalitha becomes restless. At last, Miss. Mendoja comes with the news that she is going to the city for the premiere of the film, and getting the permission of her father she takes Lalitha to the city. Appa misses Lalitha during Deepavali. When Lalitha is back Appa is happy again.

One day Lalitha is missing. They learn that she has gone to the town and also that she has taken all the money she could lay hands on. Apppa goes to the town in search of her and returns after a week without finding her. At last a letter arrives from Lalitha saying that she is waiting for work on the new film to start and that Mr. Gupta has made excellent arrangements for her stay. They have to take her words, because she has not given her address.

The fourth part of the novel presents the effects of the return of the fallen sister on the consciousness of the protagonist. Not only events but also the various moods and attitudes of the other members of the family impinge on her consciousness. To complete her education, the novelist makes her parents decide to take her along to
the city where they are going to confront Mr. Gupta with the fact of
the ruin he has brought upon Lalitha, when their financial condition
would dictate that Saroja be left behind with aunt Alamelu.

At last a letter arrives from Lalitha informing that she herself
is coming the next day. Appa and Saroja receive Lalitha at the next
village and bring her home in a jutka. After reeling lie after lie, Lalitha
has to confess that she is pregnant.

When they talk of the pregnancy of Lalitha, Saroja tries to slink
away, but Amma insists her to stay in. Saroja guesses that it is “for
her benefit, salutary, so that she could be armed against follies
similar to that of Lalitha’s.” They decide to meet Gupta. Amma says
that it is a sin to bring in an unwanted child in to the world, that it is
equally a sin to cause suffering to an unborn child. And that, in this
case there is no other alternative.

Saroja wonders why Lalitha and Mr. Gupta do not marry, since
they had already created a child. Then she realises that they cannot,
because they are not socially equal. They decide to go to the city to
meet Mr. Gupta and that Saroja also should accompany them. On the
eve of the proposed departure, Lalitha tries to commit suicide by
jumping into the haunted well. But Saroja, summoning unknown
reserves of strength, physically prevents her from doing so until
Lalitha comes to her senses and promises never attempt suicide
again.
Vimala Rao observes:

Saroja learns to forge her values early by listening to the arguments that go on endlessly between her parents and Alamelu at home, and among Chingleput, Manickam, Miss. Mendoza and others outside home. In Saroja Markandaya has brought out the full personality of a sensitive and intelligent young girl who grows into young womanhood and retains the innocence of girlhood. Unlike her elder sister... Saroja tastes the sensations of the city in the safe company of her family members and deliberately makes up her mind to return to her family home in the village... (119)

In the fifth part of the novel, Saroja’s education of the world continues in the city, where she too comes to face with temptation. She is drawn to the dangerous path for sometime and even defies her mother. However, she considers the condition of her sister, and makes a conscious choice to do what is right and eschew what is wrong. At the end of this part, the novelist records the authorial interest of making Lalitha’s life an important element in the education of Saroja.

While waiting at Mr. Gupta’s residence, Saroja thinks about the difference between lawful pregnancy and unlawful pregnancy. Now
she realises that all the rules and restrictions that had irked her so far were meant to prevent pre-marital pregnancy.

Devraj arrives and he addresses Saroja with pleasure. Saroja is overwhelmed with his presence. She feels “afraid of her feelings”, of what Devraj is doing to her. Since Gupta is not available, Saroja cannot forget Devraj, but she knows that the only possible relationship between them is like the one between Mr. Gupta and Lalitha which has landed them in such dreadfulness. She is reminded of Lachu’s actions. She tosses and turns, “her body an alien creature full of strange, strong impulses beyond her control” (207). and she cannot sleep throughout the night.

Saroja observes Amma sobbing and Appa arguing with Mr. Gupta, who sounds sorrowful but charges that Lalitha had flung herself at him and pestered him. As they prepare to leave, Saroja is pained at the thought that she will never meet Devraj again. When they are past the gates, Saroja turns for a last look. Devraj is standing by the door, gazing and he smiles and waves at her. Saroja longs to “run back, fling herself into his arms and tell him she cared” (221). But she follows her parents, which was the proper thing to do. She perceives that it is improper to cling herself at a man as Lalitha had done. And Saroja feels that her sister is destined to shape the stream of her life.
The sixth part of the novel exposes the protagonist Saroja, to
the spiritual crisis that is to mark the point of her attaining maturity.
Saroja resents the fact that Appa, Amma and Lalitha keep everything
secret from her. She perceives that they are initiates in the art of
creation of life, while still she is a virgin. That night she had a
disturbed sleep and by dusk she becomes restless about Lalitha who
has gone to abort the baby and then dozes off. Amma returns and
wakes her up. Saroja is reassured only when Lalitha herself tells her
that she is fine but only her baby is a bloody pulp.

The baby of Lalitha is aborted and on the third day Lalitha is up
and about. She explains the abortion to Saroja. She says that she
wants the baby, but knew that there would be no place for him. She
says that one should not cry over spilt milk over men or babies. She
adds that she will not be able to tell Saroja this latter. Saroja realises
that society is responsible for all that has happened.

She flays herself because the woman in her had suspected all
the time, but had gone along with what had been hatching. Amma
consoles her. She says that Lalitha wandered too far outside the code
of their community and paying the penalty.

After a week Lalitha is gone. She has left a note informing that
she is sure of herself and they need not search for her. Later Saroja
discovers a secret note left for her by Lalitha saying, "Stay if you want
to, no one can stop you" (241). A thought of Devraj crosses Saroja's
mind, but now she knows what is proper and what is not proper.

Geetha observes:

Saroja's life bristles with evidence of uncertainty of the facts of life. She gets her sexual education in bits and pieces from Jaya, her class mate, and her peasant friends like milkman Manickam's wife. Moreover, a series of incidents which involve her sister Lalitha begin to bring these truths home to her. With this foretaste of knowledge, she comes to the city and the presence and actions of Devraj [sic] disturb her. She has erotic dreams. But she restrained only by the warning signal- "the living evidence" of her sister. . . . After Saroja has seen her sister's fate, through Lalitha she remembers her initiating experiences. As the novel concludes, Saroja reaches a state of self discovery which gives her an insight into her moral responsibility. Her natural desires are curbed by the strong impact of the codes of the traditional society, as she learns where uninhibited freedom will lead her. (176)

They decide to go home and approach Mr. Gupta for travel expenses. There Devraj touches her and she screams at him to take his hands off. Aunt Alamelu looms up to give her the words she
struggling for and she screams, “What do you take me for . . . a virgin in your whorehouse?” (190). Appa and Amma take her away in a taxi.

Returning home, Saroja is pleased to see that everything is the same as before. Going to the buffalo shed she caresses the buffalo. The next morning she rides to chengleput’s shop. He consoles her clapping her. When she senses his manliness, he asks her not to be afraid and pleads that he is, after all, a man. She is not afraid, for she knows too much and has gone through too much. She knows that she not for Chingleput and could never be. She rides away hard, shedding tears. She does not know for whom she sheds tears, for her, for Chingleput, or, for what has ended. After a while, she thinks of her future and the tears dry.

The very theme of Two Virgins makes it clear that it is a bildungsroman. It tells the story of the growing up of Saroja and the formation and development of her mind and character. The focus is first on the environment in which she grows up, then on the adventure of her elder sister Lalitha, and finally on Lalitha’s tragedy. All these impinge on Saroja’s consciousness. Saroja, one of the virgins of the title of the novel, assimilates knowledge from every thing she sees, hears, and experiences. The tragedy of Lalitha in losing the child she wants to keep is the crisis that propels Saroja into maturity, and into recognition of her identity and role in the world. It is with this realisation of herself, that she returns home and now she knows her
place and responsibility in society. It is with this positive note that
this bildungsroman ends.

Parameswaran says that *Two Virgins* is a novel about
“adolescence and maturation’ and that it depicts “Saroja’s initiation
into adulthood” (25). Geetha calls *Two Virgins* a “novel of initiation
where Kamala Markandaya uses the mythical pattern of ‘trial and
initiation’ to depict the awakening of the two sisters to
womanhood. (175)

Drum also says:

In the symbolic journey that Saroja and her sister take,
the different stages of the journey are the difficult but
necessary phases of the external quest that leads to an
internal metamorphosis, at least for one sister. The young
girl, Saroja, emerges as the heroine of the novel, the sister
who begins to make successful transition from childhood
into the adult world. In her journey, Saroja faces
problems that are at least as complex as the world in
which she lives, but they can be placed under two
headings: societal and personal. Saroja must come to
terms with a puzzling, rapidly changing external world
and puzzling internal world of her own changing emotions
and growing sexuality. (324)
K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says that Saroja moves "from innocence to experience" (742-43). Sharad Srivastava refers to the "journey" of Saroja and Lalitha from childhood to womanhood through adolescence. (34)

From the textual analysis made and the critical opinions presented above, it becomes clear that Kamala Markandaya’s *Two Virgins* is a bildungsroman proper. It depicts the formation and development of the mind and character of Saroja under the shaping influence of her environment, the incidents that she observes and the experiences she undergoes. Saroja is drawn to the brink of disaster, but abortion of Lalitha’s baby alters her. It is the crisis that propels her to a realisation of her responsibility. She realises her proper place and role in society, resisting a last minute enticement from Lalitha to stay in the city in which she herself has vanished.

The experience of Lalitha in seeking worldly pleasures cannot be called a fulfilment of her dreams because she has paid a high price of losing her chastity to a dishonourable man.

Though the dreams of the two virgins Lalitha and Saroja are not realized, the novel ends at the note of relief in respect to the younger sister Saroja as she gains some wisdom of the world. While Lalitha has been washed away by the powerful current of the realities of life her sister Saroja has sensibly resisted the dominant forces of the not so helpful realities of life.
The protagonist of Kamala Markandaya's *The Golden Honeycomb* is Rabindranath. He is the natural son of Maharaja Bawajiraj III of Devapur state. He is nurtured and groomed by his grandmother, Manjula, Dowager Maharani, and his mother Mohini, the Maharaja's concubine. Manjula, a commoner, had been unexpectedly shifted from her valley to the palace at the age of thirteen, when her husband was nominated Maharaja in the place of Maharaja Bawajiraj I who had been dethroned and imprisoned by the British, as he had dared to "raise the levies to eject them from the country." (8)

When her husband dies after a riding accident, Manjula, as widower, gets completely free from all British fetters. Mohini, a distant relative of Manjula, is sent from the valley to the palace as retainer and companion of Manjula in her widowhood. Mohini shares some of Manjula's native fire and the bold airs of the remote valley she carries with her "will not to be swamped by the rarified, royal atmosphere."(31) Mohini soon gets the Maharaja entangled in the coils of her wild love. Manjula has all these years been pained at heart to see the British rulers having systematically moulded her only son into a despicable puppet. When Mohini gets pregnant, Manjula perceives an opportunity to challenge the hegemony of the British.
Mohini refuses to marry Bawajiraj and opts to remain a concubine in order to be free of the British fetters. When her son is born, she names him Rabindranath according to Manjula’s wish, after the great Indian poet.

Manjula feeds Rabi’s infant fancy with tales of his ancestors, intended to inculcate in him nationalistic and patriotic fervour. Rabi, at the age of three, “is avid for tales,” and listens for hours with absorption, to anyone who can tell such stories. These stories leave such an indelible impressions on Rabi’s plastic mind that Bawajiraj protests to Manjula that they are half-baked legends; Manjula asserts that “legends are the blood history of a country”; and she bluntly tells him that his British appointed tutors had taught “only slanted history” (48).

Manjula and Mohini are the two women who are “sculpting” Rabi’s life. Mohini sedulously trains Rabi to be native and natural. When Rabi is four years old, Bawajiraj, at the suggestion of the British Resident, speaks of putting Rabi to school; Mohini sees this as a British attempt “to catch him early” and to make him “their creature”. And she prefers that a local pandit be appointed to teach Rabi when he is a little older.

Rabi’s formation is also influenced by his two friends Das and Janaki; both at the age of nine are working as servants in the palace.
Rabi plays with them regularly, though both Janaki and Das resent his class.

Mohini maintains that the world of reality begins outside the crested, gilded, guarded, ornamental gates of the palace. She appoints a young local pandit from this world of reality to teach Rabi. The pandit’s teaching is different from what a British-appointed tutor would have taught; for instance, he teaches that Queen Victoria was not the queen of India. He also tells him of the nascent nationalism sprouting in the Indian mind.

Sir Arthur, the Resident, getting convinced that the local pandit has communicated subversive opinions to Rabi, presses Bawajiraj to send the boy to a boarding establishment. Bawajiraj protests that Rabi is much too young, not seven yet. The resident’s heart sinks, and he thinks, “like a Jesuit, that the boy’s thoughts are already set firm, that he is quite lost.” (71)

Shocked by the nationalistic upbringing of his son, Bawajiraj speaks of sending Rabi to a boarding establishment but Mohini threatens to leave the palace once and for all, taking her son with her. Rattled by this, Bawajiraj literally goes down on his knees, kisses her delicate toes and promises never to talk about it again; and, exploiting Bawajiraj’s state of contrition, Mohini secures his consent to take Rabi on a tour of the kingdom.
The tour is extensive. They go through the countryside; the land is arid, with scarcely a rivulet to refresh the landscape; drought has prevailed over for several years in succession and people have starved and died in hundreds of thousands; those living look like walking skeletons, their ribs showing; the nakedness exposed is a revelation to Rabi; and all these experiences make Rabi feel that he is being expanded. Kumar points out that Rabi is “able to learn about the India that lies outside the guarded palace: impoverished, exploited and degraded” (26).

When they returned to the palace after six months, Rabi excitedly narrates his experiences to his adoring father. Bawajiraj is disturbed. When he says that he wishes to take Rabi to Delhi Durbar, Mohini tells him that she does not want Rabi exposed to subversive influences. So he consents to let the pandit accompany Rabi.

At the Delhi Durbar Rabi is a confused boy; the splendour displayed awes him; his father’s bearing and importance impress him; the pandit tells him that all the money spent is a waste and could be put to better purpose; Rabi is excited when his father goes up to be received by the viceroy; but, as Bawajiraj retires from the presence, Rabi’s belief in his father’s greatness is shattered because he sees him “backing away like a lackey”; and with that, the rub of reality begins for Rabi.
Returning home, Rabi is frustrated to see Janaki gone. Only later he knows from Das that she has been beaten up and turned away from the palace for her intimacy with Rabi and their tryst in the shrubbery. Rabi begins to go to the Dewan’s house regularly to be acquainted with the workings of the Devapur state. The Dewan and the Prince take to each other; the Dewan perceives a potential allay in Rabi for carrying out his long cherished dreams for the welfare of the people.

The Viceroy recognizes Rabi as the successor of Bawajiraj. His father has all along had his heart set on the recognition and he is very happy about it. But Rabi has mixed feelings about the development.

Visiting Bombay with his father, Rabi tackles a crowd of angry, demonstrating mill-workers who injure his father, by simply talking to them in their own language; later Rabi joins the striking mill-workers at the Chaupati beach; the police lathi charge the crowd; Rabi is outraged at the police lathi-charging the crowd and breaking the skulls; and to Rabi “it is a revelation to observe the limbs of government so deployed.”(270)

Rabi is badly hit on the head by the lathi of a policeman and he manages to move away, feeling giddy. Jaya, a girl working in the mill, helps Rabi off the street to her hovel. When he comes to, he learns that she has saved him and ministered to him. She advises him to go to his parents, leaving her empty-belly race.; he declares that he will
never abide by such blinkered conventions; he partakes her poor meal; and, he leaves the hut only after getting her consent to his return, because he wants “to see” her. Rubin speaks of Rabi’s “evolution” and says that his experience in Bombay constitutes “a kind of awakening” (166).

After receiving medical treatment from a doctor, Rabi returns to Jaya’s hovel; he has his first experience of sexual intercourse with her; he learns that her husband is in jail for agitating and that she sells her body whenever she is short of money; Rabi buys an expensive sari and all sorts of things for her; but he notices that she is dirty and stinking as she has to walk very far to fetch water; about three weeks later the strike ends and Jaya goes back to work. Rabi leaves the hovel with a determination: “He would see the Dewan about certain glaring holes in his own state. He was, after all, the heir.” (290)

With the political situation hotting up allover the country, a clamour of freedom rising allover the British India, the Great War commencing and the price of essential commodities rising, restlessness spreads to Devapur state too. Rabi’s nationalist upbringing has been so effective that he refuses to join the Expeditionary Force that Bawajiraj mobilises to fight the Hun on behalf of his imperial state. While the Dewan goes for compulsory
education, Rabi is for water. The Dewan proposes a dam to harness water in times of plenty, to be released when the monsoon fails.

Rabi's commitment to the building of the dam is so complete that he prohibits any celebration in his honour. Rabi worked with a passion for the fulfilment of the dam. The Dewan comes to see the work for himself. He says what Rabi has achieved is the fruition of their plans. He also compliments the workers. The Dewan is overwhelmed by the physical details that Rabi provides, which bespeak his commitment. During summer that year, the people of Devapur state are surprised and delighted to see water flowing in the canals criss-crossing their fields.

When Bawajiraj returns from the war, the Dewan proudly says that the people now identify the Maharaja with the salt and the Maharajkumar with water. Mohini tells him that the people of Devapur are now Rabi's people and not his. Summoned to the royal presence, Rabi defends the popular nationalistic demand for rescinding the insupportable levies and treaties imposed by the British.

The very subject of *The Golden Honeycomb* makes it a bildungsroman. The novel presents the story of the formation and development of the mind and character of Rabi. The early pages of the novel present mainly the result, and not the process, of the British
conditioning of the mind of Bawajiraj, especially to serve as a foil to
the story of Rabi.

Kamala Markandaya deliberately inserts words, phrases and
sentences to point to the intended bildungsroman motif of the novel.
When the Dewan visits the dam site, he sees Rabi coming to greet his
"mentor" (321). When Rabi formally addresses him as "Dewan sahib,"
the older man is pleased and accepts the deference as his due as
Rabi's "preceptor" (322). During the budgeoning but popular
movement, the Dewan tells Rabi, "I'm glad to note that your years as
my pupil have not been profitless." (431)

Rabi's growth and development is typical of the trait of the
protagonist of a bildungsroman. His sojourn with Jaya in the Bombay
slum is his spiritual crisis. Her want for the basic amenity of water
crystallises for him all the deprivation that he witnessed but could
not comprehend in his childhood playmates Das and Janaki and the
poverty that he observed during the tour of the kingdom. He realises
that as heir to the throne of Devapur, his role in the world is to mend
the hole in the fabric of Devapur. It is with this recognition of his
responsibility that Rabi leaves Jaya's hut. After he has carried out his
resolution, the novel ends on the positive note of the peaceful popular
movement defeating the combined forces of the Palace and the
Residency on the one hand, and on the other, Rabi and Usha, the
leaders of the popular movement, deciding to get married without any
British "levers" on her or on her children. It seems as if Rabi rejects his princely role and will happily be a popular leader. Bawajiraj's growing up is only a foil to Rabi's: he is never conscious of his growth and development and he passes through no crisis of any sort. Arthur Pollard states:

Rabi's history is a progress to understanding and then to action in a movement that takes him from admiration of his father with unquestioning acceptance of the status quo, through the influence of his mother and pandit, to a rejection of his princely role and the assumption of the leadership of popular protest. . . .(24)

Several critics, though they do not consider the Golden Honeycomb a bildungsroman, have referred to certain features of the novel, like the growth and development of the protagonist, the awakening, learning and change in the protagonist, his tutelage and training, which are also features of the bildungsroman. A.V. Krishna Rao states that The Golden Honeycomb is "the storey of the 'growing up' of Rabi, the royal scion" (25). He says that "Rabi's "individual consciousness" (80) is integrated in the design of the novel.

A.N. Dwivedi points out that Manjula "enlightens" her grandson and fuses anti-British feelings into him and the pandit "injects" nationalistic feelings (213). Krishnaswamy says that the women in Rabi's life "serve as instruments of awakening his conscience," and
that, through them, "he emerges as an enlightened heir apparent, vastly different from that of the 'brown Englishmen' (223). According to Joseph the various incidents in the course of the story bring about changes in Rabi and that those who come into contact with him "influence" him in some way (149). Afzal-Khan observes:

The old grand mother hopes to inculcate in Rabi something she was unable to in his father: a sense of pride and belonging to his own people and past, rather than a past concocted by the British. She hopes that Rabi . . . will be able to address the very real problems of poverty and hunger faced by the people of his land. . . . (136).

D. S. Maini says that Manjula, Mohini and the pandit studiously groom Rabi for the difficult and the dangerous role of a "royal 'rebel"19). Iyengar says that Rabi "rejects his princely destiny" (743).

The textual analysis and critical opinions presented above show that Kamala Markandaya's novel *The Golden Honeycomb* is a bildungsroman.

As the heir of Devapur state Rabi's dreams are naturally connected with the welfare of his state. As he has been groomed even from childhood with a high sense of nationalistic feeling, his dreams essentially take the shape of doing good to the people of his state. His
tour outside the guarded palace has been an eye-opener as he directly comes into contact with the impoverished and degraded people of his state. During his stay at Jaya’s hovel in Bombay, he comes to know the hardships and ill effects that are caused by the lack of the basic amenity of water. His dreams take shape when he realises that as heir to the throne of Devapur, his role is to mend the holes in the fabric of Devapur.

Rabi’s most important dream is to supply the much needed water to the common people of his state. With the spirited support of the Dewan, he starts building a dam to harness water in times of plenty which can be released when the monsoon fails. After he has carried out his resolution with a total commitment and realized his dream of supplying water to his people, the novel ends on the positive note of Rabi rejecting princely role and happily choosing to be a popular leader in the company of Usha, the Dewan’s daughter, who has consented to enter into the wedlock with Rabi. Thus the novel ends on the happy note of Rabi’s dreams getting fulfilled.

Rikki, the son of a fisherman, is the protagonist of Kamala Markandaya’s novel "Pleasure City." He is an avid learner, taking to books “as he had taken to the sea”. Rikki is a “regular” at Mrs. Bridie’s school for fishermen’s children, which she runs in the Mission compound. The narrator records the five-year-old Rikki’s love of learning in the following lines:
Rikki liked going to the Bridies, and he went. He liked Mrs. Bridie’s English lessons. The language seemed to unfold before him, daily yielding something fresh and delightful. He liked Mrs. Bridie’s rich leather bound holy books with gilt and vermilion edges to the leaves, which she sometimes allowed him to handle. He loved the stories she read to him out of them, they were so rich, so full of Mr. Bridie’s heart.

When Rikki is six years old, his father, brothers and uncle all perish at sea in a sudden storm. His mother, who loved his father, too dies soon after. According to the custom of the community, Muthu’s family takes in Rikki. Muthu’s mother tells Rikki to call her Amma if he likes, and he does so. Rikki and Muthu fish together and mend the nets together. But Rikki is spared and allowed to go to school. Mrs. Bridie soon feels that Rikki deserves all the time she can give to him. Rikki’s hands are capable of delicate work. He is an expert in making miniature cathedrals and ships and bottling them as well as in making pebble mosaic, having learnt the art from Mr. Bridie. Also he has learnt the craft of fishing from Muthu. Mrs. Bridie often tells Rikki, “If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well. You must always aim to be immaculate.”

Rikki has similarities with Val of Possession. Kamala Markandaya’s central characters are generally grown-ups. Rikki like
Val is also a character that is leaving his boyhood behind. Val transforms from a herd boy to an artist of international fame. Rikki’s artistic skill develops and flourishes once he comes into contact with Tully. As the story unfolds Rikki leaves his boyhood behind. He is not even six years old when he is introduced in first chapter of the novel. Later he is seen as “bulging with good food”. (18) “He was older now, beginning to go to sea, and his skin was glossy with health,” (18-19) and finally is as a youth Tully happens to meet him. Tully notices the boy or youth. “He had noticed him briefly the day before, for his fluent English. (39)

Rikki learns much from Mr. Bridie’s words, because he is well-travelled and well-read. Mr. Bridie imparts a good deal of eclectic knowledge to Rikki, as the narrator says:

When in the mood or coaxed, he would read from his books, or recite from a well-stocked memory. Or sitting on the veranda steps, after they had done with the mosaic for the day, he would tell richly, rivetingly, of pirates and emperors, of India and Greece and the glory that had washed over them and receded, of the splendours of Granada, or of Rome. . . . (14)

Mrs. Bridie loves the gold-skinned Rikki as her own child, and it is Rikki’s name that she utters at last, before dying of botulism caused by a contaminated tin of salmon, as does Mr. Bridie a little
later. Rikki gets over the Bridies. He is content to be with his family, his loving mother, his lively little sister Valli and Muthu.

After the death of the Bridies, Rikki becomes a full time fisherman. The arrival of the Atlas International development Corporation, AIDCORP, to build a tourist complex, generally called Shalimar, near the village, comes as a turning point in Rikki’s life. His mastery of the English language is a noticed asset and he gets employment in the complex. His English also wins him the friendship of Tully, a middle-aged engineer who is one of the directors of AIDCORP. Born in India, Tully wishes to restore Avalon, a country mansion built by his maternal grandfather when he was Resident of Devapur state. The association with Tully furthers the growth and development of Rikki’s mind. There are several flashbacks in the novel which shows Rikki’s mind and character of being formed under the influence of the Bridies. Rikki’s experience at the Shalimar also contributes to the growth and development of his mind and character.

Rikki accepts a job as a tea-boy in Shalimar, because he is “in love with the novelty” (43). During the mackerel season, Rikki quits his job and goes for fishing. When the season is over, the fish harvest dwindles and Rikki wishes to go back to his tea-job. Muthu, hearing this beats him and thwacks him with a fish. But this only makes Rikki more determined.
When he goes to Shalimar, Ramalingam, the commissioner for Labour Recruitment at Shalimar, who has a grudge against Rikki for abandoning his job during the mackerel season, denies the job to him. Tully who has overheard the conversation, asks Rikki to build a boat for him. Rikki realises that Tully is inventing a job for him. Thus Rikki comes under Tully's wing and patronage. When the boat is finished, Tully pays Rikki well for it.

Rikki again goes to Ramalingam, but this time with a basket of fruits, and Ramalingam offers him a job as life-saver in Shalimar's swimming pool. Rikki approaches Tully and asks him to free him from his service, as he is now receiving pay for no work. Tully perceives that Rikki is honest to the core, and permits him to take up the proffered job.

Tully is aware of the human bond between him and Rikki and he admires the boy's innocence and honesty. He goes to Avalon which is in ruins and a little later Rikki too arrives there. Rikki mentions that he made a beautiful pebble mosaic for Mr. Bridie and Tully asks him to make one in Avalon. Tully plans an impluvium with a courtyard round a pool, with shrubs in tubs and a fountain. Rikki says that the pool room will be the right place for the pebble mosaic and Tully agrees.

One day Rikki sees Mrs. Tully surfing and is fascinated, though he does not like her. She teaches him the art of surfing, and Rikki is a
pupil again. After Mrs. Tully departs, Rikki resumes work at the mosaic. He practises surfing and gradually becomes an expert. He freely uses Shalimar's facilities like the gymnasium and the massage parlour to attend to injuries acquired at sea. He enjoys Shalimar's gifts and rewards for service. He brings home basketfuls of delicious leftovers and his foster-mother appreciates him for remembering his family.

Tully who is a trained sculptor, starts to chisel a marble cherub for the centre of the pool. Tully and Rikki work side by side. When it was difficult to find mangoes in Shalimar in the mango season, Rikki buys choice mangoes and takes them to Tully. When the river begins to rise, Rikki goes after Tully's capsised boat and retrieves it. One day going to Avalon, Rikki sits mesmerised by the almost finished marble cherub. Tully arrives and together they lift the cherub to its podium.

Muthu joins Shalimar service as a temporary beach-cleaner. He is worried about his future while Rikki never worries about his future. Mrs. Bridie had taught him that the evil of the day was sufficient unto the day. Rikki has adapted the biblical saying to remark that the day's happiness is sufficient unto the day.

Shalimar celebrates an Open Day. Competitions are held. Rikki wants to compete in surfing as he is certain that he will win if he competes. But he is not permitted to and Mrs. Tully wins the cup.
After receiving the cup, Mrs. Tully wants to go for one last run as she is leaving Shalimar the next day. Rikki objects because of the wind and the current, but she defiantly wades in. The current seizes her and drags her into the ocean. Rikki saves her and puts her into the boat but, before he himself can climb into the boat, a giant wave slams him twice against the boat, and, then he is hauled to safety by others.

Rikki remains unconscious for four days in the Spa, Shalimar's modern clinic. His broken bones have been screwed together with metal plates, and he is in plaster cast. Mr. Tully is miserable. Only after learning that Rikki will survive, does Tully go to his wife's bedside. When she recovers, she makes peace with Rikki, and she leaves India.

Rikki mends gradually. Tully asks Rikki if he would like to go back to fishing and offers to buy him a fishing sloop but Rikki realistically knows that he is no longer seaworthy. He simply says that his job is all fixed in Shalimar. Tully and Rikki go driving aimlessly for sometime. Rikki sets traps overnight and harvests coral lobsters at dawn which his mother cooks in her matchless way. Rikki and Tully go on a picnic and enjoy the lobsters. Rikki wishes that it were not Tully's last picnic, and Tully too wishes so. During their parting, Rikki can not stop crying and Tully too feels painful.
Rikki goes back to Avalon and is intensely aware of Tully's presence. Taking up his tools, he dismantles the incomplete mosaic in the pool-room instinctively. He feels, because the mosaic had been laid down for Tully, it could go to no one else. Because something was over, a time had passed. He realises that there is a time, and a season, for everything, as Mrs. Bridie was fond of teaching him and as he dismantles the mosaic, all the time, the tears flowed uncontrollably, because "his blood, after all, had gone into the pigment." (341)

_Pleasure City_ portrays the growth and development of Rikki, the fisher boy, from his childhood to the time he reaches maturity. During this developmental stage he undergoes varied experiences. His brave rescue of the foolhardy Mrs. Tully against the fisherman's instinct and at the risk of his own life is the crisis that physically and psychologically propels him into a man's state. The grievous injury to his legs has left him not sufficiently seaworthy to go back for fishing. So Rikki realistically and pragmatically resigns himself to a useful citizen's role in some job in Shalimar. The language and the personality that the Bridies and the Tullies had inculcated in him could be put to the best use. So _Pleasure City_ is a bildungsroman.

As the result of his moulding by the Bridies, Rikki is honest and blunt. He has a fine sense of what is right and what is wrong and he never has any difficulty in choosing between the two. The Tullies
take over Rikki’s development where the Bridies left off with their death. The text points out to this continuity of tutelage. Rikki’s association with Tully extends and intensifies his moulding at the hands of the Bridies. Rikki’s varied experiences under Tully’s patronage impinge on his consciousness and refine his mind and character. The vista of opportunity opened up by Shalimar, now flourishing and his injured physical condition make him opt for a useful life as an employee of Shalimar. With the mind and character he has displayed, Rikki can be expected to make his life a success at Shalimar.

Critics have commented upon certain aspects of *Pleasure City* which are characteristics of the bildungsroman, like shaping, influencing, educating, learning, initiation, maturation, and experience.

Afzal Khan says that Rikki “was introduced in early childhood to a world beyond his village” (140). Kumar says that Rikki, educated by the local missionaries, becomes “smart” and is ‘drawn to this modern Xanadu [Shalimar]” (27). Teena Annah Philip says that both Tully and Rikki learn through their experiences and grow “to a greater sense of maturity” (35).

Based on the textual analysis and the critical opinions offered above, it can be concluded that Kamala Markandaya’s *Pleasure City* is
a bildungsroman and that it can be taken as a good example of the genre in Indian English Fiction.

When Rikki is introduced in the novel, he is only ten years old. As such one can talk about only his childhood dreams at that stage. As an avid learner he is fond of attending the classes conducted by Mrs. Bridie, whom he looks upon as another mother to him. He also learns a lot from Mr. Bridie. But the unexpected and sudden death of these two whom he loved so much came as a shocking blow to him at such an early stage. Later, when he has got through this bitter loss, he regains his confidence in life after coming into contact with the Tullies. Mr. Tully has become an inseparable part of his life. With Tully’s understanding and help, Rikki has established himself a place in the Shalimar. The injury which he has incurred in the process of saving Mrs. Tully is another blow given to him by the merciless reality of life. But above all, the greatest blow to his youthful dream has been Tully’s departure from Shalimar and once for all from Rikki’s life. Yet owing to the education he has learned from Mrs. Bridie and Tully, he has got the grit to overcome his grief, and get settled to courses of a normal life and take the responsibility to be a useful citizen in the Shalimar.

Thus this chapter has traced the bildungsroman strain that can be clearly seen in the later novels of Kamala Markandaya and also how their youthful dreams are either fulfilled or destroyed. The next
chapter deals with the various dreams of the major women characters of Kamala Markandaya, and the harsh treatment that has been meted out to them by the hands of the ruthless realities of life.