Chapter VI

MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP – THE EAST-WEST ENCOUNTER

Kamala Markandaya deals with conflict between the western and native values of life and its impact on man-woman relationship. Western and native values have always been poles apart and there has always been a conflict between both. In her novels she shows how the difference in eastern and western values affects man-woman relationship. Her chief concern in almost all her novels has been to depict the confrontation between the East and the West, and to find out the impact of the west on the Indian mind. The theme of East-West encounter assumes a special significance in Markandaya’s novels, for she being an Indian by birth and education and a British citizen by virtue of having married an Englishman, is the product of the influences of the two cultures. Elena J. Kalinnikova points out the duality of the origin of Kamala Markandaya: “Half of life is in the East, half is in the west-Fate has in this way determined the life of Kamala Markandaya”. On account of the duality of experiences, her understanding of British characters is as authentic as her acquaintance with Indian life. Actually her affiliation with England is a possible autobiographical source of the East-West theme which recurs in her novels. Most of her novels depict, in some form or the other, the interaction of India and Britain with each other.

The encounter between East and West and its impact on man-woman relationship has been the subject of many other novels where the personal crises in the life of the hero educated in the West becomes a study of the impact of the West upon the East. According to B. Rajan, the Indo-Anglian writers are a product of two cultures. Actually this duality of their loyalty proves a strength as well as a challenge to the writers by giving them a two pronged device with which they can render a deeper version of reality than can be rendered by a unicultural novel.

The novels written in the thirties and fourties display the theme of culture clash. In the novels written in the post-independence era, the adjustment between the East and the West became a major concern, as R.S. Singh maintains: The clash of cultures, Eastern and Western, had been quite a pronounced theme even in the novels of the thirties and forties, but the writers’ attitude was then mostly biased against the Britishers. It was in the fifties that the problem of co-existence and amalgamation of cultures assumed huge dimensions.
Different novelists have portrayed their inter-cultural theme in various ways. Mulk Raj Anand has presented a caricature of the Englishmen in his novels, *The Untouchable*, *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud*, while R.K. Narayan has depicted Englishmen extremely arrogant of their economic and intellectual superiority in his novel, *The English Teacher*. But in the novels of the fifties we note this bitterness disappearing.

In the post independence period, a number of novels have appeared which depict the conflict between the two cultures not on the social but on the personal plane. This theme may generally be called an individual's search for identity in the interaction of two sets of values that exist side by side and often mingle in the twentieth century India. The definition of East and West differs from novel to novel, but each tries in a unique way to grapple with the problem that has concerned the Indo Anglian novelist for more than fifty years. This interaction was by and large interpreted as a clash till 1947 and the feeling that one was a exploiter and the other exploited or that one was pragmatic and the other idealistic continued to dominate the Indian mind. This was a clash of two different mental attitudes which Kipling had referred to when he had said: "he twain shall never meet." But it will be wrong to presume that there was no amalgam of the two cultures, or there was no attempt to reconcile the two. The majority of Indo-Anglian writers today have had at last a part of their education abroad and thus they picked up anglicized accents of speech. For instance, Santha Rama Rao matriculated from London, and graduated from United States; Kamala Markandaya too had been to Europe even before graduating from Madras University; Balachandra Rajan took his advanced degrees including Ph.D. from Cambridge; Raja Rao and Khushwant Singh lived in Europe for a long time; the former worked in the U.N.O. and the later in UNESCO. Therefore all these novelists have fluency in, and thorough knowledge of the English language. The first three of them, viz. Santha Rama Rao, Kamala Markandaya and B. Rajan are expatriates.

Elena J. Kalinnikova remarks: Among Indian-English writers, a good number of them stay abroad. They are far from their country due to the various reasons ... (they) live abroad but consider themselves inalienable from their mother land.

However, the confrontation with the west for the discovery of one's own country and of one's own self often appears as a significant theme in Indo-Anglian novels. These novels depict the increasing alienation of the western educated Indians from their native culture and life. In some novels home coming is not the
main incident nor does it affect the protagonist’s personality, but it just depicts the interaction between the two cultures. The confrontation with the west for the discovery of one’s own country and of one’s own self often appears as a significant theme in Indo-Anglian novels. However, many scholars have been trying for years to demarcate the boundary lines of the East and the West, of the so called orient and the Occident, but it has remained an ever-elusive task.

In reality there is no such clear cut demarcation between two cultures of the East and the West. They intersect each other. Human society has never been stagnant or static, it has been always on the move, always changing, but today it is taking long strides under the impact of widely spreading education and technology, and deluge of western ethos through electronic media.

We find a great impact of the western technology on the social life and moral values of the Indians. This influence is clearly reflected in the writings of Indo-anglian writers. Literature mirrors life, and hence the culture clash or fusion, as experienced by Indian society, finds a true portrayal in Indian literature in English, as M.K. Naik remarks. : Modern India represents to a large extent, a synthesis of the East and the West, for we have taken and assimilated much from the west, while rediscovering and retaining much that has always been our own.

In the complicated fabric of contemporary Indian civilization, we can discern two strands- the indigenous Indian tradition and the imported European conceptions. Thus, the two threads are running simultaneously in Indian society and values. The aping of the west in the life of the cities is apparent in every drawing room, in every home. The impact of the west has created certain cultural problems and crises in values in all parts of India, and as such it is a theme of general interest. No Indo-Anglian novelist can afford to ignore this theme of clash of cultures.

In general, the East is associated with faith, spiritualism, mysticism, superstition, passivity etc. and the west is often associated with materialism, science and technology, rationalism etc. Pt. Nehru had once observed that it was essential to combine science and spirituality in the life stream. The mysticism is found in the east and the rationalism in the west. Actually, the east and the west are not incompatible but complementary to each other. They need each other, have something valuable to convey to each other. The coming world-civilization will need the intuitional wisdom of the east as mush as the resourceful technology of the west. However, it is very difficult to bring about a fusion of the east and the west, as N. Meena Belliappa
reminds: “There is hardly a meeting point between the two”. M. Enamul Karim remarks about Kipling that he... had published a story entitled “East and West” ... like ‘The Ballad of East &West', the theme of this story is the irreconcilability of the east and the west on the racial and cultural ground.

In almost all her novels Kamala Markandaya presents, in one way or the other, the interaction of India and Britain with each other.

The major theme that Markandaya explores in all its comprehensiveness in her novels is the East-West encounter and its impact on man-woman relations. The contact of the Indians with the British and their long stay in India and the consequent tension and conflict caused in the lives of so many Indians did not escape the eye of the fictional artist like Kamala Markandaya. The British went away leaving India free : the 'culture and its ways of life left and indelible impression or, the psyche of the Indian masses in one form or the other. Markandaya's mixed sensibility that results from her close contact with and understanding of the eastern as well as the western ways of life gave her the advantage, as Balachandra Rajan says, “everybody should try to make his or her own identity through tradition, disciplines and cultures.” The strand of East-West encounter runs through almost all her novels but it finds best expression in Some Inner Fury, Possession and The Nowhere Man.

In Nectar in a sieve Markandaya brings out the opposite view points of the simple, gullible, submissive and silently suffering villagers through Rukmani and her husband Nathan's contact with Kennington an English doctor who is building a hospital, purely on humanitarian ground to treat the poor and unprivileged villagers who die miserably for lack of timely and suitable medical help. Kennington is lovingly called Kenny by the villagers. He is both a participant and neutral observer in the action of the novel. It is through him that Markandaya presents the objective image of India.

Kenny's love for the villagers is genuine. He devotes himself whole heartedly for long hours to treat and heal their bodies. He has left his country, his people and even his family out of pity for these fatalists who cannot challenge their miserable predicament and struggle for their betterment. He tries to arouse Rukmani, the silent peasant suffering without making any complaint, out of her passive endurance and acceptance of misfortune in the name of fate by protesting scornfully: "Acquiescent imbeciles do you think spiritual grace comes from being in want, or from suffering."
Kenny's humanity and selfless services make him dear to the villagers. They love, admire and adore him.

In *Some Inner Fury* the theme of East-West encounter finds its full focus. She presents India's confrontation with Britain mainly at two levels - the impact of western education and civilisation on Indian mind and the conflict issuing out of Britain's political dominance on India.

First, there are those like Mira and Kit, Hicky and Richard who represent western system of values. Then, there are Govind, Roshan, Premala who stand for eastern value system. Mira, the narrator-heroine is more western in her attitude and outlook. She does not find any harm even in marrying an Englishman Richard with whom she falls in love. But she has to part from him, because of the political turmoil, with the hopeful note that in the coming hundred years there will be no more "My People" and "Your people":It is all one. I said to myself in a hundred years it is all one; and still my heart wept, tearless, desolate, silently to itself.

Mira's brother Kitsamy is a part and parcel of the western culture as he is educated in England. He scorns and impatiently mocks at every Indian ceremony. He considers his life in India as "living in the wilds". Premala, his wife is not able to sever her roots completely from Govind, Kit's eastern counterpart even though she lives in her husband's western style house, moves in western style society, even eats the European food and has forgotten the traditional welcome of copra and betel leave, as Kit has no Indian friends. Premala is unable to overcome this barrier and fails to achieve marital happiness even though her love for Kit knows no bounds. Govind bound by the same chain has a fanatic hatred for anything English. His unfulfilled love for Premala can hardly bear the agony of seeing her destroyed bit by bit. He assures her "It is not a vital matter, this of moving among the English".

Opposite to each other in character and appearance, the two men, Kit and Govind, stand as arch rivals for the same woman portraying the encounter between the western and eastern set of values in vivid colours. This encounter costs them their lives.

It is however Roshan who is portrayed as a truly liberated woman. She has inculcated cosmopolitan and international outlook in life. Educated in England and fed on the western values, she feels at home in both the worlds: "Born in one world, educated in another she entered both and moved in both with ease and non-chalance."
Her sole aim in life is to mould her personality in her way and to achieve this she can go to any extreme and sacrifice anything. Madhusudan has rightly defined her situation: "Though she has sympathy for the west and is on the intimate terms with individual westerners, she is truly Indian at heart and takes active part in the political struggles against Britain."

Kamla Markandaya does not present directly the theme of East-West encounter in *A Silence of Desire*. There are some oblique hints here and there, of the western influence upon the Indian mind like "Western immortality" shown in films, the reference, to the coffee break as "a legacy from the British" and Dandekar's serving under an Englishman and no disliking for the foreigners.

The encounter between east and west has not been personified in this novel, yet it is presented at cultural level. Dandekar's scepticism and his sense of reason clashes with his wife Sarojini's sticking to faith-healing. Dandekar's approach to his wife's illness is western, for he advocates hospitalisation and surgery whereas Sarojini's approach is eastern because she goes to the Swami for faith-healing. It is however Dandekar who wins finally and succeeds in showing Sarojini the advantage of modern medical treatment.

Like *Some Inner Fury*, the theme of East-West encounter finds full play in *Possession*. The conflict in the heroin's life arises due to the coming together of western materialistic and eastern spiritual values. The central figure Caroline Bell, an English lady, stands for materialistic values. She tries to possess Val, an artist, who has deep faith in spiritual values. His love and understanding for his values is abiding and he keeps on renewing it through his spiritual guru, the Swamy. Caroline Bell takes him to London and does everything to westernise him. She even enters into conflict with the Swamy in order to stake her claim upon Val because Val is unable to break away completely from the Swamy.

In the beginning Val's form and outer appearance changes to an appreciable extent and he moves and talks freely among the English society. He achieves refinement and sophistication in manner as well as tongue: His English was good, the accent cultivated - Caroline had clearly made him work at it. Most of the uncouthness was gone, and some of the honesty. Did it make him more acceptable? In this polished western world, obviously yes.

Val becomes an artist of repute under Caroline's tutelege but soon the impression of the west withers and Valmiki becomes aware of the raw and rotten
aspect of its materialistic culture when by the foxy tricks of Caroline he is torn apart first from Ellie, a Jewish girl, and later on from Annabel, an English girl, with whom he makes human ties. The death of the monkey Minou further clarifies his position as merely a toy to be possessed and play with. He returns to India as his interest in humanity aroused and Caroline Bell with her western materialism is found in conflict with the spiritual values of the Swamy.

The theme of the clash of the values of east-west can also be seen running as an undercurrent in A Handful of Rice. The rebellion of Ravi, the protagonist, against his rural environment is the part of western thinking. It leads him to transplant him into a city which has nothing to give him, i.e. employment and decent settlement and forces him to join Damodar an underworld don. His falling in love with Nalini and his subsequent marriage with her motivates him to decent ways of earning his livelihood. He tries hard but fails. He joins a tailors' work in the shop of his father-in-law. But this business also declines after his father-in-law, Apu's death and he is left to fight even for a handful of rice, but finds nothing because of physical exhaustion. Ravi grows rebellious when he thinks about his early stages of unemployment: Tight wound coils of feeling insisted him instead of this, rebelling against wholesale acceptance of life as a culture for the breeding of suffering with a wild energy that sometimes made him want to break and tear whatever upheld it, and sometimes actually, physically ill with rage.

In The Coffer Dams Markandaya treats the theme of east-west encounter at two levels, i.e., personal and social. The conflict is depicted between the technological power and the forces of nature. The socio-cultural conflict is evident from the very beginning when the tribals are evicted to make way for the settlement colonies. The Indian barracks are turned into English quarters. But this is not only an encounter between the European culture and the oriental one. There is a substantial and subtle difference between the western educated Indian and the self-taught or illiterate tribals who are called "Jungle Wallah" by their own countrymen, as well as by the English The antagonism between these three kinds of people comes out in putting labels like 'Bengali Babus' on all the Indian Engineers by Rawling or calling Bashiam a civilised Jungle Wallah.

The personal yardstick to measure this antagonism is more vicious and prejudiced than the collective one while the European waver between "keeping themselves to themselves" and the extremity of "never trust the Black". The Indians,
like Gopal Rao, feel "supremely uncomfortable and unwanted" and the headman of the tribals condemns, the builder for leaving them "In a place full of moaning and pining for trash" while Clinton is contemptuous of the people, who worshipped "birds and beasts and probably snakes" Krishna remarks with equal contempt about Rawlings insistence on a Christian burial: "In the end what he really cared .... about was that he should be right and should be wrong.

This cultural conflict proves disastrous to each of them demanding a heavy price, perhaps the heaviest from the three central characters: Clinton, Bashiam and Helen. The east-west encounter can only be resolved through good will, compromise and understanding. Helen and Mackendrick realise this and their personal equation with the Indians have no racial barriers. Helen crosses the racial line easily learning their language and lore and finding love and fulfilment she so much longed for.

Symbolically, the encounter is presented through the confrontation between the mechanical and the mystical. The Indians know that the Indian river has a character of its own but the western engineer consider it only in terms of its strata, flow and course. They collect a hundred years old data on it and construct a dam based on their projections which is completely destroyed by the torrential rains. The sophisticated machinery grounds to a halt and Mackendrick borrows the knowledge about the rains and rivers from the headman. Technology may build things but it lacks the wisdom to preserve them.

*The Nowhere Man* which bears resemblances to Anita Desai’s *Bye Bye Black Bird* is almost a reversal of *Some Inner Fury*. Markandaya presents harsher reality and expresses the cultural conflict through ugly incidents of racial war perpetuated by the skin head like Fred and his compatriots.

As in *Some Inner Fury* the violence looms in the forefront to kill, disfigure and drive away the British from India, so also the 'blacks' are subjected to fanaticism of the English and are made either to leave England or die violent deaths. This conflict is brought mainly at personal level of the characters. Srinivas, smarting under the indignities heaped upon the Indians by the British imperialists leaves India and paradoxically chooses England as his adopted country on account of the British sense of justice, fair play and tolerance. He is comfortable in imitating the British way of thinking and generally enjoys his stay in England. But this is veneer only, as he still cannot eat eggs and meat and prefers Gulab Jamun to cakes. The name of his house is changed to 'Chandraprasad' to give an idea of Indianisation in an alien land.
Barring Laxman, the three of them (Srinivas, Vasantha and Sheshu) remain bound by the chain of eastern culture even though a gallant attempt at compromise is put forward by Srinivas. This paves the way for east-west encounter in the novel.

In *Two Virgins*, there is no direct delineation of the theme of east-west encounter like *A Handful of Rice* and *A Silence of Desire*. Herein the modern outlook of the protagonist Lalitha, who has the background of English schooling is put against the traditional values represented by her aunt Alamelu. The conflict that Lalitha faces is because of her ambitious nature and her attraction for glamour. These qualities are instilled in her by her education in a missionary school. She leaves her home, her village and, of course, her near and dear ones to lead an independent life in city for "the village stifled her, her talents, her ambition. She intended to stay in the city where she belonged. She could look after herself."

Like *Some Inner Fury*, the theme of the east-west encounter assumes multi-dimensional aspects in *The Golden Honeycomb* Markandaya presents in this novel two prominent aspects of India's encounter with Britain - the impact of the western education and civilisation on the outlook of the Indians and the conflict between India and Britain arising out of the awakening of the national consciousness against British rule among the people of India.

Markandaya delineates three types of characters here. First, there are English Agents, Residents, Commanders I C S Officers Governor Generals and later Viceroy. They maintain law and order and keep Devapur State under their domination by their clever policies and come in conflict and clash with the Indians. Some of the Viceroy, the highest British authority like Lord Curzon and Sir Arthur, were popular in India for their sense of justice and administration. Others were haughty and temperamental. Not only the English but also some of the Indian rulers were apathetic towards the needs and demands of the people. They burdened the public with heavy taxes and levies.

Secondly, there are those like Bawaiji Raj-Ill and the Dewan who were fed on English education and training and followed the Britishers and remained mere puppets in their hands. They always clashed with the people. The third type is represented by Rabi, who is depicted as a truly liberated man who identifies himself with the luckless labourers and common people of the Devapur State. He, along with Usha, the youngest daughter of the Dewan fights for the masses. At last they emerge triumphant with the declaration of independence in 1947.
In her last novel ‘The Pleasure City’ Markandaya portrays the encounter between east and west as she had done in The Coffer Dams through the project undertaken by AIDCORP to build a holiday resort Shalimar, in a far off South Indian Village where no technical or any other kind of development has started and the people depend on fishing. In the wake of its completion Shalimar affects the life of those who are living close to it, such as Rikki, an orphan boy Tully, the director of AIDCORP; his wife Cornia; Valli, the local belle; Carmen, the Spanish Dancer; Apu the headman of the coastal settlement, and Mrs. Pearl, who comes over to India and stays on for the rest of her life. The difference between the two cultures and modes of life is best bridged by the relationship of Tully and Rikki in the novel.

Markandaya, in all her novels, presents the theme of East-West encounter in its manifold aspects and looks upon it from various points of view.

The search for identity is another major theme explored by Markandaya in her various novels. This is the most recurrent and common theme treated by Indian English writers. Markandaya delineates this theme in almost all her novels in its varied and complex forms as R.S. Pathak notes, “Identity is a different thing. It is possible when a person is feeling belonginess for the nation and loyalty”. Displacement, rootlessness and loss of from one's moorings are some of the various causes of the loss of identity of a person that make him a pathetic figure.

Twentieth century global period is the age of progress by leaps and bounds. In this era people feel an acute need to go hand in hand with progress. Soaring ambitions of men compel them to gain a better status and to assert their identity in the milieu where they lie. Migration becomes a very common phenomenon to achieve their high ambitions, yet their affiliation for the native land does not allow these migrants to live peacefully at the alien land. "Exile", “Expatriate” and “Diaspora” are the words used for these persons who left their homelands to fulfill their increasing needs, whether of finance or after Marriage settlement. Especially, the Diaspora writers emerge as explorers of the predicaments which are faced by these persons. Their texts mainly project their preoccupations like east-west encounter, tradition vs. modernity, Indian religions vs. liberal west rationalism vs. spirituality etc.

No doubt, a search for land of exile, is the result of the memories of their past land. Their immigration does not allow their detachment from native land, even does not permit to overcome from the sorrow of left nativity. Apart from home land, the reminiscences occur and these exile create a mythical and imaginative picture for
their emotional and psychological support in the alienated milieu. Through it they want to keep their culture, religion, artifacts and texts intact in their memory.

The term “expatriate” with contemporary literary world has come to be associated with the works produced by dispersed minority communities settled at alien land leaving their ancestral homelands. Kamala Markandaya’s works truly represent expatriatism with all its ramifications. An expatriate always suffers from the pain of not being able to belong to the place where his roots once existed. Her own condition as an expatriate compels her to view and review the conditions of exile even in the contemporary ordered world. Markandaya has employed the form of novel as a tool that instigates the experiences of an exile specially in the western world. A few of her novels like *The Nowhere Man*, *Possession* and *Some Inner Fury*, stand as the true testimony to the traumas, problems and paradoxes of the life of exile. The attempts of different protagonists of her novels to make their existence possible at the alien land and their subsequent failures in doing so has been portrayed very realistically in her literary works. Kamala Markandaya has projected her characters in different states. Some of them struggle to establish them in an alien land where as some of them feel quite at home in Doth the poles. Her works are specimens of occupation and her characters attempt to preserve their own native culture in the cross cultural milieu, though they prompt and try the various alternatives to associate their fixity with the lost one. To ensue a sense of security and affirmity and to restore their native conventions and rituals, they persistently try to avoid a feeling of loss and enliven their departed cultural and ethnic prejudices. Kamala Markandaya's own birth in an elite Hindu Brahmin family of south India bound by rites and rituals, customs and conventions insist her to share into her literary products. Her characters, being south Indian always try to guard their Indianness against the contamination of alien world and its culture.

In fact, like her character Roshan in *Some Inner Fury*, Kamala was born and brought up and educated in one world, India; and married and realised full potentialities of her art in the other world, England. Further like her characters, Roshan and Mira, in *Some Inner Fury*, and Anasuya in *Possession*. Markandaya has close contact and sympathy with the individual Western, and moreover like them she is really patriotic and nationalist at heart, and so joins hands with the agitators, at least in her spirit in the political struggle against England. Though Kamala Markandaya has been living in London for a long time, enjoying family life, and
realizing her artistic potentialities, still India and its people are never effaced from her memory. It is felt that she has not fully adapted herself to the English life stream. Therefore, her novels express her great obsession with India and its people and culture.

Her novels in general, present the protagonists’ search for identity in a chaotic world. The cultural clash is ingrained in Markandaya’s own personality. Markandaya’s mixed sensibility resulting from duality of her origin is conducive to close understanding of both oriental and occidental values of life. It is advantageous for her, because the presence of two cultures in a writer’s mind forms a wider basis on which to originate the quest for identity. A new angle of vision was developed in Kamala Markandaya as a result of the British contact, and hence this cultural conflict constitutes the kernel of her fiction.

She treats the tensions and points of contacts between people of India and England. Her mixed loyalty enables her to view with calm the challenge of contrasting cultures. She observes and portrays both ways of life in her novels with great objectivity. Therefore the delineation of racial relationships in her novels is realistic and natural to a great extent. Her English characters are also drawn with great vitality and vividness. Kamala Markandaya’s novel Some Inner Fury gives full focus to her major thematic concern of East-West encounter and its effects on man-woman relationship. In the novel, Mirabai, the narrator heroine, her brother Kit, Richard the Englishman and Hickey the missionary are those characters who stand for western value system not because they have altogether shunned their customs and traditions but because they outwardly show their life style in western colour and follow the manners which may speak of their rational approach in domestic governance, whereas Premala and Govind are those who uphold Indian value system much because of their background and limited choice. Mira has been brought up in a family that believes in a blend of Anglicization and Indianisation, but she has not imbibed anglicization as Mira has. Govind the staunch nationalist with terrorist leanings ardently believes in Indian values. The affluent Roshan merchant although at home in an anglicized atmosphere is equally at home in the third class railway compartment and even goes prison for her nationalist beliefs.

The novel presents three different attitudes to the western way of life and their relations with India through three different characters Govind, Kitsamy and Roshan. Govind harbours a deep rancour against the British rulers and civilization and
fanatically loves his own country. He is patriotic to the core. Kitsamy presents a contrast to Govind in his education in English. He is westernized from tip to toe. Western culture has taken deep roots in his mind. Inspite of being an Indian, Kit finds it difficult to understand the attitude of his own countrymen and thus presents a good example of the native alien.

However, through her female character Roshan. Markandaya presents the liberated woman of modern India and sets an example of the fusion of the two cultures. She receives her education in England and has a dual citizenship and feels quite at home in both the worlds like her creator. Markandaya remarks about her : “Born in one world educated in another she entered both and moved in both with ease and nonchalance”. Thus Roshan is an excellent example of the amalgamation of the two cultures. The impact of Eastern and Western conflicts in Some Inner Fury is set against the historical background of the freedom struggle and more particularly the Quit India Movement of 1942. At the political level the gulf separating India and England remains unbridgeable.

In fact in Some Inner Fury the author has tried not only to present the encounter between the spiritual East and materialistic West but has also endeavoured to present the impact of such relationship on man and woman. She shows this impact mainly in the relationship of Mira and Richard, Kit and Premala. The action of the novel takes place in the historical year 1942; yet it presents the love story of Richard and Mira. The two persons who love each other belong to two different races and the novel is a study of the influence of the troubled national spirit of the period upon their relationship. The apparent conflict between East and West influences their relationship too. Mira while recollecting her past observes : A whole war lies between us ... a whole struggle whose beginnings we did not see. which used us and wrenched us apart and is now best forgotten. When, this is all over, I said to him ... we can still be friends.

The words of Mira suggest the possibility of personal intimacy and understanding between two individuals belonging to the two cultures, but at a national level this fusion seems to be quite impossible. The novel highlights the fact that the East-West conflict affects the personal relationship of man and woman. The love affair of Mira and Richard racedes in futility before their loyalties to their nations. Ultimately the national loyalty triumphs and their deep personal love is defeated because of the current political upheaval.
Parallel to the dominant theme of East-West encounter, there runs the story of political crisis in India in pre-independence days. The novel dramatizes the lives of young people lost in the political confusion of the independence struggle. The national political crisis does not allow harmonious relations between the Britishers and the Indians, and hence Richard and Mira go their separate ways towards the close of the novel Undoubtedly in the enactment of the national drama, the worst sufferers are the young individuals.

This novel also works out the dilemma between personal relationship and racial prejudice, by depicting the romance between Mira and Richard. In their love they seem to have overcome all racial boundaries. They try to surface all differences but it becomes impossible as they both belong to different nations and races, the race of the ruler and that of the ruled. The political conflict overpowers their emotional bonds. Mira becomes the victim of forces beyond her control-the forces of history. Like in *The Passage to India* by E.M. Forster, ‘Some Inner Fury also ends on the not that the East and West cannot meet because the forces that pull them apart are too strong’.

Though political upheaval separates Mira and Richard, yet Mira has never shown any sympathy for the agitation. She does not protest against the British as Roshan does, yet at the end she joins the crowd as they leave the court building. In the chaotic scene, Mira and Richard are forced to part, for he is English and she Indian. Richard also joins the group of Englishman. The parting of India and England becomes the parting of the two lovers. However Mira’s internal monologue reveals her spiritual agonies. Go ?!leave the man I loved to go with these people ? What did they mean to me. What could they mean, more than the man I loved? They were my people-those others were his. Did it mean something then-all this ‘your people’ and ‘my people’ ... Nothing... I knew I would go even as I knew Richard must stay. For us there was no other way the forces that pulled us apart were too strong.

The conflict between eastern and western values can best be seen in the relationship of Kit and Premala. Kit is married to Premala, a shy and conservative girl, Indian in spirit and born and brought up in a traditional family. She tries her best to mould herself according to the taste of her husband but vain Kit finds her misfit in his own world of modernity and civilization. Mira rightly comments about her brother’s preference for western culture: But Kit did not merely participate in it; he was a part of it; his feeling for the west was no cheap flirtation, to be enjoyed so long,
no longer to be put aside thereafter and forgotten, or at best remembered with a faint nostalgia. It went deeper, it was understanding and love.

Kit has to marry a traditional Indian woman, who does not believe in fashionable entertainments. She does not like the hypocrisy posed by him. For Kit, such entertainments are life and blood. As a matter of fact, these two characters present the conflict of the Eastern and the Western values. Both prove to each other a failure in adjustment. Though he poses to be modern, he treats his wife like an Indian husband. He lacks that liberality which a truly westernized Indian may be expected to show. In this sense it may be said that Kit is not entirely a product of the west; the influence is however, deep. He prefers English style English pattern. He is very much influenced by the Western culture. As the novelist points out: Kit's house was different: the furnishing had been left in the hands of European firm, and there was nothing that was Indian about it. There were wilton carpets on the floor, wing chairs and a cocktail cabinet in the drawing room, the sideboard held English bone-china ... 

Premala, his wife, finds herself unable to adjust in the anglicized atmosphere of her husband’s house. She is a typical Indian lady, her views do not match with her anglicized husband. Her heroic efforts to measure up to Kit’s expectations very often end in disaster. There we see that the clash between the two cultures affects the relationship of Kit and Premala. Because of different attitude of her husband, she turns to the missionary school run by Hickey in an attempt towards self-definition.

If on the one extreme this contact led to the emergence of a thoroughly westernized, Kit on the other, it produced people who were bitterly hostile to the British rule. They were nationalists to the core. They want the Britishers to be away from their country. They can't just bear their sight. To him it was the produce of a culture not his own, the culture of an aloof and alien race twisted in the process of transplantation from its homeland and so divorced from the people of the country as to be no longer real. In the character of Roshan Merchant we find a perfect blending of East and West. She has the courage to raise her voice against British injustice. She writes scathing articles exposing the British railway system but she has English friends. Roshan, a girl of cosmopolitan outlook presents perfect blending of the Eastern and the Western cultures. She is friendly with individual westerners being truly Indian at heart. She sets an example of the confluence of the two cultures—Eastern and Western.
Richard though an English does not feel shame in adopting Indian tradition. Mira is astonished when she saw him cross legged on the floor of a Brahmin restaurant as though he had been used to eating in this manner all his life. Mira away of an Englishman’s contempt for Indian art and culture is surprised at Richard’s knowledge of stories of the Mahabharata. They shows her inclination towards Indian art and culture. His love for Mira is genuine. Richard though modern in his ways is conscious of the Indian upbringing of Mira. He does not want Mira to cross the line of Indian culture and tradition to the extent of being revolting. He does not readily agree to her suggestions that they go on a holiday. He tells her: "You have been brought up differently. I have stayed with you, I know your family you are not like other women”.

He not only goes with Mira to seek her mother’s permission for their marriage but he also fully appreciates her mother’s anxiety concerning this inter-racial marriage and is prepared to wait till Mira is twenty one. Richard stands by Mira in her hour of trial Premala has died of asphyxiation in the school fire, Kit has been knifed to death by the terrorists and Govind has been charged with Kit’s murder. But when the mob invades the court room where Govind is being tried, Richard knows that now his ‘love’ must give away to duty to his country.

Mira’s love for Richard is not less than his love for her. Still we see that Mira, at a personal level is in love with an Englishman but shows great dislike for the English as rulers. The novelist shows her in dilemma to choose either of the two and makes her forsake her lover in order to join her own people. Thus national loyalty overpowers the personal love of Mira.

However, in the final stage of the novel this conflict resolves itself by Mira’s preference for her nation to her personal love, by merging her fury of passion in the larger fury of the national movement.

*Being* It depicts a familiar dilemma between self and society, between relationship and racial prejudice. Mira and Richard gets success in establishing love and affinity at a personal level, but they are not so much free to decide their own destiny.. They both become victims of forces beyond their, control. The forces of history isolate them. As Mira leaves Richard in the midst of the fury of the mob, she rightly reflects : Go? leave the man I loved, to go with these people ... They were my people, these others were his. Did it mean someing then - all this 'your people' and
‘my people’? ... I know I would go, even as I know Richard might stay. For us there was no other way, the forces that pulled us apart were too strong.

Thus the novel ends on the note that the east and the west cannot meet because the forces that pull them apart are too strong. The novel also brings out the fact that the Indian and the English may be friendly but the gap between the two cultures cannot be bridged. The confrontation can occur at any point or at any time and whenever this confrontation arises, it affects the man-woman relationship. Different attitude because of two different cultures has always been the subject of confrontation. Whenever western and native values cross each other, the confrontation arises in one form or the other.

In the novel Possession also Kamala Markandaya depicts the conflict between the east and the west and its impact on the relationships. The differences in two cultures have been highlighted and it is shown how it affects the relationship between the two. It delineates the conflict between the Indian spiritualism and the western materialism. This clash is narrated by Anasuya, an Indian writer, who silently watches the whisking away of the humble peasant boy Valmiki a fine artist who paints murals on the roll of rock caves from his villages.

Markandaya's fourth novel Possession centres round the efforts of Caroline Bell, an English lady, to transform Val, a talented artist, into a sophisticated and westernised person and celebrated artist. She tries to possess and condition him culturally and psychologically. Of course she has a right, she has brought him from an interior village of India where he was expressing himself in art and wasting his talents, painting the murals of walls of reck hills. She succeeded, though apparently at the beginning for “Val is shown succeeding eminently in the western sense which has been unambiguously defined in terms of public acclaim and commercial exhibitionism”. Under the able guidance and direction of Caroline Val becomes a very successful artist and a celebrity. He adapts himself to the manner and ways of west and becomes “an ostentatious artistic persona and the kind of artistic extravagant personality.” He mixes and moves freely among the English guests. His moral qualities, his honesty, simplicity and liberality begin to erode. But his art flourishes and he becomes an artist of continental fame.

The impact of west does not prove everlasting upon him. The suicide of Ellie, a Jewish refugee girl, who falls in love with Val and is made pregnant by him; parting from Annabel, an English girl, with whom he is involved later; the forged letter from
Caroline to the Swamy in his name; and lastly the death of the monkey Minou shakes him spiritually. The artist in him dies and his individuality degenerates. Desperation and guilt tear his myopic curtain aside and he compares his lot with the monkey dressed up for show. He realised that Caroline’s motive behind his art is totally commercial and his paintings merely a commodity to be displayed and sold in the market rather than an expression of his communion with the divine. She considers him as a personal possession and cares for him "with zeal and efficiency as he might have a property - the necklace of diamonds round her throat." With the help of his spiritual guru the Swami, he is able to break away from Caroline.

But the impact and interaction with the west is not the utter waste. It deepens Val’s love for humanity and fills him with determinism and courage. He returns calm and quite to pursue his spiritual life and dedicates his talent in painting for the divine spirit of the universe. His experiences in the west deepen his human interest in the art. Even Anasuya, the narrator, marked the change in his art. 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 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 have never been apparent before.

In Possession, Valmiki, the Indian belonging to rural area and his paintings under the inspiration of Swami, symbolises India. An English lady Caroline Bell, embodiment of western civilization, takes him to London and tries vehemently to win him over. Val feels inspired to paint again. The fame and popularity of Val amongst the Englishmen is actually inspired by the fact that he is Indian: He tried to know everything about India. He knew about the Inda’s fashion, culture, tradition and behaviour.

Valmiki under favourable conditions adjusts himself. Under the supervision and guidance of lady Caroline, he makes progress to an appreciable extent. His English was good, the accent cultivated. Caroline had clearly made him work at it. Most of the uncouthness was gone, and some of the honesty. Did it make him more acceptable? In this polished western world, obviously yes. Undilute East had always been too much for West; and soulful East always came lapdog fashion to the West, mutely asking to be not too little and not too much, but just right.

Though Caroline’s guidance makes him refined and polished, it also has adverse effect on him, leading to the loss of honesty and faithfulness. Caroline is an
autocrat, ruthlessly ambitious and determined to get what she wants: She was supremely confident, born and brought up to be, so, with as little thought of fallibility as a colonial in the first flush of empire, as a missionary in the full armour of his mission, dogged by none of hesitancies that handicap lesser breeds.

Highly individualised, affluent and unscrupulous — these qualities of her are best brought out in the words of Meena Shirvadkar, who finds her highly individualised, an unscrupulous and sexy woman who tries to possess Val, the village artist ... . physically as well as spiritually.

She sets about getting possession of Val and moulds him into a man. an artist and a lover after the image she has in her mind and in the process ruins him, depriving him of his independence and spiritual strength, though in her opinion he gains more than he loses. That she is supercilious towards all non-British, specially Indians is amply illustrated by the method she uses to buy Val from his parents.

However, his love for Val is not faithful because his motivations are extremely selfish, including sexual desires. But sexual desire, which spontaneously emanates from feelings of belonging and love, remains virtually hidden in its behavior. It is perversity and lust that invite Caroline to defeat Valmiki. Kamla Markandaya has painted in Caroline a faithful portrait of the dominant radial character who holds absolute power over a man belonging to a inferior inferior race. In normal situations, it is the male who controls the female, but Caroline is an exception. It's snowing to have total sexual control over Valmiki. In effect, sexual ethics destroys the context of racial superiority, where a white woman is superior to a man of race and politically black.

The relationship between Caroline and Val is neither balanced nor based on understanding. Carolina is cold, intolerant, selfish, mercenary and manipulates everything and everyone to adapt to herself and achieve her desired goals. You do not recognize the human element in Val. Ignore or sweep the human bonds it maintains. She deliberately minds and forces Ellie to separate from him and commit suicide. Like the colonial English, it also embraces the politics of division and conquest of Val and Annabell.

So, there is no spark of love between Caroline and Val. He maintains this relationship only to restrain him because his lover Val immediately realizes that she is possessive, but is not able to separate until the catastrophe of the death of Elite breaks the net around his eyes.
Caroline's case shows "nothing as clear as there may be a reasonable relationship, but simply the overlapping of a stranger with another" Anasuya also discovers his possessiveness: -Carolina thinks that Valmiki belongs to him and that it's not right. People do not easily give up what they think is their job. English has never done."

Caroline has had several love stories that reveal her nymph needs. She does not hesitate to take Valmiki, who is half her age, as her lover. She is jealous of Val's human relationships with Ellie and Annabel. Extremely selfish and diabolically intelligent, he organizes Ellie's suicide and the separation of Annabell and Val.

She even does not hesitate to overpower the Swamy and confident of her own power, she tells him: "One day he (Val) will want to be mine again. I shall take care to make him want me again and on that day I shall come back to claim him." The Swamy's severity, detachment and faith in humanity seem to waver for he, perhaps foresees that Val can come under Caroline's influence in future and that she can be successful in possessing Val.

Despite all this, Caroline is by no means happy or fulfilled. She is like those rich women who flock to the Swamy in the Indian city. Anasua's description of such women is eye catching, when she says: all with a less evident common factor of subtle deformity -the pinched, down-drawn mouths of permanent discontent, the out-thrust bosom and shoulders of an unrelenting aggressiveness, the painted, shadowed wary eyes of people exhausted by their evolutionary move from being woman happy to surrender, to women doomed to conquer, like those distant sea creatures that took their first steps on to land to collapse gasping upon the beach.

Thus, Caroline is the true spokesman of the British society with its clever talk, sensuous living, material comfort and career opportunities. But the impact of West does not last long. His process of westernization slowly diminishes and love for his motherland and the Swamy get stronger. Here we see that amidst the western soil, Indian flowers in the form of Valmiki start fading their hue.

In Possession, the Swamy and Caroline represent two divergent approaches to life, the spiritual (oriental) and material (western). Val's return to the Swamy suggest the fact that while a brief contact with the west may be beneficial for the modernization of India it can be healthy if interaction of ideas is there. However, its last fulfilment can be brought only through her own spiritual values. The words of Harish Raizada are noteworthy. India's relationship with the west may be worthwhile
but possession of its soul by the west is bound to stiffle its progress. Thus the conflict between the Swamy and Caroline for custody and control of Val truly becomes symbolic of the conflict between Indian spiritual values and western civilization for the possession of the soul of India.

Caroline is thirty two or three, old enough to be Valmiki’s mother or elder sister but she treats him like a lover. Other younger women like Ellie and Annabel who try to have Val, love are adroitly eliminated by her. She boasts: “I discovered him in a cave. Oh yes, real one India, hideously bare and uncomfortable, except for those superb walls. And Val of course”. But Caroline fails to understand the true spirit of Valmiki which is still in the forceful grip of the Swamy. When he visits London at the invitation of the International Guild for the Advancement of Theosophy, she remarks angrily: “It is a seduction ... spiritual. There’s no place for it in England. He ought never to have been allowed in”. She tries her every nerve to influence Val profoundly but his roots remain intact with Swamy. The narrator, Anasuya, reports thus: Valmiki’s attachment to the Swamy seemed undiminished, if less emotional than when he had been a child. It was to some extent certainly reciprocated; and perhaps it was this human tie, tenuous though it was that had led the Swamy to forsake his isolated life in the realisation that he was as yet unready to meet its austere demands. Yet the link had been slight, or severely controlled. In all the years of their separation he had never once communicated with Valmiki, nor had there been any indirect enquiry; and his visit to London, though distantly connected with Valmiki, was only a matter of a few brief weeks.

The relationship of Val and Caroline breaks up as a result of conflict between western materialism and Indian spiritualism. The crippling western impact upon Val does not last long; it cracks up in the face of the Swamy’s spiritual aura. When Caroline remarks to Val of the awful wilderness of India, he very confidently replies: “No crime ... the wilderness is mine; it is no longer terrible as it used to be; it is nothing”. Even of time when Val has returned to India to the patronage of the Swamy, she continues to believe that he will come back to her one day. Caroline tries her best to bring back Val form India but her efforts turned futile as Val refuses to come back. To her surprise, she discovers that Val has developed deep attachment to the Swamy and has been living with him in a state of perfect happiness. Ultimately she has to return empty handed. Caroline reflects in her personality the typical English possessiveness. A daughter of the former British Resident in India, she maintains
that “being British is best”, and that India needs England for an all-round development. As soon as she sees Valmiki, she decides in her mind to take him with her. She considers Valmiki as a property. Actually this novel deals with the theme of cultural domination and patronage of India by Britain.

This novel is superb in the delineation of the theme of conflict between eastern and western encounter, in which materialism and possessiveness collide with Indian spiritualism and dispossession and how the raft is created between the individuals because of such conflicts. In *A Silence of Desire* we find no direct encounters between the Indian and the British as there is no British character in the novel. Here the novelist shows the clashes between the western ideas and the impact of western ideas on Indian mind. The conflict is between the Indian spiritual faith and the western sense of reason. On one side there is modernity of Dandekar and on the other traditional outlook of his wife the conflict between which come on the fore. Dandekar, a government servant, undergoes a great mental torture on account of his wife’s frequent absence from the house. Finally, he comes to know that she goes to Swamy to seek faithcure for a tumor in her womb. Dandekar exhorts her to undergo a scientific cure through operation and not rely on superstitious faith, but Sarojini protests: yes, you can call it healing by faith, or healing by the grace of God, if you understand what that means.

Sarojini is rigid. She does not want to go to a doctor to be operated upon. She knows that faith and scepticism cannot go hand in hand and is convinced that without faith she will not be cured. Dandekar after great difficulty succeeds in convincing his wife for the operation. He takes the help of his officer, Mr. Ghosh, to get the Swami out of the town. Mr. Ghosh has western scientific outlook and he wants his country to be equal of any in the west. However, the Swami leaves the town of his own accord and Sarojini agrees to an operation. Thus, the novel presents indirectly the clash between the Eastern faith and the western reason.

Swamy voluntarily retires from the town and goes away but not before advising Sarojini to undergo the operation and assuring her that it will be successful.

Dandekar finds his tranquility from Swamy. Sarojini is operated successfully and his tumor is removed. Dandekar is now perfectly relieved. Suddenly he goes to the place called Swamy where he meets the dwarf, who smells him for organizing the withdrawal of the saint, spiritual and moral support of the needy and the unfortunate. He takes back his ornaments from the dwarf, saying: I want to achieve
these things. I do not forget any thing which is very essential for me. I will fight for my children and wife and these are the other fragments, of which even you must be aware.

Thus, we find that the conflict between the relationship of Dandekar and Sarojini arises because of two different approaches - the western and the traditional. Kamala Markanday’s *Nectar in a Sieve* is a representative novel with respect to human relations as it shows the varied aspects of man-woman relationship in it. Kamala Markandaya’s novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* deals with the sufferings of peasants in the preindependent India. Nathan and Rukhmani, the central characters in the novel are not individuals but like Prem Chand’s Hori and Dhania in *The Godan* stand for every Indian farmer. Their tragic tale is the tale of Indian peasantry. They are the victims of landlordism a system introduced by the Britishers. Rukmani and Nathan in the land which does not belong to them and pay exhorbitant rent for it even during famine and flood. Despite their back-breaking work at farm, they hardly get a square meal a day. Poverty and privations are their life-long companions.

Happiness of the Indian farmer depends on the moods of Weather-God. If the weather is favourable, he feels supremely blessed as the rich harvest would enable him to keep the wolf from his door. It arouses hopes his heart. Rukmani, overjoyed with the hope of rich crop, says, While the sun shines on you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eyes, and your husband sees beauty in you which no one has seen before and you have a good store of grain laid away for hard times, a roof over you and sweet stirring in your body, what can a woman ask for? My heart sang and my feet were light.

But weather is not always favourable and farmers are well acquainted with its vagaries. The drought or the excessive rain makes the fear of starvation imminent. So much so that a farmer is compelled to sell his possessions like vessels and clothes to pay off the rent. Thus insecurity and privations are part and parcel of the farmer’s life.

Rukmani and Nathan face indescribable difficulties and hardships in their peasant life. They are forced to sell their utensils, clothes and even seeds, which hold prospect for the future crop in order to pay off their land rent. But they could not save their land and are forcibly deprived of it which compel them to seek i refuge at Murugan’s home in city. The sad news of Murugan’s desertion of his wife adds to their frustration. They are reduced to the state of mendicants with all their meagre
belongings stolen. Trying circumstances compel them to throw themselves upon the resources of the city urchin, Puli. They take up stone-breaking in a quarry outside the city. But they make only a pittance and their lot as urban poor remains as pitiable as their life on the farm. Nathan is completely shattered and dies as a broken man. Rukmani reconciles to her lot and returns with Puli to her native village. Despite so many trials and tribulations, Rukmani retains her motherly love and affection which is expressed in her adopting the leper Puli whom she entrusts to the care of Dr. Kenny.

Kamala Markandaya also shows the evil effects of industrializations followed by urbanization. Industrialization attacks the calm and quiet village life in the form of tannery. It devours green open spaces, polluting the clean, wholesome atmosphere of the village. The whole village, devoured by the tannery is turned into a spiritual wasteland: The society is not well. Everybody is moving rudely in street of the villages and society. They do not think about the welfare of the society but they think about individual.

With the establishment of tannery, an industrial society based on the principle of exploitation comes into existence. It brings the filthy commerce of a town. The death of Rukmani’s son, Raja, is compensated with money. It sets all ethical values at naught. Arjun and Thambi clamour for more to eat their fill. Ira who ever had been meek and docile, takes up prostitution.

Soaring prices and greed urge the villagers to demand higher wages. But when their demands are thwarted, they threaten to create trouble for their employers. This has caused a menacing tension all over the village.

In 'Nectar in a Sieve' Kamala Markandaya highlights the differences between the philosophy of East and West. West in the novel is represented by Dr. Kenny and the tannery. To west individuality is the peak and purpose of whole cosmic process. The westemers think of ego and set themselves against the play of nature. But among Indian it is the fate that finds an important place in man’s life. Misfortunes befall a man due to the misdeeds of his previous birth. Indians take them as a punishment from God. When the rain fails, Rukmani like other villagers take it as God’s punishment to them. She tries to propitiate the Goddess with a pumpkin and a few grains of rice. She weeps at her feet in contrition for her sins.

Rukmani has been taught to sear sorrow in silence. She believes sorrow is a chastening process. So she remains stoic in the face of vicissitudes of life. She believes that nothing is unbearable and man’s undaunted and indomitable spirit
helps him to overcome all trials and tribulations by endurance. She patiently endures the vagaries of her life and waits for the times to be better. Her passive acceptance of her misfortune and sanguinleness about the time to come irks Dr. Kenny who chides her saying, Times are better, times are better. Times will not be better for many months.

He believes that instead of enduring the things patiently man must fight against that heavy odds for his survival. The village huts are uprooted in the storm while the tannary withstands the onslauts suggesting that the western rationality has the timber to survive, to fight the heavy odds. Nevertheless westerner Kenny fails to save his marriage from breaking down.

On the contrary, Rukmani believes that man's spirit has strength enough "to rise above his misfortune".

Not only Rukmani but old Granney too has become used to bear misfortune with courage and fortitude. She lives alone making meager living by selling vegetable. The western philosophy is rational, scientific and materialistic. It advocates for a certain amount of planning about the future. But Rukmani cannot plan: How can we? It is not within our means......We are in God's hands.

In fact she has a firm faith in God and draws from it the strength to surmount all difficulties. She is deeply rooted in traditionalism. Though she accepts the western science to cure Puli of his leprosy, she does not accept it beyond that, liable to appreciate each other's behaviour, Rukmani md Kenny nevertheless remain friendly with each other.

Kamala Markandaya also draws our attention to the human relationships, the way they are formed, sustained and disintegrated. The central characters, Rukmani and Nathan prize their relationship above everything. It is their harmonious conjugal bonds that give them strength to bear the buffet of cruel nature and corrupting influence of the ugly industrialization. Despair, disappointments and frustration abound their life but they endure them braely like the true heroes and feel happy in each other's company. When Nathan while lying on the death-bed, asks Rukmani, Have we not been happy together? Always my dearest always, says Rukmani

Rukmani, the youngest daughter of the village headman, due to the poor economic conditions of her father, is married to Nathan, a tenant farmer. She soon reconciles to her fate because she finds Nathan poor in everything but in love and care......for his wife. She lives with Nathan facing utter penury, privations and
hardships courageously. Mutual love and understanding characterise their conjugal bonds. Rukmani feels Nathan to be with her even after his death. The novel opens with Rukmani telling us: Sometimes at night I think that my husband is with me, coming gently brought the mist and we are tranquil together. Than morning comes, the wavering turns to gold, here is a stirring within as the sleepers awake art he softly departs.

Nathan's love and care for his wife does not let his landless status and limited financial resources come in the way of their happiness. He shows great patience towards his ignorant, plain child bride, who imbibes many household jobs from Kali and Janaki. He is aware of Rukmani's deep anguish and disappointment on seeing his mud-hut. He knows that she is used to better living and makes sincere efforts to cheer her up, assuring her of the better times to come. His loving concern and good conduct wins Rukmani's heart. He says to Rukmani with a pleading look: Perhaps you are frightened at living here alone - but in a few years we can move - may be even buy a house such as your father's. You could like that?

Nathan loves Rukmani immensely. So he builds his huts with his own hands for the welcome of his bride. Rukmani's heart is filled with joy at the thought of having a loving and considerate husband.

Nathan too is equally happy with Rukmani whom he considers the best of all women. On Diwali day when they enjoy themselves around the bonfire, Nathan lifts her up and says, I am happy because life is good and children are good and you are the best of all.

There are occasions when Nathan loses his temper and uses harsh words. But even in anger he is never inconsiderate towards Rukmani. When he is unable to collect the required amount to pay to the landlord, he decides to sell everything including the seeds for the next crop. Rukmani does not acquiesce. Nathan angrily says, Do you think I am blind and do not see or so stupid as to believe that crops are raised without seeds? Do you take me for a fool?

Rukmani knows that 'It was due to the terrible choice forced upon us and he never meant to be harsh'. Though they are devoted to each other, yet there have been aberrations in their lives. Nathan was drawn towards Kunthi and sired her two sons. Hence he always remains fearful lest Kunthi should divulge the secret of his illicit relationship with her to Rukmani. But eventually he has to confess his sin to Rukmani when the latter reproaches the children for stealing rice. On learning about
Nathan’s moral lapse, she is deeply anguished and feels cheated. But she does not give vent to her anguish as she herself has concealed from Nathan her relationship with Kenny whose medical assistance helps her bear a son and cures Ira of her barrenness. But she does not want her husband to know it because being a foreigner Dr.Kenny is dubbed as being with the rulers and oppressors. So she meets Kenny surreptitiously because as she is ‘sure Natha would not like his wife or his daughter going to a Whiteman, a foreigner’.

Like Nathan Rukmani too has been blackmailed by Kunthi, who extracted rice from her for not divulging to Nathan of her going to Dr. Kenny. Rukmani think Nathan to be her most precious possession and does not want to lose her: I need you, I cried to myself, 'Nathan, my husband I cannot take the risk, because there is a risk since she is clever and I am not'?

She tells Nathan that Kunthi extorted rice from her also and feels much relieved because now she was ‘freed from the necessity for lies and concealment and deceit with the fear of betrayal’.

Conjugal relationship of Rukmani and Nathan is strong enough not to be disrupted by this unpleasant episode. It provides them strength to bear with stoic calm immense suffering caused by industrialization and deprivation of their land. Their relationship is based on mutual trust, faith and understanding.

In Nectar in a Sieve' not only the conjugal but the filial relations also find a significant place. Children are second self of the parents. Hence a feeling of natural attachment exists between them. Rukmani does not protest her parents' decision to marry her off to a tenant farmer because she understands that her father due to his weak financial position can't give her a rich dowry as has been given to her three elder sisters. Rukkani, after marriage keeps on paying visits to her parents though they become few and far between due to the household liabilities.

Parents are always worried about the welfare of their children. Rukmani’s mother shows her concern for Rukmani's bearing sons. While dying she gives her a lingam, symbol of fertility to enable Rukmani to bear sons. Rukmani’s father is no less concerned with the welfare of his children. He teaches all his children reading and writing because 'he wanted his children to be one cut above the rest'. He believes that education would give them a solace in affliction and a joy in tranquility.

Though all children are equally dear to parents yet in Indian society parents show preference for a son. Rukmani and Nathan are extremely happy at the birth of
their son. While the birth of Ira makes them sad since they wanted a son who could till the land beside his father and work with them.

Rukmani and Nathan are affectionate and their children remain obedient and submissive to them. Ira marries according to wishes of Rukmani and Nathan. Arjun and Thambi too hand over all their income to their mother. It is only when the circumstances become extremely hard and trying, the cordial relations between the parents and children undergo a change. In the fierce struggle for survival, Rukmani and Nathan become helpless before their children. They let Ira go for prostitution, much against their wishes, let Arjun and Thambi leave for Celone knowing fully well that separation from them would be unbearable and let Murugan go to city. They do not compel Selvam to choose the profession of their choice.

To sum up the filial bonds in *Nectar in a Sieve* are based on mutual love and understanding. The adverse circumstances compel the children to go against their parental wishes, yet mutual trust and sympathy remain between them.

Thus Kamla Markandaya deals with multiple of themes in her novel which shows her deep understanding of the Indian rural life and its problems.

In *The Nowhere Man* the author depicts the conditions of Indian immigrants in England before and after independence. Here, the east-west encounter is depicted from a different angle. The novel deals with the story of Srinivas and his wife Vasantha who go to England to escape the cruelty and harassment of the British in India. In England, where he starts an import-export business. He is blessed with two sons, Sheshu and Laxman, who are moulded in western culture. They get conscripted in the army to fight for England during the Second World War. Sheshu dies in the war, while Laxman marries an English girl, practically cutting himself off from the family.

Vasantha is a woman who does not leave her Indian way of life. When she is placed on the western soil, she plans carefully for the future of her sons and returns to India. Srinivas is idealistic, but Vasantha is very practical. On buying a house she proudly says: “At last we have achieved something, A place of our own, where we can live according to our lights although in alien surroundings: and our children after us, and after them theirs”.

The house is named ‘Chandraprasad’ after the original Srinivas home in India. Vasantha dies after the shock of losing both of her sons. In his utter loneliness and
helplessness Srinivas loses all interest in life till the day he meets Mrs Pickering who is a poor old woman and was formerly a nurse. Srinivas though well settled in England finds himself not accepted by English men. Fred is of the opinion that these immigrants should leave England and return to their homeland. One night he along with his companions enters the basement of Srinivas’s house and sets it on fire. Srinivas is completely surrounded by the flames. His son, Laxman accompanied by Dr. Redcliff and C. Ket, rushes towards his father to save him, but it is too late. Srinivas settles in England, though he regards it as his country, but he remains alien for them. One day he is physically assaulted by Fred and his friends. He has spent two third of his life in England and tells Mrs, Pickering, his companion in old age, with pride: “This is my country now and again says, ‘My country’, I feel at home in it, more so than I would in my own”. But it proves to be mirage. Fred an Englishman, soon tells Srinivas, that he has no right to live in ‘This county’. The Western and Eastern conflict mounts up in form of agitation against the blacks and posters carrying the message of hate ‘BLACKS GO HOME’ become too obvious on walls. Now Srinivas is extremely disturbed and it is difficult for him to digest the word ‘outsider’. Kamala Markandaya artistically presents the two types of English, one who are against Indians and the other who are tolerant. In the first category fall Fred and his friends, and in the second category persons like Dr. Radcliffe, Mrs Pickering, Mr. Glass and Mrs Fletcher. Mrs Fletcher feels very much concerned about the misdeeds of her son Fred. She sympathizes with Srinivas and tells him: You don’t want to pay any attention to Fred ... He doesn’t know what he is talking about. You’ve got as much right to live here as what he has ... Even if you were n’t born in this country, Mr. Srinivas, you belong here, and don’t let anyone convince you different.

The novel clearly shows that however friendly Mr. Srinivas and Mrs. Pickering may be on personal level they can not bridge the gap between the two divergent cultures they stand for. Thus, the theme of East-West confrontation again comes alive in the pages of this novel where the protagonist living in England finds himself rootless and a ‘Nowhere Man’ looking for a nowhere city. The title of the novel indicates that if a person voluntarily gives up his own identity and tries to ape others he finds himself ‘nowhere’.

In The Coffer Dams Kamala Markandaya concentrates on encounter between the East and the West in the form of the human and the technological values and their impact on man-woman relationship. The story moves round a dam under
construction over a turbulent hilly river. British experts including a middle-aged engineer Clinton and his young wife Helen reach India. Clinton deeply involves himself in the challenging assignment. The young woman finds few moment of relief in the mysterious East. She typifies the new generation of sensitive and sympathetic English women. She makes friendship with the native Indian and discovers natural springs of social intercourse that promote her cultural consciousness. She reacts with ease and her contact with the Indian tribals. Delighted her too, opened up new acceptances, filled a want that was in her, quiescent but ready to flare. Something in England had starved her.

In her heart of hearts, Helen feels the want of the fullness of life, "a life in which qualities of satisfaction and excellence are present". She finds fulfilment in building bridges of understanding. She departs from her English ways of living in order to affirm herself. She tries to achieve the sense of fulfilment by living not for public approval but to live authentically. She is drawn towards the tribals and establishes a healthy bond with them. She perceives the vastness and depth in the tradition sustaining the tribal people. To her, they are not 'black apes' but alive and feeling men and women, not "blank opacities of their total incomprehension". She has sympathy for them and does not find any difference between herself and tribals. She really wants to overcome the feeling of "we" and "they". Her following remark reveals her true nature: But these people are not different clay. They're like me like people like me. What is for me, is for them, there's no other kind of yardstick that's worth anything.

She develops a kinship with them and shows sincere and genuine sympathy for the tribals. She visits them quite often to have closer communion with them and is overwhelmed by their over flowing warmth, courtesy and hospitality. Helen is greatly shocked at the cold inhumanity of the British in making the tribals vacate a place to make bungalows with the best view for them. This is unforgivable and unredeemable according to her scale of values. In fact, Helen feels attracted towards the tribals. When Clinton wonders whether this relation is due to the fact that his wife is half his age, she retorts "It's nothing to do with age, I just think of them as human beings that's all .... you have got to get beyond their skins, darling II is a bit of a hurdle, but it is an essential one."

Helen rebels against the code of conformity. She begins to visit the up river village where the defrauded tribals have set up a new home. It is her unconventional
behaviour that distinguishes her from other character around her in the novel. She is irritated at the technological and material progress at the cost of human values. Deny them. Pretend they haven't got any. Then they don't know about sunshine or rain either. Sometimes they can't move, poor things. We don't allow them to, in case they yield us one ounce less of their flesh. Where is our instinct for pity? Blunted. We've cut ourselves off from our heritage. We've forgotten what we knew. Where can we turn to, to learn? A million years accumulating, and we know no better than to kick it in the teeth.

Helen is aroused to human kindness for all the creatures upon earth. She develops interest in Bashiam, the tribal technician. He gives her emotional support and fills the vacuum created in her heart.

As the novel progresses we see Helen's growing closeness with Bashiam and increasing alienation with her husband Clinton. She feels she can achieve a sense of unity with her own true self through her union with Bashiam. Her unfulfilled desires find expression in the company of Bashiam. She feels solace and a feeling of satisfaction in his company. When Bashiam feels hesitant.

Helen transcends the racial and cultural barriers in her union with Bashiam. She also indicates a possible solution to the problem of racial apartheid. The complex of superiority or inferiority does not touch her and she is totally free from it. She feels a sense of universal affinity. After her consummation with Bashiam, she expresses her exhilaration: "I belong. I am not alone. Everything is part of me, and I'm a part of everything. Not just a pop up card board figure". However, to Markandanya, such union is seldom permanent because it is not based on mutual help and comfort as in the Srinivas-Mrs Pickering relationship in *The Nowhere Man* or Raja Rao's, *The Serpent and the Rope*.

Helen is drawn towards Indians and especially to Bashiam because she lacks something at emotional level. Her emotional needs remain unfulfilled. Clinton, too absorbed in his work, forgets his wife's existence. This creates a vacuum in Helen's heart. Helen, like her husband Clinton, is a strong character; she is fiercely independent. She dislikes superficialities scorns formalities, ignores convention and is impelled by a sense of higher abstraction. One easily notices a temperamental incompatability between her and Clinton. They are as Asnani finds, "portrayed with diametrically opposed attitudes to life. They represent two extremes. The former absolutely incapable of communicating with the natives. The latter achieving almost
total identification with them". Clinton gets busy in construction work of the dam leaving Helen to take refuge in building a dam of good relationship. The clash between Helen and Clinton arises due to their different attitudes towards Indians. She feels and cares for the Indians as human beings whereas Clinton does not. For him concrete and steel are more important than human outlook and human beings. He thus becomes a personification of the forces of ambition whereas Helen personifies the forces of humanitarianism. Clinton and Helen are two distinct personalities standing poles apart and pitted against each other. At one point Markandaya catches their states of mind in the following words and makes Helen think: It was as if they were walking on different levels: he on the flyover, she on the underpass. He had, as he said, an overall vision. She saw the detail: Das, and the birds, and the passions below. We go our different ways, she thought and may be his as valid as mine; but could not drum up much conviction and it remained an intellectual exercise.

Helen cannot subscribe to Clinton’s view at emotional level but at intellectual level -she can. So she can understand his preoccupation with his work, but she fails to understand the reason of his indifference towards her. She fails to share the burden and mental tension of her husband until Bashiam meets an accident and is crushed hips down. Helen, after her meeting with Clinton, progresses towards intense realization of her situation. She eventually accepts her responsibility as Mrs Helen Clinton. The love-hate relationship between the guest whites and the native blacks creates piquant situation till both are overtaken by a calamity. Thus, in this novel too, east-west encounter becomes the chief forte of Kamala Markandaya.

On the human level, this conflict arises in the form of hostility between the sophisticated British technicians and the hill tribesman of India. Here, we find the clashes of opinion as the two technicians belong to the two different cultures. Thus, the British and Indian officers are in conflict with each other. In this novel western modernism and the primitive forces of India can be seen at cross currents.

Clinton’s behaviour towards Indians is hostile. He does not even treat Indians as human beings. Shocked by the servile attitude of the natives, his wife Helen asks Krishnan the Indian engineer if they have no integrity of their own. He bitterly remarks: “The British had eaten it away during the centuries when they were the rulers and the Indians the ruled: it would take a century to form again".
This novel presents the theme of east-west encounter in the form of a clash between the ruler and the ruled and between the technological and the human values. Helen a sympathetic observer in the novel highlights the evils of technological strides. She stresses that machines tend to make people inhuman. She recedes from her husband Clinton farther and farther each day because for him concrete and steel are more important than human beings. Therefore, she asks him desperately: “Can’t you care? Don’t human beings matter anything to you? Do they have to be a special kind of flesh before they do?” Helen tries to look around for a few moments of relief in the mysterious East. Her looks roam around in search of the modest dwellings of the tribesmen. Kamala Markandaya also presents a clash between the western modern and scientific ideas and superstitious and traditional attitudes of the natives. The scientific and progressive ideas are represented by Clinton and Mackondrick. Madhvi Menon and A.V. Krishna Rao point out the plurality of conflict between Indians and the English in this novel:

In fact, neither the British nor the Indian alone can construct the dam. Only by the fusion of the British mind and Indian muscle can this task be accomplished. The native tribals are driven out of their territory. Here we find the conflict arises between the ancient tribal values of India and the modern-western civilization.

The conflict between the two cultures breeds ill feelings among the employer and the employee. Some of the Indian workers in British concerns have bitter feelings against the British. For instance, Krishnan, the Indian engineer on the site abhors Clinton’s ways and widely differs from him on the construction programme of the dam. Whenever Krishnan finds Clinton callous and indifferent to the sentiments of the Indians, he feels bitterly hurt.

In *The Coffer Dams* the materialistic ideas of the British overpower the simple ideas of the East. The western impact compels the natives to be money-minded. In the novel the old tribal chieftain still has great faith in the continuity of his tribal tradition and bemoans that his people are becoming materialistic like the British and ‘money madness’ is polluting their hearts, turning them into insensitive and soulless human beings.

However, unlike other Britishers, Helen thinks of the Indians on equal terms. She is able to perceive the vastness and depth in the tradition sustaining tribal people. To her they are not black apes. She feels the ‘old indestructible India bug’ is infatuating her too and she wants to do away with ‘we’ and ‘they’.
Helen does not follow the established customs of the Englishmen and as such does not “keep away from those bloody aboriginals and behave like the other women”. Helen's attitude towards India and its people irritates her husband Helen is shocked to know that tribals have vacated the place to make bungalow. This is unforgivable to her. In fact, Clinton wonders whether this kinship is due to the fact that his wife is half his age.

The clashes between Helen and Clinton occur because of Helen's sympathetic attitude towards Indians and Clinton's harsh behaviour towards them. At the time of shattering noise of blasting the English sit comfortable while Helen is disturbed and gets restless. Clinton says callously that ‘They will get used to it', but Helen like her creator does not believe that one gets used to suffering out of despair.

The novel highlights how man and his finer sentiments are sacrificed at the altar of the so-called progressive technology. The old man, the chief of the tribesmen, still has great faith in the continuity of his tribal tradition at people's becoming materialistic like the British and 'money-madness' polluting their hearts turning them into insensitive and soulless beings. This novel portrays the encounter between man and machine, heart and head, the humanity of the East and the technology of the West.

This feeling of being insensitive to is not found not only in the hearts of Britishers for the Indians, but it has become a common characteristic of both. This thing can be traced out in the relationship of Hellen and Clinton, a young couple, intensely loving each other at the outset of the novel, but in the end we find a gulf between them Clinton becomes a perfect professional or a business minded person. He finds it difficult to spare time for his wife as he is in hurry to construct the dam. He even wants to suppress her individuality at both physical as well as spiritual levels. It appears as if he is constructing the dam at the cost of his wife's feelings. He seems to tie the waves of emotion surging in Helen's heart. Britishers scoff at the Indians for being superstitious and worshiping the forces of nature. It is impossible for Clinton to believe Helen when she describes the tribals harmless. He reflects: “But what weight if any, he thought with contempt, could one attach to the words of a people who worshiped birds and beasts and probably snakes”.

The English who are prejudiced against the Indians, have no faith in them and do not make sincere efforts to understand them and their ways. Hellen, however, is an exceptional character. She has boundless curiosity about India and its people,
though her rapport with them puzzles and irritates her husband. Bashiam, the tribal engineer, introduces Helen to the fascinations of the jungle and to his own simple tribe. She meets the tribal chief and discourages their easy surrender to materialism. Helen is attracted towards the tribals, their chief and above all Bashiam.

In *The Coffer Dams* Kamala Markandaya rightly voices her concern for human values which are being eroded today by modernization and industrialisation. Helen, the Englishwoman, is created to represent the noble human sentiments whereas Clinton is made a symbol of faceless machine civilization. In Helen’s relationship with Bashiam, the novelist has tried to create a bridge of understanding between the East and the West. The novel portrays the East-West encounters at various levels.

In what can be said in summing up is that the main concern of Kamala Markandaya in her novels has been the cultural clash of the East and the West. Most of her novels display the clash between the values that arc upheld in India and those prevalent in Britain. No doubt, the path shown by the West in the field of science and technology is not insignificant but at times it appears that ‘never the twain shall meet’. The author tells us that the cultural pride and sharp political disagreements between the two cultures have been responsible for keeping the twain apart.

In general, Kamala Markandaya’s attitude as reflected in her novels is patriotic. She seems to give the message that India should not sell her soul to the West, by rejecting and discarding her own customs, traditions and beliefs. The message of reconciliation emerges from Markandaya’s novels, as Uma Parameswaran remarks: Compromise, the author seems to say throughout her novels; compromises so that the best traits may mingle and produce a better race. Her idea of compromise ... consists of assimilating a large portion of British culture as spread in India.

Kamala Markandaya seems to assert in her novels that the East and the West should be complementary to each other. The West should look towards India for ethical and spiritual advancement while India may learn much from the modern progressive outlook of the West. The author also warns Indians against the blind imitation of the western values. It would be worthwhile to quote Dr. Harish Raizada’s words while evaluating Kamala Markandaya: She has treated the theme of the East-West confrontation more comprehensively than any other Indian English novelist.

Kamala Markandaya’s last published novel, *Pleasure City* also highlights the inter-cultural theme in the form of the interaction between the Indians and the British.
Earlier, the west moved towards the East to build empires but now it sets out to construct hotels and resorts. Tully an English descendant of the consuls who once ruled India, is given the project of building a luxury holiday resort in India. He comes to India as a director of AIDCROP to construct Shalimar, a resort. In India he develops an intimate friendship with a talented orphan fisherboy Rikki, who has been a ward of the missionary couple Mr. Birdie and Mrs. Rose Birdie. He also starts soaring high with the arrival of Tully. Both are mutually fascinated. Tully takes his help in building Shalimar, the pleasure resort, as he knew how to make miniature cathedrals accurate to the last detail and ships complete with masts and sails and slid entire into clear glass bottles and the art of pebble mosaic. The intimate Tully-Rikki relationship reveals the possibilities of the bond of brotherhood between the peoples of the East and the West.

Thus the novel, *Pleasure City* presents a haunting tales, not of empire, but of its after effects, and of the impact of the western notion of progress on a traditional fishing colony of India, stretching its scope to occupy its land and its people. Underlining the contribution and impact of Western technological invasion on the life of Indian people, Kamla Markandaya herself writes in this novel. But whether by accident or design AIDCORP in due course included men who saw clearly where the future lay. It lay in fulfilling widespread and wistful longings for progress into something that decency could tomach.

The conflict between the East and the West as portrayed by Kamala Markandaya is not to be marked out in geographical coordinates. The West is essentially a society making rapid strides in liberalism founded on technological advancement and new world-view brought about by science. Spirituality is the preserve of the East. Kamala Markandaya seems to preach that western altitude to life is not an innocent commodity, which can be employed as a convenience by people wishing to partake only of the West’s material power. Rather it is spiritually corrosive, burning away ancient authority and traditions. Their rationalism insists upon a universally open-ended view of the world that rejects any absolute convictions and embraces only the permanent possibility of change and progress. The decadence arises from the obvious failure of liberalism to transmit any value-system other than bland tolerance. For ourselves in the East, we can begin to define our lives in the terms in which we do anyway when left to our own non-scientific
conventions. We can have irreducible affections, values and convictions, which will express our kinship with our living and breathing Indian culture.