

I INTRODUCTION

Kamala Markandaya-Life and Works

Kamala Markandaya was born in a Brahmin family in 1924 in Chimakurti, South India. She writes empathetically and convincingly about peasant lives in South Indian Bucolic community. Markandaya studied at the University of Madras, worked as a journalist in India, then married an English man and moved to London in 1948. To put it succinctly Markandaya was a pioneer who has influenced all other Indian writing in English. She has an interest in dignifying her people, so she creates complex, moving characters and covers themes that she hopes will debunk preconceived notions of many westerners that Indian people are inferior to whites both socially and intellectually. Her next parts can be divided into two groups: those which focus mainly on rural a small town India such as *Nectar in Sieve* (1954) and *Two Virgins* (1973) and those that are set either in India or in England and India, dealing primarily with the interrelationship between two peoples and cultures for example, *The Cotler Dams* (1969) and *Shalimar* (1982). One of her most important novels, *Nectar in a sieve* (1954) was widely acclaimed for its portrayal of the cultural clash between whites and nonwhites, and its success lies in revealing the commonality of the human condition. It received rare reviews and won the American Library Association's Notable Book Award in 1955. As a result, she achieved huge literary success with this first novel, as an international bestseller and it was translated into several languages. Even today, it is taught in various American schools and universities. She went on to publish nine more novels, the last one was *Pleasure City* in 1982.

In *some Inner Fury* (1955), an autobiographical novel, Markandaya probes the East West conflict through the dilemma of Mira, a young woman in love with an

Englishman during the tumultuous 1940s, India's freedom movement. Similarly, conflicting values dominate *A Silence of Desire* (1960), in which an office clerk is caught between the traditional and the modern, the eastern and the western, the spiritual and the material values. The cultural clash figures again in *Possession* (1963), a novel set in pre-independence India and England. *A Handful of Rice* (1966) deals with Indian city life as *Nectar in Sieve* with the village life. *The Nowhere Man* (1972) deals with the problems faced by immigrants, Indian's relationship with the British, parent-child conflict and racist violence.

The very theme of cultural interaction is clearly depicted in her another novel, *Two virgins* which shows the lifestyle of growing sisters in a small village. We learn a great deal about the fabric of life, and what it means to the Indian women adulthood. The author, in the novel portrays the two sisters and their lives are shaped by the influence of their childhood environment. They move beyond home and the village. They don't want to be rooted in by the familiar environment, and the familiar emotions. They strive towards the city, the life beyond the unknown. They want to feel freedom. In imposing upon them their growing awareness of their own sensibilities, the author shows us how they, though sisters under the same paternal roof, develop differently.

Similarly, her present novel *Nectar in a Sieve* is a fictional epic on the Indian life, revealing a rich gamut of human experience. The entire novel is coloured with havocs of hunger, the evils of industrialization, the tension between the tradition and modernity. It is a woeful tale of the trials and tribulations of a peasant couple, Nathan and Rukmani. Through their contact with the English missionary Kenny, the author brings out the opposite view point of the simple and innocent persons like Rukmani and Nathan.

***Nectar in Sieve* - A Review**

Numerous critics have diversely interpreted Markandaya's *Nectar in Sieve* following the novel's publication. Some of the critics and thinkers have commented that Markandaya idealizes womanhood in her novels; most of her novels have female characters. This indicates her interest in women characters. K.S. N. Rao has remarked that " Markandaya has no heroes but only heroines" (37). Comparing the treatment of women by Markandaya with Virginia Woolf, B. Sudipta clearly studies:

Both of them have evocatively delineated woman simultaneously; From the plane of orthodoxy to the changing modern trends in contemporary society. The cultural background of Woolf and Markandaya is polaristic, but the juxtapositioning of their protagonists has dissolved all notes of dissonance. This has brought the evidence of women's fate being universally similar, on predicaments being either on an emotional level or on both physical and emotional. (85)

What is most significant in all the themes of Markandaya are the protagonists originating from different strata of society. So, Markandaya's women are earthy and real, while Woolf's women are sensitive and ephemeral. The main point of congruency is their familiar affiliations.

Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* is a story of a women's struggle for existence, it also probes on the significance of land that fosteres life, happiness and family. In this connection, Metthew M. Yav writes:

Rukmani the protagonist of *Nectar in a sieve* often found solace in the land on which her husband built a home for her with his own hands in the time he was waiting for her. She often reminisced the very home to

which Nathan had brought her with pride. The land became her life to her starving spirit. She felt the earth beneath her feet wept for happiness. (188)

From the above extract, we can see Rukmani, a tenant farmer lives a life of constant struggle because a tannary built near their village forever alters her life and it takes away farmland. The changes in village life from an agricultural to an industrial community frighten Rukmani and her life become one of hope and fear.

Most of the reviewers concentrate on the condition of Rukmani and her regular struggle for existence, she faces difficulties for the family and challenges her relationship with her husband and kids. As B.W. Paleo mentions "The struggle of this Indian woman prove the indefatigable spirit that is in each of us no matter or geography or our circumstance" (143). These lines show Rukmani's regular struggle for existence, she faces difficulties for the family and challenges her relationship with her husband and kids.

Kamala Markandaya: Style and Technique

Kamala Markandaya chooses the most suitable narrative technique for the theme. Her technique in this sense becomes the means of persuasion and enables her to stir her intended idea in readers. Markandaya not only focuses on the social, political, economic and cultural problems alone but rather juxtaposes all these elements with human tragedy. It is the treatment of tradition and modernity that distinguishes Markandaya with her contemporaries: Ruth Pravar Jhavala, Anita Desai and Nayanatara Seegal. She chooses female characters in her most novels to idealize womanhood.

Markandaya uses first person pronoun 'I' to describe the events and incidents which makes the heroine and narrator in equal circle. It helps her to get objectivity

and reality in her works. Markandaya as stated by Arnold Kettle "gains the advantages of lending its authenticity to the narrator. It also provides the necessary distance between the writer and narrator" (178).

In Markandaya's writing, she never brings sub-plot to explore the existence of Indian people in the midst of their social, economic and political obstacle rather weaves fact after fact, situation after situation i.e. every detail that affects the life of character is presented in chronological order. Her novels are not mere narration of incidents but rather an artistic interpolation of cause and effect sequences. Her first novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, is the best illustration of the aforementioned technique. While presenting the story through Rukmani, she uses both pictorial and dramatic methods.

Regarding the language and selection of words, unlike her contemporary, Anita Desai, Markandaya never provides a list of words and explanation at the beginning or end of the book. Her English is pure and idiomatic and her style is lucid. Unlike Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, she does not add suffixes to Indianize the words. Similarly, Markandaya's vision of life is clear. She does not attempt at the psychological exploration of her characters.

Kamala Markandaya, thus, through her appropriate technique makes her novels meaningful. The use of first person narration in her novels helps the readers to generate the unforgettable experience.

Markandaya and Indian Writing in English

Indian writing in English is not a contemporary phenomenon. Its origin can be traced to the infamous "Minute" in series on South Asia, desire to create "a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect"

(South Asian Series 359) . For decades Indian writers have used the colonizer's language, English, to produce an Indian reality that is very different from anything Macaulay might have envisioned. In other words, the literature produced by Indo-Anglian writers depicts a many-sided India that is completely opposite to the exotic vision of Raj writers like Paul Scott and John Masters.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) was the first Indian to write a novel in English. Today, his 20th century counterparts include Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and Kamala Markandaya. In the last few decades, as Salman Rushdie puts it, that "flow of good writing [in English] has become a flood" (60). Writers like Amitar Ghosh, Kiran Desai, and most recently, Arundhati Roy have joined the stream of Indo-Anglian writers. Publishers like Oxford University Press, Penguin, and Heinemann have begun to notice the increasing interest in this literature, both at home and in the west, and have started to put more resources into promoting these writers.

The above mentioned writers almost share the common theme about cultural encounter. Their main concern is the encounter caused by love, sex, marriage and alien social milieu. They represent the problems and prospects of establishing intimate and meaningful relationships between two racial and cultural groups.

Kamal Markandaya in the same manner presents the cultural interaction in her novels. Being the inhabitant of England, she truly captures the cultural dilemmas she encounters. She depicts the problems of native Indian in a new culture and foreigners in Indian soil.

Her novel *The Nowhere Man* takes up this theme further. The author is aware of the cruelties prepared in the name of imperialism. She condemns the British domination and the misery of Srinivas and his wife Vasanta. They are forced to take residence in England because their families were suspected being involved in terrorist

activities against British rule in India. Their two sons are born in England, brought up there, the elder marries an England girl, the younger dies fighting for England hit by a German. Vasanta, grown in England, dies of consumption and the lovely, alienated Srinivas is brought back to the main stream of life through the canny; he receives kind help and proper guidance from Mrs. Pickening as equally old and destitute but English lady. In spite of living in England for half a century, Srinivas is the victim of racial prejudice. Hence, the novel shows us the reaction of Britishers to the inflow of coloured immigrants.

The very theme of cultural encounter is clearly depicted in her another novel, *Two Virgins* which shows the lifestyle of growing sisters in a small village. The writer shows the questioning beyond the two sisters, their lives are shaped by the influence of their environment. They move beyond home and the village. They struggle in the city, the larger life beyond the unknown.. They want to find freedom. Saroja and Lalitha, the two sisters are constantly made to choose between eastern and western way of perceiving the world around.

Similarly, her present novel *Nectar in a Sieve* is a fictional epic on the Indian life. The entire novel is coloured with havoc of hunger, the evils of industrialization, the tension between the tradition and modernity. It is a sorrowful tale of a peasant couple, Nathan and Rukmani. Through their contact with the English missionary Kenny, the author brings out the opposite viewpoint of the simple and fatalistic creatures of the soil who have been nourished on the novel ideals of liberalism. It is because of pity for the poverty-stricken and suffering people of India that he has to leave his country, wife and children.

Although Kamala Markandaya was born in the politically independent India,

the influences of the imperial power were still prevalent. It was the time, the Indian had strong feelings towards their national movements. Though significant writings had begun before the independence because the situation gave them freedom for expression. But the situation was that two streams emerged at the same time in the history of Indian Literature. On the one hand, there was a voice and support for the Indian native language, on the other massive writings in English were emerging.

The position of English language became stronger with the rise of literary of the middle class for which English was a status symbol. English language achieved an international status not only on the merit of great literatures, but because of English Empire. The importance of languages has always been determined by the extent of power-political, economic, military or religious ideologies. For example, French, Arabic, Greek and Sanskrit languages are not in power these days.

The realization of the power of the language forced the Indian writers to express their ideas in English. Sisir Kumar Das writes, "The most important role that English played is, undoubtedly, through translation. It is only through translated text, *Gitanjali* for example, that Indian literature received international attention" (59). Indian writers felt the necessity of translating their modern works into English to make them known in different parts of India.

Critical Synopsis of *Nectar in a Sieve*

Nectar in a sieve is a daring and colorful novel, in which Markandaya brings forth the two different cultures, Indian and the Western. The protagonist of the novel is Rukmani who is married to a poor farmer, Nathan, whom she had never seen before. She follows the norms and values of society from the very beginning of her marriage. She does not even take her husband's name. She is equally close to the nature with the murmuring of stream and chirping of the birds as she is preoccupied

with Indian culture. She knows the fact that her dignity lies in native culture and she can't go away from it. Rukmani's inclination to western culture and unfaith in Indian culture is seen when she takes the risk of visiting a white doctor Kenny out of her compulsion to beget a son. It is the Indian culture which insists on a son and takes as an agent to open the gate of heaven.

Rukmani's regular visits to Kenny slowly and gradually not only makes her digest the 'awe' and 'fear' towards him, but rather germinates her wishes to spend the moments of her life with him. On the other hand she wants her relation with Kenny to be secret. She wishes her husband not to know that she was putting herself in the hand of foreigners. She intends so because she is afraid of her society and Indian convention which does not allow her to keep a relationship with other males, especially with foreigner.

Rukmani is the representative character of rural Indian peasant life. Most of the people like Rukmani and Nathan are landless. They have been compelled to work in other's land. At the same time, Kenny becomes a support to ease their life. However, Rukmani has inseparable relationship with Indian culture. She is worried about the marriage of her daughter Ira and the dowry needed in the ceremony. The hard times of her life begins when she has to feed their six children. With the changing of time, Ira is married to a villager but she is also deceived by her own fate. Like her mother she couldn't get a son for her husband. When she comes to Rukmani, she is taken to Kenny for treatment. Ira is treated and gives birth to an Albino son, but only to see that her husband has married another woman. To feed her brother Kuti, who is forced to sell her own body. It reveals the terrible impact of western culture, which makes Rukmani furious with another culture. She never thinks to sell her body to solve the need of her stomach. Like Kunti for her family, Ira becomes the feeder

and protecting figure for her brother. The death of their son Raja brings that industrialization and scientific development does not necessarily bring happiness and solace to the poor people like Rukmani and Nathan.

When the westerners start constructing a hospital in the village, there are rays of hope in Rukmani and her villagers to get a job to solve their daily needs. Her son Selvam gets the job under that construction. Rukmani thinks of her another son, Murgan, who works in the city. He is another victim after being landless of industrialization and urbanization. In the course of time, Nathan is affected by rheumatism. The little income of her another son, Selvam could not solve their problem. Meanwhile, Rukmini and Nathan take a journey to the city with good hope. But the fragile hope is shattered when they confront the city. There, the poor couple fall into the trap of cruel city life. They feel the absence of morality, humanity, and religiosity in the city. They search their son all over the city but in vain. Murugan, the son has already fallen into trap of evil activities.

The life of old peasants becomes more complicated in the city and the longing to return to their home is only solution. With more enthusiasm and excitement, both work hard to save the money to return to home. While they are hammering the stones into small pieces, the rain falls heavily and violently and Nathan closes his eyes for ever. Rukmani is left alone in the world, and she returns to her home.

In the study of the novel, Rukmani, the central character of the novel feels the cultural dilemmas when her son dies in the tannery which was established by westerners. Her another son, Murugam falls into the trap of evil activities like prostitution, alcoholism and gambling by imitating western culture. The protagonist faces the problems of a new culture, custom, language, and the value system of such society becomes hostile to her. Because of this hostility, she strongly feels the need of

her home and own land. So Markandaya's characters like Rukmani, Nathan, Ira and Kenny are the people who somehow have the strength and courage that helps them to survive and carry on in the apparently relentless and remorseless world to which they are inexorably bound. In the midst of nothingness as well there lies the hope to formulate identity in all central characters through the mutual bondage and understanding.

II CULTURAL STUDIES

Cultural studies designates a recent and rapidly growing cross-disciplinary enterprise for analyzing the conditions and effect the productions reception and cultural significance of all types of institutions practices and products; among these literature is accounted as merely one of many forms for cultural "signifying practices". A chief concern is to specify the functioning of the social, economic and political forces and power structures that produce all forms of cultural phenomena and endow them with their social "meanings", their "truth" and the modes of discourse in which they are discussed.

A prominent endeavor in cultural studies is to subvert the distinctions in traditional criticism between "high literature and art" and "low literature and art" regarding the later to be the lower forms that appeal to a much larger body of consumers. Typically, cultural studies pays less attention to works in the established literary canon than to popular fiction and at the same time challenges the belief of group particularism, like blackness, femaleness or Africanness. These are essential unchanging qualities and within the areas of literature and the more traditional arts there is a frequent undertaking to move to the center of cultural study. This work tries to observe how some cultural practices are marginalized or excluded by the aesthetic ideology of white European or American males, particularly the products of women, minority, ethnic groups and colonial and postcolonial writers. As in new historical criticism, politically radical exponents of cultural studies organize their writings and teachings toward the explicit end of reforming existing power structures and relations which they view as dominated by a privileged quarter of gender, race and class.

Cultural studies is a discursive formation i.e. a cluster of ideas, images and

practices which provide ways of talking about the form of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society. Thus, a good deal of cultural studies is centered on question of representation that is on how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us. The central strand on cultural studies can be understood as the study of culture as the signifying practice of representation which requires us to explore the textual generation of meaning. It also demands investigation of the modes by which meaning is produced in a variety of cross cultural contexts and representations. Cultural studies here takes linguistic turn because it is language that gives meaning to material objects and social practices. Culture is articulated with moments of production but not determined necessarily by that moment. The meanings of the text are produced in the interplay between text and reader so that the moment of consumption is also a moment of meaningful production.

Such a discipline called cultural studies has the centrality of the Foucauldian concept of power. "Power", writes Barker, is not simply the glue that holds the social together, or the coercive force which subordinates one set of people to another... but the processes that generate and enable any form of social action relationship or order" (10). Such notion of power is similar to Antonio Gramsci's concept of "Hegemony" which is closely related to cultural studies and which implies a situation where a 'historical block' of powerful groups exercises social authority and gains leadership over subordinate groups through the winning of consent.

These observations can perhaps be reduced to a single proposition that cultural studies refers to a multi-stranded intellectual moment that places cultural analysis in the context of social formations, seeing society and culture as historical processes rather than frozen artifacts, emphasizing the inextricable relations between culture and power, and calling attention to social inequalities.

Cultural Encounter

Cultural encounter facilitates a pattern of mutual adjustment or reciprocal give and take by offering a space enough for coexistence. But all the time it is not necessary that cultural encounter promotes blending or merging of perspective. The meeting of cultures is likely to be marked by contestation and struggle that match the tensed relation between absence and presence, emptiness and affirmation. Such an encounter takes place when one culture is introduced to the another culture. Such exposure to alien culture initiates a moment of genuine self-transformation, that is, a reassessment of prevailing patterns in the light of newly experienced insights or modes of life. It does not take a single mode rather it is a process and can be clarified on the basis of various modes of cultural encounter like acculturation, cultural adaptation, cross-cultural communication, hegemony and Diaspora.

Acculturation

The term acculturation was formally adopted as the concept representing the new area of study dealing with those phenomena which result when groups of individuals have different cultures and come into first hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either one or both groups. The history of each society is characterized by a set of values, beliefs, and practices and each culture has a codified exhaustive set of instructions concerning behavioral issues. Cultural interactions stem from the prolonged contact between two or more sets or values, norms which can be extremely different from one another and such contacts may extend "from domestic contacts to global interaction" and "between hegemonic western culture and developing non-western societies" (Dallmayr 14)

This can be result in cooperation or competition between cultures. In the first case exchange and mutual support can take place while in the second case hostility

and conflict may arise. More often, cultural modification concerns the changes a cultural group has to introduce in collective as well as individuals behavior, in order to coexist and interact with the norms and habits of a dominant social system. It usually applies to ethnic minorities immigrants, indigenous people exposed to colonization, refugees, which can be globally considered as acculturating groups. Because of the involuntary character of the acculturation process minorities are mostly forced to adapt to the cultural system they live in, in order to cope with the dominant environment and became active part in it.

People belonging to the acculturating minority have strong relationships within their groups. They create a separate sub-culture, which is minimally influenced by the dominant group. In such situations, the contact between the two social systems are subsequently very limited. Individuals originating from the acculturating group are not accepted as member of the dominant culture. They are marginalized by the dominant group regardless of their wish to integrate or to assimilate. Acculturating individuals manage to acquire values and behavior's characterizing the dominant culture in which they live, at the same time preserve their own traditions and habits.

A bicultural individual knows and understands two distinct cultures and he/she is able to show dual modes of social behavior that can be alternately used depending upon which culture the individual is interacting with. But it does not necessarily mean that an individual comes daily into contact with the dominant culture nor that the two cultures share a common geographical areas. Nevertheless bicultural competence is a laborious task. It requires the creation of effective interpersonal relationship without losing personal identity. It implies knowledge of the dominant language, sense of being grounded in both cultures. Not everyone is able to acquire this competence.

However, the effort an individual has to perform in the acculturation process is too often not rewarded. In several cases integration remains a remote goal or even an unrealistic ideal. It is very difficult to estimate the intrinsic absolute value of one cultural system as compared with others. As a matter of fact, depending on the historical period and the geographical location each model of social structure offers some advantages and imposes some constraints on individuals.

Diaspora

The term 'Diaspora' was commonly applied to cover a range of different cultural and ethnic groups held together by shared cultural or religious commitments and having some sense of 'exile' from a place or state of origin and belonging. These days the term as used in the studies of race and ethnicity, to describe a range of cultural connection with other groups, who have been dispersed from their original birth place. To live in a diaspora is to experience the exile, migration, displacement and rootlessness.

The language of diaspora is increasingly invoked by displaced people, who feel a connection with a prior home. The sense of connection must be strong enough to resist erasure through the normalizing processes of forgetting, assimilating and distancing. Diasporic identifications reach beyond mere ethnic status within the composite, liberal state. The currency of diaspora discourses extends to a wide range of populations and historical predicaments.

Life for women in diasporic situations can be doubly painful-struggling with the material and spiritual insecurities of exile, with the demands of family and work, and with the claims of old and new patriarchies. At the same time, women in diaspora remain attached to, and empowered by, a "home" culture and a tradition selectively. Diasporic women connect and disconnect, forget and remember, in complex strategic

ways; the lived experiences. Thus the life of diasporic woman involve painful difficulties in mediating discrepant worlds. Community can be a site both of support and oppression. A couple of quotations from Rahila Gupta offers a glimpse of a South Asian women's predicament:

Young women are . . . beginning to question aspects of Asian culture, but there is not a sufficiently developed network of Black woman's support groups to enable them to operate without the support of community and family. This is a contradiction in which many women are caught between the supportive and the oppressive aspects of the Asian community. . .

Patriarchal oppression was a reality of our lives before we come to Britain, and the fact that the family and community acted as sites of resistance to racist oppression has delayed and distorted our coming together as women to fight this patriarchal oppression (27-29).

This presents common experiences of post colonial displacement, racialization, and political struggle, as well as sharp differences of generation, of region of sexuality, of culture, and of religion. A possible coalition of diverse 'Black British' and 'third world' women requires constant negotiation and attention to discrepant histories.

Hegemony

Hegemony initially a term referring to the dominance of one state within the confederation is now generally understood to mean, domination by contest.

Fundamentally, hegemony is a power of ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Domination thus exerted not by force, nor even necessary by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over economy and over state apparatus, such as education and the media by which the

ruling class interests is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted.

The term "hegemony" is useful for describing the success of imperial power over a colonized people who may outnumber any occupying military force, but whose desire for self-determination has been suppressed by hegemonic notions of the greater good, often couched in terms of social order, stability and advancement all of which are defined by the colonizing power. Hegemony is important because the capacity to influence the thought of the colonized is by far the most sustained and potent operation of imperialism in colonized regions. The inevitable consequences of such interpellation is that the colonized subject understands itself as peripheral to those Euro-centric values while at the same time accepting their centrality.

Postcolonial cultures are inevitably hybridized investing a dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology and the impure to create or recreate independent local identity. Hegemony implies a situation where a 'historic bloc' of ruling class faction exercises social authority and leadership over the subordinate classes through a combination of force and more importantly consents. Ideology is understood in terms of ideas, meanings, and practices which supports the power of particular groups. Above all ideology is not separate from the particular activities of life but is a material phenomenon rooted in the day to day conditions. Ideologies provide people with rules of practical conduct and moral behaviour equivalent "to a religion understood in the secular sense of unity of faith between a conception of the world and a corresponding norm of conduct" (Gramsci 1971). The representation of the formal education system as a meritocracy which offers all an equal chance in a fair society and the representation of people of color as by 'nature' inferior and less capable than white people could be described as ideological.

Hegemony involves those processes of meaning making by which a dominant authoritative set of representations and practices is produced and maintained.

Hegemony involves education and the winning of consent rather than the use of brute force and coercion. Through the state is not conceived as a crude arm of ruling class, it is nevertheless implicated in class hegemony. In such situation force remains an option for social control, during times of relative stability it takes a back seat to the unifying role of ideology.

A hegemonic bloc never consists of a single socio-economic category but is formed through a series of alliances in which one group takes on a position of leadership. Ideology plays a crucial part in allowing this alliance of groups to overcome narrow economic-corporate interest in favor of 'national-popular' dominance. Thus a cultural social unity is achieved through which a multiplicity of dispersed skills, with heterogeneous aims, was welded together with a single aim as the basis of an equal and common conception of the world (Gramsci 349). The building, maintenance or subversion of a common conception of the world is an aspect of ideological struggle involving a transformation of understanding through criticism of the existing popular ideologies.

Ideology is lived experience and a body of systematic ideas whose role is to organize and bind together a bloc of diverse social cement in the information of hegemonic and counter hegemonic blocs. The ideology can take the form of a coherent set of ideas; it more appears as the fragmented meanings of common sense inherent in a variety of representations. Ideological hegemony is the process by which certain ways of understanding the world become so self-evident or naturalized as to render alternatives nonsensical or unthinkable. All people reflect upon the world and through the 'common sense' of popular culture, organize their lives and experiences.

Thus common sense becomes a crucial site of ideological conflict and, in particular the struggle to forget 'good sense' which is the recognition of the class character of capitalism. Common sense is the most significant site of ideological struggle because it is the terrain of the 'taken-for-granted: a particular consciousness which guides the actions of everyday world. More coherent sets of philosophical ideas are contested and transformed in the domain of common sense.

Hegemony can be understood in terms of the strategies by which the world views and power of as condemn social groups is maintained. However, this has to be seen in relational terms and as inherently unstable. Hegemony in temporary settlement and series of alliances between social groups which is won and not given. Further, it needs to be constantly re-won, renegotiated, so that culture is a terrain of conflict and struggle over meanings. Hegemony is not a static entity but series of changing discourses and practices intrinsically bound up with social power. Since hegemony has to be constantly remade and re-won it opens up the possibility of a challenges to it, that is the marking of a counter hegemony bloc of subordinate groups and classes. Such a counter hegemonic struggle must seek to gain ascendancy within civil society before any attempts is made on state power.

Discourse and Power

Post-colonial theories foreground the theory of discourse as power propagated by Michael Foucault, a poststructuralist theorist who propounded the theory that discourse is involved in power. Each discursive practice in the society has its political implication The discursive practices are the result of power-structure operating in the society. In other words, the real power in the society is exercised through discourse. Foucault views that social and political power operates through discourse.

Foucault's theory of discourse foregrounds the philosophy of 'will to power' propounded by German philosopher, Nietzsche. Nietzsche argues that all knowledge is an expression of will to power, and that the producer fills the discourse with the facts that suit his aim. The discourse, therefore, is inseparable from power because discourse is the ordering force that governs every institution. The discursive formations have enabled institutions to wield power dominating, and in creating the 'sub-ordinate class' people recognize a particular piece of philosophy or scientific theory as true "only if" Selden writes in his book *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, "it fits the descriptions of truth laid down by the intellectual or political authorities of the day, by the member of ruling elite, or by the prevailing ideologies of knowledge" (100). This means that the institution that produces the discourses, fill it with certain set of standards and 'Logos' which are imposed in the society, that in turn raise the institutions in the level of power. Talking on the process of 'discursive formation' as Foucault has described in this book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, seldom further says, ". . . in mapping the discursive formation which often in the name of science, have enabled institutions to wield power and domination by defining and excluding the deviant" (76). This is to say that discourse is always separable from power, because it is discourse through which certain criteria of 'truth' is prescribed by the governing institutions that have the authority to speak.

For example, the doctor who is the source of medical knowledge and is the "locus of the registering and interpretation of information documentation, instruments of correlation and techniques of analysis which he makes use of in relation to the patient . . . which may now lead to the threshold of a new medicinewhich is made possible purely perceived descriptions together with observations mediated

through instruments, the statistical calculations institutional regulations" (Foucault *Archeology* 34)

will modify his position in the society through the practices of medical discourses.

Foucault is in the opinion that "truth" and power is interrelated. The knowledge on medicine gives the doctor the authority to exercise his power by means of medical discourses. Foucault in his interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasaquale Paquino says, "Truth" is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A 'regime' of truth" (*Truth and Power* 1145). This is to say that discourses are the embodiment of power, and it is the discourses through which speak the power of ruling culture the power to govern to control:

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as truth; the mechanisms and instances which enables one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned, the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts true.

(*Truth and Power* 1144)

In Foucauldian in notion, discourses in all fields are produced within a real world of power struggle and are used to gain real power. All institution, either it is university or army writing media or medical institution, are involved in power formation by means of discourses. There are very refined rules and regulations to support and continue the existing social systems. To elaborate the relation between 'knowledge'.

power and discourse' Foucault in his book *History of Sexuality* says "Indeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (100)

Cross - Cultural Communication

Cultural communication is a complex human practice that encompasses two interrelated aspects of social life. The first aspect is culturally distinctive ways of communication that can be found in particular times, places and social milieu. In this sense, cultural communication is communicative conduct that is infused with the particulars of cultures. The second aspect is the role of communication in performing the cultural, or communal, function - the workings of communication in constituting the communal life of a community and in providing individuals the opportunity to participate in, identify with, and negotiate that life. In this sense, cultural communication is the work that people do in coming to terms with the communicative demands of their life-worlds.

Different cultures have different systems of meaning, which confuses people from different cultures and makes it difficult, if not impossible for them to understand each other. The observation that language, thought, and culture are closely tied together can be lineally traced through Sapir to Boas, and to Humboldt who proposed that "each language has its own worldview and that the whole of languages mediates between human beings and the internal and external nature that affects them" (60). That languages delineate underlying classification of experience differently, and that such classification of experience, that various languages classify experience differently, and that such classifications need not rise to conscious awareness.

The language differs people's capability of thinking the imagination and imposing biases, and therefore, they try to meditate without language and communicate beyond language. The west has developed a rich tradition of speech

subscribing to the principle of the universality of meanings. The East however, has firm believed that meanings are particular, which has given rise to the belief that a total understanding requires oriental unification with the other person the belief of oneness, or a perfect harmony became a tenet for all major East.

Cross - Cultural Adaptation

The term adaptation is employed to refer to the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to unfamiliar cultural environment, establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment. At the core of this definition is the goal of achieving an overall person environment "fit" for maximization of one's social life chances. Adaptation, thus, is an activity that is "almost always a compromise, a vector in the internal structure of culture and external pressure of environment" (Sahlin 136).

Placed at the intersections of the person and the environment, adaptation is essentially a communication process that occurs as long as the individual remain in contact with the environment. This communication based definition enables us to move beyond the conventional linear the existing investigations in the field of cross-cultural adaptation and encourages to examine the phenomenon in its totality - all of the individual's personal and social experiences as well as the host environment.

In this interactive and inclusive conception, the term cross-cultural adaptation serves as a "superordinate category" (White 18) under which other commonly used terms can be subsumed. When individual entering a new and unfamiliar culture undergo some degree of new cultural learning, that is, the acquisition of the native cultural practices in wide-rending areas, particularly in areas of direct relevance to the daily functioning of the resettlers from attire and food habits to be havioral norms and cultural values. The resocialization activities are the very essence of acculturation,

consistent with the definition offered by Marden and Meyer, "The change in individually whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture" (36).

Adaptation is closely associated to the process of acculturation. Within the adapting group, individuals lose their ties with the original cultural background and acquire values, habits and behaviors from the dominant culture. It is usually applied to policies in some western or westernizing nations. In the post-imperial era adaptation is greatly abetted and intensified by nationalism and the idea of the nation state. As Fred Dallmayr quotes Rupert Emerson:

In the contemporary world, the nation is for greater portions of mankind the community with which men must intensely and most unconditionally identify themselves. . . The nation is today the largest community which . . . effectively commands men's loyalty, overriding the claims both of the lesser communities within it and those which cut across it . . . In this sense the nation can be called a "terminal community." (Quoted in Dallmyr 15)

The hegemonic influence of nationalism and the nation state is not only continued to advanced western countries but extends to non-western, post-colonial societies. While initially opposing the 'state' as an alien, colonial apparatus, independence movements quickly adopted a nationalist rhetoric geared toward the acquisition of state power. Every, nationalist assertion of independence urgently needs to reconstruct the nation through collective imagination.

Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their actions. The concept includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been thought and

known. It is the system of inherited conceptions, which is expressed, in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitude towards life. Cultural has become the site of conflict of content rather than a homogeneous ground for reciprocity. In the process of knowing, one culture assumes the authority over the other. On the diversities which had remained apart are brought together in common space of discussion cultural encounter takes place. Cultural encounter entails acculturation, assimilation and dialogue between cultures where each culture survives in relation to other, preserving sameness and diversity.

In coming up chapter, Kamala Markandaya's Novel *Nectar in Sieve* will be analyzed. This chapter will be used as a theoretical 'frame of reference' while making textual analysis. The text will be analyzed to illustrate the ways in which Markandaya has treated the complex issue of cultural encounter. Attempt will be made to analyze the text keeping in mind, the various modes of cultural encounter that are discussed above. Apart from this, in the present novel, the cultural problems of main character's interaction with a new culture and foreigners in Indian soil will be analyzed. Acculturation in Markandaya's *Nectar in a sieve* will be discussed to refer the process where diverse cultural traits and complexities are modified because of the continuous contact by making the cultural patterns of both group. Like this, diaspora will be applied to cover cultural commitments and having some sense of 'exile' from a state place of origin of the protagonists in the present novel. Hegemony also works in Kamala's *Nectar in a Sieve*, how a power of ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Cross-cultural communication is inseparable part of cultural encounter which will be examined in the present novel to encompass two interrelated aspects of social life. Like above modes of cultural encounter, cross-

cultural adaptation will be employed in further chapter to refer to the process by which the protagonist of the novel, upon relocating to unfamiliar cultural environment.

III Cultural Encounter in *Nectar in a Sieve*

Cultural Interaction

Culture shapes the human behavior, and helps people to guide their action. It surprisingly gives the individuals their identity. Moreover, the change of culture brings cultural dilemmas in the lives of individuals, as they can't assimilate into new culture. Regarding this Said says, "Culture with its superior position has the power to authorize, to dominate, to legitimate, denote, interdict and validate....." ("The World" 9). Thus the superiority of new culture dominates individuals as they feel inferiority of their culture in new culture. When someone nurtured in one culture is placed in another he/she may face cultural dislocation and ambivalence and the resultant reactions may be anger, frustration, fear, curiosity, fascination, repulsion, hatred or confusion.

Every writer has his own vision, which is peculiar and unique. His perspective is shaped by the experience he gets of the world around him. National ethos may also influence a writer's perception, which is inextricably interwoven with its cultural heritage. Expatriate writers have the complex experience of coping with coalescing influences their birth and the country of their choice. Their vision gets suitably modified by confluence of divergent cultures, of which they are the products. In a similar manner, Kamala Markandaya has made place in immigrant writing too. Born in India, married to an English, and currently settled in the US, the cross cultural background added to her first hand experiences as a marginal, living in another dominant society. These experience accounts for the unmistakable stamp of authenticity in her novels.

Today, the world has become a global village and Diaspora experience has become a common form of experience of migration or exile, generating fissured

identities and hybridities alongside problems of dislocation and dispossession and a larger problem of a lost center. The writers including Kamala Markandaya articulate important question in her works regarding traditional culture system, material discords, collapse of the joint family, social, economic and cultural realities around her. Kamala Markandaya succeeds in effectively assimilating these realities and experiences into her writing. Multiplicity of thematic patterns and polyangular perspectives in her writing clearly bring forth the multicultural ethos that forms the basis of her writing.

Markandaya is fully familiar with the East-west confrontation and as a writer hailing from a colonized country, it is but natural that her sympathy is with the oppressed. She seems to affirm that to be on the side of the human and life, against machinery, against exploitation of the war, against war and violence. The encounter between the dramatically opposite East and the West in the context of human relationship and cultural values constantly engages her attention and get reflected in her novels. Markandaya herself being the product of both the oriental and the accidental cultures, it is not far-fatching to see in most of her novels, her own experience being filtered.

Nectar in a Sieve is a colorful novel in which Markandaya brings forth the two different cultures the East and the West. Hindu traditions are also important in Markandaya's writing. Rukmani, the main character in *Nectar in a Sieve*, worships the Mother Goddess, the Earth incarnate, who embodies creative energy, passion and power. Reflecting upon the happy first year of her marriage, Rukmani succinctly touches on themes and motifs of significance throughout the novel. Nature and its beauty appear in the sun and the green fields at the first source of her well being. In this connection:

While the sun shines on you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you which no has seen before, and you have a good store of grain laid away for hard times, a roof over you and a sweet stirring in your body, what more can a woman ask for? (7)

Rukmani expresses her appreciation for Nathan, who has discovered a beauty in her that she didn't know she possessed. At the same time, Rukmani conveys Nathan's appreciation for her and for a beauty that is more than skin-deep. The all-important grain represents life itself. A good store of grain means more than substance- it means freedom from fear and doubt about survival. Her mention of the shelter of a roof foreshadows a time when the roof is threatened by monsoon floods, but it also acknowledges that the hut Nathan built for her with his own hands is sufficient for her needs. Initially, she felt diminished by the mud but with its thatched roof, but she has grown in understanding since her first days as a bride.

Echoes of the epic Ramayana, one of the best-loved Indian stories, are clear in this novel. *Ramayana* recounts the adventures of Prince Ram and his ideal Hindu wife, Sita, who must prove her faithfulness to her husband. Markandaya's work compares Nectar's Rukmani to the legendary Sita. Rukmani is not shown as a rebel for Indian tradition. She follows the norms and values which society is laid down. She never takes her husband's name. She says "my husband, whom I will call here Nathan for that, was his name, although in all the years I never called him that for it is not meeting for a woman to address her husband as husband" (4). Markandaya shapes Rukmani's life around the traditional life stages of the Brahmin caste. Here the devotion of Rukmani to Nathan is very important because this relation is compared with the husband wife relation of Kenny.

Another best example of Rukmani's attraction to western culture and faith in Indian tradition is she takes the risk of visiting a white doctor Kenny to beget a son. Within a year of marriage, she has a beautiful daughter, Ira, and good rice harvests. During the next six years, Rukmani does not conceive. Troubled that she can't produce a son for Nathan, Rukmani visits her ill mother and there meets Kenny, a foreign doctor. He treats her infertility without Nathan's knowledge. In quick succession, Rukmani bears five sons. It is because of the Indian culture which insists on a son and takes as an agent to open the gate of heaven. Rukmani realizes that Kenny has served her well leaving his own family and country. She can't reveal her gratification to him in words. That's why, she says, "that my home is yours and all in it" (19). Markandaya further emphasizes the importance of son in Indian culture.

In addition to the beliefs and traditions of Hinduism, contemporary Indian politics contribute to an understanding of *Nectar in a Sieve*. While Markandaya was growing up and attending college, India was governed as a conquered colony of Great Britain. British law transformed Indian Zamindars like old Granny, Biswas. This could be easily felt in Rukmani's remarks "there is a dislike of the money lending among us" (23). It tells how the domination of one social group to other exists in Indian society. It is an impact of western culture upon Indian culture.

British rule brought the Industrial Revolution to India, changing traditional rural life. Young men moved off the land to earn money in factories instead of by growing crops. They established capitalistic project in the name modernity and development and create truth upon Easterners' that they are superior. In this connection:

The officials of the tannery had increased as well. Apart from the white man we had first seen- who owned the tannery and lived by himself-

there were some nine or ten Muslims under him. They formed a little colony of their own, living midway between the town and open country in brick cottages with white washed walls and red-tiled roofs.

(47)

This implies a situation where ruling class faction exercises social authority and leadership over the subordinate classes through a new attraction. It involves the process of meaning making by which a dominant for authoritative set of representations and practices is produced and maintained and the tannery is a symbol of the present western invasion.

In Rukmani's quest for dignity, hunger is a potent enemy. Fear of hunger, she says, torments the peace of every peasant who lives by the vagaries of the wind and rain. Tired of constant hunger, her elder sons break up the family to seek new lives in a new land. Her daughter chooses the degradation of prostitution over the degradation of starvation. Rukmani nearly becomes a murderer, thinking Kunti has come to steal the last of their rice. Rukmani indicates both the industrialization of the villages represented by the tannery, and the laws of land ownership that impoverish and displace peasants like her and Nathan. At the same time, Kenny becomes a support to ease their life. He helps at most of the crisis of Rukmani. Hence she regards him as god. She addresses him as "my lord, my benefactor many a time I have longed to see you. Now at last you come I bent down to kiss your feet" (31). Here it can be seen that Rukmani is in the state of existential surrender to those who have power to help.

Knowledge is indissociable from regimes of power. Knowledge is formed within the practices of power and is constitutive of the development, refinement and proliferation of new techniques of power. By sketching the life of Rukmani, she turns

to Kenny because she says, "White men have power" (52) Kenny uses his power treating the poor and raising funds to build hospital.

The relationship between Rukmani and Kenny, Markandaya shows the contrasts between western and Indian tradition. Rukmani doesn't want to shout for the help forgetting their ego and identity. But Kenny says that the native must cry for the help. She realizes well that appeal for help is to deceive their culture. She says:

Privately I thought, well, and what if we gave into our troubles at every step! We would be pitiable creatures indeed to be so weak; for is not a movies spirit given to him to rise above his misfortunes? As for our wants, they are many and unfulfilled, for who is so rich or compassionate as to supply them? (113)

After Kenny offers Selvan a position as his assistant, Rukmani counters Kenny's philosophy on want and endurance. Once again Kenny exhorts Rukmani to cry out when she needs help rather than suffer in silence. Yet even her argument against his position is silent expressed only in her thoughts. In this passage, she highlights the difference between western and Indian traditions. Kenny stands for action. Particularly to alleviate physical sufferings and as a doctor, he dedicates his life to this goal. Rukmani, on the other hand puts more emphasis on the spirit than on the flesh. She considers it a weakness to give into trouble. As her losses mount, her endurance increases. When Raja dies at the hands of the tannery guards, Rukmani does not cry out for compensation, she believes there is no compensation equal to a human life. In Hindu belief, suffering is a form of purification and Rukmani is willing to bear her suffering and rise above misfortunes. However there is one expectation: When she realizes she is barren, she cries out to Kenny for help. By consulting western medicine, Rukmani reaches across the philosophical divide.

Through the relationship between Rukmani and Kenny, Markandaya unravels the universal pain, suffering, hazards and human incapability to fight with the difficulties of life. Kenny outwardly seems to be very gentle, prosperous and happy but inwardly he is totally tormented and deceived by his own life. He is compelled to leave wife, children and home. Markandaya tells us that all these things are the essence of life for Rukmani. Kenny takes those contrarily as the obstacles of individual freedom. When he gets freedom from such bondages, he thinks himself to be the master of his desire. Confidently, he says, "I work among you when my spirit wills it... I go when I am tired of your follies and stupidities, your eternal shameful poverty" (71). But quite oppositely, Rukmani survives looking at of her family members. Kenny also admits to Rukmani, that he has lost his wife and children because of his work in India, another concept quite foreign to Rukmani, for whom family is critical. As a westerner, Kenny fights the appalling poverty of India with his will and his skills. He works among the people until he drops with fatigue. Kenny lives what he preaches, taking direct action against suffering by treating the villages' illnesses and crying out for help through his fund-raising .

Markandaya's Indian characters like Rukmani, are seeped in religious beliefs and superstitions. Rukmani seems to be an integrated lot who possess a systematic set of ethical and social beliefs which are accepted norms of tradition and customs of Indian culture. She never thinks to sell her body to solve the need of her stomach. She knows "Kunti's painted mouth and scented thighs had held so many men" (82). Rukmani and Nathan also know that their daughter Ira adopts the same profession like Kunti. Like Kunti for her family, Ira becomes the feeder and protecting figure for her brother. It depicts that prostitution is not Indian culture, it is because of the impact of western culture. She death of their son Raja brings along with the prostitution of Ira

and reveals the very catastrophic situation and a number of sinister consequences in their family given by the tannery of Industrialization and urbanization. Tannery causes behind prostitution and Rukmani says "Ira had ruined herself at the hands of the throngs that the tannery attracted (134). It shows the terrible impact of another culture.

Rukmani is much more ambivalent about the tannery. A tannery built near their village forever alters Rukmani's life, for the tannery takes away farmland and silence, and while it provides jobs, they come with great costs. "Hope and fear. Twin forces that tugged at us first in one direction and then in another, and which was the stronger no one could say" (79). The changes in village life from an agricultural to an industrial community frightens Rukmani. Actually, later, the tannery is also looked at as a sort of a disgrace, because it had made the village a noisy and has brought unwanted people. Soon the good times end and money is no longer abundant. This brings difficulties for the family, and challenges Rukmani's relationship with her husband and kids.

Caste, in fact, never appears to be an issue in *Nectar in a sieve*. Traditionally, the men who worked in tanneries were low caste Hindus, but aside from Rukmani telling one of her sons that "The men in the tannery were of a different caste than theirs, the villagers do not seem opposed to letting their sons work with their low-caste peers" (52). This could be said to be one of the blessings of modernization and urbanization which disrupts caste hierarchies by forcing people of different castes to be close to each other.

The rays of hope in Rukmani's villagers that they will get the job to solve their daily needs, they will be treated when they fall sick, sparkles when Kenny and his companions start construction hospital in the village. Rukmani 's son Selvam gets the

job under that construction. Despite her saying he has ceased to belong to their family, he has started to spend his time with Kenny. He is totally detached from his family. But she is content seeing the knowledge and the experience he has acquired by Kenny. Rukmani has the potentiality to understand the lacks and gaps in her village. Hence she says that the cause of old Granny's death is lack of health facilities in her village. She also reveals the fact that it was because of the delay in the construction of hospital, old Granny was pushed into the mouth of death because she couldn't get the treatment in time. In this connection, Kenny says, "It is not enough to cry out, not sufficient to lay bare your woes and catalogue your needs; people have only to close their eyes and their ears, you can not force them to see and to hear- or to answer your cries if they can't and will not" (125).

Rukmani to continue her reflection on crying out for help: the death of old Granny and setbacks in the hospital construction. Rukmani is devastated when old Granny dies on the path to the well, starved and alone. She feels culpable, partly because she stopped selling her vegetables to old Granny to earn her livelihood. Rukmani feels that the villagers, herself included, closed their eyes and ears to old Granny's plight though she lived within sight and sound of them. She speculates that old Granny might have been saved by the hospital had it been finished, but the tireless Kenny understands that the hospital will not be able to serve all those who need help. But at the same time, Rukmani goes beyond the mere criticism of westerners but rather contemplates that human suffering and weaknesses as the universal one.

The family experiences its greatest loss when the land agent tells Nathan and Rukmani their land has been sold to the despised tannery. No one else will lease land to a man as old and ill as Nathan, and Rukmani and Nathan must leave their home of thirty years to go to their son Murugan in the city. They leave Ira and their grand child

under Selvam's care. Their possessions reduced to the few bundles they carry, Nathan and Rukmani try to find Murugan in the city. Murugan in the novel is another victim of industrialization and urbanization. In the courses of time, Nathan is affected by rheumatism. They lack the support to sustain their life. The little income of her another son, Selvam, could not solve even their minute problems. Rukmani knows the fact they can lead a life from the tenant farming till the time they have their strength in their body but nobody can get support from the tenant farming in his/her old age. Here we can realize her rage towards this traditional kind of agricultural system flowing inside her when she says "My sons had left because it frowned on them one of them had been destroyed by its ruthlessness" (134). Here Rukmani, not only thinks her own problem but she is concerned with whole Indian peasant families.

In all Markandaya's novels, the personality of her character is governed by the product of the environment and culture in which they live and grow. The protagonist of the novel Rukmani from a traditional Hindu family. She believes in spirituality but she reveals the absence of morality, humanity, religiosity in the city more shamefully in the temple. She knows the suffering of the city when she sees the various scenes over there. The fragile hope is overshadowed when she confronts the city Rukmani suffers much on the way to their destiny to get son's address. The frustration and mental torture rises up when they couldn't find Murgan in the city, Rukmani says in this connection, "For where shall a man turn who has no money? Where can he go? Wide, wide world, but as narrow as the coins in your hand. Like a tethered goat, so far and no farther. Only money can make the rope stretch, only money" (167).

Rukmani has lost everything, even the hope of the turning to her son Murugan, who has abandoned the city and his family. She and Nathan return to the temple and unhappily subsist on the single daily meal the temple provides. Rukmani and Nathan

consider the skills with which they might earn a living and find none of them suited to the city. Her vivid image of the tethered goat describes both her constraint and her powerlessness. It evokes the gentleness of the goats at the temple whose grateful eyes thanked Rukmani for a mouthful of leaves. In the country, Rukmani and Nathan manage to survive without much money by living simply on the products of their own labor. In the city, with no work available, Rukmani rues the fact that only money counts. The city's insistence upon cash reduces a person to an animal state and deprives Rukmani of the free will that characterizes her as human. Just as city thieves rob Nathan and Rukmani of their last coins, the city's unjust structure robs them of liberty and choice, their birthrights as humans.

A pessimistic note is again struck when Ammu tells Rukmani that Murgan had left her two years ago. She further states that it was unknown where he had gone. Rukmani as a fatalist blames her own fate and says "We gave him life, we should have taught him better: yet looking back it was difficult to see how and where the mistake had been made" (162). This serious contemplation is distracted as Amm says that she had to go to her work leaving them alone in the room. Nathan and Rukmani remain silent and simply look at each other's face. They are totally 'alienated' from their own kin. Their son falls into the trap of evil activities like prostitution, alcoholism and gambling by imitating western culture.

Rukmani and Nathan dream of home but have no means to make the trip. Rukmani tries to get work as a letter reader but earns only enough to buy rice cakes. One evening, Rukmani splurges on extra food and toys for puli and her grandson. When she returns to Nathan, she finds he is violently ill. The dialogue given below between Nathan and Rukmani as he is dying completes the circle of their life together. In this connection, Nathan asks Rukmani to hold him, "Would you hold me when my

time is come? I am at peace. Do not grieve." "If I grieve," I said "it is not for you, but for myself, beloved, for how shall I endure to live without you, who are my love and my life?" (188).

On several occasions in the novel, Rukmani remembers the physicality of their love, reaffirmed in this request. She recalls the sweetness of nights she went to her husband, not as a pained and awkward child bride, but as a woman. In her reflection on married love, Rukmani draws upon her life with Nathan to describe both the fire and the tenderness they shared. Now that Nathan prepares to leave his body, he seeks Rukmani's encircling arms one last time. As Rukmani begins to grieve for her impending loss, Nathan reminds her of their important contribution to the continuation of life. Throughout Rukmani's story, she has celebrated life and its abundant fertility. The years of her barrenness were harder for her to bear than the years of privation and loss. While she endured hardship with quiet dignity. She cried out for help to conceive her sons. When Nathan assures Rukmani that he lives on in their children, he promises his continued care. She need not be alone or unloved because of the lives they created together from their separate selves. Nathan also assures his wife that he is at peace. His physical journey is over, but his endurings that are the great goals of a Hindu life.

Rukmani perceives city through the materialistic pre-occupations but she can't completely lose spiritual belief and customs. She felt very much the outcast, failing to comprehend Indian reality. She becomes an object of humiliation in the hand of the dominant culture. She desires "I looked about me at the hand and it was life to my starving spirit" (188). Rukmani often found solace in the land. The rhetoric of counter modernization in *Nectar in a Sieve* is merely confined to Rukmani's nostalgic background - looking glances toward a pre-industrial golden age.

The novel *Nectar in a Sieve* is a inter-cultural journey of a peasant. Rukmani's journey within village with Kenny, from the village to the urban and her return to her own native land. Through this journey, Markandaya reveals that industrialization and scientific development doesn't necessarily bring happiness and solace to the poor people like Rukmani and Nathan. It also connotes if the spirituality, morality and family bondages are undermined, Indian people can never be happy. In short, Markandaya has successfully revealed the Indian villagers have not been benefited and happy from such modern achievements rather it has destroyed all the spiritual properties like spirituality, morality, familial affinity and unity.

Dialogue between Cultures

Nectar in a Sieve, set in some village in India, is a gripping story of one indefatigable woman's survival of a checkered life. We can find a determined, unrelinquished fighter in a woman who bears an unfailing faith and rams through impregnable calmer that invades her life. Rukmani impresses with her amazing capacity to compromise with the harsh facts of life. They emerge neither as a result of her actions nor because of her failure. There is no passivity in Rukumani's acceptance. As Kenny tries to persuade her to shout for help, she replies that "we would be pitiable creature indeed so weak, for is not man's spirit given to hem to rise above misfortunes?" (76) Nathan advises her to bend like grass so that she would not break. This is infact an effort to create independent identity remaining within the limits of indigenou Indian culture.

Like other characters of Markandaya, Rukmani's quest for dignity, hunger is a potent enemy. "Fear for hunger", she says, "torments the peace of every peasant who lives by the vagaries of the wind and rain" (53). Tried of constant hunger her elder sons break up the family to see new lives in a new land. Another son resorts to theft

and in killed for it, leaving Rukmani to give for his meaningless life. Her daughter chooses the degradation of prostitution. Rukmani nearly becomes a murderer, thinking Kunti has come to steal the last of their rice, In the city, Rukmani observes the supplicants at the temple pushing and shoving like animals to secure a share of food. Similarly, beggar children snarl and fight like beasts over a scrap dropped in street. Rukmani indicts both the industrialization of the villagers, represented by the tannery, and the laws of land ownership that improvise and displace peasants like her and Nathan, In *Nectar in a Sieve*, hunger breeds thieves, prostitutes, murderers and subhuman bears. Not only nature's whims but also the choices of an unjust society produce the shameful misery of starvation.

Fertility is so precious of Rukmani that she takes risks to pursue it. When she is pregnant, she encounters a cobra in her pumpkin vine, and though it might have killed her she says "I could feel once more the serpents touch" (15). She conquers her fear of a foreign doctor to seek treatment for barrenness, risking Nathun's disapproval. Ira's miseries also stem from infertility, and she loses her husband to another women because she can't give hem sons. She fertility of the land in paramount, for when the land does not produce, the family starves, Images of grains of rice, sprouting paddy, and the harvest represent life itself.

Rukmani accepts the blow and moves on in life. In addition, when her son Raja is murdered even her thoughts do not express rebellion. She moves from numbers to grief, thinking, "For this I have given you birth my son that you should lie at the end at my feet with ashes in your face and coldness in your limbs and yourself departed without trace" [89-90]. Then she begins to wash the corpse and prepare it for burial. When two officials form the tannery, where Raja was killed, come three days later to try to bully her into saying they have no responsibility, she tells them what

they want to hear thinking "what compensation is there for death? I felt confused, I did not know what they were getting at" (91). When the officials turn to leave she realizes that one of the men feels "shame and misery" and tries to make him feel better. "You should not care, I said very softly to him alone, it doesn't matter" (92). Her goodness and inner strength prevent her from becoming hard and bitter.

Rukmani survives. No pain or injustice caused her to rebel or seek revenge. In fact, Markandaya subverts Rukmani's only violent reaction. When she finally physically attacks a shadowy figure in her home, thinking it a woman who has previously robbed her family of precious rice during a famine, the woman turns out to be her daughter Ira. Western and Eastern values, explicitly appear in *Nectar in a Sieve* as Rukmani confronts the Western doctor, Kenny, who urges, "You must cry out if you want help. It is no use what so ever to suffer in silence. Who will succour the drowning man if he does not clamour far his life?" (44). In response, Rukmani thinks, "Want is our comparison from birth to death, familiar as the seasons or the earth varying only in degree, What profit to bewail that which has always been and can't change?" (92). But Kenny, the westerner believes that "there is no grandeur in want or endurance." (100) It means that Rukmani, the Indian woman sees suffering as good for the spirit and endurance as a necessity, because she can't change her situation but the western viewpoint misjudges the ideal of the devoted wife.

The Hindu religion is highly visible within the context of narration. Ceremonies and rituals for birth, weddings and death are conducted according to Eastern standards, distinguishing their customs from the Western way of handling these special events. Rukmani is depicted as praying and offering gifts to the gods for blessings, she expressed her faith in god 'We are all in God's hands, and He is merciful.'(72) Rukmani maintains her heritage's traditions and beliefs through her

upholding the Indian belief that a woman is responsible for continuing the practices, rituals and beliefs her family. Regardless of the sacrifices she is forced to make to provide for and benefit her family, Rukmani never forsakes her cultural heritage.

Faith on Spirituality

Nectar in a Sieve is similar to the classic Indian literature because of its themes and ideas of Hindu religion and traditional Indian culture. Dharma maintains its significance within the novel through Rukmani's desire to fulfill her duty as a female and as an individual. Like the works of the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavat Gita*, *Nectar in a Sieve* emphasizes the symbolic battle of life that the characters experience. Changes are seen as inevitable elements of life, contributing to the development of one's strength and character. Until the tannery was built the village thrived on its production of agricultural products and resources. Here Rukmani says ". . . the changing that now came into my life, into all our lives, blasting its way into our villages seemed wrought in the twinkling of an eye" (115). New sets of standards, economic and cultural, were brought to the region through the rules, lifestyles and beliefs of the 'whites' though causing controversies between the contrasting cultures. India's domination by the British is demonstrated throughout the text, portraying the lack of influence and control the "natives" had over their own land. Nathan and Rukmani are forced out of their home, left to tend for themselves without concern or compensation for their hard work and dedication through their years of toil and labor. Financial profit was the only consideration for many landowners and dealers, contributing to the country's or cultural and economic deterioration. Indians were denied their basic rights, and they were often taken advantage of because of their naivety toward worldly issues and ideas.

Relationships and reputations play an important role in the story's plot.

Initially, the arranged marriage between Nathan and Rukmani foreshadows disaster because of their lack of love toward each other. As the couple matures through, feelings begin to form and deepen within the relation of an affair between Kunthi and Nathan is unable to destroy the marriage. The friendship that exists between Rukmani and Kenny is subjected to a lot of suspicion and rumors by others, due to their different races and gender. Different life and world experiences form the grounds of mutual respect and reliance between the two people, creating an understanding and interest between them. Rukmani is able to educate Kenny about the beliefs and practices of India, whereas Kenny is able to help and inform Rukmani about the new developments and beliefs of the larger world. He sometimes praises Rukmani for her sound instincts about man and woman relationship. He also identifies himself with the Indians so much that he doesn't feel himself an alien among them. This is evident in his occasional conversation with Rukmani, "My country, sometimes I do not know which is my country. Until today I had thought perhaps it was this" (109).

Reputations of prostitution and troublemakers become characteristic trademarks used to label Rukmani's children later in her life. Ira becomes a stigmatized individual because of her infertility during marriage, employment as a prostitute and mothering of an illegitimate albino child. Several of her brothers are also subjected to similar ridicule because of their leadership of "Union" members at the tannery, advanced knowledge over other men, and willingness to adopt different lifestyles from those of their ancestors. Due to these actions and attitudes, Rukmani's children are portrayed as a new generation of Indians, capable of changing to survive and succeed in world of prosperity and modernity. But Rukmani's sacrifices,

suffering, faith, hopeful attitude, and actions, based upon the criteria set by classic literature of the Indian culture, distinguish her as an "ideal" woman.

IV CONCLUSION: THE CONSEQUENCE OF CULTURAL ENCOUNTER

Kamala Markandaya tacitly exposes and expresses the trauma of dislocation, alienation and identity crisis in her works. On the one hand, her novels crystallize exile, migration and its problem and on the other hand they deal with the situation of cultural encounter between the western and complex Indian cultures. In her novels, she focuses on the outsider- the expatriate, the marginalized and suggests a mixed cultural assimilation of discrete centers through which there is a strong presentation of the character which reveals us that Indians do have strong love and affection for their native culture. Like her other works, *Nectar in a Sieve* deals with the western intellectual, cultural and Indian spiritual life. It revolves around Rukmani, and Indian women endeavoring to adjust herself even in the influence of western culture.

Markandaya displays common Indian characteristics and represent a complex of emotions, feelings and attitudes towards mysteries and complexities of life. They have common attitudes, superstitions, beliefs and symbols that govern their social relations and which are sacred and normally imperative to them. When we look at this aspect of characterization we realize that through this device Kamala Markandaya raises those ordinary rural peasants to the level of universal typed-admiral though people are ordinary peasants and battling with all their might against a malevolent fate determining the life of the people throughout the world. This is best presented through the story of an Indian woman who is forced to face numerous hardships throughout her life. Issues of cultural beliefs and practices, social classes, climate occurrences, westernization, and the inevitable changes of life alter her life, addressing the conflict between ancient Indian traditions and western modernity.

Markandaya never forgets to present the underlined essence on spiritual qualities of Indian culture. They are all religious Rukumani is depicted as praying and

offering gifts to the gods for blessing concerning their crops, pregnancy and their personal safety. Wedding ceremonies, the naming ceremony for Arjun and the funeral processions all provide a realistic view of the performance of a culture's traditions.

Makandaya also focuses development at the socio-economic level, the process of industrialization at the village level and its fear and hope caused on their life. Markandaya brings Kenny, a foreigner, as a figure to conduct the development program and support the poor farmers. Markandaya, by bringing into contact the people belonging to two different cultures and traditions, has striven to establish mutual understanding and harmony between the westerner and the Indian from the humanistic standpoint.

Markandaya tries to establish the cross-cultural relationship between the European and the Indians, where people from different cultures and race try to develop a bond of mutual understanding on common cultural ground, despite their differences. At times they preserve their heterogeneity but their sole concern is to develop a reciprocal relation in order to share a common cultural way of life. Dr Kenny is the representative character who is uprooted from his original homeland. He deeply observes and outlets the predicaments of Rukmani's villagers. Though Rukmani is a traditional and spiritual Indian woman it does not mean that she doesn't know anything about western cultures rather she is always prepared to adopt the good aspects of western culture which may be supportive in her existence.

Markandaya portrays woman characters as ideal sufferers and nurturers. The cause of their suffering springs mainly from the characters' surrounding environment calamity. Rukmani, the main character, and her daughter Ira display suffering throughout the novel. Rukmani works hard and is devoted to her gentle husband. She

Undergoes several hardships in her life. Poverty, famine the divorce of her barren daughter, the death of her sons, her daughter's prostitution, and finally her husband's death. So Markandaya's effort through this novel is not only to present the indigenous Indian culture but also reveal its gaps with the universal theme of isolation. Hence, she pleads for universal co-operation. Her journey of bridging the gap between two diverse cultures starts right from the rural areas of India where she finds people suffering from many superstitions. At the same time Markandaya makes her character quite audacious to change according to the need of time. This relation is presented in the novel. Both of them become supplementary in their being. Such main characters stand as the representatives of social groups or traditional types. Nathan and Rukmani are representatives of uprooted peasants whereas Kenny represents the symbol of development.

To sum up, through Rukmani's journal of struggles, hardships, successes and maturation, Markandaya has shown a realistic portrayal of Indian life and culture during the time of British colonization. Acknowledgement of cultural, economic and social differences between the two countries highlights the factors that contributed to the controversies between their civilians. Rukmani represents the strength and perseverance of the traditional Indian culture to retain its beliefs and customs through times of changes and adversity. Her faith, love and hope provide an inspiring source of courage to rise above the prejudices of ethnicity, race, gender and religion. Consequences of westernization, good and bad are illustrated within this text to highlight the global occurrences to this time period. Besides these western actions and attitudes, Rukmani maintains her traditional beliefs throughout her life. Markandaya by bringing into contact the two different cultures has shown the interplay of strategies of characterization for the cultural encounter in *Nectar in a Sieve*.

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