

Theme of Politics in Kamala Markandaya's Novel: Some Inner Fury

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Abstract

Right from the beginning novel is never set in vacuum. It has essentially been a chronicle howsoever well disguised of the milieu wherein it is set. It is all the more true in case of the genre in the countries like India where novelists consider themselves as visionaries who deem it incumbent on them to take stock of the intricacies of the immediate scenario and also to reveal if possible a way out of the impasse. That is why in the early thirties and the early years of post independence the most of the political-historical novels were produced in Indian English fiction. This form of literature was used as a means of arousing and fostering national pride. It was inevitable because the long years of struggle and sacrifice has shaped and coloured every experience of modern India and no novelist living in or dealing with this period could avoid writing about this revolutionary Indian experience. Kamala Markandaya's *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession* and the *Golden Honeycomb* can also be reckoned in this sort of literature. But the present study purports to enquire into the treatment of theme of politics in *Some Inner Fury*.

Keywords: Politics, British Rule, Independence, Freedom Struggle, Sufferings.

Introduction

Kamala Markandaya belongs to the generation of people like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Nayantara Sahgal who experienced the political and social traumas engendered by the foreign rule and the fact that after her marriage to an Englishman she settled in the country which once ruled her own kept alive her memories of racial discrimination and cruel oppression during British rule. She saw the atrocities of the British rule on the Indians which left an indelible

imprint on her artistic soul and the imprints of these atrocities can be traced in her novels.

The historical novel was an offshoot of nationalism. It was used as means to give vent to a newly awakened pride in India's past. D.F. Karaka's novel, *We Never Die* (1944) climaxed the efforts of numerous reformers to bring about amity and cultural tolerance. Ahmed Ali's novel, *Conflict* (1947) moves round the Quit India Movement of 1942. K.S. Venkataramani's *Kandan the Patriot* is mainly concerned with a social evil but everything is viewed in the larger political context. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1932), Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1985), Nayantara Sahgal's *A Time to be Happy* (1958), R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) Menohar Malgomekar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* are some glaring examples of Indian fiction that treated the theme of Indian freedom struggle excellently. R.S. Singh rightly observes:

Once oppression by the foreign ruler became a matter of memory, the creative genius of India applied itself freely to the task of producing a balance sheet of the history of the last hundred years, especially the Gandhian era.¹

Political Theme in Some Inner Fury

The theme of politics appears prominently in Kamala Markandaya's novel *Some Inner Fury*. It is politically war cry against foreign rule. Struggle for independence, anger and hatred felt by the oppressed people for the oppressor have been ably depicted by Kamala Markandaya. It dramatizes the lives of young people facing the disturbing dilemma of their freedom in terms of individual as well as of their nation. The story revolves around Mirabai, Kit, Premala, Govind and Roshan- all educated, sophisticated and to some extent westernized Indians and Richards- an Englishman in love with Mirabai. The novel portrays how their fates are sealed by the independence struggle, especially the Quit India Movement. It is not a novel simply depicting East-West confrontation like *The Nowhere Man*. The novel presents the people "lost in political confusion of the independence struggle"²

Kamala Markandaya brings out a true picture of the Indian society which was coloured with political consciousness. The political conflict between the Indian patriots and the British rulers was an external aspect. The family members have divergent conflicting views on various aspects of political struggle. Govind believes in violence whereas Mira and Kit's wife Premala in favour of peaceful means to oppose the cruel British rulers. In *Roshan*, the novelist portrays the liberated woman of modern India who sacrifices her parents, her husband and the aristocratic life. In her sacrifice, she resembles Rajeshwari of *Kandan the Patriot* by K.S. Venkataramani.

In *Some Inner Fury*, Kamala Markandaya has imaginatively treated India's contact with western culture and civilization which led to the emergence of three distinct types among the educated Indians. First, there are those who have been completely swept off their feet by English education and find nothing valuable in their ancient culture and way of life. Kit and his father belong to this category. Second, there are those who are fundamentalist and stick blindly to the old Indian traditions and values. They are totally averse to the British way of life and deeply hostile to their rule in

India. Dodamma and Govind belong to this category. Between these two extremes, there is group of judicious people who draw inspiration from the liberal and democratic values of British civilization and have a cosmopolitan outlook on life.. Roshan belongs to this category of people.

Mira is a product of the conflicting cultures, her home being an example of the East-West amalgamations. Richards is a picture of an ideal Englishman, representing almost all the qualities of his race. Both sensitive and sensible he is even ready to adjust according to the ways of the Indian so as to become a perfect match for Mira. The East- West interaction and its terrible outcome is, to a large extent, dramatized through the relationship of Mira and Richards. Uma Parmeshwaran rightly points out:

*Personal relationships are Kamala Markandaya's forte. Step by step she builds up relationships, analyses them and dramatically makes them represent something larger than themselves.*³

The East-West conflicts resulting in struggle for independence ruins the life of Mira and Richards and tears them apart. Their separation symbolizes the incompatibility of the East and the West. The political situation, about to ruin a lover's paradise is described by Margaret P. Joseph:

*The volcanic "Inner Fury" of the nation erupts, destroying the illusion of harmony with wider connotations of relationships between races and nations. The microcosm of individual relationships is also destroyed by the "inner fury" of love, jealousy and violence.*⁴

Kamala Markandaya reveals her ardent nationalism and her complete identification with, and approval of the Quit India Movement. In spite of all this, she has never been biased against the British. She depicts their qualities as well as flaws without any flattery or bitterness. She has appreciation for the Britisher as individuals, which is evident in the characterization of Richards. Her British characters have high sense of duty, discipline and honours. The jail superintendent does his duty and imprisons Roshan, though. She is known to him since her childhood. Though she has portrayed the finer points of the English, her attitude is decidedly patriotic. She also does not negate the possibility of a meeting between the East and the West. An amalgamation of these two diverse races and cultures is always possible at the personal level but for that the two have to meet on an equal level not in terms of the ruled and the ruler. There can be love and understanding between two countries and cultures but domination cannot be tolerated.

Conclusion

The important message conveyed by Kamala Markandaya in her novel *Some Inner Fury* is that one country cannot rule over another country for ever. On the personal level there may be and should be understanding and love between the people of one country and those of another. But any domination is bound to be resented and destroyed in due course. In the process of liberation, a few individuals may be hurt or

eliminated. For a nobler aim personal losses do not count. Commenting on Kamala Markandaya's bold depiction of anti colonial stance and her attempt for a social reform through her novels. S. Cowasjee and V.A. Shahane observe:

Her anti colonialist and anti imperialist stance comes through in her works but there is a little or no font hysteria in her writings, and her social pronouncements are always tempered with common sense and sound judgement.⁵

References

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- [4] Kamala Markandaya (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1980) pp.25-26.
- [5] "Kamala Markandaya", Modern Indian Fiction, p.104.