

East West Encounter in Indo Anglian Literature with Special Reference to Kamala Markandaya's Some Inner Fury and Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope

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Abstract

Indo Anglian Literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora, such as V. S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri who are of Indian descent. As a category, this production comes under the broader realm of postcolonial literature- the production from previously colonized countries. When the Eastern characters come in contact with the Western characters, it is obvious that there is conflict between them due to different opinions and different value systems. This theme of East-West encounter is handled by many Indian English writers like E.M.Forster, AnitaDesai, KamalaMarkandaya, RajaRao, R.P.Jhabvala, Bharati Mukherjee etc.in their works. There are various causes of occurring this encounter between the East and the West. The present research paper aims at finding out the major cause of the East-West encounter in Kamala Markandaya's Some Inner Fury and Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope.

(Key words: Indo Anglian Literature, East West encounter, Kamala Markandaya, Raja Rao, Some Inner Fury, The Serpent and the Rope, cultural differences)

Introduction-

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Aims and objectives

1. The present research paper aims at finding out the major cause of the East-West encounter in Kamala Markandaya's Some Inner Fury and Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope.
2. It will also study how the theme of East West encounter is handled in these novels.

Kamala Markandaya was born in an upper-middle-class Madhva Brahmin family. She belonged to Mysore, India. She was a graduate of Madras University. She published several short stories in Indian newspapers. After the independence of India, she moved to England. She is an Indian immigrant in England.

Kamala Markandaya is known for writing about culture clash between Indian urban and rural societies, Markandaya's first novel, Nectar in a Sieve, was a bestseller and cited as an American Library Association Notable Book in 1955. Her other novels include Some Inner Fury (1955), A Silence of Desire (1960), Possession (1963), A Handful of Rice (1966), The Nowhere Man (1972), Two Virgins (1973), The Golden Honeycomb (1977), and Pleasure City (1982/1983).

Markandaya's novel Some Inner Fury deals with the theme of East-West encounter. The best example of the conflict, in the novel can be seen in Kit-premala's relations. Premala stands for the traditional concept of the Indian Woman. Whereas, Kit is partly an English man. She is traditionally brought up and her engagement with Kit is fixed by the elders in the two families. As a traditional Indian girl, she tries to adjust herself and to satisfy his Anglicized tastes. Despite both being Hindus, born in

the same background, Premala comes from a conservative family and kit experiences the Western culture. Being educated in England Kit is Anglicized. Due to his Anglicized household and civil service status he is thoroughly British in outlook and in his way of living. He prefers the club, the formal dinners and tennis. In Contrast to this Premala is fond of Veena playing, reading the Gita, and is domestic minded. She is modest, with her painting of miniatures and musical hymns. Cultural differences between the two push them away. It is only Premala who makes a constant effort to bridge the gap and she fails at every step.

Though Premala and Kit are suitable for each other, their married life is not joyful due to their contradictory cultures. Premala inherits the Eastern values and does not agree to leave them. She is gentle and submissive. She sacrifices all thought of personal freedom and happiness for the satisfaction of the family members. Kit is modern while Premala is extremely religious. She believes in the sacredness of the marriage. She believes in abiding by her duty as a wife. Therefore, she gives up her own identity as a being in her effort to please her husband whom she considers her master. Here the tragedy is brought about not by timidity – but the clash between the two different values – traditional and modern. The girl who is Indian to the core is asked to set up a house in a far away town, far removed from the background she grew up in. In a house run by a cook and a butler she has lot of time and very little work to do. Therefore, her life becomes dull and she gets frustrated.

Premala lacks the social refinements, which make Kit very much popular among his English friends. She is afraid of entertaining them at home because she is not able to do so and she feels awkward among them. She is expert in Indian music; painting, cooking and other works expected from an Indian wife. But Kit does not appreciate her skills. They start drifting apart from each other within one year of their marriage. Due to this they are forced to lead their life in their own way. Therefore, Kit involves himself in his Westernized sphere while Premala engages herself in a school in the village and brings up an orphan girl though Kit dislikes it. The little orphan girl gives her relief for short time only. Being a traditional woman she tries her best to care her Westernized husband but both Kit and Premala are poles apart from each other. Thus, due to the clash between the Eastern and the Western culture Kit and Premala's marriage is a failure. In this novel

Kamala Markandaya presents the theme of East-West encounter in three different relationships. Firstly, in Kit – Premala relationship, then in Mira-Richard love and finally, there is the theme of patriotism and national movement under the British rule.

Raja Rao was an Indian English writer. *The Serpent and the Rope* is Raja Rao's second novel. It was first published in 1960 by John Murray. The novel deals with the concepts of existence, reality, and fulfillment of one's capabilities. The protagonist Ramaswamy's thought process in the novel is said to be influenced by vedantic philosophy and AdiShankara's non-dualism. It also deals with the problems of the Immigrants and Immigration. The novel won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1964. This is a semi-autobiographical novel. It describes Ramaswamy's search and quest for Truth and Self Knowledge. This novel also deals with the theme of East West encounter.

The novel presents the relationship of Ramaswamy with Madeleine. At the age of twenty-first he goes to France to pursue a course of research in European history. There at the University of Cain he meets, Madeleine, a history teacher. Ramaswamy marries her though she is five years senior to him in age. A child is born to them whom they name as Krishna. However the child dies of Broncho-pneumonia within a year of his birth. In the beginning, the relationship between Rama and Madeleine was successful. Both of them value the cultures of each other. In fact, their marriage is not only an individual relationship but it has also an international dimension. It is the mutual existence of two cultures having their unique philosophies of life. Rama and Madeleine symbolize two different world-views and their relationship is the combination of two different cultures –the Eastern and the Western. Though they have different cultural backgrounds, in the beginning their relationship is very intimate. However, this relationship between them does not last for long. Both Rama and Madeline having different cultural background are unable to adjust with each other. Therefore, the bond of marriage between them breaks down finally.

Though Rama marries Madeline he does not take her to India when he goes to India to meet his father who is about to die. Rama himself tells that their relationship is not going so well. There is lack

of mutual understanding between them. He returns to India though his wife remains there in France. In India, he has a stepmother who has served his father till his death. He calls her as 'Little Mother'. He and his mother attend rituals and ceremonies. They go on a pilgrimage to holy places as part of it. Having performed all ceremonial duties of a son, He goes back to France to be with his wife.

Ramaswamy is longing to understand himself and his life in a better way especially about his incompleteness within himself. During the trip to France, He meets Savithri, a Cambridge student. She is engaged to one of his friends. She confesses to him that she is not in love with the man. Initially, he considers her to be a modern sort of woman and does not think highly of her. Despite this fact, He is not able to keep her away from his thoughts. Reaching home, he feels himself to be more distant more his wife than ever. At their first dinner together after his return, Madeleine, too realizing a change in him, asks him if she has failed his gods somehow. He replies that she has not failed his gods, but she has failed him. His mother had given him the toe rings to be bestowed upon Madeleine as blessings. But now he feels so distant to her that he cannot give her the gift. He realizes that things have gone too far now. He no longer sees her as his beloved wife.

When Madeleine is pregnant with their second baby Rama has to leave for India for his sister's wedding. Due to his declining health, He has to make an emergency visit to Bangalore. While he is there, he comes to know that Madeleine gave birth prematurely to a second son who has died. He goes to back to France. Madeleine has become a Buddhist and draws herself completely away from her husband. Ramaswamy divorces Madeleine. He realizes that the answer he has been seeking lies in the journey to seek out his Guru and that all of the trials and tribulations of his life have led him to this realization.

Conclusion –

In both the novels **Some Inner Fury** and **The Serpent and the Rope** the East West encounter is caused by the cultural differences between the two couples. In the novel **Some Inner Fury** Premala and Kit have grown up in different surroundings. Premala's religious nature and Kit's modern attitude

make them drift away from each other. Their cultural background is also different. In **The Serpent and the Rope** Ramaswamy is an Indian and Madeline is a French. Their backgrounds are extremely opposite. Ramaswamy's background is Eastern while Madeline's background is Western. Therefore they are unable to adjust with each other and finally their marriage breaks. Thus in both the novels the major cause of East West encounter is the differences of cultures of both couples.

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