



A Study of Inner Fury reflected in Kamala Markandaya's 'Some Inner Fury'

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Abstract:

'Some Inner Fury' is the second novel of Kamala Markandaya published in 1955. There is a totally different aspect of life. Markandaya dramatises here in this novel not only the political upheaval that wrecks the interracial love of Mira and Richard, an Englishman, but also the moral nihilism of the generation of anglicized. We may come across the glimpses of protest in the form of inner fury of Indians for the British and also for the westernized people, may be Indian also. The events described in the novel are supposed to have taken place in the beginning of the nineteen forties when India was waging a political war against the British Raj and the national liberation struggle was gaining more and more momentum year by year. Though the reader may not find any direct references to the activities of political parties or prominent leaders of the period, he certainly feels everywhere in the novel a historical authenticity. Markandaya tells a heart-rending story of great human interest against the national historical background. She seriously endeavours to examine the various factors that hinder the amicable relations between two diverse races and cultures. She also tries to surmount racial barriers through the characters.

Keywords - Upheaval, Nihilism, Momentum, Surmount

1 Introduction

The novel 'Some Inner Fury' is considered politically as a war cry against Britain. So, the East-West conflict apparently comes to the fore. Harish Raizada calls it, "a political novel dealing with the straining of human relationships in the wake of 'Quit India Movement.'"(4) The very first novel, 'Nectar in a Sieve', depicts the conflicts and protest arising out of economic disparities and exploitation, while in 'Some Inner Fury', we find it through the political conflicts and racial hatred, which form the core of this novel. This novel portrays the novelist's indictment of war and violence, dividing the human race in 'your people' and 'my people'. Markandaya tries to assert here the volcanic inner fury of the nation, which destroys the illusion of harmony and relationship between races and nations. Markandaya has tried to project the mode of living of an affluent society in the background of the political upsurge of 1942 caught in the maelstrom of struggle against British rule.

The patriotic feelings of the Indian and their hatred towards the English rulers are highlighted through a series of conflicts among the members of a single family. It depicts the dilemma of Mira whose family becomes tragically involved both for and against the struggle for freedom. One of her brothers, Kitsamy, is pro-British; the other, Govind, a freedom fighter; who seeks to overthrow the British Raj through violent activities and she herself is torn between her Indian patriotism and her ardent and sincere love for Richard, an Englishman. Kitsamy's westernized outlook makes him an alien in his own country. It can be said that this novel, on a sociological plane, brings out the arch objectives of traditional and patriotic values, which keep the East and the West apart. Thus, it is the story of Kitsamy, Mirabai, Roshan, educated, sophisticated Westernized Indians; Govind, a nationalist, with a dislike for westernized manners; Premala, an embodiment of Indian culture; and Richard, a British visitor to India and Mira's lover.

2. Inner Fury Reflected in the Novel:

The novel begins when Mira sentimentally opens the beautiful silver box engraved with filigree work and gazes at the bit of material covered with dust and blood stains; and her eyes begin to get misty, she revives her experiences in memory. We travel back in time with her to when she was young of seventeen. Mira narrates this story as a flashback of the past. The first person narrative connects all the threads with remarkable skill.

The novelist projects Mirabai as the central consciousness and synthesis of two different poles the East and the West in her character. Mira, the youngest member of an aristocratic and westernized family, has been brought up with all urban sophistication. She is well aware of her superior status. Her brother, Kitsamy, is educated in Oxford University. He is a thoroughly westernized son of a moderately progressive family

Westernized men like Kit live in a world half-Western and half-Indian and suffer the inner conflict that goes on within them. His bi-cultural identity, duality of culture threatens his identity. He becomes an alienated person, who is like a vine clinging to the British Raj, having no individual identity. His return from London signals the dramatic action in the novel. He brings with him an English friend, Richard. Kit joins the prestigious and powerful post of District Magistrate. He also brought with him British mannerism and Oxford gossips. He is a gentle admirer of the British and a loyal pillar of the alien government.

Kit marries Premala, an Indian girl, who observes the Hindu rituals of society. Unfortunately, he fails to understand Indian traditional and cultured woman, Premala. This disparity between husband and wife compels them to choose different ways of life. Their mismatched married life is the result of the confrontation between the two different values- the Eastern and the Western, traditional and modern. This cultural confrontation leading to contaminate human relations seems to be protested by Kamala Markandaya.

Mira is very free and forward in her manners and forms an intimacy with the Englishman Richard. Her mother dissuades her from accompanying Kit and Richard because Indian tradition does not permit woman to show undue boldness. But, Mira's resistance seems to defy both male hegemony and the colonial subjugation. She seems to defy the code of conduct of Hindu family tradition and lead an individual life.

Govind, the adopted brother of Mira and Kit, hates the high class society and rejects the offer of any clerical job to him in his foster father's business. He hates both the Englishmen and those Indians who serve the British Crown. He is a fiery revolutionary burning with hatred for the white men. He despises even a well-meaning English missionary, Hickey and his class. Govind, with his unstinted identity as a true Indian, presents a contrast to the Westernized Indian, Kit. He joins the nationalist movement and fights against the British rule and becomes a votary of violence. His protest against the British is violent protest. Govind, a votary of freedom fighters, instigates his fellow people to violence and set fire to the news paper office where he himself worked for twenty years. Markandaya has skilfully projected anger and hatred felt by the oppressed for the oppressor. The freedom loving people are shown protesting by boycotting the foreign goods.

Kamala Markandaya rightly presents the political and cultural conflict between the Indian patriots and the British rulers. This political conflict was an external aspect. Even the members of a family could have divergent conflicting views on various aspects of political struggle. Govind believes in violence whereas Mira and Kit's wife Premala are in favour of peaceful means, non-violent protest, to oppose the cruel British rulers. There seems to be a fire smouldering in Govind, the fire of revolt because he has been denied true affection and, like a volcano seething with hidden lava, it finds an outlet in revolutionary activities. His extreme and violent acts lead to Premala's accidental and sudden tragic

end. The furious companion burn the school wherein Premala was serving. Hickey, the founder of the school, is terribly upset to see the inner fury of the unruly, violent crowd.

Markandaya presents that how the conflict at the political level affects all sorts of relationships between the people of both the countries. Mira loves Richard. But when Govind is tried in the court on the charge of murdering Kit She gives up her love. Indians believe that Govind is innocent and Hickey, being English, is telling a lie against Govind. On the day of Govind's trial, a violent mob of Indian revolutionaries invades the courtroom declaring Govinda innocent and frees him. Mira decides to leave Richards because he belongs to the community of the ruler. She decides to join the procession of political agitators. The unruly mob snatches Richard from Mira and beats him almost to death. Thus, Mira and Richard are caught in the coil of political violence. Markandaya wants to give message through this novel that one race cannot for ever rule over another. Anil Kumar Bhatnagar rightly says,

“On the personal plane 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 even eliminated and we need not get unduly depressed by that.”(65)

Markandaya tries to show that cultural pride, sharp political disagreement, colonial domination, racial consciousness and the subsequent tension kept the twain apart. She also is of the opinion that racial animosity and global violence is fatal to the entire mankind. She decries racial violence and aggression, and convincingly emphasizes the need for racial harmony and universal brotherhood. She strongly feels that any long lasting close relationship between the Indian and the British cannot be possible as long as India is ruled and politically suppressed by Britain. She stressed the fact that genuine and profound relationship could ever be possible only when India is politically free and both the races could meet on equal footing. She pines at the erosion of human values and humanity.

That is why there is a realistic touch in her graphic description of the conditions of India under the British rule. Markandaya presents how when freedom is suppressed, resentment spreads with lightning speed among the people and resistance gets organized.

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 observes:

“Her anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist stance comes through in her works, but there is a little or no hysteria in her writings, and her social pronouncement are always tempered with common sense and sound judgement.”(qtd in Bhatnagar 140)

Jyostna Sahoo writes:

“Political domination in any form is a crime against humanity. So, there is protest from all over India against political domination by the British people.”(55)

It is evident in the novel that the focus is on two systems of politics, British rule versus self-rule by Indians and the clash born out of it. Markandaya does not set out to solve any problem or to indicate any stand. It can be said that she is not a slogan-raising social reformer or a preacher of a certain political-economical gospel. She merely reveals, as an artist, the forces of history and politics operating in the lives of individual. Joan Adkins rightly points out,

“resistance, rebellion and death” provide the thematic structure of the novels and that wisdom is gained through suffering.”(qtd in Rao & Menon 36)

3. Conclusion

Thus, it can be said that *Some Inner Fury* is a tragedy engineered by the political confusion of the struggle for independence, interracial relationships, deracination from one's native culture and concomitant problems, especially with powerful political pressure, affecting the life of characters. To sum up, the element of protest is evident in Premala, Roshan, Mira. The violent protest by Govind represents the feelings of the freedom fighters. Thus, in all, the element of protest is very much witnessed against the British as well as anglicized manners and attitude. Also, Markandaya's protest against the alien rule and its indifferent attitude, which becomes the cause of contamination of human relationship, is found in it.

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