

Redemption through Self-realization in Kamala Markandaya's Novel -Possession

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Abstract

This paper explains the character Valmiki from Kamala Markandaya's novel Possession achieves self-realization through his life experiences. He confronts the issues of human inequality, exploiting human for money, and cultural differences. To overcome this, self-realization serves as redemption, restoring his true cultural identity and peaceful life.

Keywords: self-realization, cultural identity, life experiences, possession, east-west dichotomy

The ultimate aim of any work of literature is for the characters to achieve self-realization. The inner exploration of one's own self through one's life experiences is known as self-realization. An individual's true identity in life can be identified and redeemed through inner self-exploration. So, the individual is transformed into a better person in society as a result of their inner self-exploration. In Kamala Markandaya's novel "Possession", the protagonist, Valmiki, goes through self-realization to redeem his true cultural identity, which he had in his life before meeting the character, Caroline Bell.

Kamala Markandaya's fourth novel, Possession published in 1963. The protagonist, Valmiki is a poor South Indian boy of fourteen years who has a talent for painting. He is a representative of the poorer sections of society, who values Indian culture and tradition over money and luxuries. Lady Caroline Bell, a British woman, is a symbol of western society, as she delights in possessing innocent people for her own selfish reasons. This novel explores the inequality in human nature, demonstrating how money can have a significant impact on human thoughts and actions; the characters of Valmiki and Caroline Bell demonstrate the differences between the east and west dichotomy cultures.

Money is the most important factor driving human life in the modern world. It corrupted people's minds, making them selfish and self-centered toward others. In this novel, Caroline intends to obtain money on Valmiki's talent as well as she possesses on Valmiki. So, she plans accordingly to tempt Valmiki and she makes him fall into Caroline's

trap. She is so adamant about her possession that Valmiki should not think of anyone beyond her. Caroline's attitude toward Valmiki, on the other hand, enlightens his mind and helps him to achieve self-realization. Self-realization is the redemption to get a satisfying and peaceful life. It can be achieved by realizing and recollecting our life experiences. It assists in determining our true nature and being a better person in society. At the end of the novel, Valmiki has realized his inner self and the hidden motives of Caroline. As a result, he decides to leave Caroline for a better future in India, where he can reclaim his true cultural identity.

Markandaya attempted to prove that the western people do not understand the Indians and their way of life through the characters of Valmiki and Caroline Bell. The western people are still trying to be ruler, arrogant, conceited, and govern over the Indians. They react differently to the ways of Indian culture. Kamala Markandaya's personal life experience has given her an understanding of both the east and the west. She claimed that the east and west have different ways of living and will never meet.

Kamala Markandaya is an internationally renowned Indian author in English, best known for her masterpiece Nectar in a Sieve, published in 1954. She was born in India, married an Englishman, and moved to England. Markandaya has varied expertise of life. She knows the world through experience. She is very familiar with the east-west confrontation and the resultant identity crisis. As a writer, she has effectively portrayed nearly all of the important aspects and varied colors of human life, although she is from a colonial country; her sympathies should primarily be on the side of humanity and life, against exploitation of the poor, against machines, against war and violence. She aims at educating humanity and beliefs in the betterment of man. Her fiction, rooted in Indian soil and ethos, has a subtle social purpose. In a sense, she fictionalizes the sociology of India.

People in modern society are running behind money. They are not ready to imagine their life without money. Money affected their thoughts and behavior causing them to

behave selfishly against others; treat others unequally. The novel mainly focuses on the possession of deceitful Caroline over innocent Valmiki. Caroline intends to make money off of his talent so she takes full charge of him. When Caroline takes him to London from his village he is a young boy who is only skilled in painting and he is oblivious to the cruelty of the world. Valmiki's family receives compensation from Caroline of five thousand rupees because he is the breadwinner in his family. Caroline decides to exploit not only his talent but also him. Caroline makes an impact on him as a kind-hearted lady as she is financially supporting his family and assisting him in learning all the technical skills of his art. Soon he thrives in his career and becomes popular. Valmiki is not aware of the outside world norms. For him, the outsiders are kind and simple like him. It is an innocent phase of Valmiki when he is only able to see a surface view of human nature. Still, there are a few innocent people in this society, such as Valmiki, who are unaware of the deception perpetrated by people like Caroline.

Self-realization has to occur at some point in life to lead a satisfying and peaceful life. It strikes a few people when they are young, others when they are in their middle ages, and still others when they are elderly. Self-realization aids in the development of self-awareness, the recognition of one's true identity, and the ability to be a good citizen.

Valmiki falls in love with Ellie, a Jewish girl, with whom he shares his heart, but Caroline separates them, despite the fact that Ellie was pregnant at the time. Valmiki is disturbed by her absence, but Caroline gradually persuades him. There, we can see how Caroline, who has complete influence over him and persuades him. Annabelle is the next girl who enters Valmiki's life. Valmiki does not have the same emotional connection with Annabelle as he does with Ellie, but she remains an integral part of his life. Caroline's rage and jealousy are rekindled as a result of their relationship. She plans to plot against Annabelle, so Caroline informs Annabelle of Ellie's pregnancy with Valmiki. She is enraged by Valmiki and decides to leave him. His mind becomes enlightened at this stage in his life. He understands that Caroline besides being his benefactor she is exploiting him. She is exploiting him physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Valmiki states,

"She does not care for me. She cares only for what I can do, and if I do it well it is like one more diamond she can put on the necklace around the throat for her friends to admire: but when I do nothing I am nothing to her." (Possession)

Self-realization is the redemption for all of one's and the

world's vices. It helps one to face the self's and the world's emotional and intellectual challenges. Life gradually provides answers to unanswered questions in the form of problems. If a man leads an easy life and has no issues, he has not achieved anything from his life. "Life experience is the best teacher". Certainly, people grow strong and resilient minds as a result of their life experiences. The ultimate goal of self-realization is to make people reflect on their lives, discuss the past and present, and envision a better future. So, self-realization helps a person to successfully redeem his or her life through life experiences.

After the self-realization, we can see the mature facet of Valmiki. He starts to evolve his mind about what is good for him. It is like the growth of a person who learns from his life experiences. It is the circumstances that make you wise. When Valmiki starts to figure out everything about Caroline's hidden motives; he decides not to let Caroline manipulate him any longer and refuses to return to her.

Kamala Markandaya has lived in both India and London, so she has a unique perspective on both cultures and she has drawn the east-west encounters in her novels very effectively. Readers will truly perceive the perplexity and conflict of her mind while writing the novels. Her characters struggle at the individual level, social level, cultural level, political level, and racial level. Her fiction is crammed with the east-west dichotomy, not only at the human level however additionally the simplest way of life. We can see the conflict between tradition versus modernity, rural versus urban, faith versus reason, mysticism versus science, spirituality versus materialism, and the Indo-British relationship. She tried to demonstrate in her novels *Possession*, *Some Inner Fury*, and *The Coffer Dams* that western people do not understand Indians and their way of life.

Despite his lack of wealth, Valmiki finds comfort and peace in his inner life through Indian tradition, culture, and spirituality. Caroline attracts by materialism, a western mindset, luxuries, and convenience. As a result of her attitude, Valmiki becomes a puppet in her eyes. She has no genuine feelings or love for Valmiki. Her inner thoughts are all about possessing and controlling Valmiki. But, Caroline can only alter his external life, not his inner life, and she fails to meet the emotional needs that Valmiki requires in his life. She misjudged him that Valmiki would be with her if she made his external life lovely with materialistic stuff. Valmiki's true Indian cultural identity forbids him from being with deceitful Caroline. He decides to leave Caroline to redeem his peaceful life, Indian values, and cultural identity. Finally, he opposes western materialism and embraces Indian spirituality. Markandaya made it clear in this novel that western

people do not understand Indians and their way of life through the characters of Valmiki and Caroline. They are also selfish and conceited in their desire to rule over the Indians. She claimed that the east and west have different ways of living and will never meet.

In the novel *Possession*, Markandaya tries to convey a message that a human being is not a toy that can be purchased. Through the characters of Valmiki and Caroline, readers can sense the inequality in human behavior; money has been shown to have a strong influence on human thoughts and behavior, and the contradictions between the east-west dichotomy cultures. By the act of self-realization, Valmiki flees from Caroline;

he redeems his peaceful life and true cultural identity by exploring his inner self and understanding the real world. People are lucky enough to have such life-changing experiences which lead to self-realization.

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