

How to Cite:**Dr Ratandeeep (Dec 2020).Diaspora of Kamala Markandaya's Possessions***International Journal of Economic Perspectives*,14(1),161–167Retrieved from <https://ijeponline.org/index.php/journal/article>**Diaspora of Kamala Markandaya's Possessions**

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Broadly speaking the term Diaspora means the dispersion of any people from their ethnic homelands to other parts of the world and the ensuing developments in their dispersed cultures.

The term Diaspora which in ancient Greek means to scatter or to disperse is used to refer to any ethnic population forced or induced to leave their traditional or original homeland and as a consequence, being forced to disperse throughout other parts of the world.the ancient Greeks originally used the term to refer to those conquered people who migrated to a conquered land with the purpose of colonization in order to assimilate that territory in to the Greek empire.

when the old Testament of the Bible was translated from hebrew in to Greek, it was the Golden age of Greek Alexandria.It was published during the time of ptolemy 11 Philadelphius (295 - 247 B.C) and from that time the original meaning of the term was cut off and the term came specifically to refer to the dispersion of the jews beyond Israel. The main Diaspora, events that started between the 8th and 6th centuries B.C and continued even after the fall of jerusalem in 70 A.D. It came in a series of phases beginning with the captivity of the jews the Babylonians in 722 B.C to their exile from judea in 586 B.C. when jerusalem fell to the Roman armies in 70 A.D and the temple, famed for its great wealth and re-built by King Herod the great was burnt down, the jews were forced to flee from their traditional homeland ,their nation and settle in other lands. the Roman Empire was at that time the acknowledged world empire. It held its sway all over Italy, half of Britain, and the whole of the Mediterranean world as far as Iran. the jews were, therefore, more widely dispersed throughout the Roman world and a beyond . this is often referred to as the "Great Dispersion" and stands out starkly in world history.

With the passage of time Diaspora came to mean different things in different climes. since 1960 it has come to represent various Kinds of population movement and the condition of such displaced people in dispersed state. As a result the academic field of Diaspora studies was established in the late 20 century in regard to the expanded meaning of diaspora.

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Diaspora is not a new phenomenon for the Indian mind. Indian history and ancient classical texts describe the long journey saints and monks took for the spread of peace, Knowledge, and love , Archaeological evidences establish the fact that Indians during ancient times did travel to other countries. Prime among these who looked beyond native boundaries was Emperor Ashoka. After his conversion to Buddhism he sent his missionaries to other countries. his famous rock edicts still bear a strong testimony to it .The spread of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs across geographical boundaries of India saw the emergence on Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms in several places. Maritime activities and ship-building techniques that existed in that period reveal that movement of Indians to clasical Greco-Roman world.

When Islam came to India again large scale movements occurred the Afghans ,pathanas etc. and other raiders who phundered India returned to their countries carrying back not only the enormous wealth of the country but also thousands of men and women as artists , dancers , architects and calligraphers. During the reign of the mughals, Indians took journeys to several countries as emissaries, scholars,artists,musicians .

During colonial rule Indians were traded as slaves by Portuguese, Dutch, French and English imperialists. Indians were taken as indentured labourers to develop plantation, economics, construct railway networks or to serve as soldiers in the military establishment. A case in point was v.s. Naipouls ancestors who were taken as indentured labourers to Trinided to develop plantation, economics, construct railway network or to serve soldiers in the military establishment .The migration of Indians as professionals, labourers, and traders to the rest of the world is a continuing saga of Indian migration.

The theme of exile has engaged the imagination of many writers in the course of literary history either because they experienced having to leave their native country for political reasons, or because they felt a dissatisfaction with their society and consciously chose to go elsewhere. In fiction , as in life , there are many kinds of exile, as individual as the people experiencing and writing it sometimes historical cricumstances dictate that a number of nations leading intellectuals and writers leave in order to seek personal as well as artistic freedom.

Diasporic Indian writing in some sense is also a part of exile litereture. a broad survey of the contributions of the second generation of the modern Indian Diaspora in the field of Indian writing in English depict certain shift in comparsion to the previous generation. Displacement whether forced or self-imposed is in many ways a calamity. yet a peculiar but a potent point to note is that writers in their displaced existence generally tend

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to excel in their work, as if the changed atmosphere acts as a stimulant for them. these writings in dislocated circumstances are often termed as exile literature. exile literature also includes migrant writers and non-resident writers and even gallivanting writers who roam about for better pastures to graze and fill their oeuvre. world literature has an abundance of writers whose writings have prospered while they were in exile. Although it would be preposterous to assume the vice - versa that exiled writers would not have prospered had they not been in exile .

the study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projection of ' otherness ' The diasporic production of cultural meaning occurs in many areas, such as contemporary music, film, theatre and dance but writing is one of the most interesting and strategic ways in which diaspora might disrupt the binary of local and global and a problemation national , racial and ethnic formulation of identity.

Internal exile is another form of exile that many writers face. Perhaps it is the most damning of all exiles for in this case the exiles stay in their own country, yet as alienated. In fact it was the colonial power that made most people aliens in their own country, firstly, through linguistic displacement. It is in this colonial context that the native writers spawned the various subgenres of English literature. writers like Mulk Raj Anand , R.K Narayan ,Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya who established Indian English literature ,were all subjects of the British rule in India. Even after the colonized countries got independence, writers of many of those countries still faced a state of exile either because of dictatorship of their countries, or because of racial persecution, or because of ethnic cleansing, or because they chose to migrate.

The Agony of an immigrant's heart can be felt in the expression of Satendra Nandan.

"That yearning, this longing for a place that is no more"¹.....

In fact in this past changing political, social and cultural milieu of our times everything has undergone a sea-change. everything

"is perpetually in process of cohesion and dissolution."²

It is interesting to note that the history of diasporic Indian writing is as old as the diaspora itself. In fact the first Indian writing in English is credited to Dean Mahomed, who was born in Patna, India and after working for fifteen years in the Bengal Army of the British East India company, migrated to eighteenth century Ireland and then to England in 1784. the travels of Dean Mahomed was published in 1794. It predates by about forty years the first

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English text written by an Indian residing in india, kylas chunder Dutt's 'imaginary history ' a journal of forty eight hours published in 1835. the first indian english novel, Bankimchandra chatterjee's Rajmohan's wife, was to be published much later in 1864. it shows that the contribution of the Indian Diaspora to indian writing in English is not new .

The 'modern diaspora' as we now know it, is not one of political compulsion, as in the case of the jews or the flux of the populations of india during the partition, but a more individualistic decision, a matter of choice in a time when, to use Stevenson's phrase, the great affair is to move. but while in the nineteenth century travel for travel's sake was sheer delight, it is now, as Naipul says, a new kind of coming and going. the reasons of going to and fro may be different from one individual to another and none too simplistic at that, it was certainly not a repeat of the first century when an entire nation by and large was forced to free, the modern use of the tern 'Diaspora' academically speaking is thus qualitative and goes beyond the political. it takes in a reconstituting of position from historical racial, cultural or even metaphysical position, the reestablishment of a cultural identity either lost or damaged by the colonial experience. Footloose, strangely restless, away from the land of their ancestors, the children of modern diaspora keep looking back across the boundaries of time and space, comparing, searching, carrying a different picture in their heads. the children of diaspora are torn between present uncertainties and emptiness and a desire to rediscover their roots, their origins. it is a complex process comprising the pull of two different cultural loyalties, loss of mother tongue as well as the cross cultural shifts.

the word 'Diaspora' however is not a substitute for the word immigrant. Diaspora is essentially a bitter experience of dislocation that lead to alienation, a sense of loss and nostalgic desires. it refers to that particular class of immigrants who are unable to go back, primarily because of the hostile climate of discrimination in the country of their birth, or the land of their adoption. Usually Diasporians are not happy anywhere and suffer silently. The famous poet Stephen Gill, himself an immigrant living in Canada, underlines their unhappiness to a large extent.

I have gazed
in to the graveyard of their eyes
often grabbing
the dry bones of their silence.....
A smoke of uncertainty
surround them like for

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and the albatross of loneliness

sits upon them

like a paperweight.³

kamala Markandaya is one of the champions of Indian diaspora in England who carries indian legacy through nostalgic memories cherished in her novels. Her sense of India was always extraordinarily vivid, filled with rich vitality and imagination in the way of all great writers who have been connected to place. as Markandaya herself asserts.

" Except for visits to India, which I still regard as home,I am domiciled in England and live in London. London gives me and this will sound paradoxical to any but an oriental- a serene background: and it is a matchless point of departure - springboard if you like - for those excursions in my novels into another world, India, which was and is and perhaps always will be mine.⁴"

Markandaya feels pain of the suffering humanity and believes in the betterment of man. she aims at educating humanity and like Mulk Raj Anand wants to bring reform in the Indian society. she raises her voice against the exploitation of man by man . Her intention is to awaken the polite society to the real problem of immigrants. As N.K jain observes " Kamala Markandaya is one of the most distinguished women novelists on the Indian scene. Though she is not a didactic novelist, her work is inspired by a crusading spirit for the welfare of humanity and the alleviation of human suffering whatever the difference of themes and setting and style may be in her novels, a single thread binds them together, they are what as she herself calls a 'Literature of concerns'⁵.Markandaya's novels are filled with clarity and a deeply humane vision. Her novels leave an indelible mark on the reader and give him a wide understanding of the complexity of relationships in a fast changing scenario.

In possession, Markandanya emphasises the cultural domination as well as the political theme is partly present. caroline's possession of val is symbolic of the Britisher's attempt to possess India. It is the spiritual values as represented by the Swamy that prevent caroline from possessing val likewise the Britishers tried to own India by trying to exploit her people, but the strong spiritual values kept the morale of the Indians very high and ultimately they succeeded in removing the Britishers from India.

Lady Caroline Bell, a rich divorced, well born lady, "Really well born descended from a long line of men who had ruled India in the days of British Raj,"(9) is keen in acquainting herself with an Indian village. She wanted arak and in fact it "wrought havoc on

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undernourished peasants (10)" but on wealthy welfed people. it resulted in no more than a rich langover, while travelling through India, she accidentally gets to know goathered valmiki, a gifted native artist and in order not to let the talent die, takes the young man with her to London. Caraline, an autocrat typical of the British ways in India sets about getting possession of val with the same dedication and ruthlessness with which the British subjugated India.

Even Indian names were truncated to suit British fancy. valmiki becomes val, the name made him more of an alien. even the Indian writer's name, the narrator of the story was abbreviated from Anasaya to Suya as she tells," a further diminution to nice sensible sue was only avoided by the most strenuous resistance on my part (10) according to Caroline Valniki is wasted in the village and so she wants to take him to Madras, to Paris or to London. Caroline gives her patronoge to valmiki who needy and neglected accepts it. It brings out the cold and thoughtless manner of caroline regarding valmiki without any recognition of him " as a human being, with human ties " (15)

But uprooted from his nalive soil, the sights and sounds of nature that had once inspired him, dry up the well spring of his artisitic life. In an alien land, the only picture he could paint was 'The Desert 'which so very evocatively conveyed the feelings of barrenness, anguish, emptiness and sorrow within him.

"Except for one painting of what looked vaguely like a desert , the walls were clean and bare. the palette bore traces of paints, there were desultory flecks of colour on easel and floor. Despite these the room looked decorous, almost sterile. (48)"

There is hollowness and someting vacant in his personality that is reflected through his desert paintings. After his possession, possessed by Caroline,Valmiki lost his idinty. he became hollow and empty from inside as he himself confesses ,"Nothing that is the truth Suya. If you could look inside me , you could find nothing but dead Wood (212)

Free from the clutches of Caroline ,Valmiki is yet influenced by the Swamy's teachings. Val's spiritualism brings him back again to India, to hermit swamy Whose principles of non-violence, kindness and trust in human being are the basis of his philosophy. Just as independence was essential to a national identity, so at the and of the novel, Valmiki's moral salvation is dependent on a severance of relations with Caroline and a return to India. It is with his Indian mentor the swamy , not with his English mentor, that he achieves his true

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identity as a painter and a man. there is no room for spiritual feelings in Europe as Caroline herself accepts , "spiritual there's no place for it in England"

It is through possession , in the life and personality of Srinivas and Valmiki, Markandaya underlines the pitfalls, the pathos and the tragedy underlying those who opt for an alien land in lieu of their own. Eventually Valmiki stands for the orient which "as an object is to be seized and exploited at will by the superior power of the occident ."6

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