

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Alternative Modernity: Cultural Mediation and Identity Formation in Markandaya's

Novel *A Silence of Desire*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, in the Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Arts in English

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July 2011

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Letter of Recommendation

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Letter of Approval

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Acknowledgements

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Saroj Sharma Ghimire for suggesting, guiding and directing me the path my thesis had to take. He deserves very special thanks for the encouragement, subtle guidance, supervision, editing and revision he provided. This research work is much a product of his incisive observation.

I also take the pleasure in forwarding my thanks to Mr. Harihar Jnawali for his scholarly guidance, Mr. Hem Lal Pandey for his valuable suggestions, Mr. Krishna Sapkota for his mutual co-operation, Mr. Pradeep Raj Giri and Mr. Ghanashyam Bhandari for their initial guidance.

The friendship of Gayatri, Hreedaya Laxmi and Durga has been a privilege that I have had the good fortune to enjoy since joining the University. I continue to learn from the rich interactions we have ever had.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the support that I have received from my family and my in-laws. Special thanks to my husband for emotionally supporting me, and for giving affection, encouragement and criticism in equal parts. Lastly, a very special thanks to my Father, for his continuous inspiration and for making me realize the value of self esteem and dignity in life and gratitude to my Mother for enhancing on me, the spirit of tolerance towards rival views.

Uma Bhandari

July 2011

Abstract

This research examines the constituents of an Indian middle class behavior in Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Silence of Desire*. The project aims to research whether the characters go for a compulsive urge for modernity or make a strong hold to nostalgic idealization of the tradition or form a constituted identity out of the amalgamation of both the attributes.

This identity addresses the form of modernity Indian society celebrates within a non-western location apart from the reason oriented 'Enlightenment Modernity' of the West. The revelation of Sarojini's secrecy, the indebted feelings of Dandekar towards the Swamy and Sarojini's readiness to be treated at the hospital indicates an improving relationship among the couple. The character can neither escape the colonial legacy of reason and the overwhelming global cultural flows nor can they ignore the native sense of spiritual anchorage and religious beliefs. The harmony is only possible when both the characters acknowledge the necessity of both 'faith' and 'reason' as essential to lead a healthy life and agree to come near, by respecting the opposing views.

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I. Cultural Encounters in *A Silence of Desire*

Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Silence of Desire* (1960) explores the clash of values which stems from a nostalgic idealization of tradition and compulsive urge for modernity. The friction of spiritual faith and rational values is problematized in order to examine the dissipation of certain beliefs in the light of new truer claims that emerge out of the mediation of the self and the culture. For any particular culture is taken to encompass an ensemble of practices and ideas regarding language, rituals, norms and values, social relations, virtues and vices etc, it is unified as a single constellation. The referents of culture are always a subject to adaption or rejection. Thus culture as a whole is dynamic. The construction of 'self' (individual or social) in mediation with this fluid cultural nature results in the formation of a negotiated and constituted identity.

A Silence of Desire deals with the problem of the protagonists and their dilemma either to accept new values or go for tradition and culture. Markandaya creates living characters in meaningful dilemma. The clash between the western oriented rationalism of Dandekar who wants his wife Sarojini to get herself operated for a tumor at a hospital and the traditional religious faith of Sarojini, who relies absolutely on the faith healing of the Swamy is adequately realized.

A Silence of Desire forefronts cultural representatives striving to reach a mediated positioning. Sarojini bears a local taste of Indian ritualistic sensibility through her belief in faith healing where as her husband, Dandekar wants her to seek medical help with a stance to global values. Their positioning, however, cannot remain independent rather is influenced by the mediating role of the nation –state, especially within a non-western positioning.

To remain far from the west, not only geographically but with distinct cultural origins and referents, necessarily leads us to form the culture, history and personalities of our own type (eastern). But the overwhelming ‘global cultural flows’, to use Appadurai’s term, mix into the local culture in such a way that the identity thus formed becomes neither global nor local but ‘National.’ Mike Featherstone asserts, “the global and the local cannot be neatly separated” (352). He refers to the term ‘glocal’, the fusion of ‘local’ and ‘global’, to make a blend. Sarojini has learnt acceptance from the swami without which she could never be treated. Her acceptance for a medical operation correspondingly makes Dandekar realize that the Swami also was no less powerful and thus he felt he was indebted to the man. The writer towards the end of the novel illustrates how peace prevailed in the family after the reconciliation of two distinct thoughts. Markandaya writes:

Her face was confident, serene. He’s achieved the impossible,
Dandekar thought: sponged away those fears and memories, driven out
her devils. He had done what I couldn’t do. So I am to be humbled:
beholden once more this man of all others. Well if I am, he thought, so
be it. It was less tiring than to rebel, and after a while, it became
touched with something like peace, like a homecoming. (174)

In Markandaya’s *A Silence of desire*, the emphasis in Sarojini’s spiritual anchorage, religious belief and ritualistic sensibilities and Dandekar’s rationality, represents her intention to demonstrate the significance of native culture in relation to the western one, not through the binarity of superiority and inferiority but through a lens of difference with equal respect to both, thereby asserting the alternative form of modernity. A scrutiny of eastern form of modernity as conceptualized by

Radhakrishnan , Appadurai, Gaonkar and others remains the primary tools of analysis of this study .

It is essential to identify the critical considerations of how modernity works differentially between the developed and developing world. The form of west advocated modernity with the Enlightenment era and the markers such as railroad, bureaucratization, industrialization have certainly spread on throughout the global umbrella. Modernity seems to rest much with explanations of “reason.” This understanding of modernity casts a stone to the religious ideas and the western form of it is usually a cultural claim which, Charles Tylor calls “the error of seeing everything modern as belonging to one Enlightenment package”(27). The belief that modernity comes out of a single universal centre is distorted to excavate the multiple approach of the non-western cultures in relation to their cultural creation and creative adaptation. The indigenous realities of the non –west has a hold on the ethical and moral centre. The very cultural domain is anchored deeply in identity formation. The non-western Indian identity of Markandaya’s characters reflect on their attempts of creative adaptation with something of their own and other thing adopted out of choiceless global scenario as the third world is almost choicelessly globalized.

The overwhelming global cultural flows the third world receives in form of people, technology, media, capital and ideas as advocated by Appadurai tends to link the people to the direct experiences of a metropolitan life. Such flows is mediated and negotiated by an institution called the nation-state. It admixes, creates, calculates, produces, conducts and mobilizes these flows. A nation-state thus mediates amidst the local and the global. Appadurai clearly exemplifies:

The nation-state relies for its legitimacy on the intensity of its meaningful presence in a continuous body of bounded territory. It

works by policing its borders, producing its people, constructing its citizens, defining its capitals, monuments, cities, waters, and soils, and by constructing its locales of memory and commemoration, such as graveyards and cenotaphs, mausoleums and museums. The nation-state conducts throughout its territories the bizarrely contradictory project of creating a flat, contiguous and homogeneous space of nationness and simultaneously a set of places and spaces. (189)

The problem is not in fact, of the conceptual separation of the domains of the individual and the cultural or the local and the global but, rather how they may better be brought back together. Similarly, Makandaya's characters too are not particularly interested in the actual constitution of individual identities through exercise of power or exclusion rather they raise awareness about India and teach others in the West about a culture otherwise largely unfamiliar.

In particular, the story focuses on the strong bond of love and dedication between the family, and the willingness they have, to make things work between them whereas general overview emphasizes much on the tension between faith and reason, spiritualism and scientific rationalism and a trouble winging between tradition and modernity, two sets of values existing side by side and locked in confrontations. Markandaya succeeds in achieving the delicate balance between unfolding the individual's psychological and social predicaments and portraying a wider cultural and political sitting which create this crisis.

In addition to globalization, the post –colonial pretext might have implanted much influence upon the characters. Some subtly forge their native path and the others come under the British rational sun. Markandaya, a step ahead also thinks of the environmental and societal problems that globalization and development bring.

The world has reached a point that is beyond going back and thus no identities can be ascertained as being pure. However, there are issues that can be separated through a lens of difference. On the same foundation, the cultural identity of the non-west today claim that they too have their form of modernity, that differs to the western paradigm. And the point to make is that a tradition is entitled to respect though one does not agree with it or belong to it.

Dipesh Chakrabarty sounds convincing when he argues, “there are parts of society that remain opaque to the theoretical gaze of the modern analyst” (45). When modern world history celebrates its achievements, it fails to address the modernities that vary from the “Enlightenment Package.” Nevertheless, the historical survival of Indian values create enough space to claim their modern identity in the verse of cultural mediation. In this connection Meera Bai writes:

In the novel of Kamala Markandaya, the encounter between the dramatically opposite East and West in the context of human relationships and cultural values constantly engages her attention and gets reflected in her novels. She herself being the product of both the oriental and occidental cultures, it is not far-fetched to see her own experiences being filtered through the consciousness of her fictional characters. (10)

Bai acclaims that Markandaya’s novel is an exposure of how confrontations arise due to cultural variations. Moreover, her own experiences can also be sensed in amalgamating the cultural practices of both the orient and the occident by means of her fictional characters.

Regarding the bi-cultural identity of Indian writers writing in English, Harrex says, “The philosophical quest involves a familiar web of dualism from which the

Indian protagonist must disentangle his complex identity: tradition versus change, mysticism versus materialism, soul versus body, faith versus reason, moral code versus free will” (66). The parameters Harrex mentions, is also a reflection of the writer’s quest for identity amidst two extreme facts, one being the native/acquired and the other the foreign/achieved. This web of dualism also captures the attitude of the protagonists, Sarojini and Dandekar in Markandaya’s novel exactly the same way Harrex says.

Markandaya’s novel unmasks the archetypal conflict between tradition (east) and modernity (west). Nagendra K. Singh says:

Kamala Markandaya’s novel deals with the modernization of India especially through its interaction with the west, we can discern a pattern not a smooth progress, but a trouble winging between tradition and modernity between cultural excluivism and a pluralistic cultural identity. (237)

This analysis delineates that Markandaya’s novel portrays modern India interacting with western progress. However, the plural cultural identity and spiritual anchorage India inherits through generation is something of its own, a form of its own modernity.

Markandaya has universalized the issue by deliberately refusing to add distinct place and time in her novel. Incidents are abrupt with characters acquiring varying points of view. As Sunaina Kumar mentions, “by means of appended comment, multi dimensional perspectives and short, abrupt chapters, the author has effectively conveyed her vision of a world where there is a breaking up of a terrain of thought” (67). Kumar is aware here that multiple thoughts are what the world is primarily

characterized with. And thus, Markandaya demands equal respect to every identity and all cultures.

Markandaya in her novel reflects the condition of her non-western characters much influenced by the global socio-political environment. Two major characters Sarojini and Dandekar stand on two bank of the same river. They differ on their views regarding Sarojini's treatment of womb tumor. The novel however ends up with the transformation of Dandekar's mind from skeptic to a man feeling spiritually, after the swami leaves the city. On the other hand, Sarojini has learnt acceptance and agrees to be treated at the hospital.

The character type and their transformational nature exhibit the middle class ethos of a non-western location where individuals are shaped not solely by what they are but also by where they are standing. The identity formation of both Dandekar and Sarojini is achieved out of cultural mediation of the local and the global.

Born Kamala Purnaiya in 1924 in Chimakurti, a small Southern village in India, Kamala Markandaya learned traditional Hindu culture and values. She was raised a Brahman. Between the years of 1940-1947, Markandaya was a student at the University of Madras, where she studied history. While studying at the university, she worked as a journalist, writing short fiction stories. In 1948, Markandaya decided to further pursue her dream of becoming a writer by moving to London, where she met her husband Bertrand Taylor, a native Englishman. This biographical line Markandaya possesses, becomes a source of ten novels she published in her lifetime, all dealing with post colonial themes in modern India. She blends her native Indian culture she inherited by birth and the modern western values she acquired through her education and marriage into her writings.

Markandaya's novels reveal her deep preoccupation with the changing Indian social and political scene and they evince a keen interest in the relationship of individual and the society. Though short, there is so much packed in her novels that one happens to miss something if one blinks. *A Silence of Desire* is also relatively a short novel that introduces western readers to life in India and the legacy that the British colonization left over. On the most basic level, it is the story of a couple representing differing values. On another level, it is a tale of indomitable human spirit that overcomes the burden of over reasoning and traditionalism side by side. Finally, it is also a novel about the conflicts between a traditional culture and modern values that demands a need of middle path to both the realms. An extreme of any realm cannot workout, rather amalgamating both faith and reason works its best to shape middle class Indian modernity.

This research attempts to deal with how a more complicated interaction between the local the global results in cultural formations and how individuals shape their identity amidst the overwhelming globalization process. Identities thus formed and negotiated is what this research calls an amalgamation of varying thoughts and hence advocates the existence of alternative modernity.

The first part "Cultural Mediation and Identity Formation" deals with how a 'self' is formed under cultural referents, both having a fluid identity. The 'cultural self' hence produced are not the original 'self' but under globalization identities are negotiated and mediated by the nation – state acting between the local and the global. The second part deals with the conflict existing side by side among two values in the modern Indian culture. Denying the sole recognition of modernity from the Enlightenment package, this part, in support to critics like Arjun Appadurai, R. Radhakrishnan, Mike Featherstone, Dipesh Chakrabarty and others and through the

textual analysis of Markandaya's novel, *A Silence of Desire*, advocates the form of modernity that emerges and exists in the Indian middle class society.

Finally, the third part is the conclusion of all these ideas that demands a middle path among rationalism and traditionalism thereby, asserting an alternative form of modernity different to the European paradigm. What all these parts are searching for is a better understanding of the complexities of modernity in India and exploring a form of modern discourse that accentuates the eastern perspective of gaining strength through spiritual anchorage.

II. Alternative Modernity: Cultural Mediation and Identity Formation

Modernity is the violation of the accepted conventions in respect to all social discourse that question the certainties which support traditional mode of religion, morality and even the traditional ways of conceiving the human self. Modernity is a multiplicitous concept. What modernity signifies vary with the user. Modernity, to refer on this project, tilts to the cultural formation of non-western lifestyle and their disjuncture from the western paradigm of how modernity gets defined.

The markers of modernity are undoubtedly the child of the west. But modernity at a non-western location cannot claim to owe the same since it perceives every global flow not directly but through mediators and negotiators. Modernity specifically at the Indian periphery can further be claimed as an amalgamation of both tradition and science, endeavoring to accomplish a dual identity constituted of their originality and the British influence in addition to the emerging technologies and development. This blend creates a strange sense of defining newness specific to the Indian land. To add on it, Indian cannot escape the overwhelming global cultural flow from the West. The flow does not remain as it is, rather gets mediated, filtered, blended or negotiated by the nation-state. This role the nation-state plays determines the identity formation of its inhabitants on basis of the global receptions.

Modernity today is global and multiple. It no longer has a western governing centre to accompany it. This project makes the non-western, non-universal elements as a tool to exhibit a more complex, rigorous and multifaceted understanding of how the modern come about when modernity has always laid claims to universal certainty. Focusing on making modernity outside the west, the text accentuates two representative values of modern Indian culture existing side by side, faith on

spiritualistic sensibilities on one hand and rationalistic belief on the other delineated by the character of Sarojini and her husband Dandekar respectively.

Modernity advocated in this project is not simply against the western form of modernity. One should accept that the concept of growing modern is a western product but the same facet does not correspond the non-western location. However, had modernity not been guarded by the west, it would probably never be with the form it is today at the third world. With Said's concept of Orientalism, the non-western people have discovered their own form of discourse, accentuating the importance of the native culture, rituals and philosophy. With that every national and cultural sites today can no way escape the legacy of western discourse on modernity. On the same ground Dilip Gaonkar asserts:

However, to think in terms of alternative modernities does not mean one blithely abandons the Western discourse on modernity. That is virtually impossible. Modernity has travelled from the West to the rest of the world not only in terms of cultural forms, social practices, and institutional arrangements but also as a form of discourse that interrogates the present. (13)

'Present in question' is a marker of alternative modernity this project emphasizes on. Whoever thinks on this line necessarily should think on the contradiction of the present. Sarojini is a modernist not because she finally agrees to go to the hospital but because she realizes that the hospital alone would have not worked unless she had faith on it. Similarly, Dandekar walks on the same line because he acknowledges that he would never get his wife back unless the swamy wanted it. His feelings of indebtedness towards the swamy is his acceptance of the contradiction of the present.

A Silence of Desire (1960) shows up a new dimension of sensibility in that the fictional focus is on the psychological adjustment of an urban – middle class family. It is essentially a “spiritual crisis” for Sarojini, the serene and traditional housewife of the newly emergent middle class in the country, when she is asked by her modernistic husband to give up her faith in what she simply believes to be the traditional values of life. However, she accepts the scientific spirit of the age, which is not in conflict with the basic human values, as it merely attempts to make the humans more happy here and now. Sarojini’s belief in the Swamy’s super human power and spiritual superiority impels her to go to him for the cure of her physical ailment – a tumor in the womb. Dandekar, a junior clerk in a government department, is painfully disturbed to learn that his wife, Sarojini, has a growth in her womb. A “second-generation city dweller”, his pragmatic and scientific outlook on life, partly influenced by his contact with the Europeans is shocked when he discovers that his wife is seeking some kind of faith-cure for her serious ailment. After much misunderstanding and an unhappy silence, Dandekar succeeds in his efforts to shift away the Swamy with the support and help of his boss, Chari, as the only possible solution to make his obdurate wife see reason and regain her health in a modern hospital.

Faith healing is neither an essential part of the national tradition nor is it efficacious in much psychological tension and even domestic disharmony. Shorn of her husband’s flaw, Sarojini truly represents the traditional Indian wife, in her concern for the family as well as her religious devotion. The Swamy’s helpful departure from the town resorts to Sarojini’s quest for locating the acceptable means of treatment. Sarojini, however, emerges as stronger to her husband with a firm and stable spiritual faith to indicate which Markandaya amplifies:

Dandekar didn't pray it, he was always careful to say; it was a plant; one didn't worship plants: but it was a symbol of God, whom one worshipped and it was necessary that God should have symbols, since no man had the power or temerity to visualize Him [. . .] it was not that she did not understand; it was just that sometimes she seems to forget, tending the Tulsi with her reverence which it did not merit. And yet, he had to concede, it was a fine point, the difference between the reverence due to a symbol and to its actuality; between the Tulsi tree and its maker. (1-2)

The characters attitude and beliefs distinguish their mode of thought. The idea of worshipping a mere plant as God appeals less to Dandekar, a man of progressive thoughts whereas it means much to Sarojini who's also not less contented with what she does. It gives her satisfaction and accounts to deposit her silent desire where she relies to support her life at. Neither does Sarojini nor can Dandekar acclaim absolute satisfaction to their standpoints.

Markandaya thus tries to amalgamate these far-fetched attributes and form a fusion out of it that can appeal to the ideas of alternative modernity. Both originate in the belly of the culture of modernity fractured by the traditional archetypes and western innovations. 'Tulsi' becomes a demarcative archetype that distinguishes the cultural and acultural understanding of modernity. A cultural understanding as Charles Tylor focuses, deals specifically with the changes in the modern west in terms of rise of new culture whereas the acultural understanding refers to the description of transformation in some culture-neutral perspective. An acultural theory advocates on the use of reason emphasizing modernity as belonging to one 'Enlightenment package'. But it has to exceed this descriptive boundary and encompass an

understanding that modernity cannot be complete without the study of all constellations such as religion, faith, and metaphysics. Charles Tylor rightly advocates that: “the belief that modernity comes from one single universally applicable operation imposes a falsely uniform pattern on the multiple encounter of non western cultures” (28).

Markandaya’s novel illustrates an interesting aspect of the modern Indian enlightenment that has not only been a release of the feminine subjectivity but also achieved an imaginative self-sufficiency which paves a way to exploring newness in practices. This newness endows her novel with certain representative character that marks them out as a significant entity in Indo-Anglican fiction. Sarojini’s fundamental spiritual urgency and her moral scrupulosity need not be either sacrificed or subordinated, but, only her attitude needs reorientation. The novel projects perception of the different and distinct forms of consciousness, which propel the individual’s progress in the modern world. It is possible to trace out in her novel, an intelligent pattern of ideas that reveals her aesthetic assimilation of a long established tradition under the disturbing impact of modernity. The protagonist does not run away from the hard realities of life, by choosing death as final solution, which is a vindication of the traditional values of Indian culture such as tolerance, acceptance and endurance.

A Silence of Desire dealing with spiritual realities exposes a clash between modern and traditional values in the family. The happiness in the life of a couple gets lost when they do not unburden their hearts by giving vent to their feelings. It portrays the assault of the views of western skepticism on the oriental faith. Markandaya focuses on the psychological torments of Sarojini, the heroine who is a God-fearing, religious and a very caring wife. Dandekar, her husband, a government servant with his modern and western attitude to life opposes her deep faith in medical treatment of

her malady. She undergoes great spiritual crisis when her westernized husband asks her to give up her faith in the spiritual power of the Swamy. Sarojini clearly tells him; “I have beliefs that you cannot share [. . .] because faith and reason don’t go together and without faith I shall not be healed. Do you understand that?” (68). She ridicules him for his ignorance of the efficacy of faith and prayer:

“Yes, you can call it healing by faith or healing by the grace of god, if you understand what that means. But I do not expect you to understand – you with your western notions, your superior talk of ignorance and superstition when all it means is that you don’t know what lies beyond reason and you prefer not to find out.” (68)

While belief in spiritual realities is presumed in the Indians, skepticism as a natural characteristic is attributed to the British. The aforementioned excerpt illustrates how such thinking is reflected in Sarojini. Self torment on the part of Danderkar is also heightened by his own divided psyche: his part western mind fought against alleviations which his part eastern mind occasionally hinted to be wise. Thus Sarojini asserts herself by expressing her personal views on faith-healing, which gives her a kind of identity and distinct personality. She strongly believes in spiritual faith and sticks to it and does not even hesitate in defying her husband. The inability of ultramodern hospitals in treating her mother and brother has made Sarojini much inclined towards spiritual reliance. She has strengthened her faith in god. The strong character of Sarojini with firm faith in spiritualism saves many times her husband, with his so called modern, progressive and scientific outlook from moral degradation when he is reminded of her loyalty and fidelity.

Dipesh Chakrabarty rhetorically questions, “why is a tradition entitled to respect even when one does not agree with it?”(13). The modern, as Chakrabarty says,

is the path of the revolutionary. Sarojini with her spiritual faith is firm and stable in her principle and thus she emerges as a stronger person than her husband while Dandekar, with his scientific views is filled with doubt and skepticism. Being a perfect housewife and embodying the ideal and traditional feminine virtues Sarojini becomes an integral part of Dandekar's life and pivot of the family. It is she who enhances the beauty and charm of life and provides grace and dignity to it. She provides a solid foundation to the edifice of family which is impossible without her active participation. Markandaya pictures a woman's gradual journey from self-effacement to self-realization, from self-denial to self-assertion and from self-sacrifice to self-fulfillment. Sarojini's form of modernity gets reflected on her revolutionary nature of how she denies what her husband agrees and believes.

Markandaya reflects a rebellious 'Nora like image' through Sarojini when she says:

[. . .] you have come to me – thrust yourself on me night after night because, God forgive you, you couldn't think of any reason for my refusal except a vicious one [. . .] you must be ill too. Sick – your brain must have been sick, to have believed what you did – to have followed me as if I were a common harlot with whom you consorted but were not sure of. (67)

Sarojini's identity perhaps is negotiated between a submissive housewife and bold lady able to question the husband's judgment. In the beginning of the novel, she has been a good wife and a good mother and with the plot development, she revolts for her own style of treatment. It was after all the treatment of her own body. Moreover this decision marks much involvement of the West- floated attitudes and the benefits of colonial legacy. Women in pre-colonial and traditional society were expected to

manage the household affairs and agree to every decision of the husband as the family head. But Sarojini is bold enough to choose the life she prefers living. Modernity, the same way enables its subjects to choose some among several alternatives. Eduardo Mendiata puts:

To live in a post-traditional society means that we live in societies in which we critically appropriate the ways in which we decide to position ourselves to our past and our future [. . .] what is taken to be tradition is itself a choice made available to us by the very conditions of post national and post colonial society. (413)

What the colonial legacy left over into Dandekar's or Sarojini's psyche is amalgamated with what they possessed of their own. Their life is much the result of their own choice. Their desire to live a debt free life, have a steady job, a fair pile of savings, ornamentations and graduating slowly downwards to the luxury of the ground floor made the couple successful in their lifestyle.

Bargained Identities under Globalization

A Silence of Desire tells of a life journey of a loving, wealthy, middle class family, living comfortably and enjoying many luxuries. However, things quickly worsen when Dandekar loses respect for his wife, Sarojini, after finding a mysterious picture of a strange man, whom he believes to be her secret lover. This story focuses on the strong bond of love and dedication between the family, and the willingness they have to make things work between them.

When we seek to find who we are it is essential that we discover our abilities to adjust with time and situation. A modernist with a non- western location has to be capable of forming identities that are bargained in the global market.

They socialize themselves with the culture that the society produces. This is what called the 'production of locality' by Arjun Appadurai. Moreover, socialization of time and space produces locality affected by globalization. The 'where' and 'when' of global factors such as people, media, technology, idea and money determine the practices, performance and representation of people.

Globalization exercises a permeating effect on building the relationship between and among various locales. People become 'closer' to each other as time and space tend to compress due to the advances of technology and mass media: the most distance places are easy to access, and the world seems smaller. An individual becomes more and more involved in the process of increasing mutuality of the world and finds himself submerged in great number of various dialogues and debates, he's exposed to the widest variety of opinions and viewpoints, often contradictory and hardly reconcilable.

Globalization, but, does not have the same effect on the developed and the developing nations. Radhakrishnan says, Globality and globalization are like, what Darwin says as the survival of the fittest: "In case of the developed nations, the capacity for going global enhances their capacity for self-representation as powerful nation-states, whereas in the case of the underdeveloped nations, globalization attenuates and eviscerates their sovereignty as nation-states" (90). The developed nations are growing more developed and powerful under globalization whereas the developing nation states possess a risked sovereignty. 'Pray the power' becomes a guiding statement and thus the ideology culture and capital of the developed states flow towards the developing ones. No originality remains with the latter states and they happen to form a blended identity which we call an admixture of the local and

the global. The third world nationalism is thus shaped by the same process of globalization and so are the nationals.

Dandekar and Sarojini are also a product of this process representing how a middle class culture is formed amidst continuous global cultural flows and how individuals try accepting or rejecting them to form a third world, middle class Indian identity. Markandaya has made an attempt to expose a universal phenomenon by presenting smaller instances of families; an approach which seeks to project and interpret experiences from the viewpoint of a third world citizen.

Appadurai presents the essentiality to look at the relationship among five dimensions of global cultural flows, namely: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples, ideoscaples. He says:

They are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-state, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub national groupings and movements and even intimate face – to – face groups such as villages, neighborhoods and families. (231)

The influence of the external forces are not easy to affirm. This brings attention to the dialectics of global and local as the two sides of the same process. The encounter of the global into the local is not independent rather affected by several factors like the nation state or the multinational corporations. What globalization has definitely contributed to is the replacement of master identity with an identity based on ethnicity, race, local community, language and other ‘local’ and culturally concrete forms.

The mediation of expression by means of mass communication has reached its peak, and its pervasive influence causes the substitution of the real world for the

world of images. Television in this respect signifies a powerful medium of globalizing trends and is often viewed as representing superficial images. Appadurai avers:

These images involve many complicated inflection depending on their mode, their hardware, their audiences and the interest of those who own and control them. What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapas to viewers through the world in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed. (35)

The images, media produces are responsible in shaping people's mode of thoughts.

The ideological interest of the owners of these images are transmitted as 'ideas' to the audiences who are deep into the grip of the vast array of images hence produced.

Their thoughts and perspectives are thus shaped accordingly.

Times are changing. So are believes of people regarding marriage. There is divorce now. However, Indian nationals at Markandaya's novel represents varying mode of thought regarding marriage.

If they talked about marriage now it was in general terms, with views that varied from Sastri's, who went to see films of Indian classical stories and held the benign belief that wives were faithful, virtuous creatures, prepared like their classical sisters to follow their husbands bare foot into the jungle, if necessary, to Joseph's, who believed in free love and was even said to practise it. There was a third view, a curious result of western films, the strongest adherent of which was Mahadevan. He believed that no marriage was safe unless, in their husband's absences, a wife was locked in a chastity girdle. (16)

The ideological reference frame endorsed within the films are considered responsible to shape the thought of the viewers. Moreover, in case of advertisements and other communicative forms, the globalizing trends are mediated depending on the governmental policy of whether to support the local producers or favor the foreign ones. The natives play an active role in assimilating or resisting the dominant culture. Sastri is one of such representatives who is untouched by the western values and has a bent towards classical oriental faith. He is thus fond of classical Indian films. Similarly Joseph believes in free love and Mahadevan is sceptic towards marriage. The writer herself claims these characters as a curious result of western films. The characters are able to explore several realms of the same ritual as per their exposition towards films and other medias.

The juxtaposition of two diametrically opposite culture, the oriental and the occidental, have produced cultural form of hybrid nature. They are neither purely occidental nor purely oriental.

The overwhelming global cultural flows leave people with three specific options; to accept them totally, to neglect or reject the entire flow or to create a hybrid culture by accepting some and rejecting the other. To accept the entire flow risks in the loss of native culture and to reject them totally isolates people from the global scenario of science, technology and other power plays. An appropriate option would be to amalgamate both the local culture and the foreign one to form a culture of hybrid nature. Markandaya's reflection of the middle class people in *A Silence of Desire* delineates on how hybridity draws on local and transnational identification and generate historically new mediation. Such mediations are new because they are located outside the official practices of the national cultural boarders.

Most post-colonial writing has concerned itself with the hybridized nature of post colonial culture. To understand with post-colonial criticism, hybridity is the result of the orientalist project of the west. As discussed by Ashcroft, Griffith's and Tiffin write:

Hybridity occurs in the post colonial societies both as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when settlers invaders dispossess indigenous peoples and force them to 'assimilate' to new social patterns. (87)

There emerges a conflicting milieu of cultural exposure when the colonial settlers with an aim of economic and political control felt the necessity to establish the cultural values of their own type in contrast to the native cultural paradigms. Resisting some and accepting the other, the locals contribute in the production of a different culture that neither is foreign nor local, but an admixture of both, which is a hybridized form of culture.

This is how modernity gets its way varying from the western paradigm and shapes itself in the verse of middle class adaptation. A part of western thought believe that an intermediate class means a class of persons, Indians in blood and color but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellectual. This thought probably is much biased with the cultural power belonging to the Europeans; however, it's not wrong in defining the existence of 'Intermediate class' as hybridized result of the local and the global.

Lacing belief in faith healing, Dandekar wants his wife to seek medical help but does not wish to force his will on her. He does so out of respect for her religious faith. Markandaya describes Dandekar's mind as a 'part western mind' referring to

the legacy of his experience in the employ of an English man, Mr. Wilson, during pre-independent days. Dandekar is the product of an admixture of the culture he inherited by birth and culture he adopted. Denying the former is impossible to him as it is what he has learnt and experienced since years and the latter too is out of his reach to ignore as he's born and socialized in the same oriental culture.

Markandaya's characters are in part the result of her own experience. She, herself consists of a hybrid identity of both east and west and her rich experience as an expatriate is evident in what Prem Kumar argues:

Indeed, the east – west encounter as a recurrent theme in her novels is directly related to her experience as an expatriate who inherited Indian values by birth and acquired western values through residence in England. Like her, most of her characters find themselves in situation where they must confront values rooted in opposing cultural milieus, historical processes, economic system, political ideologies and philosophical traditions. (16)

Sarojini is one of such characters who is gripped into the opposing cultural milieus. A character in active and assertive role, Sarojini refuses to put up passively with whatever her husband asserts, rather chooses to resist them with courage and determination.

The Sarojini Dandekar bond woefully lacks the essential prerequisite of trust and belief in the beginning. They do not bother to discuss the intimate aspects of man-woman relationship. Their evening chit – chat merely includes Dandekar's narration of what happened all day except those subjects dealing with sex. Dandekar has been a typical middle class husband whose expectations remain the same always. Sarojini would be ready for him and so would be the evening meal. But he was never prepared

to ask his wife about the identity of a stranger's photograph that he found in her box. Inability to muster courage and communicate properly pushes both the characters into a rift of problems. Dandekar is probably much into work and has grown materialistic. He seldom considers what his wife inherently desires. It is 'self understood' to him. Dandekar is not a man made up of his sole thoughts; he's made up of his works, colleagues, his boss, his middle class attitude and most of all his socialization blended with his cultural adaptation. On this note Mendieta clarifies that, "at any given time, then, we are not just negotiating our localities or positions vis-à-vis race, class, gender, and nationality, but also positionalities within a geopolitical system" (409). Dandekar is a different man before he leaves for his office and after he comes home in the evening he's a bit of everyone. He is also a share of post-colonial postionality and also a bit of doubtful personality with a jolted mental equilibrium.

India's independence has raised people's expectations sky high. Only political freedom cannot by itself be a panacea for all social and economic ills. The new native rulers turn out to be no less rapacious than the colonial masters they had supplemented. At such circumstances, individuals try becoming more of what they are not. Moreover, rapid globalization, the development of technology and media have made people subtle parts of the same global village. No identities remain pure rather they are formed by negotiating, blending, and mediating among several civilizational cultures of the world.

Spiritual Anchorage and Ritualistic Sensibility

What makes us different from our forebears is not just our beliefs and doctrines but also a different background understanding of things that interpret a single matter in multiple ways. The rise of modernity is predicated upon or intimately associated with a change in our embodied background understanding and these

include new ways of understanding ourselves as persons, our relationship to God, to other human beings and to the world. All cultures do not have to experience the same social change as the West. The embarkment of Enlightenment procedure leaves all cultures to look the same. But the maintenance of cultural differences is an individual as well as national right where one assumes a cultural recognition. Non-recognition actively extinguishes identity. Therefore, it is essential that a culture needs to be recognized to achieve an identity of its own.

The clash of values in *A Silence of Desire* occurs at several levels, but the most crucial encounter remains between the ideas inculcated by Indian cultural traditions and the forces of progress unleashed by Western science and technology. Sarojini's attitude towards life stands in sharp contrast to that of Dandekar. But Dandekar and Sarojini's character may be the emblematic of Markandaya's vision of reconciling the two worlds. Markandaya silently seems to suggest that preserving outdated tradition is as futile as jumping on a wagon of technological advancement simply for the sake of change. However a mutual respect for each other's ideology is essential to avoid conflict.

Prem K. Nayar explains the situation of newly independent nations such as India where changes cannot be accepted easily at the cost of abandoning native culture. He elucidates:

While the newly independent nation state in the 'Third World' sought to model itself after secular Western ideas of the nation, the native culture's roots in religion and spirituality were not easy to abandon. Further, most colonies had shared a difficult history with Christianity. The issues of conversion, the dialectic between native faith and a colonial education and the search for a secular form for the nation-state

are part of African, Asian and South American histories in the twentieth century. One way of dealing with this theme is to posit a spiritual native culture/tradition against the materialist 'West.' (96)

The East-West confrontation in *A Silence of Desire* is broad in scope and depth mainly because the character of Dandekar is focused to bring out the clash between his inherited and adopted cultures. The East-West encounter from a 'third world' location is dramatized in term of the character's respective conceptions of their native belongings.

Dandekar's cousin, Rajam is also a proof of how healing through faith works when science and reason fail to locate the pain. Rajam tries to defend Sarojini's visit to the Swamy, the faith – healer: "And what makes you so gullible", cried Dandekar, "as to believe these miraculous tales, these heresay stories, these cures that have happened always to someone else" (129). Rajam is presented as an evidence of how faith healing works into the psychology of those who believe on it. She says:

I used to get such terrible pains – here – almost doubled me up they did [. . .] And as if one would want to!" [. . .] I would have died if the pain had gone on. Luckily I went to the swamy [. . .] and I have never had it even once since, may god bless him. (129)

Dandekar, of course, would rather have his wife treated by some competent doctor at some ultramodern clinic; he would not brook any nonsense about faith-healing. But Sarojini would not yield either; in fact, one day, she flashes back with an unusual vehemence: "[. . .] you would have reasoned with me until I lost my faith, because faith and reason don't go together, and without faith I shall not be healed" (123).

For a few moments Dandekar feels nettled: his self – complacent scientific rationalism is somewhat shaken. Markandays's emphasis on the restless psychological crisis of Dandekar appears problematic whereas Sarojini is attributed with deeper confidence of what she is after. The beauty and potency of Sarojini's uncompromising faith adds to the beauty of earnest ritualistic sensibilities she acquires.

People say, half healing of a patient is done when one has faith on one's treatment. The psychological understanding of the concerned disease and the confidence that it is treated makes the disease half healed and the ultimate remedy lies on the patient's faith on his treatment.

Relying on tradition, rituals, Swamy or the God is inherent into our psyche not because we implant it from an alien world but it is the way we are taught to behave what Pierre Bourdieu calls 'habitus.' Rituals can have an evocative dimension that permits the prayer to forward his wishes and desires towards the God. Charles Tylor says: "In any theistic culture there will be some beliefs about god, but our sense of him and our relation to him will also be formed by modes of ritual, by what we pick up from the attitudes of pious and impious people and the like" (30). Rajam thus ensures Dandekar that an evil can be avoided simply by the ritual of burning camphor every day. As she says: "Be sure cousin, I shall burn camphor in your name every day until the evil is lifted from you, and I shall tell Sarojini to do likewise, she is a sensible, devout girl" (150).

Belief in God, faith in ritualistic sensibilities and spiritual anchorage are the characteristics features of Oriental culture. A form of alternative modernity as advocated by Charles Tylor essentially assume the essence these cultural explanations and the acultural understanding alone cannot fulfill the demands of modernity. He says, "exclusive reliance on an acultural theory alone locks us into an ethnocentric

prison” (119). It becomes lop sided explanation of modernity. Thus, this research calls upon the amalgamation of both cultural and acultural understanding for achieving full gamut of alternative modernities.

Behind the façade of rational analysis, there lurks a deeper truth – a truth that remains intractable to any logical reasoning. This transcendental view of experience dawns upon Dandekar when he himself visits the Swamy. In his presence, time comes to a stop, all questionings and misgivings are suspended: all activities are petrified. Pursued by his acute sense of guilt, he’s driven twice towards the Swamy. Dandekar, in his first visit itself had gravitated into a new sphere of influence by the swamy. Now he realizes the illusion of all material possessions; he who had come to scoff, remained to pray:

The Swamy was not looking at him, he did not seem to have to look at anything to do anything, he was simply there. Dandekar sat down, glancing covertly at the thin face, the weather-worn skin, the calm, deep-set eyes. After a while he forgot even those externals, aware only of a quiet that seeped into him, a stillness in which he seemed to float, detached from every care, warm and serene like a child in the womb.
(122-23)

And then the Swamy’s prophetic words ring out, with a compelling urgency: “One is not rich until one has nothing left to give away” (123). The ancient spiritual emphasis on self-abnegation is reiterated. But as soon as Dandekar moves away from the holy presence, back into the banalities of the humdrum existence, doubt and negation reassert themselves, and a vacuity grips his soul. He even implores Mr. Chari, his executive head to have the Swamy turned out of town. But when the faith healer is gone, he again realizes how his disciples particularly his wife, has been

deprived of their only spiritual anchorage. His search for broader moral and ethical appeal grows and he's driven towards the belief in an ideal spirituality that transcends the physical and the empirical and is realized only through individual intuition.

Dandekar himself is ready to accept that the world of the Swamy is not an ordinary one when he says, "it will make no difference to him – his reality is not ours, to him his surrounding does not matter" (145).

The humdrums of so called modern life have complicated lifestyle with technological overload and complex reasoning apart from the advantage one exploits. Peace becomes a long lost term and thus alternative modernity seeks a space at the Zone of spirit for spiritual tranquility. Human ills have been increased through several neurotical problems. Shiv K. Kumar on this line asserts:

Beyond the ramification of reason, the hall mark of modernity, lies those in definable zones of the spirit where along abides peace. If technological advancement has ushered in only frustrations and neurosis, faith can cure all human ills. The world is indeed too much with us and little do we realize that there is also a divine spirit. (513)

A salient problem of modern Indian life has been the process of urbanization, its price – the pain and travail it brings in the wake of what too often turns out to be the mirage of a better life, the gradual loss of innocence and dignity, the slow but certain erosion of old values and decencies one had clung to in the past. The loneliness, the loss of communication, the feeling of alienation which pervasively afflicts modern city dwellers, are the ills of western modernity models that pervades a sense of hopelessness and futility. At such situations, individuals shelter to spiritualistic umbrella where one can find peace, tranquility and calmness.

It reflects on Dandekar's attitude when he ultimately realizes that Sarojini is not only his wife and his children's mother but also a source of 'spiritual ingrowing' into him. The novelist in the same vein continues:

He wanted her back, not merely because he desired her, or to care for the children, or to keep house as she had once done, nor even because without her his world was unpeopled – no; but because above the sum of all these parts was something else, a spiritual ingrowing which made it impossible for him to be whole so long as any part of her was missing. (151-152)

Dandekar lately realizes that he was taking away from Sarojini, the support she relied on and the force from which she drew strength. Thus, he silently says to her, "forgive me." This apology, the realization of his spiritual ingrowing and the abhorred feelings of Dandekar, reflects how powerful and self-satisfactory is the native culture in contrast to the restless psychological crisis Dandekar previously possessed. After the news of Sarojini's well being his happiness knows no bound. Markandaya writes:

Uncertain where to go, he yet began to walk, in a vague hope that the sense of disorientation would lift. Strength had returned to his limbs: he watched his legs swinging his torso along without any direction from him other than the avoidance of obstacles. He did not know where they were taking him, he did not care, until, aghast, he realized he was outside the whitewashed house in the narrow street. (176)

Dandekar was physically rested but psychologically lost. His inner self in absence of his conscious mind took him to the Swamy's whitewashed house because somewhere inside he felt the need to see the Swamy or probably thank him.

As a matter of fact, the Swamy has brought much more transformation in Dandekar's attitude. He already has some inclination towards the Swamy. To transform a man who is completely antagonistic to rituals and religious beliefs reflects the Swamy's genuine power. The truth becomes more evident when the Swamy leaves the town. Dandekar by now confesses that his wife is a part of him now and without her he's not whole whom once he did not think twice to accuse her as a whore. He says: "Just for a little fruit like a dutiful housewife. Like a loving wife. Like a thrifty whore" (70). Such disastrous comment is a result of his jolted mental condition out of suspicious mentality.

The Confluence of Divergent Thoughts

Markandaya endeavours to portray her characters as individuals growing into themselves, unfolding the delicate process of their being and becoming. Her major characters, Sarojini and Dandekar possess intense sense of love and belongingness towards each other though they are portrayed on a confrontational setting. The beauty and potency of their marital bliss get its way when they discover that lop sided extremist argument would not count but a reconciling attitude would work the best. A part of thought/society is completely insensitive to the degradation of an overwhelmingly vast part of native Indian cultural history and rituals on the Indian soil. The Indian society has yet to throw up true selves who can map out the entire injustice of the system and suggest an alternative to the morass in which we find ourselves. *A Silence of Desire* is pervaded by this pain of misunderstanding. Markandaya's major theme, the cultural clash of the two modes of life, the western and the oriental reflects the consequent actuation of the painful process of modernization.

A Silence of Desire probes the world of spirit. The clash between spiritual faith and scientific reason is intertwined with the conflict between tradition and modernity. This conflict is dramatized through the interplay of central characters, Dandekar and Sarojini, who share the proverbial conjugal bliss without really having any interactions at other level, intellectual or spiritual. The family happiness is shattered when Dandekar suspects that Sarojini is harboring a secret, probably an extramarital affair. Minor happenings confirm his suspicion and lead to a confrontation and an accusation of infidelity. Hurt and insulted, Sarojini tells him the truth. She has been visiting a swami in hopes of being healed of a malignant growth in her womb. Lacking belief in faith healing Dandekar wants his wife to go to the hospital.

Markandaya's major characters are seeking change in their mode of thought and the institutional behavior. They seek change means they desire to go modern. Every change necessarily does not lead to modernity but under the impact of modernity as Gaonkar says "all societies will undergo certain changes in both outlook and institutional arrangement." Both the major characters', Dandekar and Sarojini's, thoughts are corresponded by what they thought to be oppositional until the reconciliation. "She learnt acceptance from him" (173) and he was indebted to the swamy. Dandekar realizes that his means was incorrect to achieve a justifiable goal. "At that moment, if it had been in Dandekar's power to bring the Swamy back, he would have done it" (173). It is amazing to know how Sarojini learnt acceptance from the Swamy and how both stubborn heads melted down into liberal individuals. The novelist further dramatizes:

Dandekar said wretchedly.

'And you?'

'I? What about me?'

‘What will you do?’

‘Nothing. What should I do? I formed an attachment, it is broken, that is all. One must accept it [. . .] It would be sinful to batter oneself to pieces because one refuses to recognize that another’s life is his own. If the Swamy chooses to go it was his decision. One must accept it in good heart.’ (173)

Markandaya’s clashful setting demonstrates the evils of so called modernization through the declining psychological crisis of Dandekar and the charismatic ensuring of faith and reasoning on the part of Sarojini. Sarojini and Dandekar have come near not only to exchange their words but also their heart in order to respect each other’s attitude through communication. The confluence of divergent views creates a ground for the protagonists to come near to term with each other for a meaningful existence of life.

It was not much necessary for Markandaya to transform Dandekar as much as it was to change Sarojini. She could have taken Sarojini to the hospital bed but the indebted feelings of Dandekar towards the Swamy was optional. However, she finds both the reconciling factors equally significant. Markandaya raises awareness about India and also teaches others about a culture that may be largely unfamiliar. She brings to light the complications of post-colonial and traditional Indian social hierarchy as well as the implications prevalent within both the systems.

Sarojini reverences the Tulsi plant as embodying the divine spirit not only as a result of her self-explanation but because her socialization is an oriental one and “in many societies, boundaries are zones of danger requiring special ritual maintenance,” as Appadurai asserts. An attempt to redraw or escape these boundaries results in the exclusion of individuals not only from the ritualistic paradigm but also from the

psychology of spiritual anchorage. A social order is communicated in such societies through religious anchorage that shapes people's daily life as a social process.

Sarojini's culture is thus a hook to connect her beliefs and thoughts with her actions. This entails the recognitions of her struggle to sustaining this anchor, and establishing an identity on the spiritual ground. Huntington's 'Clash of Civilization' is an extended overview of Markandaya's idea of cultural conflicts, where she has minimized the broader form of conflicts to familial sphere of individual psyche. Huntington justifiably says, "the end of Cold war has not ended conflict but has rather given rise to new identities rooted in culture and to new patterns of conflict among groups from different cultures which at the broadest level are civilizations. (130)" Dandekar and Sarojini are representative of these broad cultural milieus where they react on the insistence of their varying thoughts. This results in conflict that has gripped Markandaya's characters. However, their cultural roots being common, encourages cooperation and thus amalgamation is possible.

The playful element of the East-West encounter more perceptible in Markandaya's novel is beautifully brought out by showing conflict among individuals of varying thoughts. The result is often misunderstanding and mutual incomprehension but not unbridgeably as shown by the warm relationship which grows between Sarojini and Dandekar. To cite one of the examples of such situations which develop when Dandekar is back home after the good news of his wife's recovery: "He smiled a little. He would go and meet them with the good news about the mother." The last line of the novel becomes the beginning of the family's budding happiness.

Most of the characters now bow to the winds of change, heralding the 'acceptance of Sarojini' and 'indebted feelings of Dandekar' as a great landmark of

progress. These characters are caught up in the maelstrom of sanguine struggle. Their struggle reflects an unbridgeable widening gap embodying tradition and change until the last half of the novel. Dandekar rides roughshod over all inhibitions Sarojini possesses. He goes on long expeditions with his doubt, fear and dilemma in utter disregard of decorum and propriety. He even implores Mr Chari, his executive head, to have the Swamy turned out of town. But when the faith healer is gone he again realizes how his wife and all other followers have been derived of their only spiritual anchorage.

Markandaya reflects a form of modernity achieved from the cultural mediation and the amalgamation of both tradition and modernity. Modernity at India is not the same as that of the other parts of the globe rather is constituted of an identity that is negotiated and mediated by nation state between the local and the global flows. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar on this regard makes modernity more comprehensible when he says: "Everywhere, at every national/cultural site, modernity is not one but many; modernity is not new, but old and familiar, modernity is incomplete and necessarily so" (18). It would be impossible to define modernity precisely. Our assumptions about time, space, people, truths, myths, facts and superstition along with a number of momentous shifts in attitude and the historical processes should be observed. Accordingly Markandaya's text makes loud, a form of modernity from a third world location that is almost choicelessly globalized.

Moreover, this study asserts a separate form of modern discourse that accentuates the eastern perspective of gaining strength through spiritualism and further deconstructs the positivist affirmation of the west as the sole source of treatment. Faith consists of potency and beauty among the eastern values as much as science and reason does in the mainstream western paradigm of societal

modernization. The strength of faith Sarojini acquires is inevitable for the successful treatment of the malignant growth in her womb. On contextualizing the broad conflict of the eastern beliefs and western mode of thought in a narrowed frame of familial relationship, the writer unmasks the subtle impressions such conflicts leave upon smaller units of social life.

New Hybrid Identities: A Conclusion

This research critically examines the conflict between Eastern values and Western perspective within a familial context. The cultural differences individuals acquire (being the member of same family), the role of nation state on mediating between the global and the local cultural traits and the ultimate resolution to these differences become Markandaya's landmark ideas in the novel. She has done justice to it probably because she's familiar with the Eastern tradition by birth and the western ideas by profession and maturity. Her own experience is filtered through the consciousness of her fictional characters.

A Silence of Desire (1960) deals with the problems faced by the middle class protagonists, Sarojini and Dandekar due to their differing belief and attitude. Sarojini is the representative of traditional roots who worship Tulsi as God and also decides her own way of treatment to her serious ailment that demands science and equipments. Dandekar, her husband on the other hand is an urban-middle class, western influenced individual who considers Tulsi merely as a plant. Markandaya maintains a stance that pulls both the far-fetched attributes and hence a hybrid identity is formed within the modern-Indian-middle class family. Sarojini's readiness to go to the hospital and Dandekar's changing mind towards the swamy represent their action as a step forward to negotiation and compromise.

Their stance however, is not independent. India as a nation state mediates between the local and the global culture. This cultural mediation results in the formation of an amalgamated hybrid identity that the characters in the novel cannot escape. The resolution was inevitable because neither could Sarojini remain unaffected by ultra modern technological global flows nor could Dandekar completely resist his native anchorage to spiritualistic sensibility. The novelist provides ample

spaces in valorizing the traditional roots and at the same time, elucidates the significance of science and reason. Modernity within a third world location is different from the main line European Enlightenment modernity. It is shaped by both local and global but with a mediated form. It can be seen that Markandaya herself is conscious of forming a negotiated identity of her characters when she creates a point of compromise and brings together both the values represented by traditional Sarojini and Modern Dandekar.

The psychological adjustment of the urban-middleclass family paves a way to exploring newness in practices. The assimilation of a long established tradition under the impact of modernity brings into light the necessity of Sarojini's reorientation. The characters of Dandekar and Sarojini are emblematic of Markandaya's vision of reconciling the two worlds.

Other characters such as Dandekar's colleagues and Sarojini's cousin also consist of varying thoughts and attitudes. But their conversation reflects that they too cannot escape the overwhelming global cultural flows. Mahadevan is a strong adherent of western films and Joseph believes in free love. The typicality of these characters is maintained by characterizing them as real life characters speaking here and now, the challenges one has to face amidst multiple choices.

Markandaya endeavours to portray her characters as growing into themselves. She is able to achieve the balance between individual's psychological situation and the socio-political predicaments. *A Silence of Desire* touches on several important social phenomena: the importance of traditional cultural practices, people's reluctance to change, inevitable resolution of cultural differences and an impact of global cultural flows into the local culture. This is a tale of indomitable human spirit that learns to compromise and has a willingness to make things work better. On this

process, Markandaya had exposed the constituents of a middle class Indian modernity as an admixture of tradition and modernity at equal parts.

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