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Editor's Note

Literary Studies, an annual publication of the Literary Association of Nepal (LAN), is a peer-reviewed journal of language, literature, and culture. Founded in 1981, the Association has been conducting workshops, performances, seminars, and conferences and delivering lectures regularly in addition to publishing the Journal. This edition of *Literary Studies* (35th Volume) includes papers from India, China, and Egypt. Of the 14 authors, eleven are from Nepal; one from India, one from China, and one author is from Egypt. The papers cover various aspects of life, literature, and pedagogy. Right from its inception of LAN, Prof. Shreedhar Prasad Lohani has always been kind in providing support for its publication. The Editorial team express their thankfulness to Professors Amma Raj Joshi, Anand Sharma, Anirudra Thapa, Jiblal Sapkota, Phanindra Upadhyaya, and Druva Karki for contributing to the team of reviewers. Their support has made it possible to bring this issue up on time. Similarly, Ekta Books, Kathmandu, deserves special thanks for materializing this project into this form. Once again, the Editorial Board welcomes all constructive observations, relevant suggestions, and comments to enhance the quality of the Journal in the Volumes to come.

Prof. Ram Chandra Paudel, PhD
Editor-in-Chief

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Coming of Age : Gurung Women (Mustang, Nepal) and Ute Women (Colorado, USA)

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Abstract

Gurung women of Mustang, Nepal, and Ute women of Colorado, USA, are fascinating people and subjects. They have upheld matriarchy in the predominantly patriarchal world. Their free, symphonic life presents a model for other women. The two tribal womenfolk living in two different poles show keen relations regarding many customs and rituals as well as in displaying women power. It is an interesting and meaningful study to compare the societies of these two tribal womenfolk and trace their relationship with one another. They may have been distantly related to each other in their origin as such studies imply about them.

Keywords: Gurung and Ute women, matriarchy, menses, padonomy, puberty rite, polyandry

Background

Gurung women of Mustang, Nepal, and Ute women of Colorado, USA, are fascinating people and subjects. They have upheld matriarchy in the predominantly patriarchal world. Their free, symphonic life presents a model for other women. However, few people know about them as there is little substantial work done about them, and their kinship, and menstrual taboos and marriage customs that I took as my Fulbright project in 2018. I was short-listed and interviewed but not selected. Still the concept and project are pertinent forever. The reason is, first, authors describe about Gurungs in general, and mostly those belonging to Pokhara and other accessible places of Nepal. Second, there are some random writings about the Gurungsenis of Mustang but there are scant materials about the puberty rites and feelings and power of these women during their menses and marriages. Likewise, few writers have treated Ute women and their rites extensively. They concentrate more on the Utes beyond the Great Basin of Colorado, Denver. Moreover, the anthropological study of kinship in Nepal as a scientific subject is very limited.

Nepal is a multiethnic country. Every community of people has their own kinship features. The academia has not been able to cover all of them. The research proposed to focus on how these two indigenous nationalities separated in time and place show striking kinship affinities with one another. It aimed to create a comparative course plan for working anthropologists and other multiple disciplinarians. It also aimed to develop a working bibliography, and devise suitable artifacts and pedagogical matters and documentaries for teaching about them at different levels. The detailed findings might be used for better understanding the issues and uplifting other women elsewhere, who mostly live alienated and discriminated. Above all, it will make the Governments of Nepal and the USA and concerned agencies and organizations (especially those working in the fields of gender, ethnicities, and social uplifting) accountable towards mass awakening and forming core groups to address any such anomalies.

Objectives

The present study tries to achieve following goals:

1. To acquaint the students-readers with theory and practice of comparative anthropology;
2. To enable them to understand the similarities and differences between the customs and conceptions that prevail among the two women folks of two different countries and continents.
3. To help them to apply suitable research methodologies to form groups and focus groups, hold interviews with the target groups and concerned faculty and experts, analyze data and findings, and write reports thereof.
4. To publish the findings for teaching and learning, and for arousing global awareness on the issues and creating an egalitarian and equitable society.
5. To use the findings (mainly anthropological ones) to make the course interdisciplinary and “learner-centered.”

Methodology

The project has proposed to follow a participatory and observatory qualitative research method in order to help the students to form and work with a focus group, concentrating on the marriage customs and menstrual myths regarding Gurungsenis and Ute women. Together they can study Gurungseni artifacts. In USA, they can visit Colorado ranches, observe and interview the Ute women, and collect information about these issues now and then, and how they and their communities regard these. They can also explore relevant materials through libraries and archives notable universities like California State University-Northridge (CSU-N), in particular and the greater Los Angeles, in general.

Significance

The research findings can help empower these and other tribal women that suffer alienation and discrimination due to their body and odor besides color, race, sex, ethnicity, and origin. These can be included in the curricula of language, literature, sociology, anthropology, and gender studies of Nepalese universities. These will broaden our perspective about kinship and women power.

In Nepal, this will upgrade women literacy, especially about their rights and responsibilities. It will also enhance critical, liberal pedagogy focusing on gender and ethnicity as Freire and Darder respectively propounded. For Freire labor lurks in liberation more so that of the oppressed (31), even more so that of the oppressed women. But it is worth—it gives birth to a new thought, new concept, and “new woman.”

I did my PhD dissertation as a socio-anthropological research. Earlier, I studied Critical Pedagogy at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), USA. I also did library and archival search at American Studies and Research Centre (ASRC), Hyderabad, India. I also visited Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2017-18 for Sabbatical study on “Diasporic Nepalese Children.” All these enthused me to pursue the project, and I wish someone took this up, and upgraded it. For, this will help women and others to launch programs of teaching about puberty, sanitation, and hygiene and removing any marital anomalies. The courses will highlight the women power they gain through their independent relations and decisions and through defying unscientific taboos of their periods. The findings will further broaden the researcher’s pedagogy and perspective and research about other women and marginalized groups that I myself belong to.

The inter-university exchange, if feasible, in Nepal and USA, and the visits of the Fulbright scholars will shift patriarchal pedagogy to a matriarchal one. Personally, it will prepare the researcher for better student counseling, making documentaries and translating and subtitling related documentaries for global audience, particularly females. For that, they can work with the related departments of universities, governments, and international organizations. Socially, it will effect racial harmony by uplifting multiple ethnicities of Nepal, and eliminating the said taboos and malpractices, and other male domination. Economically and ecologically, it will flourish “padonomy,” enabling women to use their muscles round the clock and year without polluting themselves and surroundings, and earn their own bread, without any hatred and hesitation. Specifically, it will liberate women and make them responsible and active towards family, nature, and kinship. Indeed, it will mainstream them and their study by establishing a two-way “vagina discourse.” For, women, like men, have the same blood, body, and brain everywhere. Anything that happens to a woman anywhere affects her “sisters” everywhere. Treating these two women tribes will benefit Nepal and USA in particular, and the world in general.

Evaluation and Dissemination

The project/research will lead learners and educators to observe things afresh. They will learn about these women’s lifestyle, stories, customs, and rituals. They will talk with their kin and community about how things were in the past, how they changed, and where they are moving. They will also pick up suggestions and measures to improve their conditions. Back home, they will relate the Ute story and encourage the Gurungsenis to relate similar stories, which they can transcribe in English for the Ute. These will enlighten other marginalized women about health and hygiene, focusing on natural menstrual cycle, using or making and disposing of hygienic sanitary pads, and avoiding any patriarchal taboos and customs. They can make pictures, posters, and pamphlets to educate the grassroots to fight against social malpractices like early and multiple

marriage, forced marriage, dowry, family feud, and land and property division. They can motivate them to hold all the domestic and social activities freely and confidently.

Rationale

1. The researcher must visit US to make the research foolproof. There they can observe the Ute women in the neighborhood of Los Angeles, and acquaint their freshers and faculty about the similar issues in Nepal and elsewhere.
2. California State University-Northridge (CSU-N), for example, is the right place to work with if one could access a qualified mentor, especially an Asian or Asian-American. They know both East and West. They can communicate freely about the nitty-gritty of the two different linguistic and ethnic groups. Moreover, their Department and university library and inter-university library facility will provide the researcher enough space to work, and materials and access to valuable archives to conduct the research. Its interdisciplinary and cross-cultural atmosphere, several specialists and research methods plus connectivity with the Departments of Anthropology and Native Americans will help the researcher put the theory into practice.
3. The vibrant cultural, intellectual, and interactive life of the University will help disseminate the research findings through guest lectures truly “productively.” The researcher can also interact with other Asian/Nepalese faculty and scholars, and “fit” cross-culturally and academically in the vein of René Descarte, “I blend, therefore I am.”
4. The research will also enrich the researcher’s host institution and other visiting Fulbrighters with the “new knowledge.” This collective will inform the University faculty about the state of Mustangi Gurungsenis and their affinity with the Ute women. Thus, it will bridge a gap in the isolated studies of the respective native scholars, widen the academic spectrum on both sides, and complete the picture frame that fits both.

Research Statement

The proposed research should focus on menstrual taboos and matrimonial customs of Gurung women (Mustang, Nepal) and Ute women (Colorado, USA). Both defy common menstrual taboos and marital systems, and display unique women power in their kinship. Kinship makes for the evolution of father-mother relationships along blood and breast lines. The relationship runs along linear and collateral lines. A child is thus related with the father, cousins, aunts, and uncles, and the kin of both father and mother. Kinship also considers gender subversion through eco-feminism, Neo-Paganism, and Goddess movement (Carsten 2018), specifically among Gurung women and Ute women.

Pussy, Pad, and Power of Gurungsenis

Gurungsenis bear a Sino *saino* (Tibetan tie). They exhibit a “stronger sex” in marriage, and menstruation stands for their maturity or “coming of age.” They love their labia and lunacy. They take puberty as natural. So they avoid *chhaupadi* (isolation) in menses. For instance, in Lower Mustang, Nepali adolescent girls like Kunsang Gurung freely talk about menses, which is normally a taboo in Nepali society. They care for their

pussy and use pads for purgation unlike other tribal and rural women, who do not take any such protective measures and, in fact, they are isolated as untouchables. They believe these endow women power upon them. Some Gurungsenis even enter monasteries and consult doctors for menstrual cramps. They regard menstrual blood as natural as pisses and feces. At Muktinath temple, according to Hare-Grogg (2018: 19-25), one even manages *puja* as a nun during her period.

Reversed Polyandry

Gurungsenis marry siblings and save any partition of family and land. These Tamus live with the in-laws and under *Ama Samuha* (Elderly Women's Organization) in Himalayas away from others and spouses that bake bread in the barracks of soldiers (as Gurkhas) or diasporas (as *lahures*). They freely decide domestic and other matters. Long before the promulgation of the new Civil Code (August 17, 2018) which made mandatory the minimum age of twenty-one years for marriage, they married among the clans at twenty through *magi* (arrangement) or *bhagi* (elopement). Today they select partner(s) or first cousins from *char*, *nau*, or *soraha jats* (clan of four, nine, or sixteen groups). They may be father's sister's son/s (FZS) or mother's brother's son/s (MBS). Those without a brother bring in their spouses as *gharjwains* (resident sons-in-law) to live with their parents. But only years later do they enter the groom's lineage when her heavily gifted father passes it on to her. But they can divorce and claim collateral or "bride wealth" when the spouses are incompatible and sterile, disown family, or bring (though rarely) concubines. The single Gurungsenis can even inherit parental property in accordance with the recent law enforced by the Republic Government of Nepal though it is against the Gurung customs.

Women Worship

The Gurungsenis make premarital affairs in now somewhat anachronistic *rodighar* (youth club) for supposed promiscuity therein. Chene, however, claims that it promotes certain "core values and forms" (June 1996: 116). Married either way, the Gurungsenis in their matriarchal society manage the household and farming, children's education, and property single-handedly and almost "patriarchally." In 2008, with the declaration of federalism in the country, Mustang kingship was rendered obsolete. But these women have retained their own "queenship," and booze themselves liberally on the abundant apple orchards in Mustang. Meanwhile, they maintain their integrity and tribal culture.

Ute's Puberty Rite

The Ute women (Colorado), though dependent on their men folks, are physically strong, and fight, according to Allen, the oppositions while carrying their colonized kinship or "bicultural bind" (34). These "Nu Ci" observe the first menses by avoiding some activities and food like deer meat so as not to spoil their spouses' kill (*Ute Encyclopedia*, 1996). The men, on the other hand, hunt deer to prove their puberty but do not eat it, and observe their women folks' puberty rites. According to Allen, "the un-Indian, non-Indian" critics see Indians segregating and preventing unclean, menstruating women from festivities, and confining them to a set space (32). They regard Ute as "sick, cursed, sinful, and weak." However, Indians trust in their own "occult power . . . innately the blood-given power to kill—with a glance, with a step, or with a judicious mixing

of menstrual blood into somebody's soup" (33-34). They believe their maturity gained through menses and hormonal growth helped God to bear Christ out of a woman. It also enabled Eve to capsize Eden, and can enable modern *mujeres*, particularly Ute, to re-right it (Sojourner Truth, qtd. in Allen, p. 33).

Ute Matrimony

Ute live in the Great Basin with maternal kinsfolk. They share work and shamanistic rituals with men. They marry beyond twelve bands through arrangement and indulge in premarital intercourse at their home. Spouses are mostly monogamous and loyal. While alive, women make relations, unlike Gurungsenis, with their brothers-in-law. On death or sterility, their sisters marry the widower brother-in-law. Ute, however, seek divorce if men prove barren, disloyal, and disharmonious, and control children and property under single, independent families. When widowed, they share sheer springs, eagle aeries, and garden plots as most personal belongings of the deceased are burnt (*Ute Encyclopedia*). When grown, these "Spiderwomen" command respect, and help otros ángeles to mature. They also join the Bear Dance to increase their hunting and virility. Besides, they instill the same spirit in the now "grown-up" girls. They also participate in the Sun Dance for individuals or community (barrio). These Red Hoods, thus, retain their native or Uterine "redhood," orality, and posterity.

Imperatives

The two tribal womenfolk living in two different poles show keen relations regarding many customs and rituals as well as in displaying women power. It will be an interesting and meaningful study to compare the societies of these two tribal womenfolk and trace their relationship with one another. Maybe in the distant pasts they had a common lineage and ancestry. They display a striking similarity in their indigenous look and language, food, and dress, headdress and hair-do (plaits). They wear beads garments and rings, and pierce ears and noses for that purpose. They drink and dance liberally. They also worship nature, and perform circumambulation and shamanic rites. Besides, they till farm and ranch sheep and other cattle, and preserve land through collective or their sole proprietorship. All these affect an ilk of Paleolithic bondage that probably owes to the easy migration and intermingling of the Asian, mostly Mongloid, and American hunters and gatherers sometime in the dim past.

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Mo Yan's Symbolism and Literary Root-seeking

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Abstract

Mo Yan is the first Chinese writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. After he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in October 2012, he immediately drew the attention of the world. In the past nine years, there have been many theoretical articles on Mo Yan's creative style and narrative art, but a very few articles on Mo Yan's root-seeking characteristics from the perspective of symbolism. This paper attempts to explore the ways Mo Yan searches for his roots through his writings.

Keywords: Mo Yan, symbolism, literary root-seeking, local culture

Symbol is a widely used concept, in human life, symbol is everywhere, it involves literature, arts, aesthetics, theology, psychology, logic, linguistics, semiotics and many other disciplines related to human thinking. The word symbol originated from the ancient Greek word "sumbolon", which originally referred to a piece of wood or pottery divided into two halves, each holding one to ensure mutual friendship. Later, when it entered the religious field, it became a mysterious thing to communicate the relationship between man and God. The concept of symbol has always been vague, and symbol has different connotations in different fields. In the field of semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce, the founder of semiotics, believes that symbol is an artificial symbol, and the relationship between its object is artificial or conventional (qtd in Liszka 6). In the field of anthropology, Victor Witter Turner and other anthropologists believe that symbols are condensed forms of meaning, through which people adjust themselves to the external world and its changes (26). In the field of philosophy, Kant thinks that symbol is the intuitive representation way for people to enter the invisible world in the process of aesthetic appreciation (qtd. in Kuehn 30) while Hegel says that symbol is first of all a sign (qtd. in Singer 97). In the field of aesthetics Susanne K. Langer interprets art form

as a symbol feelings (66). In the field of literature, René Wellek said in his book *Literary Theory*, the more appropriate meaning of this term should be that thing A implies thing B, but thing A itself, as a means of expression, also requires full attention (203). Obviously, the concept of symbol is developing. Simply speaking, it is to express or imply a certain concept, philosophy or emotion with a specific image, and when applied to creation, it is an artistic expression technique of expressing emotions by means of metaphor.

In China, Chen Duxiu, a professor of Peking University, was the first to mention symbolism, but he did not explicitly use the concept of symbolism, but only mentioned some symbolist dramatists. Symbolism has been translated as representationalism until 1919, when it was officially translated as symbolism. In fact, symbolism has a tremendous and profound impact on Chinese literature, and promotes the emergence and development of Chinese symbolism literature. During the May 4th Movement and the mid-1980s, a large number of symbolic narrative theories and works of Western fiction were translated into China. The two great movements of Western learning spreading to the East promoted the emergence and development of Chinese symbolic narrative novels. As one of the most influential schools in western modernist literature, symbolism and symbol have certain inheritance, but they are quite different in essence. Symbolism, as a long-established technique, is often active in various styles of different writers in different periods, and coexists with human art. Symbolism is only a literary school or literary trend of thought in a certain period of time, which rose in France in the 1880s and 1890s, and then spread to all countries in the world in the 1920s and 1930s, becoming a global literary trend of thought. In a word, compared with symbol, symbolism is a relatively small concept, often included in the symbolic system, and a special form of expression in the development of symbolic art. It mainly shows the connotation of the work, the development of things and the truth of the author's heart through symbols. Generally speaking, symbolism first rose in the field of poetry. Baudelaire, the French "devil" poet, is the basic basis for the occurrence and development of symbolism. His work *Flowers of Evil* is the symbol of the formal rise of the Symbolist literary movement. *The Literary Declaration* published by Jean Morias, a young French poet, in the Paris newspaper *Figaro* in 1886 is regarded as the birth certificate of symbolism. He called the poets who despised realism and naturalism and tried to express their personal ideas symbolists. In fact, before the name of symbolism appeared, French poets such as Stephara Mallarmé, Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine created many symbolist poems and became the most famous symbolist poets after Baudelaire. In 1899, British poet Arthur Simmons published *Symbolism Literature Movement*, which introduced symbolism to Britain, and the influence of symbolism literature crossed national boundaries and spread to the whole world rapidly.

Then, why did symbolism come into being in literature? As a school, it has different backgrounds in society, economy, literature, art and culture. Symbolism opposes the strong sentiment of Romanticism, but inherits the introspective characteristics of Romanticism. Symbolists believe that the objective world is illusory and unknowable, only the subjective world is real, the objective is only the hints and symbols of the subjective spirit, and the world is "a symbolic forest". In other words, they deny the truth and describe the reality objectively, emphasize the expression of intuition and fantasy,

pay attention to subjectivity and introversion, and pursue the so-called highest truth in their hearts. Therefore, the most important feature of symbolism is the symbol and hint.

When it comes to the topic of symbolism, we need to clarify the two different concepts of symbolism as a means of expression and symbolism as a method of creation. As a method of expression, symbol has a long history in China. As early as 3000 years ago, the ancient Chinese ancestors had the idea of symbol, and in a large number of totem literature and art accompanied by religious color in the primitive period of China, symbolism expression methods had created very rich works. For example, the most representative dragon totem and phoenix totem in totem art are the symbols of the two tribal alliances. Later, because the dragon totem merged the phoenix totem, the dragon became the symbol of the pluralistic integration of the Chinese nation. The Yin, Yang and Eight Diagrams in *The Book of Changes* symbolize various phenomena and changes in nature, reflecting the traditional Chinese cosmology. There are still many such primitive symbolism, which cannot be elaborated here. Perhaps for this reason, Hegel once believed that symbolic art originated mainly in the East (qtd. in Singer 9). Zhou Zuoren also said that symbolism is a new trend in foreign countries, but also an old way in China (211). Generally speaking, the use of symbolism in Chinese poetry is the earliest and the most, from the earliest collection of poetry- *The Book of Songs*, “Bi Xing” has become a traditional method of poetry creation. But this does not mean that other literary styles are used less. For example, there are “precious jade”, “golden lock” and other symbols in a *Dream of Red Mansions*, and so on. This kind of primitive symbolism and classical symbolism works show that symbolism is not only the product of the West, but also the traditional method of Chinese literature. Then, how does Chinese symbolism change from an accidental and unconscious use to a conscious literary means? When will it become a literary trend of thought in China? What influence did symbolism have on Chinese writers? These problems involve the creation method of symbolism, which is juxtaposed with realism and romanticism.

Symbolism, as a category of creative methods of modern and contemporary literary theory, should be a concept introduced into China along with Western symbolism. Before and after the May Fourth Movement, there were articles introducing the works of the symbolists. From March 1920 to November 1921, *Young China* published seven articles written by Wu Weinan, Tian Han and Zhou Wu to introduce the Symbolists. Symbolism was always translated as representationalism until 1919, when Chen Qun published “a Glimpse of the Literary Trend of Thought in the Nineteenth Century in Europe” in the magazine *Construction*, calling the late nineteenth century the era of New Subjectivism (New Romanticism), Symbolism and Mysticism, and symbolism had a formal translation. After 1920, many important western symbolist writers and works were translated and introduced to China. For example, in 1907, Lu Xun translated the Russian symbolist writer Andreev's novels *Silence (Mo)* and *Hatred (Man)*; In December 1924, Xu Zhimo published the translation of Baudelaire's poem “Dead Body” in the third issue of *Yusi* magazine, and so on. After symbolism entered China, it attracted people's attention, and had a tremendous and profound impact on Chinese literature, including fiction, poetry, drama, prose and other aspects, and thus formed the Chinese symbolism literature.

What is the background of symbolism in Chinese literature? Since the rise of Enlightenment at the end of the 19th century, foreign literature, including modern symbolism, has been introduced in large numbers. The conception of Chinese literary creation was once deeply attracted by the broad sense of symbol, thus forming the phenomenon of broad symbolism. The formation of this phenomenon is closely related to the social background at that time and the writer's world outlook and artistic outlook. The darkness of society and the embarrassment of life around the May 4th Movement made Mao Dun, Lu Xun, Lao She, Guo Moruo and other pioneers of the New Culture Movement feel that they could use symbolism to expose the darkness and ugliness of Chinese society at that time and inspire people to strive for lofty revolutionary ideals. In this way, the flowers of revolutionary symbolism blossomed out. In terms of novels, Lu Xun's novels such as *Medicine (Yao)*, *Hometown (Guxiang)*, *Diary of a Madman (Kuangren Riji)*, *Changming Lantern (Changming Deng)*, *White Light (Baiguang)*, *Public Exposure (Shizhong)*, *Mending the Sky (Butian)*, etc.; Others, such as Mao Dun's *Poplar Praise (Baiyang Lizan)*, Lao She's *Cat City (Mao Cheng Ji)*, Shen Congwen's *Border Town (Bian Cheng)* and so on, all draw on the expressive techniques and skills of symbolism to varying degrees. In poetry, the use of symbolism is the most skilled. For example, Li Jinfa's *Light Rain (Wei Yu)*, Dai Wangshu's *Dream Seeker (Xun Meng Zhe)*, Guo Moruo's *Goddess (Nv Shen)* and *Phoenix Nirvana (Fenghuang Niepan)*, etc. In drama, Guo Moruo, Tian Han, Hong Shen, Tao Jingsun, Cao Yu and other dramatists also used symbolism drama skills, which made great contributions to the emergence and development of modern Chinese drama. However, the development trend of symbolism in China is practice first, then theory. According to the times, it can be divided into three stages: primitive symbolism, classical symbolism and modern symbolism. The emergence and development of modern Chinese literature is inseparable from the acceptance and transformation of Western symbolism literature and art by Chinese writers. Nevertheless, no one can deny that the emergence and development of Chinese symbolism literature is not only due to the leading role of Western literature and the new tendency of new writers, not only because they like to use symbols, but also because of the requirements of the times. In other words, it was the critical and expressive requirements of the May 4th Movement that determined the inevitable position of symbolism in the literary world of China at that time. The pioneers of the New Culture Movement deeply embodied the historical requirements of social criticism, ideological criticism and cultural criticism through literary forms, and skillfully and naturally integrated realism and symbolism. Their symbolism of the West is such a use for me, not a blind copy. Through the unique transformation of symbol, they make symbol thoroughly Chinese. In a word, Chinese symbolism has always shown strong national characteristics in its long history.

Mo Yan's literary works are full of symbolism. When it comes to the symbolism of Mo Yan's novels, we have to talk about the influence of Latin American magic realism on Mo Yan. When the Nobel Committee announced Mo Yan as the winner of the 2012 Nobel Prize in literature, it said that Mo Yan does a good job of blending magical realism with folk tales, history and contemporary society. The world in his creation is reminiscent of the fusion of Faulkner and Marquez's works, and at the same time, he who with hallucinatory realism merges folk tales, history and the contemporary.

Generally speaking, magic realism is a kind of modernism rooted in Latin America, which is formed and developed in Latin America and accompanied by the movement of searching for national identity in Latin America. Based on the cultural tradition of Latin America, it expands the meaning boundary of the surface language through the use of symbols, metaphors, hints, metonymy and other means of expression, and has a profound impact on the creative concepts and artistic method of Chinese writers, among which the magic realism works represented by Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* have the greatest impact. The so-called symbolic technique of magic realism refers to the addition of illusory, absurd and deformed elements on the basis of traditional symbolism, which enhances the uncertainty of symbols and the depicted symbolic entities, and weakens their own certainty, so the symbolic technique of Magic realism is less affected by the objective attributes of symbolic entities. It's a hyper-representational, hyper-realistic composite. Obviously, the symbol is the magic realism writer commonly used technique, in their writing, both in changes the reality into the fantasy and does not lose its truth the magic reality local righteousness creation basic principle, the symbol has realized the fusion with the national culture, thus complied with this time novel creation by the current objective social discourse to the illusory history and the cultural discourse development evolution. The reason why Latin American magic realism can be favored by root-seeking writers, especially Mo Yan, is that it combines the symbolic narrative of root-seeking fiction with magic realism.

As a famous writer of root-seeking school, Mo Yan is also deeply influenced by Latin American magic realism literature, and has developed into a magic realism writer combining Chinese and Western. He himself admits that Latin American magic realism literature had a great influence on his early creation: my novellas *Ball Lightning* and *Blonde Baby* all have traces of imitating magic realism. He added: "I was very surprised when I first read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1984. It turns out that novels can be written like this!! Mo Yan said, after that, I have been fighting with Marquez for more than ten years." *One Hundred Years of Solitude* not only let Mo Yan find his own artistic field, but also let him find his own artistic expression. While continuing the special structural mode and expressive perspective of magic realism, Mo Yan added allegorical symbolism to his writing. Symbolism is a commonly used writing technique in magic realism, and symbolism can be seen in most of Mo Yan's works.

Under the influence of Faulkner and Marquez's literary geography, Mo Yan created a local world full of life consciousness- Gaomi Northeast Township. More than 20 years of rural life experience has made Mo Yan have a unique and profound experience of rural life and peasant psychology. Most of his works are created around the background of his hometown, deeply rooted in the national soil of Gaomi Northeast Township, widely absorbing the vitality of folk culture, and narrating the joys and sorrows of Gaomi Township. Mo Yan turns Gaomi Northeast Township into a vibrant life world, and explores the original meaning of life through the ingenious use of symbolism in his novel creation. As early as in the *Red Sorghum Series (Hong Gaoliang Xilie)*, Mo Yan used a lot of symbolic techniques. "Red sorghum" is the symbol of the whole article, is the symbol of the Chinese people's strong vitality, sorghum wine, derived from the red sorghum, a symbol of Gaomi Northeast Township people's indomitable enterprising,

heroic and masculine Dionysian spirit. In Mo Yan's works, Hometown is a kind of imagination, a kind of boundless, not in the geographical sense but in the literary sense. Mo Yan uses myth, absurdity and fable to express the symbolism of Gaomi Northeast Township.

The first is the myth model. Mythological mode, with its complete and self-sufficient overall symbol, constitutes the narrative strategy of root-seeking novel, supports the symbolic narrative of the novel, and strengthens the symbolic art of the novel. In Mo Yan's works, the construction of mythological mode not only enhances the magic factors of the novel, enriches the symbolic implication of the novel, but also becomes the writer's creative style and characteristics. In the Red Sorghum Series, Mo Yan established a fantasy myth world by applying myth mode to his novels, and achieved the purpose of revealing the national character. The second is the absurd narrative. The main feature of magic realism is the extensive use of absurdity, deformation and fantasy elements. Absurdity is the concrete embodiment of mythological thinking in symbolic narrative, and the contrast and integration of absurdity and reality can increase the symbolic implication of the novel. Absurd narration is ubiquitous in Mo Yan's novels, which runs through almost all of Mo Yan's creative process. In *Ball Lightning (Qiu zhuang Shandian)*, *Thirteen Steps (Shisan Bu)*, *Mangrove (Hong Shulin)*, *Wild Mule (Ye Luozi)*, *Big Breasts and Wide Hips (Feng Ru Fei Tun)*, *Wine Country (Jiu Guo)*, *Forty-one Cannons (Sishiyi Pao)*, *White Cotton (Bai Mianhua)* and *Sandalwood Penalty (Tanxiang Xing)*, he carefully constructed an ugly and dirty absurd world by using a large number of absurd things. The third is the national fable. There is a close relationship between allegory and symbol. National fable is a strategy of symbolic narration in root-seeking novels. National fables originate from Jameson's third world national fables, the core of which is to express the perception of national survival with localized symbols and imagination. Mo Yan's text has multiple meanings, and national fable is one of the important connotations. Mo Yan combines symbolism with allegory, which makes local imagination become a kind of national allegory imagination, and also an allegory about national survival. In *Red Sorghum*, Mo Yan expresses his regret and recollection of the loss of the excellent part of the national spirit through the absurd and bizarre stories of my grandfather and my grandmother. *Fatigue of Life and Death (Shengsi Pilao)*, *Sandalwood Punishment, Frog (Wa)* and *Wine Country* all create national suffering, frustration and hope. The black boy image and the carrot image in *The Transparent Carrot (Touming de Hongluobo)* make the whole novel text like a poetic fable, and so on.

Mo Yan also takes women as the center to construct his literary paradise. The female images in Mo Yan's works are inextricably linked with symbolism, which is first attributed to Mo Yan's childhood experience and his gratitude to his mother. Mother is a symbol, a totem, a transcendence and an ideal in Mo Yan's works. In Mo Yan's novels, women are the metaphor and symbol of the pursuit of freedom and love. The Chrysanthemum Girl (Juzi Guniang) in *Transparent Carrot*, Dai Fenglian in *Red Sorghum*, Mother (Niang) in *Joy (Huanle)*, Shangguan Lushi in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, Sun Meiniang in *Sandalwood Penalty*, Women in *Women Embracing Flowers (Huaibao Xianhua de Nvren)*, Aunt (Gugu) in *Frog* and so on—these women fight in different forms and under the suppression of male culture. Even the variation of human

nature, only for their own survival opportunities and power. In Mo Yan's works, women are a symbol of vigorous vitality, she endured great pain, tenacious survival, become the true symbol of the Chinese nation. The female images created by Mo Yan contain endless symbolic meanings.

At the same time, Mo Yan is also a master of using color. His novels often use gorgeous color to create a strong sense of picture for readers in reading. Here in Mo Yan, color has been separated from the easy and elegant function of embellishment and decoration, and acts as the carrier and symbol of life's painful feelings. After contextualization, color generates new meanings and constructs the symbolism and allegory of language. Red is the most common color symbol in Mo Yan's novels. The carrot in *Transparent Carrot*, the red pony in *Song of Garlic Boltsin Heaven (Tiantang Suantaizhi Ge)*, the red satin in *Blonde Baby (Jinfa Yinger)* and the red rooster crown have become symbols of hope, strength, joy and life. The red color in *Red Sorghum* has become the background tone of the novel and the symbol of indomitable progress. The lush red sorghum in the novel symbolizes the vigorous primitive vitality.

In a word, symbol is a means of literary creation for writers to express some abstract concepts, thoughts and emotions with the help of concrete images according to the links between things. Symbolism makes the text have multiple interpretations, and leads the reader from the real world to the other side of the world, which is not divorced from reality, but also increases the meaning of the text. Mo Yan has been writing novels for a long time, with a large output of works and a changeable style of creation. We cannot analyze them with several unified laws and standards. Because each novel has its own unique side, it is a creative experiment of Mo Yan in the process of folk transformation. The writing techniques of Mo Yan's novels are changeable and varied, whether it is magic realism or symbolism or film montage editing techniques, its rich imagination space and wanton words can always be amazing.

Mo Yan has a far-reaching influence and inspiration on the development of contemporary Chinese literature. His representative works *Red Sorghum*, *Sandalwood Punishment*, *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, *Wine Country*, *Fatigue of Life and Death*, *Frog*, his maiden work *Rain on Spring Night (Chunye Yu Feifei)* and his famous work *Red Sorghum Family* are full of feelings of nostalgia and resentment, and are classified as root-seeking literature writers. In his literary creation over the past 20 years, Mo Yan has not only reflected the great changes of Chinese society, but also experienced the development and evolution of Chinese literature and even world literature, trying almost all styles, even in the fields of film, television and drama. He not only inherits and draws lessons from the writing technique of Chinese traditional culture, but also combines the Chinese native creative method with the world, and forms a unique Mo Yan Style novel paradigm in the composition of style such as expression technique, theme nature, structure type, language style and form format with his own excellent creation and unique style, which occupies an important position in the contemporary literary world at home and abroad.

As a cultural root-seeking movement and literary trend of thought, root-seeking literature took place around the 1980s. During this period, with the introduction of a large number of western modern cultural thoughts, including various philosophies, literary

theories and natural science trends, a wave of cultural root-seeking has risen in the Chinese literary arena. The upsurge of cultural root-seeking makes Chinese writers begin to excavate traditional consciousness and national cultural psychology. They mainly explore the relationship between literary roots and culture from the creation of poetry, fiction and prose, which is called root-seeking literature. It is particularly noteworthy that the development trend of root-seeking literature in that period was theory first, then practice. Based on this theory, the writers began to create, and the theorists called them root-seeking school. It is worth pointing out again that the emergence and development of root-seeking literature is not only due to the absorption of modern western culture, but also due to the requirements of the times. In other words, before 1985, the main trend of literary and artistic creation was to return to humanism. Trauma Literature, Reflective Literature and Reform Literature are all carried out around the political axis, and the emergence of root-seeking literature makes literature turn from paying attention to social politics to discovering the deep cultural psychological structure, which is an important symbol of literature's inward turn.

Root-seeking novel is the most important branch of root-seeking literature. In 1985, Han Shaogong, Acheng, Zheng Yi, Zheng Wanlong and Li Hangyu put forward the banner of root-seeking one after another, opposing the tendency of blindly pursuing the creation of Western modernist literature and advocating the root of literature in the rock strata of their own nation. At the same time, influenced by the cultural fever in academic circles, it aims to trace back to the origin of national culture, examine, analyze and inherit traditional culture, which is called root-seeking novel in literary history. This upsurge reached its peak in 1985-1988 under the background of the internal cultural fracture and the collision of external ideological trends. Generally speaking, an important significance of root-seeking literature in literary history is to promote the transformation of the artistic concept of fiction in that period. This transformation is mainly reflected in two aspects: first, the formation of cultural consciousness has changed the single political vision of modern Chinese literature; Secondly, the integration of romanticism and modernism in root-seeking literature breaks the single pattern of realism in novel creation, and innovates in language and style, metaphor and symbol, narrative mode and work structure, which shows the consciousness of literary creation.

In fact, the relationship between root-seeking and Mo Yan cannot be separated from symbolism. Generally speaking, foreign literature, including the introduction of a large number of modern symbolist works and theories, the symbolist tradition of Chinese fiction, and the inherent requirements of the development of fiction itself in the 1980s all constitute the local resources for the prosperity of symbolism in root-seeking fiction.

"During the May 4th Movement, Chinese writers translated and introduced a lot of Russian symbolic novelists, which inspired modern novelists to renew their style. Since the mid-1980s, with the great emancipation of the mind, the continuous translation and introduction of Western modernist literary trends, such as symbolism, expressionism, existentialism, stream of consciousness fiction, absurdity and black humor, and the success of Latin American magic-realist literature based on national cultural traditions in the world, Latin American magic-realist literature has become a great success. All these have strengthened the self-renewal consciousness of Chinese contemporary novelists in

their creative concepts and methods. In addition, the long tradition of Chinese classical symbolism and modern symbolism mentioned above, from a pure technique of expression to an independent creative method, also provides a good hotbed for the formation of the symbolism art of root-seeking fiction. Literature and art, including fiction, as a mirror reflecting social reality, should also develop in line with the political and economic changes of society. The changes at home and abroad have led to the transfer of the creative thinking center of root-seeking novel. In this transformation, the root-seeking writers further embarked on the road of exploration from the critical requirements and performance requirements of the May 4th era. They realized the historical requirements of social criticism, ideological criticism and cultural criticism of the May 4th Literature, and the political tendencies of scar literature, reflective literature and reform literature, all of which made Chinese literature intentionally or unintentionally neglect the deep connection with national culture in the process of development, criticizing bureaucratic local righteousness, privileges and exposing scars. But politics and revolution cannot solve the problem of human nature (Han Shaogong 120). Writers have realized that finding the root of their own national culture is the way for the development of Chinese literature. As Zheng Yi said in *Across the Cultural Fracture Zone (Kuayue Wenhua Duanlie Dai)*: “Whether a work is literature depends on whether it can enter the national culture. Cannot enter the national culture, again lively, is also a time, rely on, I am afraid or non-literary factors” (Zheng Yi 1985). Thus, the exchange and dialogue between culture and literature became an important trend in the development of contemporary Chinese literature at that time. In addition, the situation of realism in Chinese literature at that time seriously hampered the writer's creative thinking and enthusiasm. The creative techniques of the novel should be flexible and diverse. Based on this, in order to break the deadlock of Chinese literary creation thinking and techniques, and get rid of the one-way thinking mode in the past, the diversified development of literature has become a necessity at that time. Symbolism has become a new narrative way to realize the transfer and development in the creation of root-seeking novels.

The change of narrative discourse is the most prominent evolution of root-seeking novels. In the way of narration, a large number of symbols, metaphors, fables, magic and other expressive techniques are used to enrich and deepen the cultural connotation of the works, and then to achieve the integration of realism and modernism creative techniques. Based on the cultural tradition, the root-seeking writers integrate the absurdity, symbolism, stream of consciousness and existentialism of the western modernists, so that the novels convey profound national implications in an aesthetic way. They intentionally or unintentionally incorporate symbols to show the current situation of national survival and to think about the root of national culture and national spirit. In a sense, symbolism has become a particularly effective way of expression for root-seeking writers to show a stronger cultural consciousness. Root-seeking Novels fully applies the symbolic techniques of the development of Western modernist magic realism to its own creative practice, and expresses a certain depth of cultural thinking with various symbolic images. For example, in Han Shaogong's *Dad Dad Dad (Ba Ba Ba)*, a baby has become a symbol of Chinese feudal culture; In Zhang Chengzhi's *Northern River (Beifang de He)*, Northern River as a symbolic image, it is the symbol of the spirit of the whole

Chinese nation, and so on. Color symbols are also widely used in root-seeking works. For instance, the red color in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* is a symbol of tenacious progress; the white color in Zhaxidawa's *Tibet, Hidden Years (Xizang, Yinmi Suiyue)* is the symbol of the purity and sanctity of Tianshan Mountain and Holy Lake. In a word, inspired by Latin American magic realism literature, root-seeking writers use myths, fables and magic realism, which can embody symbolic thinking, to find the foundation of literature and the code of culture. In them, symbols have been explored and innovated.

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Performing for Social Justice: Efficacy of Political Theatre in Nepal and the Philippines

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Abstract

Theatre plays a vital role in the struggle for democracy, functioning as an alternative medium for presenting social problems “of and to” the people and proving its efficacy as a powerful creative force in unravelling the hidden truths of repressive regimes. This article examines and compares the role of theatre in a Nepali and Filipino context, in particular its deployment in response to repressive regimes, and argues that theatre is both adaptable and efficacious as a tool for social and political justice. Although never colonised, Nepal was under the control of the Rana Oligarchy for over one hundred years (1846-1951). This period of oligarchical rule was followed by three decades of totalitarianism under King Mahendra’s party-less Panchayat system (1960-1990). Despite and because of this climate of political brutality and oppression, theatre and performance traditions endured. These traditions made “the invisible visible,” serving to awaken the population to their democratic rights. In the Philippines, theatre and performance traditions have been used to push back against centuries of foreign influence. More recently, these traditions have been deployed in response to the authoritarian rule of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, in particular his aggressive war on drugs. As this study shows, theatre has been a powerful means to fight against autocratic polity and restoration of democracy in Nepal and colonial forces as well as dictatorship in the Philippines.

Keywords: Nepali theatre, social change, call for democracy, Philippino theatre

Politics in Theatre

When, in different geo-cultural settings, regimes turn repressive and social discrimination in different forms and manifestations- gender, sexuality, race, class, colour, caste, region, religion, nationality etc. - becomes rampant, artists have used the

creative power of theatre and performance in their fight against discriminatory social structure. Theatre workers have contributed to creating a just society. Theatre has helped the artists reveal injustices in the society by dramatizing rulers' cruelty and people's trauma, trials, and tribulations. From the plays of Oedipus, Aeschylus, and Euripides to contemporary playwrighting when, as Richard Schechner says, "broad spectrum approach" of performance is necessary to understand contemporary society, theatre has played a vital role in interrogating unjust political system and revealing regimes' excesses to the public. Theatre has been applied to effect change in the society. It has helped make people aware about their rights and instilled a revolutionary spirit in them. From the "Hit and Run" theatre of Zimbabwe to "political theatre" of South-East Asia, from Augusto Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed" to Bertolt Brecht's "Epic Theatre", and Nepal's "Street theatre/*Kachahari Natak*", theatre has proved its efficacy as a powerful creative device to resist injustice and effect change.

Bertolt Brecht, a Marxist German playwright, producer, and theoretician and Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theatre practitioner, drama theorist and political activist, foregrounded the power of theatre. Unlike Aristotelian concept of theatre as mentioned in his *Poetics* (c. 330 BCE) that focused on entertainment as primary purpose of theatre, Brecht took theatre as a weapon for social change. "Theatre for Brecht is not a clinic to cleanse one's soul", Hecht writes, "but it is a powerful vehicle for change in the society" (43).

Similarly, Augusto Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed" encouraged the formation of theatre companies to expose the brutality of regimes and fight for people's rights with consciousness-raising agenda of "its grassroots 'cultural action' projects during the 1980" (Dwyer, 14). Boal writes, "Theatre of the Oppressed gives us the right to speak our minds, and, using the power of Art, to invent solutions to our problems. Through theatre we discover that we are more capable than we thought, able to free ourselves from our oppressions" (Sanjoy Ganguly, xiii). It was repurposed in different countries such as *Kachahari* theatre in Nepal and "emancipated theatre" of the Philippines. Aarohan/Gurukul theatre, Sarwanam Theatre of Nepal, and Philippines Educational Theatre Association (PETA) can be cited as examples of theatre companies which have championed "applied theatre", i.e., the use of theatre as a "delivery mechanism". Theatre, hence, has been a powerful means to fight against autocratic polity and restoration of democracy in Nepal and colonial forces as well as dictatorship in the Philippines.

Regimes try to use cultural productions like theatre to perpetuate its ideology. But theatre artists mobilise the power of theatre arts to reveal "hidden agenda" of the regimes. "Theatre and performance", Marcus Cheng Chye Tan and Charlene Rajendran write, "can be considered 'events' that challenge or disrupt the political status quo and its distribution of the sensible or are works that have become events because they were, inevitably, subjected to prevailing socio-political climates that deemed them controversial, contentious or threatening to the established order" (3). As events, they are, as Jacques Derrida describes, 'ruptures' - moments that decentre or recentre a structure through disruption- or interventions, ontological disturbances which, as Alain Badiou further explains, change the rules of the situation in order to allow that particular event to be (3).

In India too, “anti-colonial-themed theatre developed” to resist British rule. Ashis Sengupta writes that “Theatre played a vital role immediately post-1947 in the formation of a postcolonial national consciousness through the creation of theatre associations, government-owned institutions and their patronage of the ‘theatre of roots’”. Theatre continues to have a significant place in contemporary Indian society and politics through its more recent forms, subgenres, and locations that indicate a welcome plurality and inclusivity in the conception of ‘nation’ and ‘national’ theatre and culture” (18).

Investigating the relationship between grief and democracy dramatized in the South Korean Theatre Company ToBakYi’s 1988 production of *Kumhi’s May*, Hayana Kim argues that “in displaying these uncounted deaths to the audience, ToBakYi issued a powerful rejoinder against the state’s prescribed limit of those whose lives are deserving of grieving” (542). *Kumhi’s May* was a way to channel his grief into actions that are “productive for history and for politics” by mobilizing theatre to make memories that might otherwise be lost and disavowed, acknowledged and kept alive in the cultural repository that is theatre (Eng and Kazanjian 5). For him, theatre was not just an artistic practice, but it was also an epistemic endeavour to counter the state’s obliteration of records of the mass murder during the uprising. *Kumhi’s May* stands as an example of the “democratic role of theatre: it disrupts the state’s stipulation of whose lives matter and expands the boundary of whose deaths are worthy of public recognition” (548). In the following sections, this article briefly deals with the role of theatre in fighting against tyrannical regimes in Nepal and the Philippines.

Theatre for Democracy in Nepal

The emergence of a non-royal strongman, Jang Bahadur Rana led to the establishment of oligarchic rule in Nepal following a massacre in Kathmandu in 1846. Janga Bahadur wiped out almost all the leading political personalities of the day by reducing the kings to ineffectual figureheads. They continued ruling as hereditary and dictatorial Prime Ministers for over a century taking absolute control of the administration. Encouraged by the nationalist fervour and independence movement against British Empire in India, King Tribhuvan and Nepali people both home and abroad waged a campaign to dismantle Rana Oligarchy. Ultimately, Rana rule came to an end in 1950 after 104 years of tyrannical rule and democracy was introduced in Nepal. After the death of King Tribhuvan in 1955, his eldest son Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev (r. 1955-1972) ascended the throne. King Mahendra started autocratic party less political system shattering people’s dream for better life and freedom. He staged a royal coup; unfortunately, nipped the democracy in the bud; “declared all parties illegal, closed down the parliament, arrested and imprisoned all cabinet members then in Kathmandu [including Prime Minister], and took the government into his own hands” (Bista qtd in Davis, 50). The party-less Panchayat system that continued for 30 years till people’s movement of 1990 which, also known as Janaandolan I, toppled autocratic party less political system and eventually, Nepal’s democracy was restored.

Nepali theatre workers, at the leadership of Ashesh Malla, mobilized street theatre to fight against autocratic political system. In Nepali people’s struggle for democracy, street theatre became a trusted partner, a powerful ally in the struggle for

democracy. *Sadaknatak* (street theatre) in the late 1970s, led by Ashesh Malla and his theatre group Sarwanam, Carol C. Davis writes, “became an effective tool of the pro-democracy movement and through its organizers gathered, educated, inspired, and mobilized masses of people to consider and take action towards achieving their rights” (50). Malla’s plays *Murdabadma Utheka Haathharu* (Hands Raised in Protest, 1977), *Sadak Dekhin Sadaksamma* (From Road to Road, 1979), *Hami Basanta Khojirahechhau* (We Are Searching for the Spring, 1982) deal with contemporary politics of Nepal. Using spring as a metaphor for democracy, Malla articulates resentment, anger against Mahendra’s panchayat system in *Hami Basanta Khojirahechhau*. Malla staged this play on the sports field of Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur and later in different campuses around Kathmandu. Because of the censorship by repressive regimes, Malla uses literary metaphors in the play. Janaandolan of 1990 (Political Movement of 1990), ultimately restored democracy in Nepal and street theatre played crucial role in making people aware about the contemporary tyrannical political situation of the country and instilling a revolutionary spirit in them.

What Carol C. Davis says is still relevant today as well. Davis writes,

The upheaval of old ways brings disturbances that often delay progress towards self-sufficiency and competition on the world stage. But Nepalis do not back down in the face of adversity—they do not give up; they continue to work for better government and better lives. The theatre makers of Nepal are at the forefront of change. They employ their vivid imaginations when they write, direct, act, and make theatre out of their problems, their achievements, their fears, and their hopes for a better society. (xxi)

Nepali rulers have not been able to deliver their promises made to Nepali people. Nonetheless, Nepalis are at the forefront when it comes to safeguarding their democracy.

Political parties could not deliver the promises and fulfil people’s expectations following 1990’s restoration of democracy. “The first decade”, Carol C. Davis writes, “after the democratization of Nepal saw little progress in these areas, however, which in turn helped foster dissent in the ensuing years and helped nurture the feelings of despair” (65). In 1996, Maoist began their guerrilla warfare against the state. Nepal fell in the vicious circle of conflict and violence. Maoist guerrillas harassed, robbed, mutilated, and eventually ambushed and murdered those who disagreed with their aims and those who tried to stop them, especially in rural areas. On the other hand, state security forces punished those who were forced to support Maoists. Nepali people were the victims of animosity and hostility between Maoist fighters and state security forces. On the evening of Friday 1 June 2001 (19 Jestha 2058 B.S.), King Birendra and the whole of his immediate family were murdered by gunfire while they were attending their customary monthly dinner gathering at the Narayanhiti palace in Kathmandu. It further pushed the country into chaos. Birendra’s middle brother Gynendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev (r. 2001-2008) ascended the throne. Citing democratically elected government led by Sher Bahadur Deuba of Nepali Congress incompetent, he took the state control in his hands and formed a council of minister in his chairmanship in 2005. Political pundits say this is the darkest day in Nepal’s struggle for democracy. He showed utter antipathy to democracy and opposed the concessions made by his brother King Birendra

to the democracy movement of 1990. Gyanendra's reversion to the path of his father King Mahendra's tyrannical system irked political parties compelling them to make the Comprehensive Peace Accord with the Maoist in 2006. Maoist came 'overground' and allied with other political parties in the fight against Gyanendra's coup d'état. Ultimately, Gyanendra failed in his resistance against people's fight for democracy and the parliament was restored. The first meeting of the restored parliament declared the end of 240 years old Monarchy in Nepal in 2008.

Nepali people's dream of political stability, economic development, socio-cultural reformation, and qualitative life has not materialised yet even after change in political system and governments. Nepali people continued fighting. The role of theatre became even more crucial. At this time, Aarohan/Gurukul School of Theatre had already come into existence as a powerful cultural institution in the initiative and leadership of Sunil Pokharel. Gurukul also became a centre not only for disseminating cultural heritage of Nepal through performances of plays but also a meeting point for artists, literary writers to fight for democracy, freedom, and human rights. What Castrillo says in the context of the Philippines is relevant in Nepal as well, "To this day, theatre continues to function as a tool and rehearsal for revolution for the oppressed as they learn to perform their stories themselves to gear up for the struggle for liberation" (538).

Theatre for Freedom in the Philippines

Theatre of the Philippines is as diverse as its geography and climate. In "The History of the Philippines", Kathleen Nadeau writes,

The present-day Philippines is an archipelago nation of more than 7, 100 islands with a total coastline that stretches 10, 850 miles, which is twice the length of the coastline of California. The archipelago lies off the southeast coast of the Asian mainland, between Borneo and Taiwan. The islands are surrounded in the west by the South China Sea, in the east by the Pacific Ocean, in the south by the Sulu and Celebes Seas, and in the north by the Bashi Channel. These tropical and mountainous islands have a land area of 115, 831 square miles. The country is composed of three major regions: Luzon, also the name of the largest island in the north; the Visayas, an island group in the centre; and Mindanao, also the name of the largest island in the south. These regions have distinct political, social, and cultural differences. The nation's capital is Manila, in Luzon. Other important cities are Cebu, in the Visayas; Davao, Cotabato, and Zamboanga, in Mindanao; and Jolo, in the Sulu archipelago of Mindanao. (1)

Narrating the experiences of working with members of the Mindanao Community Theatre Network (MCTN) in the Philippines, Julie Holledge, actor, director, playwright, and emeritus professor at Flinders University, Australia, mentions one of their favourite expressions, "*Magkoryotayo kung paanomagakyo*", meaning "Let's use plays, songs and dances the way we use acupuncture: to heal our social ills" (11). In the Philippines, people experienced not only brutalities of dictatorship but also the suppression of Spanish and the U. S. colonialism. Theatre has played a significant role in fighting against foreign imperial powers and dictatorships at home.

Referring to oppressive past in the Philippines, Tiatco and Viray, in "Theatre and

Martial Law” write that “On 21 September 1972, then President Ferdinand E. Marcos declared Martial Law via Presidential Proclamation Number 1081 to suppress the rise of communism. Since its declaration, 70,000 individuals were imprisoned, 34,000 tortured and 3,240 killed”. Besides, quoting Fernandez, they further write that the theatre became ‘a voice speaking with urgency’ because the nation struggled against dictatorship (90-91). At a time when people were scared to speak a word against Marcos’s dictatorship, the Philippine Educational Theatre Association (PETA) used the theatre to “expose the human rights violations experienced by many Filipinos during Marcos’s corrupt administration”. Like the roles played by Sarwanam and Aarohan/Gurukul theatre in Nepal, PETA in the Philippines played an instrumental role to “denounce the society’s precarious state and have aligned in a quest for a national democratic cultural revolution”. Tiatco and Vary write:

PETA reinforced the theatre as an alternative and subtle venue of protestations by presenting social injustices and on its stage. For instance, PETA staged Isagani Cruz’s *Halimaw*...which was a direct analogy to the dictator even if his name was not mentioned; every time performers spoke of the Halimaw, audience members knew very well it was in reference to Marcos, and to his wife Imelda as the monster’s wife who loves shoes. (91)

Performances took place in different venues such as streets, plazas, churchyards, and even in factories- “often through guerrilla tactics, informing the general-public- turned-spectators about the governance of Marcos”. Eventually, Marcos was overthrown via a “peaceful revolution called People Power” on 25 February 1986. PETA performed *Panatasa Kalayaan* (Oath to Freedom) to celebrate the “victorious recalcitrance of the People Power Revolution” (91).

Pamela del Rosario Castrillo divides Filipina theatre into four categories: (1) The Bourgeois Theatre in English, 1946-1964; (2) Theatre of Social Concern, 1965-1968; (3) Revolutionary Theatre, 1969-72; (4) An Emancipated Theatre in an Era of Authoritarianism, 1973-85 and emphasizes the fact that “theatre became an ideological tool in the service of the national liberation struggle” (534).

Filipino playwrights, directors and actors used theatre arts for “conscientization-education, enlightenment and action”,

The multidimensional language of theatre is used to improvise oppressive situations they find themselves in and search for alternatives. This way, they become aware of the manifestations of an unjust social order and are able to articulate a longing for justice and faith in change. Theatre then serves as a creative platform of social issues and a harbinger of hope. (Labad qtd. in Castrillo, 532)

Castrillo highlights the role of theatre in the Philippines as seen in the above statement that it was committed to informing people “of their rights, of the exploitation perpetrated against them of all the isms ranged against them (imperialism, capitalism, feudalism, fascism, bureaucrat capitalism), of their own ignorance of the graft and corruption in the government. It was theatre meant not only to entertain and inform but also to persuade and activate” (Fernandez 415 qtd. in Castrillo). Theatre became an instrument for the liberation of most Filipinos. It bridged the gap between and among theatre performers

—————Performing for Social Justice: Efficacy of Political Theatre in Nepal and the Philippines and mass audiences (255). Theatre became an ideological tool in the service of the national liberation struggle” (Patajo-Legasto qtd. in Castrillo 534).

Filipino theatre historian Amelia Lapena-Bonifacio noted that “theatre became a living newspaper because the people of the revolution strategically utilised the stage to mobilize public opinion about the enemy and to provide information about the ongoing revolution (41). On many occasions, these artists-turned-revolutionaries exposed horrors of colonisation especially in the traditional form *sarsuwela*, ironically introduced by the Spaniards in 1878 (Tiatco and Viray 89).

In musical play, *Nukleyar* written and directed by PETA’s (Philippine Educational Theatre Association) Al Santos, “powerful images point to the senselessness of the nuclear arms race, and more importantly, reveal and condemn the ill-advised construction of a nuclear power plant in Morong, Bataan that stem from the collusion of transnational capitalist forces. The play became the best medium for spreading alternative points of view” (Van Erven, 58)

Brecht’s epic theater also provided valuable inputs to the theatre of this period. The distance creating devices which have been integrated into Philippine political theater are: (1) the *dula-tula*; (2) the use of folk materials; (3) multi-media devices; (4) partial or full choruses; (5) the maximization of gestures, e. g. , mime show; (6) skits of little narratives and songs; (7) stylized movements and scenic designs; and (8) the suggestive use of space (Torres qtd. in Castrillo 535).

Abadesco decries increased militarization against their ranks but like Gramsci before him, maintains that “the answer is the development of strategies and tactics for forming and forging solidarity among alliances, not only among city-based theatre groups but also among those in towns, regions, and the nation as a whole” (Van Erven, 62). In Davao, Karl Gaspar produced plays that tackle justice and peace issues with the help of fiery Old Testament texts. Likewise, Rodulfo Galenzoga, armed as he was with “a sense of mission, the Bible and his art,” presented plays telling of local socio-political conditions” (Temple 10-11). At the same time, cultural groups of this period, secular and otherwise, engaged in the “decentralization” of theatre: cultural workers in theatre brought their practice to the dominated masses throughout the archipelago where they initiated more “imaginative means of raising people’s consciousness and provided support in organizing efforts” (Castrillo, 536).

Conclusion

In the Philippines, as Tan and Rajendran argue, where the days of martial law may seem distant, the importance of remembering this repressive political chapter is underscored in a 2017 PETA production, *A Game of Trolls: A Martial Law Musical for Millennials*. People ended Marcos’ dictatorship but again Duetetre’s brutalities, extrajudicial killings, is going on in the Philippines in the name of ‘war against drugs’. Similarly, Nepali people fought against 104 years old Rana oligarchy and tyranny, party-less panchayat system of King Mahendra through King Gyanendra’s coup d’état in 2005. But socio-economic and politico-cultural transformation as envisioned in different movements in different points in time remain a distant dream. People continue to suffer, be it from repressive regimes or lack thereof. Regimes have changed but people’s life

standards have not. Political leaders who purported to raise people's life standards are engrossed in corruption. So, the role of theatre to draw the attention of the rulers and to aware the people have been so crucial today. Ashesh Malla through Sarwanam theatre mobilized street theatre in Nepal to fight against tyranny of party-less Panchayat system. Theatre and performance, then, confronted the politics of its day but also “antagonised and dislocated audiences from their settled modes of representational reality and rupture the appearance of normality and engender a space for social and political alternatives, a mode of political agency, because such a space can offer opportunities for difference” (26). What Tiatco and Viray say in the context of the Philippines, “as long as there are abusive regimes, the theatre will always focus on providing a space to negotiate truths and to initiate assembly” (91) is also applicable in the context of Nepal.

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Cultural Practice of Natural Theology and Environmental Ethics in the Vedas

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Abstract

Vedic texts have established the cult of worshipping natural phenomena, which from the surface understanding is the process of personification, but in real, Vedic hymns show on how the Vedic people have understood the underlying power of nature. Vedas, Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda, have joined the human culture with the philosophy of nature in the mode of natural theology. The culture of sacrifice taught through Vedic hymns has conveyed the knowledge of mutual dependence of man, God and nature. Vedas have proven the natural theological notion of nature-God relation with the hymns devoted to nature phenomena as the metaphors of power, creativity, essence and purity in the forms of deities. Vedas have pertained ecocentrism as the cultural practice of nature eminence. They have further addressed the idea of environmental ethics through the Vedic view of cosmological and ontological unity in nature, and the ethics of natural law in the form of rita, dharma and karma. With the examination of Vedic priority to nature, especially from the Rig Veda, this study anticipates to link Vedic natural religion with the nineteenth century philosophy of natural theology and late twentieth century ecological study of environmental ethics.

Keywords: Natural theology, naturalism, *dharma*, *rita*, ethics

Introduction

Natural theology, as the philosophy to make a connection between nature and the existence of God, has provided the logical theory to interpret nature in relation to the divine power, especially from early 19th century. As a response to romantic aesthetics to nature, natural theology has proposed a principle of understanding theism to understand nature. This practice has brought a change in Christian understanding of nature from just as the material factor to the realization of spiritual dimension in nature. With the idea that nature is not merely a material object, natural theology makes a connection “between

what may be known through revelation (in the Bible or through divine miracles) and what may be known through “natural” means (the application of human reason)” (Gould 369), and gives a priority to regard nature as the part of theological existence. Similarly, environmental ethics searches the value of nature, both instrumental and intrinsic, in relation to human beings and ontologically. Ethics, with this reference, is not merely the sets of rules and regulations related to nature and environment, but a pattern of generating the value as the natural law.

Vedas are the most ancient texts to address the ideas of nature and environment in the East. They have cultural impacts on people. They have set religious and cultural value to nature. Providing the knowledge of philosophy to define nature, Vedas “clearly highlight ecology and environmental science as described in present-day literature” (Mishra 2). They have also developed the cultural part of life strongly attached to nature and religion. This study aims to examine Vedic texts from the point of view of natural theology and explore how Vedas have dealt with ethical issue in relation to man, divine and environment, especially natural law as the foundation of cosmological unity.

Many studies have been made in the Vedic texts both in the East and the West. Previous studies in the Vedic texts have established the religious values and the values of sacrifice in the cultural part. Also they have seen the multiple philosophies of life in Vedic knowledge. This study makes a departure in the case that it examines the Vedic texts from the perspective of western philosophy of Natural Theology- the combination of natural science and theology. Also it makes a connection between Vedic concept of ethics and modern deep ecological understanding of environmental ethics. It intends to answer two basic research questions: What are the theological justifications in the Vedas regarding their philosophy of nature? How is the Vedic concept of *rita* and *Varuna* relevant to the modern concept of environmental ethics? - as the identified problem in this study.

Natural Theology and Vedas

With the publication of *Natural Theology* in 1802, William Paley has formally initiated the discussion of the connection of nature and religion in the West, however this relation is much older in the East; especially it is practiced from the Vedic period with the priority of nature as the divine source on earth. Natural theology consists of two ideas at a time; “the first half addresses medicine and natural history and the last half treats of the attributes of God” (Eddy and Knight xvii). It links the concept of God and nature with the reliable logics on the existence of God in nature. As the part of these arguments, we can explore two points in God-nature relation: cosmological and ontological.

As regards to the first point, Vedas have strongly talked about the cosmological relation between nature and the existence of God. Vedic hymns, in all four Vedas, demonstrate a love for the harmony in nature with the concept of *rita* that is the natural law and order. They focus on “obeying one’s socio-cosmic and place-order duties or *dharma*” (Baindur 149). Vedic *rita*, also understood as *dharma* in broad sense, provides a moral value to maintain the natural rule and order, “the concept of *rita* is important as it connects the created cosmos to a moral order within it” (149). Vedas, openly envision the notion of cosmic unity with the notion of *rita* or *dharma*. *Rita* in Vedas does not refer to any particular god or deity. It is an abstract notion of universal principle. With a belief

to regulate the actions of all individual natural phenomena and elements as deities, *rita* is the part of Vedic concept of the unity of all cosmological existence, “meet together, talk together, let your minds apprehend alike” (Wilson trans. vol. IV, 579). With the sense of union of the deities, as nature in the Vedas are the deities; Vedas have strongly proposed the provision of cosmic essence of the world.

This Vedic idea of cosmic unity is the same to Paley’s analogy of natural world as a clock, “we and other creatures, large or microscopic, were little mechanisms living in an immense clockwork universe” (Eddy and Knight xix). As the clock, the world is the totality of the things in nature equally meaningful for the existence of the whole, which is strongly governed by the law, the law of nature and the law of the God, “the world around is being managed very smartly as per unchangeable laws” (Newar 10). The law, the *rita*, unites the world because there is the finest but hidden source of the divine in nature, “there is a God; a perceiving, intelligent, designing Being; at the head of creation, and from whose will it proceeded” (Paley 230). God therefore is linked with nature resulting to the cosmological unity through the *rita* or the natural order.

The theory of natural theology gives insight to the cosmological fact that “the universe itself is a system; each part either depending upon other parts, or being connected with other parts by some common law of motion, or by the presence of some common substance” (Paley 234). Nature has something in common to every existed ‘being’ and also it is particular in itself, “common (worshippers) by your intention; common be your hearts; common be your thoughts, so that there may be through union among you” (Wilson trans. Vol. IV. 579). Natural theology as “the practice of philosophically reflecting on the existence and nature of God independent of real or apparent divine revelation or scripture” (Taliaferro 1), particularly theorizes the fact that nature without the existence of God is meaningless. Classical theology of the Vedas design the notion that “there is a creator and sustainer of the cosmos who is omniscient, omnipotent, necessarily existing, nonphysical, essentially good, omnipresent, without temporal beginning or end, and everlasting or eternal” (Taliaferro 2), but in current thinking, a mode of connecting the cosmological thinking and theological logics is in naturalism, which “may be described as a scientifically oriented philosophy that rules out the existence of God, as well as the soul” (2). Like that of Vedic principle of realizing the divine in nature through deification, “natural theology can broadly be understood as a process of reflection on the religious entailments of the natural world” (McGrath 7). So, nature cannot be detached from the God and neither can it exist in absence of the Godly power. The world is the unity of nature and existence of God in it.

The second point is the issue of ontological understanding of nature. Ontology refers to the individual existence. Cosmic unity does not make difference on the ontological part of realizing nature in its own form. Every element is connected with everything else around. It does not necessarily mean that nature is dependent to other factors. Recent approaches to environmental studies focus on the ontological existence of nature. Likewise, natural theology provides an insight to see things in nature with new lenses. Unlike the claim that “nature is socially constructed and that all nature has been humanized” (Stephens 268), deep ecological understanding focuses on the point that nature is free, wild and independent. There is a problem in understanding “of nature

as 'Other', as a world existing apart from us and our artifice' must be dropped as being the product of a false 'dichotomy between man and nature' (268). Ontological argument raises a question whether human is the part of nature or apart. Vedic understanding of nature has the foundation that man, nature and God are independently and freely existing, however they have relation. The relation is not dependent; rather it locates nature in its own state unaffected by human beings. Nature is humanized and nature is venerated as the divine. Vedic hymns state that nature is not dependent to anything else, but to itself. The God causes this independence, "he by his greatness became the king of the world that breaths and blinks" (Doniger 27). The God has created nature, and can create it. It is for its benevolence, not for humans. If nature is constructed for the purpose of man, it creates a considerable problem- how much for humans? Neither humans produce it, nor it is for them. The God creates it independently for independent purpose.

Vedas venerate nature as the metaphor of God, and attempt "to establish claims about God's existence and / or nature apart from appeal to special revelation, presupposes significant disagreement over religious beliefs" (Netland 503). With regard to the natural ontological process, they clearly mention, "Order and truth were born from the heat as it blazed up. From that was born night; from the heat was born the billowy ocean" (Doniger 34). This notion of cosmic heat as the source of creation and its further expansion of different parts of natural timing boost the individual existence with the order functioning within.

Understanding nature has many factors. It can be defined culturally, politically, or scientifically. Vedic definition has cultural base in the sense that it has set a trend of perceiving nature as part of human culture. Vedic people have strongly adopted nature as the part of their culture. Ontological understanding is much concerned with the scientific definition of nature. This has become the foundational examination of a relatively new discipline of philosophy understood as environmental philosophy. The scope of environmental philosophy is "to understand the relationship between human beings and their environment from different perspectives including the belief and knowledge that communities hold about nature, their ethical, and moral interest towards nature and the various pre-suppositions that exist in such perspectives (Baindur 2). As part of the debate of human/ nature as 'one'/ 'other' for the interpretation of human-nature relationship generates a risk of the division of the world as completely humanized and unhumanized world or area. So, ontological argument has to do with the connection of human-nature relation connected by the theological understanding that nature and God are strongly linked, as God and humans are understood as connected culturally and religiously.

Environmental Ethics and Vedas

The term 'ethics' refers to the moral values and principles behind the action. It suggests to the way people should behave. The environmental ethics is "that part of applied ethics, which examines the moral basis of our responsibility toward the environment" (Bourdeau 13). Environmental ethics, therefore, refers to the notion of the moral principles looking at the environmental concerns. It can be defined "as efforts to articulate, systematize, and defend systems of value guiding human treatment of and behavior in the natural world" (Taylor 597). It, as an abstract form, provides and observes

the moral values of connecting humans and nature.

One should base their behavior on a set of ethical values that guide our approach toward the other living beings in nature. Environmental ethics is about including the rights of non-human animals in our ethical and moral values. Even if the human race is considered as the primary concern of society, animals and plants are in no way less important. They have a right to get their fair share of existence. The scientific innovations and growing industrialization have affected the originality of nature. And as a result, nature and its purity have undergone a crisis. Present issues on environment have seen nature as a complete whole with humans or without human intercede. Environment's value in wilderness or in preservation has become a debate. In the ancient time, the reality or the truth got the position of the environment. In the modern period, the concept has been enlarged to the concept of nature. With the notion of deep ecology, the further inquiry has been made and the wider term, 'environment' has been conceived from the 90s.

Having the base of deep ecology to look into the nature and environment, environmental ethics has set the principles with the knowledge of the impact of the modern science and its consequences in the changes of human behavior to nature, and it can also be the tool to look into the literary texts like the Vedas composed prior to the origin of the notion. The Vedas present the natural description in which all the natural phenomena are described in interconnected manner. This chain of the description depicts the totality of the relationship of all the things that is generally supposed to be a Vedic world. It includes the combination of different elements and events in the form of real 'beings' of nature. With reference to these 'beings' the Vedic seers have honored nature in the forms of various deities (devas) through the hymns resulting in the mode of culture and ritual. They share the common knowledge associated with the generation and creation of deities as the myths. Vedas accept the phenomena of nature as the postulated agents of the deities while "it is certainly true that many deities in the Veda are related to natural phenomena; some gods do not fit into this model and Vedic scholarship no longer accepts this as an explanation of the pantheon" (Flood 45). The relation between the gods/deities and nature is the relation of incarnated image. Nature image has the connection to be the deity. For instance, Pippal tree is granted as the worldly incarnation or the representation of lord Vishnu. So Pippal has been respected and worshipped. As a part of ritual, human practice marrying Pippal tree with another tree, Var tree. On the one hand, this relation of god and nature appears to have been the reflection of the image of the divine force in the form of nature. At the same time, it also symbolizes how the same nature can be the humanized image with cultural practice of marriage.

These Vedic devout images of nature possess human qualities out of which the majority of them appear as male deities and some others like Usas, Aditi as females. The Vedic hymns address them; they share human emotions, get invited in sacrifice and share the ritual meal. They have the association with the whole Vedic universe and the *Yajnya* of sacrifice having the history and story in the form of myths. This description of nature as the deities, Gods and Goddesses transfers as the Vedic nature myth as pantheism, monism and ethics in the Veda.

The Rig Veda does not refer directly to the environment as such. The notion

of modern environment, as the combination of all the living and nonliving things in nature, has recently been conceived. Still the environmental issue gets explored in the hidden meaning of the Vedic thought. The Vedic hymns speak for the purity in every natural element, such as, “purity of the intellect (*prajna*), mind (*mana*), vitality (*prana*) and physic (*anna*) and all together” (Bhatt 73). This Vedic search of purity establishes a strong point of environmental ethics. Vedic hymns speak about the physicality and spirituality of the elements in natural life. These elements interact collaborating one another. One element of nature is helpful to another, such as “the *Agni* glances that all the *lokas*, should protect us from the ill-will of enemies” (Wilson trans. vol. IV. 576). This mutual functioning of one element for the well being of other makes it certain to the ethical unity among them.

A holistic and integral view of environmental ethics along with the differential treatment of each type is a way of looking at ethical issue. The Vedic thought of internal working regards, “the purity of the physical depends upon the vital, the purity of the vital upon the mental and the purity of the mental depends upon the intellectual” (Bhatt 73). Therefore, the purity in the physical environment also depends on the purity of the intellectual, mental and vital aspect as the purity on spirituality. This Vedic reference indirectly threats human conduct and suggests that it needs to be regulated, balanced proportionally to ensure the smooth progressive environmental and cosmic process. Similar notion of co-working of the physical and spiritual nature phenomena is depicted in the Rig Veda: “*Agni, Indra, Varuna, Mitra*.... with one consent, (Wilson trans. vol. IV. 352). *Agni* and *Saraswati* represent for light and heat. They symbolize for mind and intellect. Similarly, *Varuna, Mitra, Vayu*, and *Saraswati*, in the form of river act as the symbols of vitality and physics. All do have a single consent of equality and commonness in action and behavior. It identifies that all these natural deities are ethically responsible for the mental and physical purity of nature at a whole.

This unity of nature phenomena enhances the Vedic environmental analogy of the unity of different elements. All the parts are interrelated in the natural body. An element functions in association with other. They have both bodily and spiritual domains. For instance, *Agni* as heat and power, *Saraswati* (river/water) as cool and mind, *Vayu* (air) as cool and breath, *Soma* (plant) as liquid and enthusiasm etc. are connected to each other with their individual values and they function for the totality of the existence and purity.

The modern environmental ethics promotes the idea that there should be widening moral codes of ethical considerations to bring regulation in human conduct not only in relation to other human beings but also with nonhuman or inanimate things. One should not only think about the self but to the welfare of others. Humans should respect the life, essence and value of the nonhuman phenomena. Similarly, the Vedas deliver the environmental awareness with the dictum that “*dharmoraksatiraksitah*” if we care nature, nature will care us” (qtd in Bhatt 74). Dharma, in this sense, symbolizes nature and its rita in a greater notion. It endorses the idea that the life of one depends and ensures on the life of others.

It is necessary to formulate the mechanism for environmental awareness among the five elements (*panchamahabhut*): earth, water, air, fire and space. Vedas portray these ingredients as gods to which all Vedic poets and mortals behave and worship. By

deifying, worshipping and respecting them both as nature and gods, Vedas arouse the ethical respect to them in the form of personified and deified beings. The Vedic hymns praise *Agni*, *Prithvi* Surya, Vayu, Usas, Sarasvatias the deities and give deepest value to nature phenomena and share the message that we should approach nature with love, adoration, respect and gratitude.

Similarly, the concept of heaven and hell transpires apparently in the Vedic hymns. They frequently state about the righteousness of the righteous and wickedness of the wicked. Vedic apparition focuses on the righteousness of the right for the balanced collective co-existence. It gives the message that the worldly organism involved in the righteousness receives award with heavenly place. This sense of the proper treatment to righteousness and wickedness has been introduced in the Rig Veda: “Like women who have no brethren, going about from their own to their father’s house, women averse to their lords going astray, so the wicked, false in thought, false in speech, they give birth to this deep abyss of hell” (Wilson trans. vol. II. 263).

The position of the wicked resembles with the wandering lonely woman in the hell. The wicked doers create this situation because of false thought, speech and action. The righteous and wicked actions are distinguished on the basis of the due actions of the mortals to other mortals and rest of the world, the works for and against the worldly value of ethics. Naturally and logically, “the wickedness of the wicked would demand a separate abode as a prison or place of punishment” (Griswold 318-19). This Vedic distinction of these two poles emerges as the reinterpretation of value in the modern period. The concept of hell materializes to have been forced by the facts of the moral life of humans originated from the Vedic understanding. Vedas clearly state this supposition with the idea of rita that maintains what is ethically wickedness and righteousness with the active role of the lord Varuna for natural law, “the natural law tradition (of which natural theology is a part) has been focused historically – and ironically – on human nature, but now must be extended to include nonhuman nature as a source of moral insight and guidance” (Gould 368). Natural law is a strong aspect of Vedic natural order through the link of Varuna.

The presence of Varuna has a significant role in the matter of ethics. He exists in the abstract form to maintain rita that copes with all the ethical problems. Macdonell elucidates the presence of Vedic Varuna, “there is no hymn to Varuna, in which the prayer for forgiveness of guilt does not occur” (27). On its basis, Vedas kindle the thought of forgiveness to all types of guilt that has greater value on ethics. Rita, notwithstanding its greatness as an ethical concept, “has taken up in the later notions of karma and dharma.... rita as embodied in the will of Varuna, was connected with god of grace who could pardon sin and restore the sinner to his fellowship” (Griswold 341). The mere mechanical working of the principle reflects the retribution or sin and ‘dharma’ with the sense of responsibility and individual as well as religious wisdom. The Rig Veda awakens the concept of ‘dharma’ that “is an obligation declared by the Veda to perform ritual action, karma” (Flood 53). It reveals the performance of Vedic ritual, “the ritualistic order of Vedic sacrifices” (52). The Vedic sense of karma as the leading factor of dharma further confirms the ethical concern of life and action in the mode of natural law as the “tradition of “following nature” can be used effectively today when “eco-systemic compatibility”

is used as a norm from which to derive ethics” (Gould 368). Ethics, dharma and karma come together in Vedic notion of natural law, rita, and Gods (deities), humans and nature are responsible equally.

Vedas revere Varuna, Surya, Agni and Vayu as the ethical gods because they have been invoked as the forgivers of sins in the Vedic hymns. They represent three different zones: Surya, the heaven, Agni, the earth and Vayu, the midair. All Vedic gods are reduced into these three identities. These three have “a common fiery nature; Surya, the ‘sun’, Indra ‘lightning’ and Agni, ‘fire’” (Griswold 357). Agni is a messenger between earth and heaven, a mediator between gods and humans. Varuna in heaven and Agni on earth are not only reflecting the righteous of their activities but also “making men righteous through the putting away of their sin and guilt” (358). This mode of ethical justice has reinforced the imagination of happiness and pleasure in the Vedas: “Grant to us happiness, pleasure and freedom from sin” (Wilson trans. vol. IV. 285). Other Vedic gods that the Vedic poets worship intend to forgive sins of the human beings. The poets pray to grant them happiness, pleasure and freedom from sins.

Enriched with the universal forgiveness as the central point of Vedic principle, Gods and goddesses possess benevolence to all the earthly organisms. Agni, Soma, Vayu, Vata are all involved in purifying the evil doings of the mortals because they concentrate on forgiving rather than punishing the evildoers. The hymns dedicate on evoking gods as the sources of purifications. Most of gods praised in Rig Veda are concerned with the forgiveness of sin by providing prosperity to mortals, and granting purity and vitality to the earthly living things. Vedas do not give priority in describing devils, evils and demons. Rather the heavenly gods transform into earthly quality with full potentiality to change the things into pure and sacred and modify the evils by forgiving their sins. This transformation takes place in a process, “*Twam Soma pavamanoviswaniduritatara, Kaviseedanivarhis*” (RV. 09. 61. 10). Soma descends from heaven, comes down in the form of rain, enters into the Soma plant and becomes the Soma juice, the drink of immortality and the source of purity, fertility, courage and wealth.

Regarding ethics, the question arises whether there is any concept of suffering of mankind and other living and non-living beings in the Vedas. The perception of sacrifice of the ‘Purusa’, the cosmic man in the form of ‘Prakriti’ is dominant in the Rig Veda. The whole creation of human and non-human living beings is said to have sprung as a result of the sacrifice of Purusa. This Vedic design of conscious self-sacrifice on behalf of the origin and life of other reveals the truth of Vedic ethics. The ‘Purusa Sukta’ clearly affirms the voluntary action of self-emptying of ‘Purusa’ for the sake of the universe through which the whole universe-- humans and the environment-- comes into existence. Nature preserves its nature, “Yama preserves our loved bodies” (Wilson trans. vol. IV. 219). Yama delivers up his own body. Vedas propose the reference of the self-sacrifice of Yama for the immortality of gods and humans. This sacrifice is also guided by the mode of ethics, and Vedas clearly mention about the power of ethics, the ethics in nature and life. It validates that Vedas have practiced the culture of “the well-being of entire ecological communities, not just individual species or individual organisms, should be the axial moral concern” (Taylor 598). One individual natural part becoming ready to self-sacrifice for the well-being of others is the highest point of ethical value of the Vedic image of nature.

Vedas do not talk directly about the environmental ethics but they arouse the environmental awareness aiming to regulate the human conduct to the other humans and non-human beings. Vedas not only refer to the kindness, behaviours and the roles of gods and goddesses, but also give ample treatment to humans as preservers and protectors of environment. It teaches the lesson of '*Dharmorakshatirakshitah*'. Nature, as dharma, cares humans if they care nature. Vedic poetry bestows the position of mother to nature; the earth mother is worth worshipping and adorable. Worshipping nature embodies a keynote of Hindu way of life originated from the Vedic arrangement. This method of worshipping and adoring nature as Vanaspataya, Bhumi, Parvata, Surya, Chandra, Agni, etc. does not mean to exhibit the primitive animism, but it reflects an expression of love, regard, and reverence to nature that enables organisms to sustain and provides nourishment to them.

Conclusion

Theology and ethics share a common ground that both ideas focus on the part of value. Theology talks heavily about the religious value of life and world with the belief on the existence of God. Ethics also concerns with the value that is primarily moral one on the judgments of what is right and what is wrong. Natural theology, likewise, is a theory, which attempts to analyze and interpret the value of nature with the connection of value of the God in it. And environmental ethics concerns on the value of the environment both intrinsic and extrinsic. Both concepts are related to the search of value in nature and environment; one refers to the search of religious value in nature and another for the moral value in nature.

Vedas have properly combined the idea of natural theology and environmental ethics in a cultural pattern. Vedic hymns teach humans to look nature as the gods/deities and revere them, which is the essence of natural theology. Further, Vedas have the hymns to ethical god and goddesses, such as Varuna, Agni, Aadityas, who in the form of deities, maintain the natural order and law with natural interconnectedness. They have proposed the idea of unity in nature as cosmological and ontological. The greatest value of Vedic hymns is that they have properly connected God, man and nature. This is not just the depiction in writing or in philosophy; it has become the part of everyday life through cultural and ritual practice.

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Of Self and Polity: Writing Resistance in Dixit's *Madhavi*

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Abstract

Madan Mani Dixit's novel Madhavi (1983) subtly argues for change in the existing rigid political order of his time by projecting selflarger than the polity. Borrowing a narrative from the Mahabharata, the novelist develops it into a full length novel to point out the cracks in the political system of his time: as a political order, the Panchayat had lost the sense of justice within the first two decades after its promulgation in 1962. Dixit employs Galav and Madhavi as dissenting voice of the age, upholding the spirit of resistance and seeking for transformation in consciousness. The tale from the post-Vedic society serves as an instance to imply the parallel situation of the country that attempts to transcend beyond the contemporary context. In this study, I have approached the novel from the new historicist vantage point to dissect the text in the changing political context of its writing. The paper claims that as a Nepali novel, Dixit's Madhavi rewrites the episode of political struggle between the person and polity in an oppressive political order in the 1970s in Nepal when the political self and polity were in tension as the outcome of their struggle for a new order in society. Moving beyond the existing situation, the maestro novelist picks the narrative of Madhavi and Galav from the Mahabharata and sets them in quest of new order in the form of agrarian society from the crumbling order of slavery. Dixit's work critiques the limitations of both self and polity in leaving the impact of one on the other, thereby exposing the brutal treatment and fall of an oppressive political order. This paper reads historical reality of the 1970s in Dixit's Madhavi in which the author writes the political history of Nepal.

Keywords: Nepali history, Panchayat, self, polity, agency, resistance

Birth of Critical Reasoning

Maestro Nepali novelist, Madan Mani Dixit (1923-2019) frames a political narrative through the renewed treatment of mythical character of Madhavi in his 1983

Madhavi. He writes the tale of post-Vedic society functioning on the foundation of slavery as the basic mode of production. The novel revolves around the journey of Madhavi and Galav, capturing their struggle to obtain four Shyam Karna (black eared) horses to pay off the debt of Sage Vishwamitra. As adamant disciple to his Guru, Galav sets the condition that he agrees to the declaration of completion of his learning in the twelve domains of the time at the *ashram*, provided that the Sage consents to receive the disciple's offering. The doubtful youth grows so critical towards his own teacher that he wants to pay the price for his learning in order to exercise his knowledge in future on his own terms. As per Vishwamitra's demand, he agrees to find four horses required for sacrifice to abolish slavery as an institution and as a mode of production from the society. In quest of the horses, he reaches his childhood friend, Suparna Nagjeya's place and then to the King Yayati of Ahichchhatra. Then, both Galav and Madhavi get tied to each other in quest of the horses.

Vishwamitra develops the sense of critical reasoning in Galav who later exercises the ability to make sense of his own circumstances in life and the world. As the mandatory attribute of modern agent, critical rationalism places a thinking subject in a position to examine the relationship between the self and the governing polity. Dixit identifies 'self-sacrifice' as the primary effect of critical reasoning which leads to formation of an intervening agency in any society. The transition from slave-based mode of production to a new era of agriculture affirms similar transition for Nepal in the 1980s. The text genuinely upholds the preparedness on both Madhavi and Galav's part, implying the need of interventionist agents in the repressive order of the Panchayat. As the author deeply associates himself with Galav, the protagonist's quest for new order signifies the latent goal in the text. In addition, Madhavi seeks after her autonomy by assisting Galav in obtaining the four horses: she readies herself for self-sacrifice to break free from the dictations of Halimak. Her quest yields into four valiant sons who later unite the Subcontinent. The novelist seeks for social change by spotlighting the dissenting voices and rewriting a classical narrative of resistance through the contemporary lens of Nepali society.

What is the ulterior motive of knowledge if viewed from the perspective of modernity in general and social change in specific? For Dixit, the answer emerges in the self-actualization of Galav and Madhavi who push the motor of social change through the transformation of their image into a major icon of self-sacrifice. However, the answer to such question varies from person to person. As Michel Foucault writes, "Everyone has their own way of changing, or, what amounts to the same thing, of perceiving that everything changes. In this matter, nothing is more arrogant than to try to dictate to other" (444). As organic structure, each society explores its unique way of raising the voice of dissent. Dixit revolts against the tyrannical Panchayat system of his time by making Galav his mouthpiece in that the critical rationality born in him pushes the whole narrative ahead. Such reading reveals the purpose of creation of such political narrative in the contemporary society. As one of the victims of the repressive political system of his time, Dixit critiques the system in the novel by bringing self and polity in confrontation.

Sanskrit Diction, Sublimation, and Social Evolution

The complexity arises in the reading of *Madhavi* as Dixit's seminal master narrative in Nepali literature. The complex framing of the story puzzles the readers for two simple reasons: firstly, the plot begins to move ahead before the lead characters are fully established in the text; and secondly, Galav's journey requires the intervention of Lord Vishnu himself. The novelist assigns Suparna Nagjeya with the responsibility to render support Galav in the most difficult moment of his life. As a modern novel, the text has attracted the attention of serious scholars who have examined it from various standpoints. The complexity of language of the text has always puzzled the critics. Critics have approached the text from the perspectives of the use of diction to employment of biographical resources for sublimation of the inner complexities. Similarly, the issues of class division and revolt of slaves have paved road to give Marxist reading to the texts. Also, some of the serious studies have focused on the sociological evolution and transition of ages in the text as well.

Often cited as the most complex novel, *Madhavi* makes use of Sanskrit diction. The use of ancient grass like *dukul* gives special impact in the story. Similarly, Dixit passionately employs the geographical description of the Subcontinent from the Mahabharata: the names take the readers to a strange world. Also, he has listed the words in a glossary at the end for the comfort of the readers. Still, the readers do not get the whole picture of the text even after consulting the list. Ram Lohani does not find it adequate in that the list does not cover all the complex vocabularies (vii). The geographical details, the names of the grains, the post-Vedic clothes, and the rivers are written in the words of the time, resulting in complexity in understanding the gist. Furthermore, Devendra Bhattarai points out the linguistic incomprehensibility in the text, arguing for the need to turn the text into the language people can comfortably grasp hold of (n. pag.). Linguistically speaking, the use of vocabulary puts general readers at a loss. So, both Lohani and Bhattarai show their concern towards the use of Sanskrit vocabularies in Nepali novel.

Like language, the biographical resources of the author have been found at the center of the text as well. Such resources help the author make the text the most authentic one while simultaneously purging the overburdening oppression from the polity. Examining the nature of psychological impact in Dixit's writing, Ram Paudel identifies the repressed content being sublimated through the revolt of *Madhavi* and Galav in Dixit (26). Paudel reads the author's life and times from the perspectives of childhood memories. In the comprehensive survey, he locates Dixit's encounter with the world and the people as they appear in his writings. Even Dixit narrates the scene behind the text as a political shock. He chose writing novel to self-immolation. He recalls:

I chose December 15, 1976 to self-immolate by sprinkling petrol on my body at the traffic beat in front of the Southern Gate to the Narayanhiti Royal Palace. At that time many Buddhist monks were self-immolating for the cause of military intervention in Southern Vietnam and democracy in Sri Lanka. Perhaps, those incidents may have inspired me towards this.

That morning on December 15, I had different state of mind. I thought self-immolation was more emotional and less objective. Nagendra Prasad Rijal and

Radha Prasad Ghimire had wronged against me. Why should I punish myself? I asked myself and thought it would be injustice upon myself. I had argument within. Finally, I convinced myself, "They have shut down my newspaper. They cannot snatch away my pen and break it." (n. pag.)

The novelist asserts the suppression of the political system and his psychological reaction to it. Emotionally carried away, he could have ended his life in vain; however, he successfully saved himself by sublimating the desire of self-harm into a beautiful tale. He undeniably grasps the myth to weave a tale of political tension and self-realization of actors.

Various other readings focus on the formation of class and consequent revolts, paving road for new orders. Rajendra Subedi critically assesses Vishwamitra's attitude towards slavery in his Marxist analysis and explores that the Sage enslaves his own disciple, Galav. As he exposes Vishwamitra's inner motive,

Vishwamitra who plots to hold a yagna to free slaves to set the society free from the existing circumstances has his reactionary society revealed to the readers in the text. Vishwamitra who preaches socialism in words and follows imperialism and feudalism in practice has become a victim of intellectual opportunism.

Confused between deeply seated feudalism and the emergent practices of socialism, Vishwamitra utilizes the opportunity to meet his own interest. (209)

Subedi seeks to posit the teacher and his student at two ends of the same spectrum of power structure where the weaker serves the stronger. Hrishiraj Baralargues Vishwamitra does not have a genuine intention of social transformation: "In the beginning, it appears that Vishwamitra is in favor of abolishing slavery. However, Vishwamitra's reality is revealed in the end of the novel. This is the significant part of the novel. Vishwamitra's real face appears here. All in grey, Vishwamitra forgets everything seeing Madhavi before him" (171). The Sage assigns Galav with the herculean task to make his goal of obtaining Madhavi possible. Additionally, Subedi argues that the post-Vedic society treated women and cattle as goods. Yayati follows the same norm when he offers Madhavi as a gift to Galav: "Yayati's rein is in the post-Vedic period. Women and cattle were treated as commodity of exchange in the time" (Subedi 211). The text upholds the power and its play as the governing theme.

Organized attempts at social change result in revolution, while as organic whole, society possesses in itself the inner potential of self-configuration. Kul Prasad Koirala and Hari Prasad Silwal identify sociological evolution as the primary dynamics of the society in the text. Koirala writes: "In *Madhavi*, Dixit has based the whole narrative for formation of his thought on a story told to an arrogant and firm Prince Duryodhan as a classical example to make him understand the point and presents the post-Vedic contours of eastern society through modern anthropological and sociological rendering" (111). Stating the boarder context for the myth, he sees the significance of happenings in one era for the people in entirely different era. Similarly, dissecting the intense picture of slavery from the text, Silwal identifies the social depiction of post-Vedic society in the novel. He evaluates:

Dixit has very critically depicted the society based on slavery. The novel historically mirrors the division of labor in the ancient society, the ownership of

a few upon such system and the formation of the class of slaves. Slavery is the most torturous form of class division where some people own the capital while others become proletariat, get tied in slave houses like cattle, and get treated like commodity of exchange in market. (77)

Silwal's reading reconciles Subedi and Baral on the one hand and Koirala on the other. As the power institution and its brutal exercise of power on individual subjects, slavery paves ground for its own collapse of the system as such in that it crosses the norms of justice and social welfare. The formation of class lays ground for the new age of social system based on agriculture.

Madhavi also signals the historical transition from one age to the other because an age devoid of justice always crumbles into pieces to let a new one to replace the old one. Both revolution and evolution subtly claim about such transition. Ram Lohani critically observes the role of historical transition in the text. As he concludes,

The writer has given a narrative shape to the thirst for freedom in human heart in the Vedic times in the novel. The novelist has attempted to show the prototype of the revolt of slaves under the leadership of Spartacus in ancient Rome in the Indian Subcontinent. In addition, *Madhavi* documents the transition of society from women at center to men at center and tyrannical monarchy based on agriculture. (vii)

The uprising of slaves helps set a particular direction in the formation of new social order based on agricultural mode of production. To Lohani, this historical shift also marks the fall of matriarchal order in society to make space for the patriarchy to set itself aground.

The existing studies on Dixit's *Madhavi* basically focus on exploring linguistic complexity, biographical resources, tension between the guru and the disciple or men and women, slave uprising, class division, social evolution, and historical transition from one form of social order to invention of entirely a different one. The textual scholarship delves into the realities of post-Vedic societies that aspired to transform either on their own or through the intervention of a powerful agency. At times, Sages like Vishwamitra initiated the process of change as such. Contemporary scholarship on the text particularly is engaged on the social reality of the distant past, ignoring the organized atrocities in the then polity. This paper reads the novel in the backdrop of historical realities of the 1970s in Nepal in order to see the political tension between the personal aspiration for liberty, equality and dignity, and oppression of the state towards the curtailment of personal freedom of expression. Dixit selects a tale of the Mahabharata to weave a parallel story of modern mode of resistance in which the self and polity confront each other.

New Historicist Reading

This study rereads the novel in the context of Nepali politics in the 1970s. The oppressive forces promoted through the partyless Panchayat System that King Mahendra promulgated in 1959 had adverse impact on the self of the people in the time. A new historicist reading assumes that the literary or cultural productions carry the national, political history in the form of creative expression. The study derives the fundamental key concepts like self, agency, and polity from Foucault and Foucauldian critical thinkers like Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher to examine the ways Dixit employs

the historical circumstances of his time as resource in *Madhavi*. As Stephen Greenblatt argues,

...the work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creators or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society. In order to achieve the negotiation, artists need to create a currency that is valid for a meaningful, mutually profitable exchange. (12)

Dixit's own narrative regarding the time has immensely helped the researcher understand the context of writing. Like Foucault, Dixit also takes the materialist standpoint to view the social configuration as the outcome of necessary relations arising from tensions in power network. The self continually attempts to shape the polity, while the polity also coerces on the self. Actually, both of them posit in a state of continual tension, whereby shaping the other and getting shaped by the other.

New historicist reading provides a valid model of reading documents of creative domains like literature to analyze the social relations and the power networks in the society under examination. Such critic goes deep into the core of the society by digging into the literary texts. For instance, Catherine Gallenger views that New Historicist rereads the political and sociological aspects of life in literature to find out the issues revolving around marginality and negativity (43) so as to bring about a large transformation in the life of the people. In this sense too, such reading puts critic in a position to view the issues from the perspective of change and justice. Having Marxist insight in the backdrop of such reading, the makers of change get due position and the dialectic reasoning serves as the key way of viewing the power relations in the age.

Self and Polity: Writing Resistance in Dixit

Dixit's *Madhavi* (1983) presents the tension between the self and the state in which each dictates upon the essence of the other. The state requires updating itself with the changing ethos of the people who form the inner core of any society; however, the stagnant rulers who represent the collective body of the political control of the state do not allow the new spirit of society to enter into their consciousness and the mechanism of the state. Then, the stress begins to collect at the underlying structure until it reaches fissures in the 'so called' perfect social order. The author has brought up a parallel tale in the novel that narrates the quest of Galav and Madhavi for four black eared horses in order to pay Gurudakshina to Sage Vishwamitra because the Sage wants to organize a jnagya to dismantle slavery as a form of production in society. For the jnagya, he requires the four black eared (Shyam Karna) horses for sacrifice. Madhavi and Galav move from state to state in the Subcontinent in their search for the horses and witness the harsh social realities built on slavery. As opposed to Bhojnagar, Ayodhya practices the absolute form of power vested on the slave owners. However, Dixit helps retain the dissenting voices of the slaves, who challenge the order by declaring loudly and clearly, "I am the soul."

As a resident scholar in the *ashram* of Sage Vishwamitra, Galav develops the art of critical reasoning that leads his inner conscience to the formation of doubt on the self and society. As the Sage agrees to declare the completion of Galav's learning, the pupil wanted to pay his teacher for the learning. Vishwamitra does not expect anything

in return from Galav's education: as a quick and smooth learner, Galav has adequately impressed his teacher. However, Galav believes that his true emancipation lies in paying for his education. So too, he insists on paying his *Gurudakshina* off. As an outcome of the art of doubt, a new ethics is born: he cannot accept *samavartan* (declaration of completion of study) without paying his master (guru) for his education (*Madhavi* 33). Actually, Galav deeply believes that without any payment made for the knowledge he has achieved with his guru, he might face some hindrances in its application in his quotidian life. He runs after the autonomous practice of his knowledge in future. The ulterior motive of knowledge as self-actualization and the ultimate freedom that he aspires to attain through the practice needs to be kept intact for him. Hence, Galav insists on paying his teacher Vishwamitra for all the knowledge he has achieved in the *ashram*.

With the help of Nagajaya, Galav finds Madhavi as Yayati's daughter who possesses double boons: perpetual virginity and a destiny to produce four emperor sons. Madhavi trades her son for a horse in Ayodhya, Kashi, and Bhojnagar. In Champa, she produces a son for Sage Vishwamitra, thereby turning herself into a means to win Galav's emancipation from the debt to his guru. He has realized the power of critical reasoning aided with self-sacrifice in the making of change of epoch and transformation of the public consciousness for social welfare. As a necessary attribute for a modern subject, Galav knows both the horizon and limitation of reasoning: he must use it for the greater common good and for the change in the existing situation. In this specific case, 'art of doubt' leading to critical rationalism results in 'self-sacrifice' that in turn produces four key features of the shift in transformation of the age of slavery into the age of agriculture. Madhavi's four sons embody the features: Vashumana, Pratardan, Shivi, and Astak represent bravery, sacrifice, righteousness, and devotion to knowledge respectively. As an avid critique of the contemporary course of action in the repressive political order, Dixit seeks to arouse the four qualities in Nepal to bring about transformation in the existing socio-political consciousness.

Dixit makes use of the episode from the Mahabharat to contemplate on the transition of Nepali society in the 1970s. Madhavi and Galav's struggle collectively reminds himself of the quotidian reality for every Nepali in his time. The novelist coins a term "yugsandhi" (8) to refer to the confluence of two ages and also the transition from one era to the next where the former crumbles away to give way to the coming one that is also heavily backed up by the social imagination produced by its participants. In fact, Vishwamitra also plays a vital role in institutionalizing new ways in the society. He modifies the customary practice of human-sacrifice to conclude the ritual and the incident persist in the collective memory of the people. As Dixit writes, "It had not been forgotten that Vishwamitra had successfully caught the spirit of the age by detaining human-sacrifice to the Varuna in an effort to complete the jnagya" (11). As a creative form of expression, literature blends the historical resources in it by rewriting the contemporary social reality as well. In this connection, Stephen Greenblatt concludes, "Literary criticism has a familiar set of terms for the relationship between a work of art and the historical events to which it refers: we speak of allusion, symbolization, allegorization, representation, and above all mimesis" (11). The indirect presentation of the shifting spirit of Nepali society in the 1970s becomes the major issue in the text. The author

depicts the social reality in which the self has to come in direct confrontation with the polity for the oppressive nature of the latter.

The historical knowledge in the people lies in reminiscence because they lacked writing in past. Dixit implies the lack of theoretical framework of change in the people because of absence of the preceding age. It shows the parallel situation of Nepal in the time Dixit sets himself to write the novel. He sees Nepali society through the narrative of *Madhavi* and asserts the nature of change as witnessed through Marxist frame of interpretation (8). What is the motive of knowledge if viewed from the perspective of modernity in general and social change in specific? For Dixit, the answer emerges in the self-actualization of Galav and Madhavi who push the motor of social change through the transformation of their image into a major icon of self-sacrifice. The acting self goes deep into the core of the society to identify the incongruent aspects that expect intervention. The birth of critical rationality in Galav through art of doubt also implies Dixit's revolt against the tyrannical Panchayat system of his time. In fact, through the mouthpiece in the text, the author revolts against the then political system.

The political protests are born from such attempt to change the ways of the polity. The ordinary people gather unusual amount of power in them for the transformation of their plight. Dixit shows Galav the pathetic condition of slaves in Ahichchhatra. The slaves in chain resist the external dictation imposed upon them. They recite the mantra, "I am the soul" (80). Dixit thus telescopes the scene of resistance:

Prabepan said, "There won't be an end to the story if you start asking them the cause of everyday dispute between the slave and the sentry." In the meantime, the slave said, "I'm the soul" and spat on the face of the sentry. The guard got furious and began whipping the slave. Other guards also followed the suit: the chained slaves attempted to break the ties free and shouted aloud, "I'm the soul." They also charged back at the guards with whatever they could lay their hand on. (80)

The suffering and inhuman treatment of slaves in Ahichchhatra makes Galav more determined, for the system is itself demoralizing for both slaves and masters. Furthermore, he gets to realize that Ahichchhatra believes that only punishment safeguards the moral, social obligation of people toward the societal collective. Also, Todd May analyzes Foucauldian position of power that resembles the scene in Ahichchhatra. For him, power functions as a constraint in social structure. As May writes, "Power, in this case, works by what might be called constraint rather than restraint. But, like restraint, constraint works to limit one's options" (77). The vertical structure of the society detains the people's aspiration for freedom which parallels the historical reality of Nepal in Dixit's time. However, agents reject such dictation as they know that the social norms emerge out of human negotiation, meaning new forms can always come into existence. Jan R. Veenstra states: "The human self is a construct, not an essence" (180). Both Madhavi and Galav know the functional nature of life and society: they prepare themselves ready for change in the society. Ahichchhatra has already begun to head towards revolt where the slaves claim human position for themselves through their mantra, 'I am the soul.' Though Galav appears that he could not understand the meaning of mantra of slaves in Ahichchhatra, it implies that the slave-revolt is on the way and thus

slavery as an institution is crumbling away.

Social system like slavery degrade both the owner and the owned: the owner loses the sense of morality and the owned becomes a permanent commodity for the service of the owner. In the court of Ayodhya, Haryashwa undergoes the situation in which he fails to show any sense of morality. Madhavi severely challenges his ways as she resists him in the following words:

Haryashwa was elated and he turned his head towards Madhavi, excited with passion. Madhavi took Haryashwa's behavior as vulgarity and she thought it was an insult to her. Furious but polite, she said, "Oh King, do not look at me like the passionate priest of Ahichchhatra, Hamilak. You must not forget that the ignorant lot who look at the sun after getting light lose the remaining power of sight. Do you not have slave girls to satiate your sexual passion at your palace? If you do not have any, you find Yashi, Gandavi or Pichashi among the Vaishya of Ayodhya to physically gratify yourself. I have accepted to be your wife to give you a son in order to help complete Sage Vishwamitra's yajna. Believe me, I will accomplish this task and take your leave from here at the earliest..." (151)

As a way of life, slavery had made its impact on the whole social configuration in Ayodhya. Stephen Greenblatt argues, "... it is not politics alone but the whole structure of production and consumption . . . that generates the pattern of boundary making and breaking, the oscillation between the demarcated objects and monological totality. . ." (8). The rules of production and consumptions emerge more powerful than the political relations in society, for such politics obeys the logic of production. In other words, the relations of production and consumptions as manifest in Haryashwa's behavior at the court also subtly tell the gender relationships existing in the society. The oppressive order robs away dignity from both the ruler and the rule, preparing ground for resistance on the part of the general people against the unjust polity.

Call for Change

Dixit's *Madhavi* upholds the revolting youths who herald for change in their society. As agents, both Madhavi and Galav develop self larger than their society and their age. They analyze the society from unique standpoint and develop empathy for the slaves under the complete suppression of the social order. As a creative genius, the novelist presents the situation as a parallel case for change in his society. Very subtly, he claims that dissenting voices pave road for change in the 1970s in Nepal by posing direct challenge to the authority that exercises every form of coercion upon its citizens. The author had to face the atrocities of the state when his paper *Sameekshya* was closed in the late 1970s. His fight gains a very intense form when he realizes that Galav and Madhavi were also the dissenting voice of their time. Like the characters, the novelist seeks out the ways to attack at the weak spots in the political system.

The political struggle of the characters implies Dixit's quest for self larger than the polity, for he argues that only such self can bring about complete transformation in the political and social order. The tale from the Mahabharata functions as a means to contemplate on the nature of contemporary society that secretly calls for complete transformation in its ways of thinking, behaving, and acting as such. Galav and Madhavi

prepare themselves ready for self-sacrifice as they realize the necessity of self larger than the polity to enforce change in society. Dixit's Nepal has fallen prey of a repressive order that requires rescue. He captures the dissenting spirit of the society in the late 1970s and tellingly presents it to critique the political system that has gone defunct in terms of recognizing the need of equality and freedom for its citizen.

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Literature in Language Syllabus: Space and Contributions

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Abstract

This study explores the place of literature in language syllabus and analyzes how literature supports language enrichment, extensive reading and critical reading. Literature for language enrichment describes how literature supports the development of language skills in students. Literature for extensive reading deals with how literature supports the development of inferential and literary skills. Likewise, literature for critical reading describes how literature contributes to the development of intellectual skills in students. For this, theoretical and empirical studies have been consulted. Similarly, five teachers teaching English language/literature at university level as primary sources have been interviewed to collect data. The data collected from interviews have been discussed under four different themes. The study concludes that literature occupies an important space in language syllabus as literature is pedagogically, linguistically and aesthetically embedded. Literature in language syllabus is relevant to teach language skills, for example, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The study shows that literature provides the ground to teach literary and inferential skills: commenting, appreciating, characterizing, finding clues, developing supporting details, drawing conclusion. In addition, literature supports to teach intellectual skills: analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting using literary criticism.

Keywords: literature, language enrichment, language syllabus, extensive reading, critical reading, inferential skills.

Introduction

Literary texts are rich in language use and content. Carefully selected literary texts in language teaching offer language input and exposure through multiple models of creative language. As literature is interactive, evocative, and authentic material to carry out different teaching learning activities, literature is concerned with the development of

better comprehension and widening the horizon of language. Agustín Reyes Torres writes in favour of the extensive use of literature in language syllabus as the reading of literature improves students' command of language engaging them in different innovative activities (9). As a resource of language teaching, literature presents how language and context are interwoven. Reading literature encourages students to draw the literal interpretation of the texts as well as to decipher the meaning in context or to elicit the implied meaning of the texts. Won Kim views that literary texts present a series of language patterns in context and such use of language as its finest level motivates the students to search for multiple meanings through discussions and group work (6). In addition, literature courses in language teaching support students to draw on their own language, promote cultural competence, life experiences in them, and lead them to literary appreciation. Mingshui is of the opinion that (multicultural) literature in language curriculum leads students from information to empowerment, consequently, they develop the ability to identify, critically analyze and to solve problems related to class, culture and other differences (qtd in Fernandes and Alsaeed 128). Literary texts of diverse themes facilitate language teaching and learning to extensive reading through their beautiful illustrations of subject matter and high quality rhetoric. Yesemin Kirkgoz rightly says that exploring literature leads students to creative writing in which students express their imagination, develop advanced language proficiency, and the skill of aesthetic reading (401).

However, literature in language teaching has been facing several ups and downs from history to date. The advent of structural approach to language teaching showed a strong resentment about the inclusion of literature in language teaching and this historical attempt invited the language literature contestation that remained sharp for several years. As mentioned in Ram Ashish Giri, the pleaders of structural approach argued that literature is useless in meeting students' academic and/or occupational goals (36). With the changing pace of time, the development of the communicative approach to language teaching has acknowledged literature as a material to foster communicative competence. Moreover, literature has been used to expand the horizon of knowledge in students after the development of content language integrated teaching/learning. But a big chunk of language teachers yet are not free of the historical contestation of literature in language teaching and feel problematic, have confusion about the inclusion of literature in language syllabus. Instead of teaching language through the wider use of literary texts, they treat literature as a complementary material only to other ordinary materials or informative texts. In this context, Alan Maley puts forward the argument that the role of literature in language teaching remains contentious because of the differences in interpretation of the precise nature of that role (180). Maley has shown the role of literature as 'a resource,' and as 'a subject' and such treatment indicates that they are two separate pedagogical practices. The present status of literature in language teaching, to some extent, resembles what Maley argued around twenty years ago. It shows that literature in language teaching still occupies the space of handmaiden. In other words, the stakeholders of language teaching have not widely accepted literature as a valuable material to teach language skills and content knowledge. The present study attempts to explore and analyze the space and contribution of literature in language syllabus.

Literature Review

The use of a wide range of styles, varieties of utterances, registers, and rich content of literature contribute to language teaching for linguistic and aesthetic purpose. Lazar argues that literature in language syllabuses has been serving as an authentic and a motivating material for language development. Students enjoy reading literature and interpret it critically and creatively (14). The reading of literature allows students to do collaborative and innovative tasks. Ronald Carter and Michael Long are of the opinion that literature in language teaching encourages students to engage in many language-based and critical response -based exercises by stimulating greater interest as a legitimate and valuable resource (qtd. in Baba 48). In contrast to this view, Geoff Hall argues that it is problematic to integrate language and literature since they are treated separately in the classroom. He further claims that literariness is biased when the focus of teaching learning is language, and linguistic elements are underplayed when the focus is literary understanding (47).

Literature is a part of culture, the site of social harmony and difference. Reading literature as the study of Malin Oshaug Stavik puts it, makes students acquainted with new values and perspectives that help them get a better understanding of other cultures (117).

Literature in language syllabus can foster language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Hulya Kucukoglu and Arda Arikan (1718); Rashad Mohammed Areqi (20) argue that the teaching learning of literature treats students as a part of literary texts and acquaints in them the notion of culture, enriches vocabulary, speech sounds, and language functions. Their study reveals that literature acts as a powerful agent by developing students' language proficiency. Likewise, the study of Gaus Azam Chowdhury and Anjum Mishu concludes that literary texts facilitate to design communicative tasks: discussions, pair and group work, read discuss and share. The study regards the brain of students as a social organism and literary texts always keep their brain functional by engaging them in different learning activities (261).

Literature in language teaching widens students' horizon of knowledge by involving them in different activities of literary understanding. Moreover, literature is aesthetically valued material and can support language teaching and learning for aesthetic purpose. Following the same vein, Rosenblatt (1994) argues that literary texts engage students in the process of meaning construction through efferent reading (reading for literal interpretation) and aesthetic reading (reading for critical purpose) using transaction (qtd. in Stavik 22). She further declares that they are two separate stances of reading or two extremes of the continuum. It is further justified by the study of Marry L. Mereedi that transactional literature discussion is a way which EFL teachers can scaffold the strategies to adopt aesthetic instruction that encourages students for critical readings (103).

After observing the situation of literature and language teaching for two decades, Ronald Carter has presented his own synthesis that the notion of literature in language teaching is relative and literature is seen as a means of introducing learners to such burning issues of our world by initiating them in the process of defining themselves through contact with others' experience (3). His report further reveals that

the role of literature in language teaching has been expanded to extensive and critical readings. The study of Lestari Setyowati and Sony Sukmawan further supports the aforementioned interpretation of Carter. Their study claims that language teaching and literary appreciation can be integrated for the purpose of extensive reading but they do not mention the procedures (134). Likewise, the studies of Saroja Dhanapal (2008); Suzanne Shen Choo (2012); Naraini Ahmad Shukri and Jayakaran Mukundan (2015) have concluded literature as a means to develop critical thinking ability in students. Their studies do not directly discuss the classroom procedures using primary data. The aforementioned studies have shown less concern on how literature serves language development, extensive readings and critical readings nor have they discussed the relationship among these steps of reading literature. This study presents how literature contributes to carry out different teaching learning activities for language enrichment, literary appreciation and critical readings, and also highlights the relationship among them.

Methodology

This study is based on descriptive/ analytical research design under qualitative approach. The theoretical as well as empirical works were used to fulfill the purpose of the study. The major authors of literature in language teaching have been consulted in order to build up the theory. They are Lazar (1993), Maley (2001), Carter (2007), Rosenblatt (1994), Hall (2005). Likewise, the empirical works of Irene (2015), Soomro (2017), Baba (2008), Stavik (2015), Mereedi (2013), Setyowati and Sukmawan (2018), Choo (2012), and Shukri and Mukundan (2015) have also been used. As a primary source of data, five informants teaching English language and literature for more than ten years at university level have been selected. The data are collected via written interviews with selected informants. For this, the interview guideline has been prepared (See in Appendix). Thematic network has been used for analyzing the collected data. Accordingly, the data have been codified, categorized and analyzed under each theme qualitatively.

Results and Discussions

The collected responses (data) from interviews have been discussed under the following four themes.

The Space of Literature in Language Syllabus

Literature in language teaching faced vicissitude in the past. There had been arguments in favor and against the inclusion of literature in language teaching. This sub-section aims at finding out the place of literature in language syllabus. In item 1, the informants responded in affirmative:

Yes, undoubtedly. Literature has space in language syllabus. The beauty of language syllabus is diversity. Literature as a creative sample of language encourages students to a wider range of language practices. It is included in language syllabus in order to teach different language items and skills although some pleaders are reluctant about the use of literature in language syllabus.

Literature is the use of language, students enjoy reading it as an important part of language teaching and learning. It has been accepted as a material to teach skills and content.

Majority of the informants responded that literature has space in language teaching as literature is one of the manifestations of language. According to them, literature is a useful resource to teach language skills and other aspects of language, for example, vocabulary, speech sounds and language functions. Literature is an expression of creative language, it is motivating and interesting. In language syllabus, literature is supportive to teach and learn meaningful communication and elaborated content. Literary texts of diverse samples of language use and themes expose students to a wider range of language practices and ample textual opportunities to analyze and interpret.

It reveals that literature has important space in language syllabus. In response to the next issue connected with item 1, the majority of the informants presented their views, “No, this is simply a superficial view. Literature provides space for stylistic analysis, engages students in creative tasks and discussions for criticality.” Majority of the informants negated the views of some ELT experts about the futile and problematic role of literature in language syllabus. The informants pleaded that literature is psychologically motivating, linguistically and culturally rich and aesthetically loaded construct. Literary texts expose students to language-based activities and promote greater tolerance for cultural differences, and are useful for aesthetic recreation. It proves that literature serves language syllabus from linguistic, cultural, aesthetic and pedagogic point of view. This interpretation is similar to Irene (2015); Mart (2017); and Healy (qtd in Soomro et al 67) who argue that literary texts provide students opportunities to perceive aesthetic recreation, the ground for linguistic/ stylistic analysis, and engage students in meaningful activities/ interactions. However, one of the informants responded, “Yes, I agree with some of the ELT experts to some extent. Some literary texts, particularly some poems and experimental fictions can have the sort of structural complexities. It depends upon the selection of literary texts.”

All literary texts do not contribute to language teaching equally. Some texts of poems and classics, experimental texts do have nominal contribution to students’ proficiency and skills. However, wisely selected literary texts contribute a lot to language development in students. It shows that the proper selection of literary texts makes the contribution of literature to language teaching more relevant.

Literature for Language Enrichment

The informants in item 2 expressed their views, “Literature sharpens students’ proficiency of language, it results in the proficiency of listening, speaking, reading and writing.” One of the participants shared his experiences with evidence, “Even at the level of Masters, I have witnessed the students, who were incompetent in language when they joined the literature programme, became skilled speakers, presenters at the completion of semesters.” The informants were affirmative about the roles of literature in sharpening students’ language proficiency and argued that such access to language manifests in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The informants expressed their views on how literature supports the teaching

and learning of the aforementioned skills. They responded their views in common:

Literary texts, while teaching and learning of listening and speaking, facilitate to carry out the activities: predicting, comprehending, arguing, making a gist, describing, discussing; for reading, they support to carry out the activities: reading comprehension, compare and contrast, unscrambling, summarizing, paraphrasing, commenting, appreciating, finding clues, making conclusions; and in writing: analyzing, interpreting, critically appreciating, creative writing.

Majority of the informants viewed that the literary texts such as poems, dramas, essays, and fictions contribute to design and carryout the activities for language enrichment/ language development, particularly in fostering students' language skills. While teaching in classroom, the teacher encourages students to listen to the text of literature, for example, a poem or certain part(s) of long text and asks them to predict the substance of the text, to comprehend the questions, to describe the main message of the text or to explore and describe the implied meaning of the text.

Students listen to their teacher and guess the theme of the text, answer the questions either given by a teacher or mentioned in the text, describe the theme of the text, search for the meaning in context. They can argue in favour or against the statement found in the text. Likewise, the teacher ask students to read the text and do the activities: comprehend the textual questions, develop the literal interpretation of the text, compare and contrast the ideas, arrange the events of drama or fiction in order, paraphrase and narrate the events of the text, comment and appreciate the text, discuss and justify the theme and/ or title of the text. Students read and answer the textual questions, develop literal interpretation of the text on the basis of these concepts/ information. They compare and contrast the issues/ ideas existing in the text, unscramble the events, paraphrase the text in simple versions. They appreciate or comment on the text on the basis of language, diction, message and style. Similarly, students critically appreciate the text, interpret it and develop creative writing and free writing as activities in writing skills. These discussions lead to the conclusion that literature contributes to language development in students by engaging them in the activities: predicting, making a gist, arguing and analyzing, commenting and critically appreciating, analyzing and interpreting, free and creative writing. These activities ultimately develop students' proficiency, improve their gripping of language and such access to language is manifested through speaking, reading and writing.

Whether literature in language syllabus contributes equally to teach all language skills was the next issue for discussion. Majority of the informants presented their views, "No, all genres do not serve equally to teach each language skill. Poetry, for example, is useful to teach listening; one-act play and short stories for speaking; essay, poem and short stories for reading, and fiction, drama for writing." The informants argued that all genres are not equally effective to teach each language skills. Particular genres are more effective to teach specific skills. They categorically presented their experiences, for example, poetry and short stories because of their average length contributes better to teach listening; drama and short stories because of their essential quality, for example, interaction and narration contribute more effectively to teach speaking to develop oral performance and the skill of order in students; essay, poems and fictions serve reading;

and long texts, for example, novels and dramas for writing. However, one of the informants showed reluctance about the contribution of poetry to language development. The discussions lead to the conclusion that particular genres of literature have better efficacy to teach specific skills although every text can have more or less contribution.

In response to the role of literature in language teaching, either as a first hand material or an ancillary to non-literary material, the informants shared their experiences, "Literature in language teaching should not be used as a complementary to ordinary materials because literature has its own value like other materials. Literary texts arouse learners' interest in language and literature." Majority of them pleaded that the role of literature in language teaching is not ancillary to non-literary materials, literature stands as an autonomous construct. Its role is to serve the language teaching. Two of the informants responded, "Literature should be used as a first hand material in language teaching. It cannot be accompanied with other non-literary materials to teach language." According to them, the focus should be language. Language is a social/ cultural construct and literature is the best road to acquire and develop language. With the help of this discussion, it is interpreted that literature is an integral part of language teaching.

Literature for Extensive Reading

Whether literature in language syllabus contributes to extensive reading is the issue discussed in this subsection. The informants expressed their views:

Unlike other materials in language teaching, literature opens a door to an infinite world of human conditions, burning issues, other variegated ideas, and the use of life-like interactions. The texts prescribed in the syllabus help students to develop their literary appreciation, skill to express their speculation, students are likely to analyze the themes and titles of literary texts, figures of speech, registers and dictions, style. They can develop supporting details. It is through extensive reading.

Majority of the informants shared their experiences that literary texts are rich in content, they include variegated world ideas. The texts of drama and novel with large length and elaborated subject matters are useful for extensive readings.

Literary texts expand students' horizon of knowledge and provide students with ample opportunities for literary appreciation. While appreciating literary texts, students analyze the registers and dictions, metaphors, and other figures of speech, describe the styles, for example, narrative, meditative, communicative, aloof, flash back, intrusive and un-intrusive. Students can sketch the characteristics, explain the context of the text and decipher the implied meaning, analyze the themes and justify the titles of literary texts. In this practice, students perceive the facts and gather the information of the texts as well as elaborate them, analyze them using their own perspectives. They accomplish such tasks without applying any theories of literary criticism. They develop their own perspectives and appreciate/analyze the literary texts. One of the informants shared his experiences, "The practice of literary appreciation instigates students to speak, to share their ideas although it can be limited, students begin to think from their own concepts." It is interpreted that literary texts, along with contributing to language enrichment, support extensive reading. This practice is the development of conceptualization of the text.

Literature for Critical Reading

How far literature contributes to critical readings in students is another issue discussed in this study. The informants shared their views:

Of course, we teach. Literature is aesthetically embedded, it is an intellectually loaded construct. The difference between literary and non-literary material, is the issue of eminence, the purpose of writing, whether intellectual or others.

Literary texts are real life texts, have the live interactions of human life and the issues related to it. It has the quality of aesthetic recreation.

One of the informants gave evidence from 'A Raisin in the Sun' and from 'To Kill a Mockingbird' on how students analyze the aesthetics existing in them. He further viewed, "Critical reading is a part of the job that literature in language teaching serves. It enables students' judgemental capacity."

Majority of the informants presented their views that literature serves critical readings or literature serves for aesthetic purpose. Literature consists of such intellectual value or literature is written for academic/ intellectual purpose. This is what other disciplines do not have. Such quality of literature leads students to the practice of critical reading. It is further justified by the views of one of the informants. According to this practice, students explore the issues existed in literary texts and analyze them by applying the approach/es to literary criticism. For example, the aesthetics of segregation in 'A Raisin in the Sun', the dominance of unwritten laws to written laws in "To Kill a Mockingbird." These issues, the plots, themes, titles or the whole text is analyzed using critical lenses, for example, reader response, feminist approach, new criticism, Marxist approach. As literary texts have such intellectual eminence, life like dialogues and rich content, they contribute to critical readings.

In response to the next issue, the informants viewed that literature in language syllabus serves language enrichment, literary appreciation and critical readings. In literature for language enrichment, students develop conceptualization, literal interpretation of the text; in literary appreciation or extensive reading, students comment, appreciate, characterize, justify the title using their own perspectives; in critical reading, students analyze the plots, themes or any existing issues applying literary criticism. It shows that these three constructs/ stances are not separate practices. They are interrelated to each other, for example, literal interpretation is the base of literary appreciation, and critical reading is based on literary appreciation.

In response to the issue whether exploring literature through language and analyzing literary texts applying different approaches to literary criticism leads students to critical thinking skills and creative writing, the informants viewed, "Students due to their continuous exposure to literary texts and exploring them linguistically and analyzing them applying different approaches to literary criticism develops the skills of critical thinking and leads students to creative writing." Majority of the informants responded that students' regular exposure and deliberate attempt to literary texts visualizes the images/ symbols used in these texts. It leads them to write a new poem or a drama on similar or different themes. For critical reading, One of the informants expressed, "Students start understanding the matter one by one, they bring out more than depicted in the words using different perspectives, they make value judgement of the things

happening in the text.” While analyzing literary texts applying approaches to literary criticism, students explore the texts as hinted in the theoretical backups of literary criticism, analyze the text on the basis of these theoretical elements, evaluate the devices adopted, synthesize on the basis of discussions, and interpret accordingly.

Conclusion

Literature serves as authentic material in language teaching. It is rich in language use and content. Literary texts in language syllabus contribute to language enrichment, extensive reading (literary appreciation) and critical readings. Literature serves advanced language proficiency in students and it is manifested in language skills. Literary texts contribute to carry out tons of activities to foster listening, speaking, reading and writing in students. Likewise, they serve extensive readings. Students analyze the language, style and the dictions of the literary texts, and they justify the titles, characterize the persons and discuss the themes. They develop literary skills: commenting, appreciating, and exploring the meaning in context. In addition, the teaching and learning of literature fosters students’ inferential skills: finding clues and supporting details, making conclusion. Literature is an aesthetically loaded construct and serves critical readings. Students read the literary texts, analyze them applying relevant approaches to literary criticism. They develop intellectual skills: analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting through critical reading. The study shows that these practices of literature in language syllabus are interrelated to each other, for example, language enrichment is the stage of conceptualizing and the base for extensive reading. Critical reading becomes significant when students connect it to extensive reading.

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Spatial Memory and Ecologically Displaced Subjectivity in Western Tharu Folk Songs of Nepal

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the folk dance songs of Dangaura Tharu from the perspective of space, memory, and performance. The paper establishes the relationship between Tharu subjectivity and conscience of their past topography inherent in their folk dance songs. In one aspect where the overall folk performance of Tharu reflects their lifestyle, in another aspect, their folk songs and rituals assist them to connect with the natural environment where they inhabit. This paper has brandied their performance as the art reflecting their bucolic lifestyle and melancholic memory. The songs have been collected, translated, and interpreted from different visual sources and personal communications. To analyze the primary texts, the notion of folklore performance from Alan Dundes, Richard Schechner, and other different folklorists have been utilized as the theoretical and review guidelines. The paper also includes the translated version of the songs. As for the indigenous culture aspirant like me, the study of folklores of Tharu indigeneity helps us to understand the spatial memory of one of the largest ethnicity of Nepal and their socio-economic history. It will provide a new perspective of their historical changes from literature which have not been critically assessed in the already conducted studies. Hence, the findings of the research helps us to understand the necessary social index of one of Nepal's largest indigeneity.

Keywords: Tharu folklore, performance, spatial memory, Kamaiyahood, Tharu-subjectivity,

Introduction

The folk dance tunes of Dangaura Tharu mirror the empathy and eco-cognizance rehearsed from a crude age. Tharu people generally have endured living respectively with nature, using and battling against catastrophes. Tharu dance melodies: *Sakhiya*,

Sajana, *Dhamar*, *Jhumra* fuse the issue of eco-subjectivity inherent in the form of eco-musicology. Thus, the development of Tharu-self can be studied by examining their folklore. The study of Tharu subjectivity by examining their folklore from eco-critical subjectivity has rarely been incorporated in the academic discussion.

Methodology

This paper has used a qualitative approach to study the narratives of the Tharu folk songs from a critical perspective of ecological subjectivity. For the analysis of songs, the YouTube video and folk singers are consulted. For videos, CS Films, RKC digital, and other various online video songs are consulted. Along with this singers Shantaram Tharu, Maniram Kariyamaghariya, Manmati Bakhariya, and Shanti Chaudhary are enquired time and again. The performances have been analyzed considering the Dangaura Tharu folklores of five districts: Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur. After the collection of songs, they were translated from Tharu language to the Standard English version. The paper has utilized the descriptive analysis to examine the performance. The wide research of Alan Dundes on folklore has also been used to interpret the closest definition of folklore. Similarly, Richard Schechner's concept of everyday experience as performance has also been analyzed the incorporation of environment- friendly behavior of the community. Besides, the conceptual reviews on folklore have been primarily emphasized.

Literature Review

The folklores collected under any themes should be analyzed to decipher their historical implications. This paper examines the context of Dangaura Tharu folk songs in the light of ecology, memory and topography. This study analyzes the songs of Tharu folk dances scripted from available YouTube videos. This paper makes a thorough attempt to validate the abundance of nature, paganism, and ecological conscience in Tharu folk performance. For instance, Alan Dundes's analytical essays describe folklores as the mirror of culture. Thus, he emphasizes the literary criticism of lore. His primary focus has been on the critical analysis of the contexts of such lore so that the memory of the performers could be understood.

The dance, songs, rituals, cult, art, and oral traditions include tradition, literacy, memory, and sense of place. *Dhamar*, *Jhumra*, *Mynah*, *Sajana*, and *Mangar* include different layers of memory. The performers mention about their relationship with the landscape, ecology, and community in the past. The songs include the sense of displaced eco-individual, loss of native habitat, the symbolism of animals, birds, and plants. Moreover, the ritualistic folklores include the contextual theme of the performance. Since the performance is community-run throughout the whole year, each dance has its own specific context. Though most of them are agrestic in tone, not all performances simply blend the annual routine of the peasants. For instance, *Dhamar* could be about the family separation during the festival of *Maghi*. Similarly, *Mangar* could be the anxiety of a woman who leaves her home after the marriage.

Folklores have been interpreted in different notions. For instance, Dundes tries to change the cliché of folklore definition. He defines folklore as autobiographical

ethnography (55). The folklores are the performer's own version of their description. However, we should not get confused with the folk performance as simply the relic of their past rather they should be understood as an expression of their contemporary way of life. Nonetheless, such contexts would also assist the whole community through their artists as Franz Boas believes to be stress free from "social sanctions, suppressed wishes, and anxieties" (55). Tharu folk dance items like *Maghauta* and *Sakhiya* are performed to appease their ancestral gods. These rituals help them to be more autonomous through public exhibitions. They help them to assert their presence in social strata.

Chhokra, *Dhamar*, *Jhumra*, *Mangar*, and *Sajana* each have their own context to be performed in Tharu community. For instance, *Chhokra* and *Jhumra* signify the initiation of puberty, adulthood, and *Dhamar* signifies the arrival of *Maghi*. *Mangar* is recited during the marriage when the girl leaves her home (as the farewell song). *Sajana* resembles the initiation of paddy sowing season. Dundes considers such folklores as an occasion to deal with the crucial stages of one's life. He asserts, "Folklore in all cultures tends to cluster around the critical points in the life cycle of the individual (e. g. , birth, initiation, marriage, death) and the calendrical cycle of the community (e. g. sowing, harvesting, etc)" (64). The folk performance of Tharu community revolves around diverse themes; for instance, *Jhumra* reflects the intimacy between sister-in-law and brother-in-law. Likewise, many of these performances include the fantasy of the composers and the artists.

The literary interpretation should be must to disseminate the symbolism, motif, and overall theme of any folk performance. Thus, Dundes disagrees with such scholars who simply archive the information. The collection of information fails to produce the meaning of the performance. He validates the difference as:

The problem is that for many folklorists identification has become an end in itself instead of a means to the end of interpretation. Identification is only the beginning, only the first step. Folklorists who limit their analysis to identification have stopped before asking any of the really important question about their material. (70)

The soundness of academic subjects thus emerges from the critical interpretation of social behaviors. It was Bronislaw Malinowski who first discussed the fallacy of collecting mere texts. He observed, "The text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context, it remains lifeless" (qtd. in Dundes 80). Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of oral literature is required. Thus, the efficacy of context to interpret the meaning of the performance should always be prioritized. The folk performance includes the social behavior: events, beliefs, customs, ceremonies, materials, and skills of a particular group. Tom Crum answers how folklore can be the significant approach to comprehend history:

A people's perception of their history is often formed not so much from knowledge of facts as from the traditional knowledge passed on to them through folklore. A great many people are much more familiar with folklore's rendition of an historical event than they are with the actual facts of the event, and this form their opinion of and sets the standard for "truth" as to the event. (qtd. in Untiedt 5)

Folklore helps to persuade and win the consent of the spectators and artists more

proficiently than history. Since, majority of the folklore artists and the community which preserves it has little literacy to comprehend the facts of history through books and papers, the performance suffice as the best approach to unite and persuade them about their memory. Tharu folk songs incorporate the animate characters of birds, animals, trees, flowers, and even natural landscapes. Graham Anderson discusses the association of creatures and plants with the signs of good and bad fate across the folklores. "It might be a mountain top, a grove in a wood, or some similarly remote place, where the supernatural can be readily evoked or imagined or where previous associations can be drawn on" (Anderson 168). Similarly, diverse usage of animal mythology could also be witnessed in Tharu Barkimar [Tharu Version of Mahabharat]. In the "Barka Banwa" song, the artists refer to various natural topography which is directly related to their religious beliefs. Such as *Banshakti Mata* (Goddess of Jungle who is supposed to protect the folks from the enchantments of the jungle). For instance, the people of the Basanta corridor worship the bumps on one of the trees believing it to be the elephant god. Moreover, the reference of "Swans" is also visible in their songs. Thus, the animated usage of these creatures reinforces the notion of an animate world signifying the existence of distinct life behavior among all the entities.

Tharus in their folk dances reflect on how their day starts during harvest season. Richard Schechner in his performance studies explores dance and ritual as an imitation of social action (29). In defining the imitative quality of performance, Schechner derives the ideas from Aristotle: "Art always comes after experience. The separation between art and life is built into the idea of mimes" (qtd. in Schechner 28-29). He finds ritualistic dance more inspired by social actions. Furthermore, some ritualistic dancing that involves serious moves may be instigated by 'the spirit' (40). Thus, the devotion to transcendental power and divinity could be well analyzed in folk performance. Similarly, while defining, the ritual as performance, Victor Turner states, "Ritual is a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words and objects, performed in a sequestered place and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests" (Deflem 5). For Turner, the ritualistic performance reveals the crucial social values of a community. For instance, Tharu *Jhumra* songs comprise the body movements, musical instruments, dress, and make-up to reflect the varied emotions of human life. These include the separation of a lover, initiation of love affair and joy of spring, and numbness of winter.

Social rules and philosophical ideas behind the performances are inherent in the rituals of every community. In similar case, Clifford Geertz finds that interpretation of cultural performance vital to understand the meaning of a complex cultural web (Yengoyan 270). He synchronizes the interpretation of the text with the interpretation of culture since the text is the production of a certain culture. The textual interpretation of Tharu folk songs signifies the annual life cycle of a Tharu peasant whose life in the past and to some extent still in the present remains around the peasantry. For instance, Carol Rosen in her review of Schechner's performance theory finds performance as the study of the use of aesthetic perspective in social psychology (253). She interprets Schechner's notion of performance as an art whose subject, structure, and action is a social process. She interprets Schechner's performative theory as the approach that studies everyday life

as the art form.

Since humans possess the capacity to develop concepts and are physically more privileged to produce their concepts into practice, they have culture, art, and innovations. Bruce McConachie asserts, “Humans can make conventions for dancing, ritual, and other folk performances. They can step in and out of their roles as dancers, beauty queens, and musicians in order to rehearse and platform for others. Performance by humans is possible due to the presence of conceptual integration among them” (42). McConachie finds performance aesthetic possible in humans since humans possess the capacity to form and conceptualize ideas into the exhibition. Deborah Kapchan reveals performative arts and rituals as the mediums of certain messages. She argues, “To perform is to carry something into effect –whether it be a story, an identity, an artistic artifact, a historical memory, or an ethnography” (479). For instance, *Jhumra* songs interpose the themes of their peasantry, displacement, family relations. They transmit the participants from their hierarchy to the mass. These performative occasions, as Turner’s idea of liminality, reflects the hierarchy of the community and at the same time end that hierarchy.

Folklores have been conceptualized as the behavior of the rural communities. E. Phillips Barker defines folk dancing as “Dancing which has evolved among the peasantry and is maintained by them in a fluid tradition without the aid of the professional dancer, teacher or artist and is not at least in the observed, practiced in towns, on the stage, or in the ballroom” (qtd. in Buckland 317). On similar point, Theres Buckland asserts the birth of such dance from the peasantry life. Likewise, Stetson Kennedy also observes folk dance as natural and profoundly spontaneous (Buckland 318). Buckland catches the improvised structures of folk dance in rural communities. Nancy Lee ChalfaRuytes defines the existent of folk dance on two bases. First, she finds folk dance solely produced by and for the folk community themselves. Second, she finds folk dance existing for diverse purposes. She asserts, “They can exist as the content of research, fun, sport, hobby and larges communication” (269). Folk dance should be appreciated as the genre having multiple qualities in them.

Folklores blend myth, epic, history, and cultural values of the communities. John Greenway also interprets folk songs as the socio-historical approach. For him, understanding folksongs help any scholar, researcher, and observer to dwell deep into to socio-historical values of a particular community. Rural people use them because such ballads suits their stories: “The form of literature which best suits the alley is the ballad. A striking proof of the influence which poetry combined with music possess over the human mind, even when most hardened and depraved” (5). Moreover, Rita J. Martin finds folklores quite useful for children to develop their language power. She argues, “As a result of singing, hearing and reading folk songs, expressive ad receptive vocabularies increase” (326). The unusual sentence patterns and unfamiliar words used in folk songs develop language proficiency and research skills in children.

Folk dances combine diverse themes ranging from romance, comedy to tragedy. In a true sense, social actors’ actions are being imitated as the performance categorizing them into different genres. Philip Barry differentiates folk ballads into two types: ballads of the situation and the ballad of introspection. For him, the ballad of situation impresses the listener and observer by the realism of action whereas the latter one by the centrality

of the chief character. They may represent misfortune and lamentation. Barry defines the folk song as “a treasure house of the events of human experience in all possible phases, of all the lights and shadows of human fancy, and furthermore, of all that by common consent of the folk is beautiful” (274). For instance, Tharu *Jhumra* songs also narrate the diverse emotions and fancies of the participants explicating their daily turmoil and ecstasy. Similarly, R. L. Tongue finds that the folklorists often use very common and abundant objects around them as particular symbols, such as flowers for women, trees for protection, and birds for good and bad signs. In *Jhumra* songs as well, references of flowers, birds, and trees are found in abundance which can be interpreted from the thematic perspective of love, family bond, goodwill, and miseries of life.

Discussion

Tharu folksongs reflect the community’s memory of *Buhran* (displaced migration from inner Dang valley). According to the songs and prevalent perception of the community, the migration occurred as an unbearable force when the Tharus could not withhold the pressure of the hill caste community who tricked them. *Mynah* and Sakhya songs often reflect the themes of such displaced topography and memory. Tharus who do not prefer to live disturbed life chose to migrate from their first habitat to the plains of Tarai. The songs not only reflect the pain of getting displaced but also narrate their suffering under the Kamaiya system. The privileged community oppressed them to work under harsh circumstances in the fields paying minimum wages. However, they failed to resist it then due to the lack of collective social agency and illiteracy. The intolerable suppression forced them to migrate from their native place. The song from the movie *Buhran* (2007) expresses the journey of similar displacement:

Hey *Mynah*, all our body looks similar but the why the tunes of flute differ
The hermit is playing the flute tiririri, tiririri
Hey *Mynah*, all our body looks similar but the why the tunes of flute differ
(Trans mine)

The woman in the song expresses different shades of life comparing them with the different tunes of the hermit’s flute. The jogi’s (hermit) music in various rhythms shows the sufferings of subjectivity during their migration from the Dang valley to the plains. The reference of *Mynah* birds who are friendly and adapt well living in cages, breed well under captivity seems to connect Tharu subjectivity. The memory unveils their subjugation until the exploitation became unbearable.

Tharus are socially heterogeneous. They share no common social image, like language or religion or even a typical myth of root. As mentioned in Guneratne’s study, Provincial British records also describe the Tharus as meek and resigning subjectivity resisting more multicultural society. This situation was especially prevalent when the Tharus could not sustain to live with the non-Tharus who were then migrating to Tarai in maximum number. As the community became more diverse, they abandoned their territory and resigned further into the forests (Bennet and Cruickshank, Stevenson-Moore, Nevill, qtd. in Guneratne 754). Moreover, when they represented no dangers to the procurement request of land by the privileged community, the community gradually lost their sovereignty.

Similarly, Gisele Krauskopff perceives Tharus as an eco-based community than of any specific class (Guneratne 756). They rarely had any concern over the acquisition of more and more land mass. As Guneratne contends, “The prepared accessibility of land in the Tarai had left most Tharus with little enthusiasm for its worth” (759). Their ignorance became the reason for not being able to justify one’s property rights. Moreover, the large family system forced them to work for anything to feed the family. For instance, Krauskopff details about fishing food-culture in Tharu community. Although the Tharus are a farming community; fishing is integral to their way of life and rich source of metaphors (Guneratne 8). Guneratne examines that Chitwan Tharus accept that the force of their gods is firmly connected to the presence of forests. They believe that their gods leave the place if the forests are obliterated. They believe that when traditions are not followed, one cannot remember their ethnicity.

Tharu folk dance songs can be divided into ballads, epics, tales, proverbs, and riddles. They can be further classified into general, ritual, festival, seasonal, and field songs. The general folk songs are performed anytime irrespective of rites and rituals, seasons, and festivals. *Sajana* and *Mynah* are seasonal songs. Both are performed during the summer season. “Bangitwa” is the only Tharu song related to work which is articulated during the sowing of paddy crops (Acharya et al. 15). Tharu myths have both the man and the animal characters. The message through such mythical stories is the moral exercises. The conduct of the characters and the relations among them clandestinely presents the ecological consciousness innate in their cultural performance. In another Tharu *Mynah* song, Basanta Chaudhary et al sing:

Oh *Mynah*, I worked in the farm as the sharecropper
Will pay the tax after the cropping and will still again be in same condition
The kokni (broken rice) will last upto *Maghi* and the rice will last only upto
Dashain
Will pack up my belongings and leave for Buhran, Oh *Mynah*
I left my father, I left my mother (Trans mine)

In the dramatic performance of the above song, the artists express the grief of being unable to harvest enough for their livelihood under the sharecropping system. They articulate that they have to live under very basic sustenance with minimum production. Even that minimum harvest suffers on loan. The kamaiya does not expect better life as his life is still miserable despite working tirelessly. He is despair. Further, he mourns over the exploitation by their landlords. Thus, he expresses the pain of leaving their native place Dang.

Jugree and Mani Chaudhary (housewives whose songs have been uploaded on YouTube) in their *Mynah* song express the cordial relationship between *bhatu* (brother-in-law) and *sali* (sister-in-law). They reflect their passionate teasing with one’s brother-in-law:

Oh brother-in-law your frequently visit has begotten love in me
Oh brother-in-law, please go to your house after the chitchat
This evil love has made me weep day and night, oh *Mynah*
Oh *Mynah*, I will pluck the leaves of Peepal tree (Sacred fig) and make them the papers

I will write my spontaneous feeling on them

When will you take me to the good- far country, oh brother-in-law (Trans mine)
The two women express the heartfelt undertaking between a woman and her brother-in-law. They express their innate desire to abscond from the Dang valley with their brother-in-law to a promised land. They communicate their disappointment with him as they have worn out on trusting his promise. Their brother-in-law appears to be devilish and simply gives fake promises. All their equipped assortments have been worn out by the rodents. Thus, the women communicate their unfulfilled dream to have a prosperous life in a delightful place.

Similarly, Resham Chaudhary's song *Har Jowata Uthal Kamaiya* (The Labor Woke up at Dusk to Plough) from the film *Kamaiya* mentions the making of a Kamaiya subjectivity. According to the song, the Kamaiya has no better life to himself regardless of his tough job as a farm worker. The life of Kamaiya (male bonded labourer) and *Kamlahari* (female bonded labourer) cannot improve even after their hard work. Thus, the song echoes the agony of being a bonded labour. Being a Kamaiya pushes him back to an exceptionally troublesome and miserable life. In general, the song reveals us about the routine job of a Kamaiya:

The labour woke up in the shivering cold of dusk
The she-labour woke up in the early morning to beat the wooden rice grinder
The tattered blouse and skirt
The worn out patched shirt
With ups and downs, the life passed digging the watercourse (man-made streams in villages) (Trans mine)

The artist mentions the waking of the labour promptly in the dawn to furrow the field of his landlord. Similarly, the *kamlahari* (woman labour) also wakes up to grind the rice on *dheki* (wooden rice pounder). The woman's awakening at dawn burdens physical and mental torture on her. She bears the social shame of being a worker at another's home. In anticipation of some financial help, Tharu women in the past were forced to work at the landowner's home and they used to be mortgaged to the landlord. Thus, she had to be the subject of homegrown maltreatment. The male speaker's dresses are worn-out. His entire life has passed delving the streams in the village to facilitate the farm water. His nourishments are very basic like *kapwa* (flour soup) and *sinki* (preserved dry vegetable). He keeps himself busy with a wooden plough and yoke, *chhatri* (umbrella made of bamboo stripes and leaves utilized during paddy planting) throughout the day. His life has been confined in being a cowherd. In the last verse, the speaker blames his poverty for his habit of drinking *jaanr* (rice wine popularly produced in the Tharu community). Because of the propensity for their heavy intoxication, it was simple for hilly privileged caste community to cheat them.

Additionally, in another song *Baba Mora Jotal* (My Father Ploughed), Resham Chaudhary resonates about a sharecropper who suffers from the compulsive tradition of pursuing the Kamaiya system. The speaker gets thwarted with his children's miserable life as they also cannot assimilate socio-political development. He blames such wretched situation to the restrictions of their traditional system. Thus, he feels the need of education for his better life. Therefore, he does not like to continue his forefather's

occupation:

My father ploughed with the bent plough
The son will too plough for his whole life...
Oh listen brothers, sisters, listen sons and daughters, do not discriminate
between sons and daughters...

How long will you make me a plough boy, now please send me to school (Trans. is mine)
The speaker condemns his parents' illiteracy for his ignorance when he ends up constricted to farming and turning out to be Kamaiya throughout his entire life. The speaker's importune to his father to permit him to go to school emulates the significance of education. The socially stifled life observed by the speaker arises as the aftereffect of his ignorance. Therefore, the only way to change such social subjugation for his is to eliminate through awareness.

Similarly, Desh Raj Satgaunwa in his song *Dukhiya Kamaiya* (The Sorrowful Kamaiya) explains the treacherous incident in a Kamaiya's life due to conservative practices. The speaker in the song presents *Guruwa Kesauka* (Tharu Priest) as the person who vows to resolve others' suffering through the blood sacrifice of hen or lamb. The witch specialist (shaman) requests wine and chicken (rooster) for conciliating the malicious spirits and playing out the essential ceremonies to push off the problems of the individual. In a hope of getting rid of such nuisance, the ignorant Kamaiya believes the *guruwa*. He trusts that the *guruwa* would easily cast the evil out:

I a poor wretched Kamaiya from my birth...
How will I be able to survive?
My father and mother have grown old, lived their lives as Kamaiya...
I am burdened with the hills of loans,
How will I be able to get rid of them? (Trans mine)

The speaker discovers the performances of *guruwa* rather misleading to helpless people than actually elevating their decrepit circumstances.

As the time changed, most Tharus gave up their traditional practices as such practices didn't bring any positive change to their lives. With the rise of modernity, most Tharus who gradually moved to the towns failed to practice and continue their ceremonies. This cycle caused them to fail to remember their set of experiences. The majority of them currently comprise no memory of their conventional ceremonies.

Tharu Kamaiya songs include the Tharu community's suffering during *Buhran*. During the *Buhran*, Tharu's ecological life had to flee from their native place for a better future. The physical and social exploitation imposed on them by socially privileged communities became beyond their endurance. Therefore, they emigrated from the inner Dang valley. Migrating due to undesired and oppressive structures, Tharus found the western part of Tarai as the new home. The new home provided them a sense of security. However, they also mourn the bucolic past whenever they perform rich folklores. Their life was integrated into nature before they started to live urbanized life. In this way, the memory of relocation and ecological subjectivity often get inter-subjectivized in Tharu folklore.

Folklores of Tharus blend the narration of their history, way of life and inform the observers about their lifestyle. Their performances should be extended into

the epitome of implicit philosophical ideas. The performances should not merely be interpreted from the aesthetic pleasure rather the inquiry into the narration should be done to decipher great themes and symbols. As Mark Johnson asserts, “We need a philosophy that sees aesthetics as not just art, beauty, and taste but reasonably as about how human beings experience and make meaning” (169). The interpretation of the dance shouldn’t be only as the epitome of art and performance but as an interpretation of a wide array of meanings and symbols. Cultural performances are not just as a form of art but the way of life commingled with emotions, and evolution. Since, folklores are socio-historical artifacts and the important document for tracing the culture, social evolution, and identify markers, they need to be preserved. In addition, they reflect the composer’s personality and philosophy of the community, too. Therefore, the study of history needs to be imbued in folklore as well.

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Dead Body as a Terrifying Object: Body Politics in Rabindranath Tagore's "Living or Dead?"

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Abstract

The paper is an attempt to examine body politics in Rabindranath Tagore's short story "Living or Dead ?" Basically, it tries to answer why people behave differently with a dead and a living body and what is the politics behind it, through the life of Kadambini, the protagonist of the story. The story revolves around the life and death of Kadambini. She is a poor widow. When she is believed to be alive everyone treats her kindly. She is in a way epitome of kindness. She fosters the son of Jamindar. But when she becomes unconscious people think that she is dead. On the way to the burning ground, the Brahmins who take her body engages in other kinds of stuff. At the same moment, she gets her consciousness back but everyone thinks that she is already dead and becomes a ghost and walks away. When she comes back home suddenly she becomes a terrifying object. Everyone frightens with her even her own foster son. So, his paper argues that people behave living and dead bodies differently especially the word "death" itself performs a horror factor in Tagore's "Living or Dead?" Thus, the paper explores how the words living and dead play the role of power dynamics and change people's perceptions about the same body. To elucidate this statement Foucault and Butler's ideas on body politics are used.

Keywords: Body politics, terrifying object, death, living body, death ceremony, power politics, performance

The paper studies Tagore's short story "Kadambini" from the perspective of body politics. It tries to answer why the body performs different role while alive and considered to be dead in the life of Kadambini, the protagonist of the story. The narrative revolves around Kadambini who is a poor widow. When she is believed to be alive, she is a matter of pity and kindness. All of a sudden she becomes unconscious, she becomes a matter of fear. When she becomes unconscious zemindar's family regards her living body

as a dead body and takes her to the burning ground. On the way to the burning ground, her consciousness comes back but the Brahmins who carry her think that her dead body converted into a ghost. Not only people's perspective towards her changed but she herself starts to see her own body like a ghost. Her body becomes both theatre and spectator of her own fears. At last, she falls into the well to prove herself alive. Thus, it argues that death and the living body play different power dynamics in society and even power politics plays an important role both in a living and dead body.

"Kadambini" is the story of a poor widow. She lives in the house of Sadasankar, one of the Jamindars of the village named Ranihat because she is all alone. She fosters the son of Jamindar because his wife is sick for a long time. She loves him like his own son. One day suddenly she becomes unconscious and her heart stops beating. Without giving a single thought the Jamindar's family announces her death. And her dead body is carried away to the burning ground without a ceremony because she is a poor widow. No one thinks that her death is important enough for a ceremony. One the way to burning ground, Jamindar's Brahmin servants forget to carry matches because of that they cannot light their lamp. The burning ground is quite far from their village so there is already dark when they are carrying the body. All of the Brahmins leave Kadambini's body and went back to the village to bring light and cigarette. At the same time, she gains consciousness. In the beginning, she feels surprised and calls sister but no one answers. Her elder sister-in-law is warming some milk when she becomes faint. But all of a sudden she finds no one. Then she realizes maybe she is in the eternal journey of death. She herself becomes quite confused. She wants to come back to Jamindar's home but she realizes nothing worth going thereafter considered to be dead. Later she realizes that she has one best friend she will except her whatever she is and she goes to her house. Her friend welcomes her as a guest. But she is unknown about her past. She thinks that she has no one so she comes to live with her. Latter her friend's husband, Siripati knows that she is already dead but her friend does not believe. Although for her friend she is alive she herself becomes confused and sometimes frightens with her own body. Later Siripati tries to find out the reality and he comes to know that she is already dead. When Kadambini hears that thing from Sripati she leaves his home and goes to Jamindar's home. In Jamindar's home at first, she meets her foster son. She becomes happy to see her and says do leave me, auntie. Again she asks her are you dead? She says yes then suddenly she frightens with her and says leave me, aunty. Also, when Jamindar's wife sees her she also terrifies to see her thinking that she is a ghost. When her foster son says go away auntie she realizes the first time that she is not dead. And to prove that she is not dead she plunges into well then only people realize she was not dead.

The story has been studied as Tagore's ferocious attempt to give agency to a poor widow. Amiya Kumar Bagchi argues that it is a portrayal of a woman's condition in colonial society. He writes, "This story is a picturesque rendering of the helplessness of widows even in a rich man's family and the superstitious belief which preyed on such helpless women" (44). Bachi explores the story as Tagore's depiction of the human condition, especially oppressive relations. He focuses more on how human being practices their agent and talk about their freedom in his short story including "Kadambini." He concludes: "Tagore's portrayal of the human conditions are intricately

bound up with the complex relations within society, with the state generally as an actor blastering oppressive relations" (45). Thus he maintains that his work on these stories including "Kadambini" is more about portrayal of a human condition fighting with oppressive relations.

Similarly, Nandini Sen gives her view on women and gender in Tagore's short stories. She argues that Tagore's women characters challenge contemporary social norms. As she writes, "It was quite likely that his woman characters were not based on ethnographic observations. However, these characters represented, or rather challenged, contemporary norms of kinship related to gender very distinctively" (100). She gives more focus on how he mastery over the need and issue of lower and middle-class women although he was from a higher class.

Likewise, Somnath Maitra examines some of the distinctive aspects of Tagore's short stories. He argues that in Tagore's story we see Bangal's soul and humanity. Also, he claims that issue of women is also found in Tagore's work especially in short stories. He writes, "There are varieties of this theme in most of the other stories of the time, for the position of women and the disabilities under which they labored had always been for the matter of deep concern and occupied his thoughts almost constantly at this period"(26). Maitra places more emphasis on the central theme of Tagore's shorts stories and claims that among various themes the position of women had been Tagore's central concern.

Similarly, Sucheta M. Choudhuri opines that Tagore's short fictions explore social, political aspects of society. He writes, "Tagore's fiction from this period is characterized by remarkable psychological complexity and awareness of the problems-social, political and familial that the rural society was riddled with" (43). She explains more about the issues of Tagore's short stories.

Mary M. Lago also puts opinion about Tagore's short stories. The writer suggests that Tagore "underestimated the power and appeal of his own short fiction" (107). According to her, Tagore's women characters in his short fictions are liberated and strong enough to speak for their needs. She stresses more on the liberated woman of her short fiction.

Tagore's short stories had been observed from different perspectives mostly as a lyric. A. D Choudhuri explores Tagore's own experience about his short stories. He writes: "Tagore himself was of the opinion that his short stories are a realistic depiction of life as he observed it. In fact, when critics referred to them as lyric in quality he felt hurt" (74). Here he mentions that Tagore himself takes his short stories as the fruits of his experience not as lyric.

Most of the critical reception take the text as a portrayal of a human conditions fighting with oppressive relations, depiction of need of lower middle class women and some regards it as presentations of position of women. However, the body of the female character and the performance and the political nature of it is yet to be explored. That is why this is an attempt to explore the performativity of the female body in the text. So, this paper argues that people behave living and dead bodies differently especially the word "death" itself performs a horror factor in Tagore's story "Living or Dead?"

The body is a political phenomenon for ages. And the politics of the body has

more to do with power dynamics and knowledge. Mostly, we differentiate body and soul and we hardly believe that soul is also a part of the body. Michael Foucault is perhaps among those pioneer theorists of body politics who theorize the political aspects of the body. Similarly, Judith Butler also plays an important role to theorize the body politics of Julia Kristeva who had talked about the politics behind the female body. So in this research paper, we will use both Foucault and Butler's idea of body politics. Especially, it explores the body politic in the story focusing more on the politics behind poor woman's dead and the living body.

Although the story dwells upon the performative aspect of the dead and living body and power dynamics behind it the writer introduces the story by implicitly stating that the story is about the female body. Tagore implicitly acknowledges Kadambini's body as female by connecting her with maternity. Judith Butler quotes Julia Kristeva's concept of the maternal body as the female body (113). Kadambini's body is taken as a female body in the story by making her the foster mother of Jamindar's son. Tagore explains it in this way,

The child of her brother-in-law Saradasankar was her darling. For a long time after his birth, his mother had been very ill, and the widow, Kadambini had fostered him. If a woman fosters another's child, her love for him is all the stronger because she has no claim upon him. (79)

Here how the writer tells about not having a claim of her towards him, it connects Kristeva's idea as maternal instinct as the center of every female body and it has been subjugated and had been in the role of others for ages. Tagore starts the story with the introduction of Kadambini and her maternal instinct is to state her body as a female body. Then, he explores the performative aspects of it.

Eventually, the story unfolds the power dynamics of Kadambini's body in relation to life and death. At first, Tagore explains Kadambini as a poor widow who is living in the favor of Jamindar. But gradually he enters into the power dynamics of life and death of the female body. Tagore mentions that she dies suddenly and Jamindar's family gives the reason that her heart stopped beating. This kind of expression indicates that she is not even important enough to tell the reason of her death or her body is not important enough. Tagore further writes, "Lest they should be harassed by the police, four of the zemindar's Brahmin servants took away the body, without ceremony, to be burned" (79). Similarly, when we came to know that her dead body is taken without ceremony it makes us clear that her existence in society. And how power politics plays an important role even in a dead body also. Regarding this Foucault writes,

One should be concerned with the body politics, as a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and support for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them the object of knowledge. (27)

The power dynamics of that body plays an important role also after death. Because she is a poor widow even she doesn't get any ceremony after death and people subjugate her dead body. It shows the role of power dynamics towards the dead body.

Similarly, Tagore renders the power politics of death rituals in relation to the political aspects of the body. Jamindar's family does not perform the proper death ritual

of Kadambini and sends her body with Brahmins towards burning ground thinking that she is a poor widow and her dead body is not valuable enough. Power politics of body not only exist when we leave but it continues also after her death. Foucault writes, "But the body is also directly involved in a political field, power relations have an immediate hold upon it, train it, torture it, force it, to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies to emit signs" (25). And the impression of power politics we see towards Kadambini's dead body. And four Brahmins participate for the final rites of Kadambini, who fosters Jamindar's son like her own mother. It shows the power politics behind dead bodies after death also which indicates the political nature of the body. Even after death, people do not forget his/her when that person was living. Her status as a poor widow continues when everyone thinks that she is dead.

Tagore not only depicts power politics behind death rituals but also picturizes people's perception towards the dead body. Although Kadambini becomes only unconscious she is not dead everyone believes that she is dead. So, Jamindar's family sends four Brahmins to carry her body towards burning- ground to burn. When the Brahmins were about to perform her last rituals they are unable to light a lamp. After that two Brahmins move towards the village to bring wood. They also leave Kadambini's body and move from there. After that Kadambini gets her consciousness back she feels a little bit awkward finding herself in that condition. Eventually, when those four Brahmins come back they do not see the dead body. They think that Jamindar do not believe in a ghost story and they decide to say that they already burnt her body because they realize that a dead body is not a valuable property anyone to steal it. It shows how the same body becomes valuable to invaluable after the declaration of death. It shows performative aspects of the body after death because suddenly it becomes valuable to invaluable.

Similarly, the writer explores death as a culturally constructed performative act by depicting Kadambini's fear although she knows that she is alive. Kadambini finds her body different and fearful. She sees her own body differently when she finds herself in the death bed. And that unhappened death performs fear factor not only to her but the people she also meets. Suddenly her loyal and kind image turns into a fearful image. Like Butler's idea, "gender performance as repetition" (131). Kadambini herself reacts in a fearful manner. Tagore explains that manner in this way, "I am dead. How can I return home? That would bring disaster on them. I have left the kingdom of the living; I am my own ghost" (82). She herself considers herself ghost which resembles Butler's idea of culturally constructed performance. It indirectly indicates that without dying her body performs like a dead body which is affected by culturally constructed body politics because people think that after death human soul converted into the ghost. But Foucault disagrees with it. Butler explains: "In Foucault's term, the soul is not imprisoned by or within the body, as same Christian imaginary suggest that, but "the soul is the prison of the body" (184). Body appears as a central theme, not a soul which shows that the writer is also in a way near to Foucault's idea on the relationship between body and soul.

Kadambini becomes both an artist and a spectator of her death. Her body performers like a dead body although she is alive. Like others, she also takes her own body fearful. In the story Tagore writes about it in this way, "Those who fear ghosts fear those who are behind them: wherever they cannot see there is fear. But Kadambini's chief

terror lay in herself, for she dreaded nothing external" (84). Her life becomes a drama, drama which is about death and her body performs her death and she both becomes both an actor and a spectator. Her body reacts like an audience of that drama so she starts taking herself fearful object. For instance, "At the dead of night, when alone in her room, she screamed; in the evening when she saw her shadow in the lamplight, her whole body shook. Watching her fearfulness, the rest of the house fell into a sort of terror. The servants and Jogmaya herself began to see ghost" (84). It shows the visceral reaction of her own body by seeing her own body. So, her body becomes a theatre and spectator both.

Not only Kadambini's body becomes theatre and spectator but she turns out a fearful object. Before she considered being dead she was a poor widow who can only give love to others but later she becomes a terrifying thing. Even her own best friend suspects on her start believing that she is ghost even though she says her she is not dead. When she leaves the house of her friend she goes to the house of Jamindar which is actually her own home. Even her own foster son frightens with her. He says leave him, "She stood like a pillar of wood, unable to flee or speak. Seeing all this, the child, too, become terrified and burst out weeping: "Go away, Auntie, 'he said, 'go away!" (88). When she listens that she realizes or insure herself she is not dead. Seeing her, Jamindar's wife falls into a faint. When she sees all these things and transformation of her own image to helpful to frightening ghosts. She proves herself she is alive by dying. Tagore writes, "Then Kadambini shouting 'I am not dead, I am not dead, ' went down the steps to the zenana well, and plunged in, from the upper story Saradasankar heard splash" (88). So, her body becomes a central theme of this story because all the things happen just declaring her dead. She is alive but people consider her dead and frighten with her. Even her own body reacts in a similar way. She frightens with her own body. However, at the end of the story, she proves herself that she was alive by plunging into a well which makes us clear that the body is the political thing and everything changes with the body.

Moreover, Tagore explores the political nature of the body in the story "Kadambini". He beautifully depicts Foucault's idea of body politics by showing how Kadambini's body is a political phenomenon. He starts the story by making the reader that the protagonist's body is a female body incorporating Julia Kristeva's notion of maternal instinct is the center of the female body just making her foster mother of Jamindar's son. Similarly, the story unfolds the power dynamics of life and death and how the body becomes a political thing also after death. Likewise, Tagore also renders the power politics of death rituals by not giving proper death rituals to Kadambini. Furthermore, he depicts the culturally constructed idea of death which makes Kadambini herself victims and starts frightening with her own body. In the same manner, he picturizes performative nature of death in a human body and how Kadambini's body becomes both theatre and spectator. At the end of the story, he shows how the same body transformed into helpful to a terrifying object just because she considered dead. In this way, Tagore elucidates the political nature of the body in his short story, "Living or Dead?" Tagore depicts the Foucauldian idea of power dynamics of the body through the medium of his fictional work. Kadambini's body becomes the central theme of the story, which shows the power dynamics engaged with it. Not only he portrays the power

dynamic of the body also explores that dynamics which play an important role to perform death ritual. So, Tagore in his story, "Living or Dead?," presents the body's political nature and its power dynamic by showing the dichotomy between the living and the dead body. The performance of power plays important role in the human body. It applies as the matter of domination, especially in a subjugated body. People's perception of Kadambini changes because the power politics transforms it from kind to terrifying. So, the dead and living body performs differently and power dynamics plays important role in the performance.

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Politics of Subaltern Consciousness: The Substantive Representation of the Margins in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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Abstract

*Despite being placed at the bottom of the society, Indian subalterns have always gained central position in the political sphere. This paper investigates the substantive representation of marginalized groups and the way they employ their consciousness to dismantle injustices by analyzing Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography *Toward Freedom* (1936) and Arundhati Roy's novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). The subaltern struggle in the society in the quest of their autonomous self and it is achieved with the help of continuous resistance on their part. Colonized Indians display their resistance to counter the British Raj. In the like manner, Hijras, women and Dalits resist the conventional norms of the mainstream by developing anti-normative body and by adopting new roles in the society. Delving on Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Ranajit Guha's ideas of the subaltern, this study analyzes the life of the colonized Indians, the transgender, and the untouchables located in the periphery of social, economic and political strata of the colonial and the post-millennial India. Besides the Subaltern Studies' scholars, Tamen and Garnett's notion on 'self,' 'interpretation,' 'agency' and 'resistance' have been applied to show the way subalterns overcome their subordination in the existing social order. From the standpoint of Nehru's promise, this study critiques the politics and the position of the subaltern in the first decade of the twentieth century as presented in Roy.*

Keywords: Agency, identity, new subaltern, representation, resistance, subjectivity, subaltern consciousness

Introduction

Subalterns have become the victim of colonialism, classism, casteism and

gender discrimination during different time periods in India. Subalterns are those groups of people who are placed at the bottom of social, political and economic strata with little or no opportunities. This paper analyzes the representation of subalterns' struggle with reference to the social, political, economic and cultural issues present in the pre and post independent India. It also investigates the position of subalterns envisioned in pre-independent India and compares it to their present position in India after more than seven decades of its independence from the British Raj. Besides, the paper explores the way subalterns make themselves free from their subordinations through resistance in order to achieve their independent self as reflected in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* (1936) and Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). The paper concentrates on the subaltern categories such as colonized Indians, Hijras, Dalits, women, Muslims, and untouchables' with its focus on their quest for independence and examines them against the backdrop of Nehru's promises for the marginalized made in his autobiography. The paper uses the theoretical insights of Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Miguel Tamen, and Michael Garnett to analyze the life of the subaltern, role of their consciousness to resist injustices and the way their position differs in post-independent India from that of pre-independent India.

The Changing Notion of Subaltern from the 1890s to the Present

The term 'subaltern' represents the group of people who are at the bottom or in the periphery of the society. They get limited opportunities in various spheres. Besides, they are the people with limited rights lacking agency of their own. They are ignored and neglected by the people at the center. Subalterns are under-represented, under-taught non-canonical groups in the society. Though they live at the bottom of the society, they can revolt against the mainstream. The concept of 'subaltern' was first developed and used by Antonio Gramsci in 1890 to represent those people in the society who were ignored during the historic transformation of the Italian state in the 1870s. In addition, he used the term to represent the lower rank military order who earn little. After Gramsci, South Asian scholars initiated the debate on Subaltern Studies. They wrote a series of volumes on Subaltern Studies since 1982 to let the historians know about the culture and existence of the marginalized people in colonial and post-colonial India.

By analyzing the concept of subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak, we find slight difference in the way they define 'subalterns.' Gramsci's standpoint regarding subalterns is instrumentally fundamental to each and every theorist who wanted to have an understanding of the notion of subaltern. In Gramsci's words, "the subaltern classes fundamentally refer to any 'low rank' person or group in a certain society" (66). Subalterns suffer under the hegemonic domination of a ruling class. Hegemonic domination of the elite denies them the basic rights of participation in constructing their local history and culture. They are not taken as active individuals of the nation. Gramsci used the term to refer to the workers and peasants who were oppressed and dominated by the members of the National Fascist Party, Benito Mussolini and his agents. Gramsci argues that "the history of the subalterns was as complex as the history of the dominant elite class" (67). The history of the subaltern is fragmented and they always become subject to the activity of the elite groups. Even if subalterns rise against elite groups, they

cannot make themselves completely autonomous because they lack history to define their identity.

The South Asian subaltern group which was guided by Guha attempted to give voice to the voiceless. This was a group of historians “who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Society” (Guha 34). Guha and his team aimed to analyze the general attributes of marginalization in South Asian Society in terms of class, caste and gender. Subalterns are different from elites. The feature that explains subaltern identity for Guha is ‘negation.’ To evaluate the peasant resistance as a subject of history, the event needs a corresponding epistemological inversion.

The term ‘subaltern’ became more debatable with the rise of post-colonial feminist critic, Spivak. In her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak,” Spivak highlights the problems of subaltern within new historical developments. She focused on capitalistic politics of ignoring revolutionary voices and divisions of labor in a current globalized world. She dismantles Gramsci’s concept of the autonomous self of the subaltern groups. Spivak excavates the history of deprived women, and elaborates on the original demarcation of the notion of the subaltern. The history of deprived women was first developed by Guha and the others through the exploration of the experiences and struggles of women either from the upper middle class, the peasantry or the sub-proletariat class. In India, the subaltern females are more marginalized than the males. As Spivak argues, “subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as a female is even more deeply in shadow” (113). Spivak deals with the realm of subalternity by taking into account the problems of gender especially of Indian women during colonial times. She sheds lights on the status of Indian women based on her analysis of Sati practices under the British colonial rule. Position of women under Sati practice differs from their position in the twenty-first century Indian society. Now, women hold better positions in social, financial and political spheres than they did under Sati practice. Thus, the subaltern as women at one time or place may not be subaltern in another place or time since the term ‘subaltern’ is relational.

Subaltern Studies focuses on the consciousness of the working classes. Spivak also emphasizes on subaltern consciousness. According to Spivak, subaltern consciousness is always subject to the people in power and never completely recoverable. Some dominant classes objectify the subaltern and they take knowledge as power. Dipesh Chakrabarty defines subaltern consciousness as the “peasant consciousness” (372). According to him, the religious consciousness of the subaltern is not subject to anything. He focuses on the two opposing forces like the elite and the subaltern, the feudal mode of power and the present communal mode of power. Chatterjee focuses on the relation between caste and the subaltern. He believes that Indian Society is based on hierarchy of caste not class. Hence, class is replaced by caste system in the Indian sub-continent. For Chatterjee, “Caste is a feature of the superstructure of Indian society . . . caste is in fact the specifically Indian form of material relations at the base with its own historical dynamic, caste in other words is the form in which classes appear in Indian society” (76). Chatterjee believes that societies in India have been fragmented not on the basis of economic condition of the people but on the basis of their caste. He opines that caste is more dominant than class in Indian society. Broadly, subaltern is a relative term and

there are layers of the subaltern. The determining parameters of subaltern and privileged class vary with time, place and economic status of an individual. Though caste and gender have become measuring parameters to locate the subaltern, they can never be the sole determining factors of the subaltern. Instead, financial and political status of people determine whether they are subalterns or elites.

Critical Perspectives on Nehru and Roy

Multiple dimensions of Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry* have been explored by various scholars and critics by focusing on the representation of marginalized people's struggles and injustices. Basically, researchers have explored the representation of marginalized people's struggle in terms of social, political, economic and cultural issues. But no research has been carried out by making a comparative study between position of subalterns in pre-independent and post-independent India and the way they overcome injustices. Nehru's text focuses on the self-questioning of the subaltern in India and about their socio-economic position in the existing social order. It presents the struggle of Indians against the British Raj and the course of freedom movement. In this line, Abid Hussain points out, "Nehru's work presents the national history of India. By going through his autobiography, we come to know about his personality and how he shaped the destiny of other people. Nehru had a Buddha like heart that could respond to the poor and their sufferings" (63). Nehru, by writing an autobiography, informs people of India about the British rule and the struggle of Indian people under it. His text makes subalterns aware about their position in the society and gives them collective strength to fight against discriminations. He wants to see Indian society freed from discriminations based on class, caste and gender. The fundamental idea that dominated Nehru's autobiography is economic freedom and economic equality, the essence of socialism in India.

Nehru's autobiography includes his ideas and experiences on religion, secularism, national unity, socialism, and non-violence. His love for nature, animals, mountains and rivers is also beautifully presented in the text. He faced torture, depression and isolation during freedom struggle. In Humayun Kabir's words, "Nehru's Autobiography expresses the manifold aspects of his rich personality, more adequately than perhaps anything else he has done" (36). Nehru employs the strategy of an impersonal historian. Nehru questions Indian peoples' existence in the society. R. Nanda has rightly pointed out, "Nehru's text reflects his doubts, self-questioning and mental conflict" (19). After his visit to some villages in Pratapgarh district of the United Province and having observed the problems faced by subaltern in India, he decided to fight for them. Farmers were in critical situation in India in the 1920s and the 1930s. They were compelled to pay heavy tax to the government without getting any assistance from it in the 1920s.

These subalterns were especially farmers, women, political rebels and Muslims. Nehru played a leading role in the Lahore congress in 1929. He joined shouting crowds and public functions for the freedom of subaltern in India. He played a significant role in organizing no-tax campaign in U. P. Humayun Kabir writes, "*Toward Freedom: An Autobiography* expresses the manifold aspects of his rich personality, more adequately

than perhaps anything else he has done” (7). Nehru promises to make marginalized people free from various injustices prevalent in Indian society and wants to see them as independent as well as autonomous beings.

Roy's text *The Ministry* highlights the rapidly transforming Indian democracy with the rise of right wing political ideology. She focuses on the degrading situation of the marginalized groups who have been dominated in the name of class, caste, gender and religion. Roy attempts her best to erase the existing gap between the margin and the center. She wants to see Indian society as well organized and well connected. In this line, Syed WahajMohsin and Shasta Taskeen write, “Roy's text focus on the issues of national importance such as casteism in India, the pathetic condition of the marginalized sections of the society, rampant urbanization, consumerism and loss of natural resources, and dismal political atmosphere in the country” (264). It is the world where people like Anum, Daychand and Tilo are not given proper space. They are taken as ‘other’ in this world as they do not fit into it. These marginalized people have to struggle with social issues to make their place in the society.

Roy presents the prevalent discrimination based on class, caste and gender and gives voice to the voiceless people through her text. Gurpreet Singh explicates that, “Roy gives voice to the most condemned group in the world's so-called largest secular democracy” (13). He further argues, “Roy has specifically focused on the marginalized and socially excluded Dalits and Muslim community who are far away from socio-political system of democratic government” (81). Dayachand is a symbolic representation of the entire suffering of Dalits. Caste, in subcontinent, does not only states one's occupation, but also is linked with one's identity. Untouchables and Dalits are compelled to work as garbage removal and toilet cleaners. Lisa Lau writes:

The novel is inhabited by cohorts of others: *Hijras*, political rebels, the poor, women who will not know their place and abandoned baby girls. The narrative of Roy's latest political narrative romance shows these others carving out new spaces for themselves, defying convention, trying possible new lives and listing out new roles. And at last they become successful to do so. (11)

The subalterns in India are still reduced to objects. They are exploited, marginalized and dominated by the powerful. Roy raises her voice against the suffering of the suppressed class of women and other dropouts of the society including third gender, Muslims and lower caste people.

Roy has unearthed the discrimination prevalent in Indian society at present. She focuses on the critical condition of the poor, transgender and lower caste people in India. These marginal sections are the evidence of disintegrated India. These marginalities are binaries of Duniya versus Jannat, dissent versus consent, democracy versus revolution and so forth. Critique Swati Ganguly visualizes the prevailing unbroken marginalities in the novel. She argues, “the novel is an exploration of a grotesque hybrid existence that the Indian state has forced its people” (492). The text deals with the issues which are political in nature like Kashmir conflict, Manipur Nationalist Movement, displacement of Adhivasi, Maoist insurgency in Central Indian forests, and Gujrat Massacre 2002. Roy gives voice to the voiceless as major portion of the book is written from the marginalized people's perspective. The text treats them as the creator of the history.

The Struggle of Subalterns across the period: From Nehru to Roy in India

Nehru presents the critical situation of all the Indians under the British Raj, whereas Roy unearths severe casteism and gender discrimination prevalent in India in the decade of 2000. Subalterns in pre-independent India suffered a lot under British colonialism. Indians were not taken as humans but as objects in the 1930s India. In the twenty-first century Indian society, women, transgender and Dalits are not given enough opportunities. During colonial period, Indians were exploited by the British and they were treated as animals. But Indians overcame the British colonialism with the help of overt and covert resistance on their part. Nehru depicts the political consciousness of marginalized people and their struggle for freedom. He represents the problems faced by colonized Indians, especially people of Kashmir and farmers of India during the 1930s in India. Nehru takes the real historical position of the subaltern and the strength of their self in the whirlpool of massive forces of historical change in India before its independence from cruel British Raj.

Subalterns in colonial India launched different campaigns to fight and get freedom from the oppressive British Raj. Three major campaigns in the Indian Independence Movement were launched by Gandhi. They were non-cooperation in 1919-1922, the civil disobedience movement and the Salt Satyagraha of 1930-1931. In addition, the Quit India movement from about 1940-1942 was also led by Gandhi. Satyagrahis suffered a lot during independence movement. They were beaten, imprisoned and backfired by the British rulers. With the help of their hard fought struggle, India finally achieved independence on 15 August 1947. Besides, the Salt Satyagraha was a heterogeneous campaign of civil disobedience. It included a range of strategic actions against illegal salt making. It focused on the boycott of British cloth and demand for complete and immediate independence. In addition, it set the stage for the Quit India Movement of 1940-1941 that led to Indian independence in 1947. The Salt March was against the British rulers' refusal to accept the INC's declaration of independence in December 1929. It was designed to challenge the injustice of the colonial rule.

Gandhi convinced many of his followers to follow the path of non-violent protests. They followed sit-down strikes. They refused to work and to pay their taxes. However, there were some people in India who wanted to use more extreme ways to go against British. The Government of India Act was introduced in 1935. The Act was introduced for Indian assembly to put their views regarding everything in India except defense and foreign affairs. The nationalists in India disagreed with this act as it failed to introduce dominion status. The major failing of the act was that it ignored the religious conflict between the Muslims and Hindus. As two-thirds of India's population was Hindus, the Muslims were afraid thinking that in an independent India, they will be treated unfairly. In provincial elections in 1937, the Hindus dominated the Congress Party under Nehru and won eight out of the eleven provinces. The Muslim demanded a separate state called Pakistan. Then the Indian Independence Act was signed on 15 August 1947. This act led the Muslim majority to leave India. Then they created the independent state of Pakistan. In the mixed provinces of the Punjab and Bengal, some people found themselves on the wrong side. Many people moved to the new frontiers. Hindus from Pakistan moved to India. In the like manner, Muslims from India moved to Pakistan.

Violence took place in places where these moving groups met. Violence occurred in Punjab where almost about 250, 000 people were murdered in religious clashes between Hindus and Muslims. Most of the people who were murdered in the clashes were Muslims, Muslim women and children. This shows that Indians struggled and suffered much in their own land before 1947.

On the other hand, Dalits, Hijras and women are struggling under patriarchy, casteism and gender discrimination in India at present. They have been given little opportunities in the society. Their private and public sphere is controlled by men and upper caste people. These people experience silence for reasons that are beyond their control including birth and social as well as cultural impositions. But they dismantle the discrimination in their own ways. Subalterns face identity crisis in some of the places of India. Though freedom is guaranteed by the constitution at present in India, people in the periphery still find themselves with no solid identity. They are treated as people from foreign land.

Subaltern Consciousness in Nehru and Roy

Jawaharlal Nehru in his autobiography *Toward Freedom* presents the critical condition of colonized Indians who were not allowed to run any business in India and who had to follow the cruel British rule without questioning it. Nehru's main focus is on representing the life of subalterns in India who were victims of colonialism before 1947, i.e. in pre-independent India. On the other hand, Arundhati Roy in her text *The Ministry* presents the existing casteism and gender discrimination in India in the twenty-first century after seven decades of its independence from British Raj. Nehru focuses on the self-questioning of subalterns in India and about their marginalized position in the society. Nehru's increasing knowledge and understanding about the poor farmers and representatives of Indian people is taken as the growth of the self in his autobiography. Nehru's effort to give justice to the "collective others" like peasants, people of Kashmir and helpless Indians, shows his positive attitude towards the subaltern in India.

People of Kashmir and Pratapgarh were more exploited and dominated than the rest of the Indian people under the British Raj. Nehru writes, "people of Kashmir and Pratapgarh were not given opportunity to work in the offices. They were compelled to work as farmers and they had to pay heavy tax to the government" (34). Their public sphere had been compressed whereas some Indians had got good space to work in the offices in cities. As Spivak argues, "There are layers of subaltern. Those who are at the bottom are more subaltern than those who are in the layers" (173). Though all Indian people were powerless and were prohibited to run their business in India under the British Raj, some poor people and farmers were more in trouble than the rest. Nehru writes, "all our people suffered under the British Raj. But, the farmers of Pratapgarh suffered more than the rest; they encountered problems in the society as Indians and farmers" (446). The farmers were doubly exploited by the British: as farmers with no earning and as Indians with no civilization. After observing the critical condition of subaltern in India, Nehru involved himself more intensely in freedom movement and started speaking on behalf of the poor farmers as well as other marginalized people in India. He took subalterns' pain and suffering as his own suffering. Nehru started identifying himself with the life of the poor Indians.

Nehru established himself as a freedom fighter. Michael Garnett in his text “Agency and Inner Freedom” focuses on the idea that “if self-sacrifice is not there, awakening of agency is not possible. An awakened agency is one that hits on weak structures of the society” (6). Nehru challenged all the discriminations prevalent in pre-independent India and questioned all the flaws with Indian politics. Nehru played a leading role in the Lahore congress in 1929. Due to his hard fought struggle for the freedom of subaltern in India, Nehru became popular among all the Indian people. He engaged bravely in the freedom struggle and showed love for the marginalized people in India. He addressed various crowds and public meetings. He played a very significant role in organizing no-tax campaign in India and it became successful too. Nehru presents the relation between society and the self. He shows that Indian peasants’ self has been ignored by dominant British. According to Garnett, “subalterns’ public self is controlled by the people at the center” (8). In pre-independent India, all Indian people were limited to certain rights. They lacked their public sphere. In the same way, in the post-independent India, Dalits, transgender and the poor people are neglected from the society. They are positioned at the receiving ends. Thus, subalternshave to struggle hard to widen and strengthen their public self.

Roy presents the subaltern in India who have become victim not of colonialism but of capitalism, casteism and gender discrimination. Thus, they are taken as the new subaltern. According to Guha, “subaltern is a name for the general attribute of subordination . . . whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way” (27). Roy presents the life of women in India through two major characters: Anjum, a *Hijra* and Tilo, a girl born to Chamar family. She shows that women, lower caste people and *Hijras* are the most marginalized people in Indian society. In Roy’s text, the major character, Anjum, faces multiple discriminations in the society. Looking at all the discriminations done upon *Hijras*, Nimmo, a transgender who is a resident at Khawabgah asked Anjum:

Do you know why god made Hijra? ... It was an experiment ... a living creature that is incapable of happiness ... for us the price rise and school admissions, husband’s beatings, wives’ cheatings, Hindu-Muslim riots, Indo-Pak war ... all inside us. The riot is inside us. ... The war is inside us. Indo-Pak is inside us. It will never settle down. (23)

The transgender lack history even though they are there in the society. Their rights have been ignored by the people at the center. Subalterns are treated as a commodity by the dominant people in the society. The condition of *Hijras* in independent India is just like that of Indians under the British Raj in pre-independent India. They are not given opportunities in the society and it does not listen to their problems. They are taken as the people from other world with different identity. They lack their solid identity in the society at present in India.

Caste inequality is the most common social problem in South Asia and particularly in India in the twenty-first century. For Chatterjee, “Indian Society is fragmented due to excessive casteism than class discrimination... caste in other words is the form in which classes appear in Indian society” (174). Hence, class is replaced by caste system in the Indian sub-continent. Caste is more dominant than class in

Indian society. Societies in India at present are fragmented because of excessive casteism. Different clashes between people take place in Indian society because of caste discrimination. Lower caste people are taken as untouchables by the upper caste people. Some characters in *The Ministry* have become victims of extreme caste discrimination. As Roy narrates, “When Saddam started working at the hospital, he finds all the lower caste people working as a toilet cleaner. He also finds them working as garbage pickers” (177). Dalits lack their solid identity in Indian society. Saddam as a subaltern has no identity as he had to change his name from “Dayachand” to “Saddam Hossain” and his constant struggle to be fixed in a job indicate how subalterns are socially and economically deprived. He is neglected from the society because he is the son of Chamar. Subaltern in India are not strong enough to resist all the discriminations and injustices inflicted upon them. They are compelled to be sufferers without resisting the injustices.

Roy presents women as subaltern in *The Ministry*. The text revolves around a female character, Tilo, a half Dalit woman, who is doubly marginalized in Indian society: as a woman and as a Dalit. Spivak takes subaltern as “a gendered category in which women are doubly effaced” (96). Tilo can be identified as an obvious subaltern figure who is doubly marginalized in Indian society: as a woman and as a Dalit. Tilo is the daughter of Syrian Christian woman and the Indian man, who belonged to an untouchable caste. Roy writes: “Tilo’s father’s family disowned her mother because she was Christian” (155). Then, Tilo’s mother left Tilo because she is the daughter of an untouchable. Thus, Tilo faced a lot of problems in Indian society and she was bitterly exploited by the people at the center. Discriminating people and marginalizing them on the basis of their gender and caste is still prevalent in India. Lower caste women have been doubly marginalized: as women and as Dalits. They are at the bottom of the existing social order in India.

Subalterns have worked hard to overcome all kinds of discriminations but they are still unable to get complete freedom and independence in India. As Spivak argues, “No matter how much subaltern rebel and rise against discriminations, they cannot completely overcome them” (102). In India, subalterns became victim of colonialism before its independence and now there is discrimination on the basis of caste and gender. In addition, people in India at present are marginalized on the basis of their economic status and political access. Economically privileged women and Dalits get respect in the society whereas financially backward ones are ignored. These impoverished women and Dalits are at the bottom of the society with limited opportunities. As they are the victim of capitalism, they are considered as new subalterns in India. Thus, subaltern presented by Roy are new subalterns. Roy presents subalterns who have interpreted their position in the society and with the help of their deep agency they are trying to develop their autonomous self. They have to strive hard to dismantle various injustices done upon them. The subaltern, in India, still have to go far to develop their autonomous self.

Politics of/from the Margin: Subaltern Consciousness in India

Subaltern in India dismantled colonialism with the help of their agency but now they have become the victim of capitalism. Financially well-established people who owns big companies and industries are at the center but the poor farmers still remain in the

periphery of social as well as political sphere. Moreover, the poor, transgender, Muslims and untouchables are still deprived of their rights in Indian society. They have got little or no opportunities in various spheres. Post-colonial India has not become successful to improve the critical condition of subalterns. Many political parties have emerged in post-colonial India but they failed to address the needs of subalterns. Untouchables and transgender in Indian societies are still at the bottom of the society, though the empowerment of women and untouchables is the main focus of post-colonial studies.

After analyzing the position of the subaltern reflected in Roy's *The Ministry* against the backdrop of Nehru's original vision manifested through his autobiography *Toward Freedom*, the study finds that though the position of subalterns has transformed slightly from empty state of powerlessness to the capacity of dismantling discriminations at present in India, they have still got marginal position in the society. Women, the poor, lower caste people and transgender in post-colonial India have not yet achieved freedom in the true sense. Though they have witnessed some improvement in their social, financial and political spheres, their condition still remains problematized as they continue to be at the receiving ends both in private and public spheres. Thus, they are new subalterns at present in India.

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Poetic Politics in the Confessional Poetry of Lowell and Plath

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the cultural shifts the confessional poets mainly Robert Lowell and Sylvia Plath brought in postwar American poetry. Under the rubric of postwar isolation ongoing developmental practices induced by Fordist culture whatever psychic disturbances the contemporary generations encountered, are reflected in Lowell and Plath's poetry. Unlike St. Augustine's sacramental confession, confessional poetry primarily aims at autobiographical self-exploration in essence. Yet, the confessional poetry departs from the life writing with its sharp delving into the poet's life. The kernel point of this paper is to discuss the way the poets debunk the boundary between private and public domain and the way they prefer to write on socially stigmatized issues like alcoholism, mental illness, adultery, suicidal thought, and depression. By exploring these issues, I argue that confessional poetry penetrates into the poetics of politics under postmodernism which blurs the border line of raw and cooked, decent and profane matters. While examining the selected poems of Lowell and Plath, the cathartic motto of the poets has been highly focused when they express their troubled experiences which were indecent in the past.

Keywords: Confessional poetry, cathartic expiation, troubled mind, impersonality, politics, and autobiographical lyric

Introduction

Confessional poetry emerged in America in the 1950s and early 1960s as a counter culture, in dissonance with T. S. Eliot's theory of impersonality: "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" (qtd. in Hoffman 698). Eliot does not adhere to poets' subjective expression in poetic creation. He argues that there must be

dissociation of personal feeling with poetry. Unlike Eliot's disapproval on personal emotive expression in poetic creation, confessional poetry primarily relies on expressing intimate feeling and experience. It is a lyrical narrative which deals with intimate experiences of poets' life. It reveals the self of the narrator that intermingles with the poet. In addition, there is the fusion of poetic excellence with tormenting turmoil of the poet. In other words, it is autobiographical in essence because confessional poetry being a practice, not just the subject of individual poems, we ought to turn now to a body of work, and the choice of poet almost makes itself (Lerner 52). Lerner's concern is to deal confessional poetry as a genre. The 1950s and 60s on prima facie stood as the age of identity markers by debunking the grand narrative and social mores.

This paper zeroes in on exploring the ensuing queries: how does confessional poetry help the narrator for the cathartic expiation of personal matters, why do the poets put their private sphere on display, and how does confessional poetry contain tumultuous state of America and poets' mind or is there any poetic politics in putting personal traumatic matters on public display? While addressing these problems the paper contends that confessional poetry purposefully ruptures the boundary of private and public sphere because it is a postmodernist politics of celebrating even the personal trauma, sexual abuses, adultery, mental illness and death wish. It can admittedly claim that the rupture of social taboos is the politics of the poets related with this genre. Equally important postulation of aforementioned stand is that confessional poetry is the emotional therapy of the poets' troubled mind during Fordist culture. It is, as well, a journey towards self-discovery that has cathartic effect while purposefully putting the individual privacy on display. In effect, the public display of traumatic experiences regarding the culturally stigmatized issues, viz. drug use, alcoholism, sexuality, and mental illness refer the poetic politics to replicate the ongoing social rupture of the time.

Chiefly, this paper hypothesizes that generally confessional poetry unbuttons the unspoken or hidden personal experience which destabilizes the borderline between socially acceptable and unacceptable or private and public issues. In so doing, it explores marital discord, infidelity, mental illness, alcoholism, drug abuse, suicidal thoughts, sexual perversion, depression, and fear of failure as the subject matters to challenge and set a new cultural paradigm. It also lets the readers scrutinize the poets' psyche. Unquestionably these stuffs were taboos in Victorian time.

Largely, this paper while analyzing confessional poetry does not aim to repudiate over suffering, but rather it pays attention on the politics of such articulations composed within a specific set of cultural circumstances, in question. Finally, this paper departs from the poet's biographical approach to dig out confession not as the pastoral atonement but as a new poetic genre. Indeed, it has no interface with the pastoral discursive technique to exploit aforementioned contents as methods to explicate in Robert Lowell's "Water," "For the Union Dead," "Skunk Hour," and "To Speak of Woe that is in Marriage," and Sylvia Plath's "Colossus" and "Daddy." These poems mirror the unjust social taboos which is also the technique of the poets to mark their protest by displaying the wish of new generations who breaks the social order.

While dealing with confessional poetry, Abrams and Herpham defines it as; "Confessional poetry" designates a type of narrative and lyric verse, given impetus by the

American Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* (1959), which deals with the facts and intimate mental and physical experiences of the poet's own life" (64). They also focus on the personal expression related to the poet's mental and physical reality. They, in addition, explain the nature of confessional poetry as; "Much confessional poetry was written in rebellion against the demand for impersonality by T. S. Eliot and the New Critics. By its secular subject matter, it differs from religious spiritual autobiography in the lineage of Augustine's *Confessions*"(64). By nature, confessional poetry is a protest against objective expression of New Criticism and it, moreover, stands away from religious confession for purging the mind.

Pursuing the same lane of intensely personal expression Murfin and Ray expound confessional poetry as a contemporary poetic mode that discusses poets' private lives including their deepest sorrows and confusions. These type of poets often address the reader directly and go beyond romanticism's emphasis on individual experience in their use of intimate details and psychoanalytic terms to describe even their most painful experience (193). It is apparent that confessional poetry forwards the traumatic experiences which are densely personal.

Likewise, Cuddon also argues that much poetry, especially lyric poetry, is 'confessional' in so far as it is a record of a poet's states of mind and feelings and his vision of life. . . However, some poems are more overtly self-revelatory, more detailed in their analytical exposition of pain, grief, tension and joy (151). His definition digs out the self-revealing nature of confessional poetry that infuses with personal pain and pleasure. Cuddon furthermore categorizes this type of poetry as a very personal and subjective account of experiences, beliefs, feelings, ideas, and states of mind, body and soul (151). In short, confessional poetry is subjective in nature. Similarly, Kennedy and Gioia seek the implied semantic of this poetry. To them:

Confessional poetry renders personal experience as candidly as possible, even sharing confidences that may violate social conventions or propriety. Confessional poet's times shock their readers with admissions of experiences so intimate and painful—adultery, family violence, suicide attempts—that most people would try to suppress them, or at least not proclaim them to the world. (825)

Indeed, confessional poetry as a part of postmodernism delves into the matters like adultery, violence, death wish, infidelity, sex and sexuality which were taboos in the society because unlike modernism postmodernism celebrates such stuffs.

Correspondingly, confessional poetry suggests that it is self-revelation that serves to reveal an author's repressed anguish or deepest emotions through verses about the personal subjects. Although feelings and emotions have long been considered a core thematic element of poetry, the risqué content conveyed in confessional poetry sets it far apart from more traditional genres (Jennifer Brozak, 2019 May 08). Edward Byrne evaluates confessional poetry through its contents; the intimate, sometimes sordid, autobiography of the poet revealed in explicit first-person narration - rather than any novel technical development or formal advancement. To him confessional poets use first-person narrative to "widen the scope of the poem" and as a "tool to increase a reader's emotional identification with the poet. As a matter of fact, this type of poetry invites

readers to live vicariously through the poem.

Endorsing this sacramental power of confession to Michael Foucault also alludes to pastoral power and articulates; “a ritual in which the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it: it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him and promises him salvation”(61-62). For Foucault, discourse of confession by which modern states exercise power depriving an individual from his privacy. Moreover, there is the implied connotation of Judeo-Christian tradition of anticipating the purity of mind and body for salvation. “It is an intimate personal revelation, especially as presented in a sensationalized form in a book, newspaper, or film.” However, marking a departure from religious and legal uses of the term, the term ‘confessional’ is applicable to a range of practices in contemporary western culture that do not necessarily cast the confessing subject in a negative light. (Silver 18). In tune with Silver, Clarke’s focus is on “‘the natural advantages of the confessional’ rather than its ‘supernatural benefits’ notably anticipates the psychoanalytic concept of catharsis” (qtd. in Silver 24). This cathartic effect of confessional poetry sharply deviates from religious purpose.

Undoubtedly, confessional writing is part of a religious tradition that dates back to Augustine and became part of a therapeutic tradition even before the advent of psychotherapy, which certainly shaped and accelerated the outpouring of personal self-revelation in the twentieth century. Moreover, in confessional poetry, both religious belief and Freudian psychotherapy play very important roles because confession relieves the confessor. Confession, with or without the motivation of penance or psychic pain relief, also represents one of the most varied and intense forms of artistic experimentation in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Notably, the intimate, disturbing nature of such material relocates guilt from the confessing individual to the society in which the trauma occurs. From the same fashion, modern subjectivity might be seen in light of this shift from the sinful self to the traumatized self, whereby confession provides a platform for those who have been oppressed, marginalized or maltreated. Arguably, then, the confessional subject has become the victimized subject *par excellence*, with the traumatic subject matter of confession increasingly informing concepts of individual selfhood. (Silver 19). Nelson elaborates this concept further as; “What made confessional poetry confessional, as opposed to just personal or autobiographical, was the nature and context of its revelations. There is, first of all, the urgency and “rawness” of the revelations.

Personal Conversion into Public

It was M. L. Rosenthal who had coined the term ‘confessional Poet’ while conveying his shock over Robert Lowell’s uncovering his intensely personal matters in *Life Studies* (1959). Lowell primarily dealt with the themes of sexual guilt, alcoholism, confinement in a mental hospital, and developed them in the first person in a way that intended, in Rosenthal’s view, to point to the poet himself. Interestingly, he performs one such reduction in a famous 1959 review of *Life Studies*, writing that “Lowell removes the mask. His speaker is unequivocally himself, and it is hard not to think of *Life Studies* as a series of personal confidences, rather shameful, that one is honor-bound not to reveal”

(qtd. in Morris 208). Rosenthal first identified and defined this new confessional mode. Rosenthal's review characterizes confessional poetry as autobiographical, therapeutic ('soul's therapy' and 'self-therapeutic') and utterly truthful, featuring 'uncompromising honesty.'

In "Skunk Hour," Lowell uses the stuffs from his personal life to formulate an image of ruined culture and alienation of modern people. The isolated narrator lost in a ruined landscape describes, "Nautilus Island's hermit/ heiress" (1-2) who undergoes the repercussions and aftermaths of commercial world while living "in her Spartan cottage" (2) which means she is living humble life and is affected by "eyesores" (11) means the hollow neon civilization that lacks human values. Indeed, the narrator laments at the cost of ill time, "the season's ill" (13) that has pervasively affected American life at large. The ongoing social unrest, cold war, curtailed of citizen rights, eroding American economy, and Vietnamese war had devastated the society. To find the solution of all ills, the narrator expects to follow sacramental path, "her son's a bishop" (4). In fact, Lowell had converted into Catholicism in the 1940s.

Above all, the narrator faces a personal deterioration which approaches absolute negation. Apparently his negation is the outcome of social unrest: "I hear / my ill-spirit sob in each blood cell, / as if my hand were at its throat" (32-34). He succeeds in making his private meditation the public matter for self-therapeutic purpose. Precisely, in this poem, there is the collage of personal and cultural anguish through the explicit echoes of Holderlin, Milton and St. John of the Cross to show the ills of the modern commercial world. However, at the very point he takes upon himself the damnation of his world with the Miltonic Lucifer "I myself am hell" (35), an emotional turn upward occurs, and signaled by the admittedly ambiguous skunk. Though completely unreflective and bestial, this creature is indicative of a minimal animal self-assertiveness and commitment to survival; It has the instincts necessary to derive sustenance from the little the world will offer and, moreover, "will not scare" (48). In identifying himself with this lower forms of life, the persona indeed deprives himself of certain aspects of his humanity, but this is an essential first step toward regaining a fuller sense of it.

He finally, mirrors the sexually perverted generation swept by Beat music and Fordism; "My Tudor Ford Climbed the hill's skull/I watched for love- cars... lay together/ A Car radio bleats/ Love o careless Love" (26-32) to show the degeneration of the time. Shocked by this degenerative time, the narrator stays back "back steps" (44) and observes the performance of skunk generation. This is how in "Skunk Hour," Lowell observes the erosion of humans' character, their craze for Fordism and Beat Music. The allusions of Milton and St. John of the Cross have largely focus on discipline to preserve humanity.

Similarly, in "Water" Lowell narrates his honeymoon tour at "Maine lobster town" (1) with his second wife before they had had marital discord. Here he imagines a perfect nuptial life through the imagery of gulls; "We wished our souls/might return like gulls/ to the rock" (29-31). By dramatizing marital breach, he ruptures the boundary between personal and public business. Notably, he puts himself on the stage by telling his marital tale in this poem. His use of imperative tone and use of past tense to decry the marital split which can be due to queer sexual orientation and infidelity that was growing

up in contemporary America. In fact, 'water' connotes purity and indivisible smooth surface that sharply contrasts with the story of family split of the narrator cum poet. The hectic locale of Maine town transforms into the cold marital relationship, "the water was too cold for us" (32), which the narrator narrates through flashback technique. Ostensibly, it is an urge of the narrator for symphonic marital life which he could not sustain.

Lowell further expresses the marital discord in "To speak of woe that is in marriage." The female narrator displays the infidelity of her gigolo husband; "My hopped up husband drops his home disputes, / and hits the streets to cruise for prostitute" (4-5). This indicates the domestic dispute and adultery which has been openly discussed. This one also refers the extramarital affairs that was there in American society. Indeed, this one is the salient trait of confessional art. Here, Lowell, additionally, shows the dishonesty of the husband; "Oh the monotonous meanness of his lust... / It's the injustice... he is so unjust- / Whiskey-blind, swaggering home at five" (7-9). Generally, lust, alcoholism, and indecent manner were taboos for modernist writer but for the postmodernist confessional writers they become the stuffs of discussion. Moreover, the hidden anguish of the narrator against her Don Juan occupies special room for public discussion. The domestic and sexual brutality is reinforced by; "he stalls above me like an elephant" (14) to show the bestial lust of narrator's Casanova man. In a nutshell, this poem displays marital/familial unharmonious relation of the spouses for the soul's therapy as catharsis.

Likewise, Lowell deals with the social problems that has haunted the American society in "For the Union Dead." He chiefly focuses on the three incidents of the history; Colonel Robert Shaw's dedication while commanding the Negro infantry during civil war, a memorial to Shaw's team who died for Union, and a violent resistance to school integration in contemporary America while recalling his childhood memories. Given that the dozer work for parking lot and 'Statehouse' that has displaced "vegetating Kingdom" (10) and the statues of Union Martyrs, 'the narrator feels like "cowed compliant fish" (8) being kept in the aquarium. This is how denizens were domesticated and through this harsh reality he concerns with civic rights affected by material progress.

Not only that the reference of "Hiroshima boiling" with gerund verb hints the ongoing threat of the peril of nuclear war between Russia and America whereas America was facing the racial segregation at school historically documented in *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) case. In stanza 15, the speaker projects "the drained faces of Negro school-children" (60) it could possibly be a reference to the nine students who integrated Arkansas' Little Rock High School in 1957. Or, the black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, who protested segregated lunch counters by sitting-ins protests. Daniel Morris rights catches the narrator's angst against the ongoing social practices and comments "blameworthy national identity during a period of nuclear pride, militarism, cold war paranoia, and the ongoing restriction of civil rights" (103) on which Lowell feels guilt ridden. His guilt complex further extends in last stanza when he refers the techno-led American Fordist culture; "The Aquarium is gone. Everywhere/ giant finned cars nose forward like fish" (65-66). To sum up, this snapshot replicates the glorious past and inhumane present thereby the narrator feels afflicted.

Plath's poem, "Daddy" contains Plath's personal life, history of holocaust and an outlet of her suppression which had brought trauma in her life. The narrator tells a tale

of victimized female persona who stands for the holocaust Jews. She begins the poem imagining herself as a prisoner living like a foot in the black shoe of her father:

You do not do you do not to
Anymore, Black shoe
In which I have lived like a foot
For thirty years poor and White,
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo. (1-5)

These lines point out her suffocation under terror haunted life for thirty years. Ostensibly, her father was a German immigrant in America who died when she was eight years old. She had had an Electra complex with him while she thought he was equal to God. She tried to emancipate herself from this bond after his death but she failed. Rather she posits herself as a victimized prisoner living like a foot in the black boot of Gestapo after being haunted by his reminiscences. Possibly she could be a captive of the bond, which could be the canopy of patriarchy that she likes to blur to develop her independent self. The narrator's final release from Electra complex is at the cost of her new life's commencement which is independent, and self-reliant. Literally it is away from penis envy. Not only this stamping to release her angst against her daddy figure who stands for patriarchy and Nazi's atrocity, but also she figuratively kills him; "If I've killed one man, I've killed two —" (71) referring the patriarchy and holocaust creator from which she frees herself.

Thus by linking her personal agony with the holocaust tale whereby the oppressor converts into an oppressed man. She gives a huge vent of her suppressed ego by rebuking daddy figure from whom finally she separates from Electra complex; "Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through" (80). After the metaphoric annihilation of daddy figure, she relieves and sets free from father fixation and sets out her new identity. This is how she succeeds in translating her oppressed self into the free 'self.' In a nutshell, she turns out to be an independent lady who debunks and challenges the patriarchal authority. Her poetic skill relies on transforming her personal trauma into the public matter.

From the same plane, Plath's "Colossus" also gives an outlet of her angst against the myth of patriarchy. Indeed, The Colossus at Rhodes, Greece is a statue of Sun God of Greek time that represents male supremacy. According to the myth, it was a gigantic statue before it fell down. Most importantly, this crumbled statue also replicates her deceased father whom the narrator tries to comprehend. Here the female narrator plays a role of a curator who tends it carefully. The poem begins with the incapability of narrator, 'I' to understand her father. She glues her fragmented memories to read him as the curator links several parts of the body; "I shall never get you put together entirely, /pieced, glued and properly jointed" (1-2). These lines indicate the failure of the narrative persona to know her daddy because of crumbled experiences she had had with him. Given to this situation, the memory she had about him is, he was undeniably rude like the beasts because he left her at her early age without imparting any wisdom to her so that she claims; "I am none the wiser" (10) because he died before she could get wisdom from him. This personal grief of losing her father at her early age is so poignant that she still belittles herself and mourns forever. Because of missing him, she develops

Electra complex with him, “A blue sky out of Oresteia/ Arches above us. O father, all by yourself/ you are pithy and historical as the Roman Forum” (16-18). These lines allude the enlightened wisdom of Greco- Roman era and Aeschylus’ Oresteia (Electra and Orestes had destroyed themselves while avenging Agamemnon’s killer) to show the narrator’s father fixation and her missing of his wisdom.

She notably regards her father’s death as the divine blow to ruin her personal life; “It would take more than a lightning-stroke/ to create such a ruin” (22-23). Nevertheless, she stays near to the colossus figure counting the red star (metaphoric use of fertile life and revolution) hoping that she could revive him so that she could get wisdom from him. In his absence she is leading a gloomy life; “My hours are married to shadow” (28). Here the shadow is the metonymic use to indicate her gloomy life and the relic of her dead father. Nonetheless, hopefully she waits for the arrival of her father in a ship like the Greek warrior; “No longer do I listen for the scrape of a keel/ on the blank stone of the landing” (29-30). Hoping for the literal unity between father and daughter as in the case of Electra and Agamemnon, she mourns in a heart-rending way. She dramatizes her grief and loss so poignantly that the readers fail to distinguish if it is Plath’s autobiography or the artifact of the narrator.

Conclusion

Confessional poetry by nature is the expression of personal experiences which gets vented provoking the cathartic repercussions. It is also an errand towards subjective exploration of the poet. Often confessional poets are crazy and preoccupied with socially stigmatized idea that troubles their minds. Being the postmodernist poets, they blur the borderline between private and public subject matters. In so doing, their autobiographical writings dramatize the unacknowledged trends of the age. Both Lowell and Plath struggle with troubled mind and are masters in shaping their personal traumatic experiences into the creative art to replicate the trouble of the age. Precisely, Lowell expresses his mental agony smeared with the tumultuous time whereas Plath’s lyrics goes with gender trouble. Indeed, confessional poetics works as a therapy to the poets and readers. These poems are colored by emotional extremity to ventilate the personal views because in their confessional expressions there is uncompromising honesty and power of sublime angst of the age which is their politics to debunk the social stigma.

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The Journey from Essence to Existence in Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*

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Abstract

This article examines Lao Tzu's classical work Tao Te Ching with the concepts of essence and existence that predominantly guide the philosophy of existence propounded by Jean-Paul Sartre. Tao Te Ching provides the way to pursuit identity in the world. It centralizes on the making of the self. To cultivate the identity, one should face the reality. Then one realizes that existence antecedes the essence because one becomes what one chooses. Essence is simply biological and not the destiny rather what we create out of multiple choices construct our individuality. This realization is the perfect way to be an evolved individual. This is another way of defining the concept of existence delivered by Tzu and Sartre. Likewise, both Tzu and Sartre agree that human exists at first. His/her existential journey starts with the materialization of facticity that s/he crisscrosses in the world. All these aspects are the fundamentals of Tao Te Ching and Sartre's philosophy of existence. This paper becomes a landmark to perceive how the philosophical beats vibrate equally both in classical work and modern philosophy. To examine all these concepts, the article has used the textual analysis method, following the paradigm of qualitative approach to research.

Keywords: Choice, essence, evolved individual, existence, facticity, Tao

Introduction

This article explores the fundamentals of Jean- Paul Satre's philosophy of essence and existence in Lao Tzu's philosophical work *Tao Te Ching*. This book paves the ways that we have to follow in our life. Tzu in this work talks about the evolvment and making of the self. He believes that the elixir of existence to cultivate one materializing the worldly dynamics opens the elixir for genuine existence. This rising enables one to realize the facts and reality of the world. Existence predominates essence. Essence is biological while existence is constructed. How one constructs and makes the self

determines the journey from essence to existence. Besides, *Tao Te Ching* projects that when one faces the facticity of life, one starts to exist. All these are the fundamental aspects of Sartre's philosophy. Thus, the exploration of Tzu *Tao Te Ching* with the perspective of Sartre's concepts of essence and existence proves to be justifiable.

Lao Tzu was an ancient Chinese philosopher who lived in the sixth century BC. He is the main propagator of Taoism. His great book *Tao Te Ching* has been considered the major book of Taoism. It epitomizes all of the ideas about the world and its realities. Generally, Tao stands for the way. Blakney writes that Tao is "A road, a path, a way by which people travel, the way of nature and finally the Way of ultimate Reality" (37). It opens the ways of life. Understanding Tao means perceiving the truth of life. So, the quest of Tao consolidates all of the pursuits of human's life.

Review of Literature

Since the time of publication, *Tao Te Ching* has been inviting different shades of interpretations and criticism. This classical work of human intellectual tradition has elicited major philosophical and religious ideas too. It amalgamates different religious and philosophical ideas. P. T. Raju relates Taoism with religious mysticism. He views that Taoism "is like the ultimate Dharma of the Buddhism, their *Tathata, drarmadhātu*, or even the neutral Brahman of the Upanishads...For the Taoist, on the whole, life according to the Tao is to be here itself, in the family, state and society" (121). It signifies that Tao is realizing the personal self with society. This is another way of interpreting Sartre's philosophy postulated in his works *Existentialism and Humanism and Being and Nothingness*.

Michael LaFargue talks about the foundation of existentialism and self-cultivation in *Tao Te Ching*. He says, "The "point" of Laoist origin sayings is not instructional, but celebratory, celebrating existentially "foundational" character of Tao as concretely experienced in the self-cultivation practice of ideal Laoist" (208). If LaFargue notes the issues of "existential foundational and self-cultivation practice" in *Tao Te Ching*, then it is significant that this book demands a new interpretation from Sartrean concepts of essence and existence. Lama Surya Das believes that this classical work crystallizes the "tantalizing existential mystery" (Foreword para 2). If he notes about the issues of existence, then a fresh revisiting is a must. Blakney vitalizes the entire message of *Tao Te Ching*. He opines that this book has still a great message for the world. Its message is important because "the old compartmentalization of the world is so shaken by the idea of "one world". In "one world" the *Tao Te Ching* would be quite at home" (49). This view justifies the power of Tao for the modern world. The philosophy that it propounds has still the greater significance in the present-day world.

The above commentaries prove that Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* has been felicitated by various critics. Even some scholars like Raju, LaFargue, and Surya Das have noted the tones of existence in the book. However, they have overlooked the journey from essence to existence in *Tao Te Ching*. In this regard, this paper fulfils the gaps by exploring *Tao Te Ching* with the concepts of essence and existence that Sartre postulates.

Methodology

This paper has applied the paradigm of qualitative approach to research because according to Ranjit Kumar this approach is flexible, unstructured and intends to radiate the diversity of perceptions (379). It has used the textual analysis method to explore the concepts of essence and existence in Tzu's philosophical book *Tao Te Ching*. For this reason, it has used the lenses of Sartre's philosophy of Essence and Existence that he has developed in his works *Existentialism and Humanism* and *Being and Nothingness*. The poetic lines from *Tao Te Ching* have become the primary sources of concepts. Related criticisms, book reviews and relevant cross-references have been used as the secondary sources of concepts to justify the argument.

Essence and Existence in Sartre's Philosophy

Jean-Paul Sartre advocated existentialism during the years of the Second World War. His philosophy propagates the valuable notion of freedom and its relationship with personal responsibility. He believes that "Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself" (*Existentialism and Humanism* 28). This enables humans to be conscious of his/her existence. This is the difference between plants and human beings. Gaarder opines that for Sartre inanimate things are just in themselves while humankind is for himself (456). If the human has to exist for himself, then the concept "I exist" becomes more important than "what I am." This is the stand-point of existentialism. By birth, human has a certain biological essence, an innate nature. However, the way one makes and creates oneself gives rise to existence. This evolution gives rise to a consciousness of why s/he is here for. Thus, Sartre says, "It is true that existence is prior to essence, man is responsible for what he is" (*Existentialism and Humanism* 29). Human, in this sense, has no basic nature to rely on. One has to create and nurture one's "own nature or 'essence,' because it is not fixed in advance" (Gaarder 457). This point is the crux of his philosophy that presupposes human's existence is superior and distinct from the physical universe and the body. Sartre writes, "Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world- and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself" (*Existentialism and Humanism* 28). One is never free of one's situation but one is always free to deny the situation and can make attempts to change it. So, "to be human, to be conscious, is to be free to imagine, free to choose, and responsible for one's lot in life" (Audi 812). That's why; it is useless to search the meaning of human life in a general sense.

The human feels alien in a world where there is no fixed meaning of life. When Sartre talks about human's alienation, he is very near to Marx. Man's sense of "alienation in the world creates a sense of despair, freedom, nausea, and absurdity" (Gaarder 457). At the same time, for our existence, we are free to make our choices in life. We must always take responsibility for our actions. For Sartre, we always collect the body of facts that become true for us. However, while living, "We remain free to envision new possibilities, to reform ourselves and to reinterpret our facticity in the light of new projects and ambitions—our transcendence" (Audi 813). It brings a sense that we have to define our life as it is. At the same time, we try to get free from the entanglement of

this life. So, there is always a dialectic relationship between the facticity of life and its transcendence. The real journey from essence to existence begins- as Sartre postulates in his work *Being and Nothingness*- when one is in the relation of the self to the object-oriented world. In *Being and Nothingness*, he says, "Facticity is only one indication which I give myself of being to which I must reunite myself in order to be what I am" (83). To perceive others in relation to oneself brings existence.

Nevertheless, the diversity in the history of philosophical schools developed by Lao Tzu and Sartre must not be ignored at any cost. The entire philosophical quest for the existence in both systems has a unity in diversity like "the same blow of entering into the different pipes of an organ makes them resound in a variety of musical effects" (Tola and Dragonetti 334). The quest for evolution only differs on paths laid by these two philosophers in different ways in different epochs. However, their final destination is to reach the same goal that is to be immersed into the knowledge that lies beyond the domain of existence.

Evolvement as Existence in *Tao Te Ching*

From the very beginning, *Tao Te Ching* delves into the gravity of existence as evolvment. He inspires an individual to rise beyond the periphery of the essence and create his/her own existence. In this course, an individual has to realize the facticity of life. The moment one drops the expectations and envisions the new possibility of reformation, one is in the total stage of making oneself. An individual is in the way to finding the reality of this world. The way to Tao is nothing other than the reforming of the self and realizing the others in oneself. To create one own existence then becomes the final destination of Sartre and Tzu. Do not they speak the same voice in this context? Of course, they do. The following lines from the *Tao of Power* better justify the philosophy of existence. It sounds as if Tzu speaks Sartre's philosophy in classical form while Sartre metamorphizes Tzu's philosophy in his doctrines of existence:

The Way - cannot be told.
The Name - cannot be named.
The nameless is the Way of Heaven and Earth.
The named is Matrix of the Myriad Creatures.
Eliminate desire to find the Way.
Embrace desire to know the Creature.
The two are identical,
But differ in name as they arise.
Identical they are called mysterious,
Mystery on mystery,
The gate of many secrets. (Kline trans 7)

One has to create and make out of oneself. The way and name are not already fixed. If the way is fixed, then it does not possess its value. One is in the alien situation of dualities while in process of making oneself. This is one of the fundamentals of Sartre's philosophy. Rising beyond the dualities of the "Myriad Creatures" is the basic way to bring existence. Tao philosophers Mantak Chia and Tao Huang in their book *The Secret Teaching of the Tao Te Ching* opine that when one interacts with many dualities,

one becomes a true individual (Chapter 6, The Wisdom of Taoist Sage “Non-Dualistic Mentality” para 2). The embarkation of dualities opens the way and that way is the Tao—the Tao of existence.

Tzu in the above lines suggests the elimination of desires, expectations, and preoccupied ideas. The moment one drops expectations, one becomes free. Then, the horizon of the mind is enlarged. Instead of perceiving what and where things are in their determined condition, one should perceive the subtlety of things rather than understanding what and where things are. This is also the basic premise of Sartre's philosophy as he opines in his work *Existentialism and Humanism*: “For if indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one's action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism—man is free, man is freedom” (34). Thus, the desire to know and make the meaning out of the situation is the fundamental quest of human beings. In this point, Tzu and Sartre make a similar quest about the human

Tzu's philosophy to realize the perfect way is to realize the totality, the dialects and extreme polarities. Discarding one part for another is not the real quest. In the process of evolving oneself, one must be aware of physical rules that guide our world where every pole, action and aspect is conjoined by its opposite side. Realizing this dichotomy is the realization of the perfect way—the Tao. How beautifully Tzu unravels the meaning of the world and its existence:

When all the world knows beauty as beauty,
There is ugliness.
When they know good as good,
There there is evil.
In this way
Existence and nonexistence produce each other.
Difficult and easy complete each other.
Long and short contrast each other.
Pitch and tone harmonize each other.
Future and past follow each other. (Wing trans 2)

In these powerful lines, Tzu clarifies Sartre's journey from essence to existence. Tzu projects that evolved individuals are in search of the knowledge that balances nature and essence. They never overlook anything because one exists because of existence of its opposite. In the multiple strata of the existence, one makes choices. This is the reality of Tao. In search of creating and making themselves, they avoid extremities. They shape the events according to their choices because one polarity produces another as logically expressed in the above lines. Choosing one aspect means grasping each and everything because Tzu believes in the totality of existence not in fragmentation because he opines “Evolved individuals... are a part of All Things and overlook nothing” (Wing trans 2). Sartre too expresses this key point of existence in his work *Existentialism is a Humanism* as he says, “When we say that man chooses himself, not only do we mean that each of us must choose himself, but also that in choosing himself he is choosing for all men”(24). They both claim for the universal string which becomes clear from these discussed points that both enjoy tunes of music played in different instruments.

Once the process of making and creating oneself gets a plenum, one should not let it decline. Holding the situation is the crucial one. The person seeking existence never ceases to grow. Tzu says, "Holding to fullness\ Is not as good as stopping in time" (Wing trans 9). It signifies that in the process of existential growth, one should not stop. In this journey, one should run. If one can not do that, it is better to walk. If this too is not possible, one should crawl at least. The important thing is one should move at any cost. Stopping means dying. The movement one moves, one is in search of existence. That's why, Grayling conjoins the Tao with identity and existence. He says that Tao "is often given as 'potency', a sort of life force towards self-realization. On this view to follow the Way is to apply, direct or unleash one's life -potential" (547). Tao is life force for self realization. By realizing the potentiality of life, one can have a better walk on the way of life.

Lao Tzu energizes the inner power in the quest for existence. When one believes in oneself and inner power, then the real journey for the existence begins. The inner cultivation is important because the human has to create and make oneself. S/he has no inherent nature to rely on. This is the fundamental of Sartre's philosophy for existence. Tzu's ideas of evolvment qualify Sartre's concept. Tzu says, "Produce things, cultivate things; \produce but do not possess\act without expectation" (Wing trans10). When one does not cling to the worldly affairs, one does not expect from its holdings. If one is free from holdings and trappings, one is free to create one's own identity. If one creates oneself, one is responsible for that. Sartre also expresses the same overtones of Tzu regarding his journey from essence to existence. Flynn justifies, "What you are (your essence) is the result of your choice (your existence) rather than the reverse. Essence is not your destiny. You are what you make to be" (8). Cultivation of oneself is the quest for existence. This voice of Sartre reverberates in Lao Tzu concept of evolvment that he expresses in TaoTe Ching. Tzu says:

To know the Absolute is to be tolerant.
What is tolerant becomes impartial;
What is impartial becomes powerful;
What is powerful becomes natural;
What is natural becomes Tao. (Wing trans 16)

The evolvment is awareness, an expansion that gives rise to existence. The more one tolerates the problems, the more one expands consciousness. One becomes stoic. One drops the expectation and realizes the inner power. It opens a new horizon, a new zenith of existence from where existence dawns. This is the sole message of Sartre and Tzu.

When one attains a higher level of consciousness and attitude, one becomes free. Breaking the entanglements is another way of perceiving existence. The quest starts from this point. The journey of existence opens the gate of freedom. The inner search germinates for the sake of liberation and freedom. Tzu always forces to "Attain the highest openness/Maintain the deepest harmony" (Wing trans 16). This is only the perfect way. Openness and the deepest harmony thus are the first stage of existence. So, Tzu believes in the magnification of small and the increasement of the few as he says, "Magnify the small; increase the few" (Wing trans 63). Only the person with existence and evolvment can do this. The actions motivated with vibes and positive drives can

bring this height. In this regard, Sartre in his work *Existentialism Is a Humanism* was right to say, "Existentialism is optimistic. It is a doctrine of action (54). To act is the way to exist. Fundamentally, the motive to exist leads to the existence.

Facticity and Existence in *Tao Te Ching*

Tzu's work *Tao Te Ching* unravels the concepts of facticity and existence as projected by Sartre. For Sartre, our situation is a conglomeration of facticity. Flynn justifies that "'Facticity' denotes the givens of our situation such as our race and nationality, our talents and limitation, the others with whom we deal as well as our previous choices" (65-66). The existence rises how we adjust with our situations according to our choices. So, one is responsible for his/her choices.

In this course of handling the responsibility, the cultivation, existence and evolvment radiate. The following lines from Tzu presuppose these ideas:

Cultivate the inner self;
Its Power becomes real.
Cultivate the home;
Its power becomes abundant.
Cultivate the community;
Its power becomes greater.
Cultivate the organization;
Its power becomes prolific.
Cultivate the world;
Its power becomes universal. (Wing trans 56)

The cultivation leads the evolution steps by steps to a higher stage. The small reaches to a universal stage. In the quest for identity, one must always move for the betterment with the rays of hope because existence rises in optimism. Choices make us powerful. The act of choosing one for another adds value to our choices. This is another point of Sartre because he writes in his work *Existentialism is Humanism* as, "We always choose the good, and nothing can be good for any of us unless it is good for all" (24). Our choice becomes universal if we magnify our cultivation of inner- self from a small beginning to the universal one. All these ideas have been better projected in the above powerful lines of Tzu.

The more one faces the facticity and face the situations that lead to transcendence. This is the stage of evolvment and the attainment of perfect existence. In this perfection, there lies the meaning and the core motto of life. Flynn clarifies Sartre's philosophy when he says, "'Transcendence' or the reach that our consciousness extends beyond these givens, denotes the taken of our situation, namely how we face up to this situation" (66). The more we face our situations and change them according to our nature, we are in the stage of transcendence. Transcending the facticity is to evolve as the existential being. Tzu postulates these ideas in the following lines:

Therefore through the inner self,
The inner self is conceived.
Through the home,
The home is conceived.

Through the community,
The community is conceived.
Through the organization,
The organization is conceived.
Through the world,
The world is conceived. (Wing trans 54)

To realize something is by understanding it as expressed in the above lines. Thus, one understands the dynamics of existence by conceiving the existence itself. So the notion of facing the facticity and our denoted situations is the ultimate way. Tzu ideas, in this regard, justify Sartrean notion of existence. Webber justifies that "Sartrean existentialism is simply as individual's character consists in the projects that person pursues" (xi). The moment one pursues reality, one gets a higher existence. Alienation and absurdity do not remain there. The sole mission of existence and evolvment reinforces for the final way.

The existential journey has a grand project. One construct his own way. Sartre in his work Existentialism is a Humanism opines that anyone can claim about the existence of human's universality. It is not an essence, not a given way, rather it is constructed perpetually. While choosing, we construct ourselves (43). While constructing oneself, the journey starts from a footstep. One must not lose his\her hope in this project of constructing of self. These most quoted lines from *Tao Te Ching* intensify this idea:

A Tree as wide as a man's arms
Grows from a tiny seed.
A tower nine stories high
Rises from piles of earth.
A journey of a thousand miles
Starts with a single step. (Kline trans 85)

These aphoristic lines crystallize the core part of Tzu's philosophy related to facticity. Using the image of tree, tower and journey, Tzu inspires one to adopt reality and face the challenges that come in our life. Human endures the ups and downs of life to construct the self. In the journey from essence to existence, one constructs the inner-self. Lama Surya Das clarifies, "This enigmatic story concerns the inner journey to the very center of things, beyond the dichotomy of doing and being and yet including both" (Foreword para 5). When one handles all the dichotomies of worldly happenings and correlates them, one rises beyond the antagonistic polarities. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita also makes this inner growth in a significant way: "You must free from the pairs of opposites. Poise your mind in tranquillity. Take care neither to acquire nor to hoard" (Prabhavananda and Isherwood trans 40). In this regard, to cope with the facticity is to go ahead in the path of existence. The Great journey starts inwardly and silently.

Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* always teaches us to realize the facticity and grow rich in the quest for identity. The first thing in this way is to realize the facticity and its consequences. Then an attitude surely builds up that knowing we do not know anything is real wisdom. Socrates also proclaimed the similar tone of reality. His final verdict about the knowledge of the world was: "One thing only I know and that is that I know nothing" (qtd in Gaarder 68). If this is the reality, Sartre's concept of realizing the facticity and transcendence remain as the metamorphosis of Socrates and Tzu. Tzu also makes the

similar claim as he says:

To know that you are ignorant is best;
To know what you do not, is a disease;
.....
It is the Wise Man's way to know himself,
And never to reveal his inward thoughts;
He loves himself but so, is not set up;
He chooses this in preference to that. (Blakney trans 124-25)

The above lines conceptualize that realizing that what we learn is just a tiny drop in the infinite ocean. The whole ocean is yet to know. So the long journey in search of identity starts from minuscule to the great part. We are part of universality. Sartre in his work *Existentialism Is a Humanism* justifies, "Our responsibility is thus much greater than we might have supposed, because it concerns all mankind" (24). It proves the notion that we are the infinite ocean in a tiny drop, and we all are the flowers of the same tree. Sartre's voice of perceiving the others about oneself brings the real existence is fully justified here.

Conclusion

Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* projects Sartre's philosophy of essence to existence. The book significantly reveals that the existence lies in evolvment. Everyone has biological essence, but what provides the existence is the process when one evolves out of multiple choices. This process of making oneself is the real quest in one's life. So, *Tao Te Ching* reflects that existence supasses essence. This is the core philosophy of Sartre regarding essence and existence. Besides, Tzu in his book *Tao Te Ching* and Sartre both agree that human's first drive is to exist. Human faces and perceives the world, and then starts to define and make himself/herself. Sartre calls this process as the making of individual identity while Tzu explains it as evolvment. They both explain the same ideology of existence. In every line of *Tao Te Ching*, Tzu suggests the ideology of being an evolved individual. He talks about the cultivation of self. This is another way of explaining the Sartrean philosophy of essence and existence. In this sense, Tzu proves to be the landmark for proposing the philosophy of existence many centuries ago. If one reads Tzu and Sartre to find the way for the evolvment in life, one becomes insightful. The interesting facts about knowledge spring that eventhough time and context may differ, the underlying elixir message for the humanity remains the same. This article incites the readers to penetrate beneath the surface if one aims to embark message of the intellectual tradition. When Tzu's ideas on human's evolvment and existence presuppose Sartrean philosophy of essence and existence, it becomes clear that the intellectual tradition of the whole humanity has an equal thirst to explore the reality.

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Soft Power, Crisis of Existence and the Tribal People of Kerala: A Study of *Mother Forest, the Unfinished Story* of C. K. Janu

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Abstract

Joseph Nye coined the term “soft power” which he says means “getting others to want the outcomes that you want.” The world’s largest democracy India is also the home of millions of impoverished people including many indigenous tribes that are impediments to the desired rapid economic and political growth of India. Mother Forest: The Unfinished Story of C. K. Janu, written by Janu Bhaskaran and translated from the original Malayalam into English by N. Ravi Shanker, narrates the story of the struggle of the Adiyas, a tribal people of Kerala, whose identity and livelihood is threatened when they are dispossessed of their ancient land in the forest. The tribe is led by Janu, a girl from their community, whose struggles against the soft power of the State inform the crisis of existence of these tribal people. This paper will attempt to study the crisis of existence of the tribal people in the narrative of Mother Forest using Nye’s theory of “soft power”. This paper will attempt to expose the authoritarianism of State policies vis a vis the helplessness of the indigenous people in the face of displacement from their original habitat as described in Mother Forest.

Keywords: *Mother Forest*, Janu, soft power, indigenous people, crisis of existence

Introduction

The concern in this paper is India’s developmental agenda and its equation with the various classes of people living in its cities, villages, and forests. As a case in point, I refer to C. K. Janu’s Memoir *Mother Forest: The Unfinished Story of C K Janu*. India’s development and recognition in the global sphere as a growing economy is based on various developmental policies that foreground the economic and social development of its peoples through its various developmental programmes while protecting the rights of the indigenous or adivasi population who reside in the forests and plain lands. It is

common knowledge that the world's largest democracy India is the home of millions of impoverished people including many indigenous tribes who are impediments to the desired rapid economic and political growth of India due to their resistance to give up their forests and land for development. Forests inhabited by the indigenous people are rich in natural resources and the lands are fertile that the Government and other agencies vie to occupy and develop to further the overall economic development of the country. *Mother Forest: The Unfinished Story of C. K. Janu* is written by Janu Bhaskaran and has been translated into English from the original Malayalam by N. Ravi Shanker. It inscribes the socio-political struggles of the Adiya tribals and narrates the conflict between the developmental policies of the Government and the rights of the adivasi. It is the story of the struggle of the Adiya, a tribal people, or "adivasi", living in the Wayanad District of Kerala, whose identity and livelihood are threatened and they are thrown into crisis when they are dispossessed of their ancient habitat in the forest.

C. K. Janu herself is a member of the Adiya tribe who have been indentured labourers by people from the mainstream for a very long time even prior to the independence of India. Janu has broken the narrative into two parts. The first part of the narrative describes how the adivasis of Wayanad who lived in harmony with nature and their forest, Mathunga, were territorially marginalised by the migrants from Travancore, a place in the north of Kerala, and pushed to the deep regions of the forests which were considered unarable and "worthless wastelands" (*Mother Forest* vii) by settlers who migrated from Travancore and other places. The Adiyas, writes Janu, were sufficiently provided for and never knew hunger as they cultivated and collected whatever they needed from the forest: "in the forest one never knew what hunger was" (2). The migrants easily usurped the lands of the Adiyas because like all tribal people the Adiyas, who lived in harmony with their environment, did not have a strict sense of ownership of land. Like the Konyaks of Nagaland and the Maria Gonds (Kundalia xvii), the Adiyas too had "their own design of development" (xvii) instead of stamped individual ownership. Anugraha Madhavan and Sharmila Narayan in their article entitled "Violation of Land as Violation of Feminine Space: An Ecofeminist Reading of *Mother Forest* and *Mayilamma*" published in 2020 notes the important connection between the adivasi and land. They explain:

'Adivasi' is the umbrella term used to indicate the tribes in India, even though the gap between indigeneity and the constitutional scheduling of the tribes has been problematised to a large extent. It translates to "original inhabitants or indigenous people". . . Drawing from Lewis and the other stories of "narrative scholarship". . . from the tribes themselves, land thus becomes central to the construction of a unique identity at the ideological and spiritual level and also determines access to resources and therefore lifestyles and livelihood at the physical and economic level. (14)

Janu underscores the oneness that the Adiyas had with their land and ecosystem which had for centuries sustained them. They became a part of the ecosystem: "The *erumaadam* (a hut built on tree top) was built between two giant trees so high above the ground that from it we could see all our lands, the unending forest, and the sky" (3). Janu says that "no one knows the forest like we do. The forest is mother to us. More than

a mother because she never abandons us” (5). The forest was their mother and tutor and no one ever went to school for formal education. Indigenous knowledge system was oral and cultural and was passed down to each generation. We read that the Adiyas could instinctively predict the change in weather likewhether and when it would be windy and when it would rain. They used their knowledge system to preserve food for long periods so that they could use it during the monsoon months when cultivating and collecting became difficult and thus would not starve. The adivasis were shy of the outside world and avoided interacting with people from the mainstream. This attitude of the adivasi put them at a disadvantage and the migrants who had usurped the forest and occupied their land were now the landlords or the *jenmi*, who employed the adivasi in their lands for meagre wages. Janu’s narrative is laced with regret, she states: “After our forefathers had toiled so much to clear the woods and burn theundergrowth and convert the hillsides into fields they (the *jenmis*) had taken themover as their own. That’s how all our land became theirs.” (15). *Mother Forest* recounts stories of interaction and exploitation of the innocent adivasi by both state and non-state agents. Janu remembers that “In those days we were afraid of almost everything. The backs of ourpeople used to be so bent because we were terrified of so many things for generations. When our people speak they don’t raise their eyes and that must be because they areso scared” (13). The migrant landowners enticed the tribal men with intoxicants like alcohol and tobacco and made them addicts so that there would be minimum resistance from their end. The Adiya men became so dependent on the *jenmi*for livelihood and intoxicants that they fell easy prey and were unable to escape the clutches of the exploiters and became psychologically enslaved.

Although a lot of anthropological study has been done on the adivasis of India and a host of literary texts exist either primitivizing or romanticizing the adivasi and their problems a few of them are written by the adivasi themselves. The body of critical work done on adivasi literature is basically socio-religious or socio-cultural analysing the lives of adivasi as depicted in their oral narratives. Janu Bhaskaran’s unfinished autobiography, *Mother Forest*, has not received the attention that it should from literary critics. There are two major critical essays one by Elen Turner in 2012 and the other by Anugraha Madhavan and Sharmila Narayana in 2020. While Elen Turner focuses on the feminist aspects of Janu’s *Mother Forest* vis a vis Anita Agnihotri’s *Forest Interludes* Madhavan and Narayana focus on the ecofeminist aspect of *Mother Forest*. This paper will further the critical discussion by laying emphasis on the neo-colonial policies of the Government of India used subtly on the Adiya adivasi of Matunga forest in Wayanad, Kerala, by exercising its soft power on them. For analysis, I shall be drawing upon the theory of soft power propounded by Joseph Nye, Jr.

Soft Power

Joseph S Nye, Jr. had coined the term “soft power” in the last decade of the twentieth century. He defines it as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced” (Nye, Jr. x). He further explains that “When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend

as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. Seduction is always more effective than coercion, and many values like democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive” (x). After the World War II, America and the other powerful nations of the world realized from the history of the once invincible Roman kingdom that muscle power or hard military power was not enough to retain hegemony over others. They realized the futility of the Machiavellian policy of being “feared to be loved” (1). Instead, winning people’s hearts and minds was seen as the key to become powerful. Nye describes power as the capability:

to affect the behavior of others to make those things happen. So more specifically, power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants. But there are several ways to affect the behavior of others. You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want. Some people think of power narrowly, in terms of command and coercion. You experience it when you can make others do what they would otherwise not do. (2)

People of poorer countries and countries that use repression on the masses find the “other’s” culture to be more progressive and alluring, little knowing that it sets the trap. Nye calls this co-optive power:

Co-optive power—the ability to shape what others want—can rest on the attractiveness of one’s culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic. The types of behavior between command and co-option range along a spectrum from coercion to economic inducement to agenda setting to pure attraction. Soft-power resources tend to be associated with the co-optive end of the spectrum of behaviour. (7)

He goes on to expand his concept of soft power positing,

The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority.) Let’s start with culture. Culture is the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society. It has many manifestations. It is common to distinguish between high culture such as literature, art, and education, which appeals to elites, and popular culture, which focuses on mass entertainment.

When a country’s culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes because of the relationships of attraction and duty that it creates. (11)

Soft Power and the Crisis of Existence

My concern in this paper emanates from the question that while the Government of India recognizes the rights of the indigenous or adivasi people, enshrining their rights and pledging their protection in the Constitution, and educates the masses on these rights, how are these rights being violated and indigenous people rendered

landless and destitute? It may be noted that after the independence of India, the then Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru “formulated the Panchsheel principles meant to guide government actions in dealing with tribal people. More recently, PESA [the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act], 1996, and the Forests Rights Act, 2006, have made a difference” (Kundalia xvi). But tribals in the remote places of India are largely unaware of the legislations and of their rights. The legislations are intended to protect the tribal people against exploitations of mainstream society, “strengthening ‘tribal’ cultural institutions, while at the same time furthering their integration with mainstream society” (xvi). These measures, although done with the best of intentions, only complicate the lives of the adivasis or the tribal people. The policy makers and people in the mainstream fail to take into account that the tribals have their own unique system of development practiced by them sustainably over centuries. A similar case in point is the struggle between the Canadian First Nation people and the Government that wanted the Mackenzie Gas Project which would run a 1300 km pipeline from Beaufort Sea through indigenous lands to the Mackenzie River Valley, which would, in turn, be highly destructive to the environment. The Government of Canada initially engage in dialogue with the indigenous people of the area. Thea Luig observes that “Contemporary discourses, such as sustainability and inclusion of traditional knowledge, have been added to the vocabulary of speakers. The legal framework of aboriginal rights and participation that has been developed in the past three decades now serves as the basis for the procedure. Nevertheless, the people who gather at these meetings face the same dilemmas surrounding industrial development, its adverse effects, and its possible or supposed benefits” (76). There were many hearings between 1970 and 2006 where the aboriginal Elders told their stories of how they respect the land on which they live and go out to hunt. “While local Aboriginal people presented their concerns at the hearings, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced in public that he wants to see the Mackenzie Gas Project starting as soon as possible and without too many conditions on it” (76). It was a lost case for the aboriginals there. Nye’s argument that one of the important facets of a country’s soft power is its political values and its narrative of economic development finds expression in the case of the conflict between the Canadian Government and the Canadian First Nation people where the State’s soft power is the ultimate winner.

Janu’s narrative in the *Mother Forest* presents a similar crisis. The narrative critically questions the place and rights of indigenous people in independent India. This paper as proposed attempts to study the crisis of existence of the tribal people in the narrative of *Mother Forest* in an attempt to expose the authoritarianism of State policies vis a vis the helplessness of the indigenous people in the face of displacement from their original habitat as described in *Mother Forest*. The Adiyas like other adivasis are self-sufficient, autonomous, and a well-functioning unit dependent on their land and forest for their livelihood. Vandana Shiva in her book *Staying Alive* discusses the centrality of forests to Indian civilisation especially the adivasi, she argues that: “As a source of life nature was venerated as sacred and human evolution was measured in terms of man’s capacity to merge with her rhythms and patterns intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. The forest thus nurtured an ecological civilization in the most fundamental sense of harmony with nature” (56). The Adiya of Mathunga forests had lived in harmony

with nature until the Government of Kerala enacted its land reforms and decided to civilize the adivasi and give them alternate habitats.

Mei Mei Evans, a noted environmentalist, states that “personal testimonies like the biography of Janu are the “life blood of environmental justice movements” (qtd in Varma and Rangarajan 180). In this context Anugraha Madhavan and Sharmila Narayana’s note that “majoritarian politics by capitalist and casteist powers have been major factors in pushing the tribals into a new category, that of indentured agricultural slave labourers. This positioning places them at an extreme disadvantage, pushing them deeper into the depths of poverty while alienating them from the land to which they belong” (15) is worth attention. Capitalist and casteist powers in India operate upon stories of the idolization of the high culture of the majoritarian Hindus and Christians. At this point we can refer back to Nye’s theory of a country’s soft power resources by means of which the country influences the minds of the people resisting its power by universalizing that country’s culture.

Culture is the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society. It has many manifestations. It is common to distinguish between high culture such as literature, art, and education, which appeals to elites, and popular culture, which focuses on mass entertainment.

When a country’s culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes because of the relationships of attraction and duty that it creates(11).

Similarly, the culture and the ways of life the mainstream Hindus and Christians were made to seem as superior and ideal to the Adiya of Wayanad. Janu tells us that tribal knowledge systems and lifestyles were undermined and children were taken away to tribal hostels to be educated in modern civilized knowledge and thus initiated into their alienation from their land and people. Initiation into modern ways of living, travelling, and entertainment furthered the alienation to such an extent that most of the tribals instead of protesting exploitation considered it their duty to tag the line of argument of the governments that they were possibly impediments to the economic development of the country.

The political agencies and the Government both tried to influence the behaviour of the Adiya. The Adiya men were given to alcoholism and addiction which made it easy for the developmental agencies to lure them into agreeing to give up their lands, and thus they fell victim to the soft powers of State. When the wildlife sanctuary was built in Mathunga forest, as a part of the Government’s policy of tourism development, the original inhabitants were made to leave the forest, consequently, they were rendered homeless and destitute. The Communist Party of Kerala too, in order to gain political mileage, tried to influence them by attracting them into resistance campaigns and protests impressing upon them that this was the way they would gain back their land in the Mathunga Forest. Janu’s reaction and her struggles against the soft power of the State inform the crisis of existence of these tribal people. In January 2003, the Adiya were mobilized by Janu, occupied a part of the wildlife sanctuary in Mathunga protesting against the government’s failure to honour their commitment to the tribals,

that is, the restoration of land alienated from them for development. Commenting on Janu's endeavour to get back their lost land Sreerekha comments that "These movements see land as the only path towards a long-term survival of the community; as the solution. In today's context, a demand for ownership to land by any marginalised community inevitably faces severe forms of state repression" (56). In the case of the Adiya, the State used power and forcible eviction which resulted in the death of one tribal and injuries to others. It is pertinent to note Stephanie Lawson's argument:

The politics of indigenous identity has become a global phenomenon with numerous groups active at the international level, promoting their claims not just to recognition but to particular rights and interests usually based on prior occupation of territory, asserting a valued way of life associated with the land, and a need to safeguard indigenous heritage for future generations. Particular manifestations of the politics of indigenous identity, however, remain firmly anchored within the realm of individual sovereign states, many of which in fact owe their very existence to the large scale dispossession of the indigenous people. (1)

The large-scale dispossession of the Adiya adivasi from their land pushes their identity into crisis. They are unable to safeguard their home and cultural heritage.

Elen Turner in her essay "An unfinished story: The representation of adivasis in Indian feminist Literature" (2012) points out that the attitude of the colonizers towards the adivasi of India has not undergone much change in the nationalist inclusivist India. She argues that the "Primitivising and romanticising tendencies emerged in colonial era studies of adivasis, which were utilised by the colonial government. Though the British devised elaborate hierarchies of civilisation as a justification for their rule, with adivasis somewhere near the bottom, they also celebrated adivasi nobility, independence, honesty, simplicity, and spontaneity. . . . This spontaneity and simplicity meant they were always in danger of irrationally rebelling against colonial rule and therefore needed to be controlled. . ." (329). Turner discusses Ajay Skaria's comments in this regard and quotes from his opinion in her essay. She writes:

As Ajay Skaria notes, '[t]he knowing mind belonged to the nationalist elite' . . . and the idea that adivasis were the 'younger brothers of the more advanced plains nationalists' was a central theme of Gandhian and nationalist thought The discourse of post-independence Indian governments has not been vastly different. Since at least the 1960s, the emphasis has been on assimilating adivasis so that they become 'developed', as their 'wildness' 'epitomized Indian backwardness; this backwardness had to be overcome and extirpated for the nation to become modern or simply for the nation to become'. . . (329-330)

Mother Forest which narrates the woes of the Adiya adivasi is located in Kerala one of the most literate States of India. This state is heralded as one of the most 'advanced' in India, with almost total literacy and basic living standards on a par with those of the west (Bhaskaran v). Kerala was also one of the first places in the world to democratically elect a Communist government (v). Around 1991 Kerala undertook economic liberalisation with the rest of India. The state's small number of adivasis generally did not benefit from the successes of its alternative route to development (ix). Adivasi lands were encroached

upon and they were exploited as cheap labour.

In the passionate account of her struggle in *Mother Forest*, Janu speaks of her childhood and her life in the forest, and her political awakening as a party worker in the CPM. Her growing disillusionment with it, and her break from it after she felt it had betrayed the tribals. Janu confesses:

Problems specifically related to our people were not discussed much in the Party or the Union. The Party saw us as a vote bank only. Therefore issues related to our agricultural lands or better conditions of life for us hardly found their way into Party circles. The speeches made in the Party classes were not what we could easily understand. They were full of strange words with hidden traps.

They tried their best not to let us speak. (34)

She condemns the atrocities towards tribal girls in the hostels where they are supposed to receive education of the civilized and to adapt to the cultural ways of the mainstream. The CPM Party which used the innocent adivasis to join their rallies and shout slogans that they did not even understand in reality. However, the party merely used, ridiculed, stereotyped, and dehumanized them. The seduction and attraction of the soft power that the CPM of Kerala had over Janu results in her falling into the trap of the Party and betraying the faith of her people. She could not give them back their land. The second half of the book recounts Janu's adult life and her political activity – the more 'public' spheres of her. Her words are pointers to the outcome of soft power used by the State development agencies which have pushed the poor adivasi into further crisis. Janu exposes the crisis when she says that all their people had become mere wage labourers in their own land and "*Mother Forest* had turned into the Departmental Forest. It had barbed wire fences and guards. Our children had begun to be frightened of a forest that could no longer accommodate them. All the land belonged to the migrants" (30).

Conclusion

Janu's *Mother Forest* is a unique story which narrates the angst of the tribal people of the Mutanga forest in Wayanad and subtly exposes the soft power of nationalist, democratic and civilized values used first by migrants who usurped the land of the Adiyas and reduced them to poor indentured labourers and then by the government of India and the political parties of Kerala who tried to lure away the adivasi from their rights over land and indigenous cultural heritage. The Kerala Government's intention of building resorts and artificial tourist sites in Wayanad was the primary reason of the governments concern to rehabilitate the Adiyas in alternative spaces. The children were taken to hostels to be educated in the seductive values of the mainstream like "democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities" (Nye x) such that they became alienated from their own cultural heritage and seemed to want whatever the government wanted. The Adiya's were seduced by the co-optive power of the Government and the political parties. The culture of the "other" seemed attractive to the disposed Adiyas and appeared to be more progressive and alluring. Unfortunately, this set the trap for them and pushed them into crisis. Joseph Nye, as I have already noted, calls this soft power co-optive power and explains that "Co-optive power—the ability to shape what others want—can rest on the attractiveness of one's culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of

political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic” (7). The Adiyas fell prey to popular propaganda that they were impediments to national economic growth and for years accepted the stigma of being outliers willingly.

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Causes and Management in Ravi Thapaliya's *Echoes of Pain*

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Abstract

Morbid human instinct and revenge psychology can lead a person to torture others with massive pain often pushing their lives into post-traumatic stress disorder which, however, can be managed with careful medicinal treatment, family support and elimination of the causes of disorder itself. Based on library research, consulting relevant archived documents supportive for analyzing the novel, this study employs the theory of trauma particularly drawing upon Caruth, Capra, Fish, Albucher and Liberzon who elaborate multiple aspects of the theory including the creation and elimination of psychic disorder. The findings show how a police interrogator tortures the suspects and enjoys at their pain in guidance of his revenge psychology developed years back when he was a street boy. The successful treatment of disorder shows how properly caring and loving the patients instead of creating distance, bringing them under proper treatment instead of isolating them and setting the things in right order instead of overlooking the causes can bring its proper management, thereby bringing the patients' lives into right track and regular rhythm that anybody can implement for managing such disorders.

Keywords: Morbidity, revenge psychology, torture, traumatic experience, psychic disorder

Introduction

Ravi Thapaliya, a Nepali doctor by profession, has surfaced his literary talent through *Echoes of Pain*, an interesting novel he published in 2005 exploring morbid human instinct that seeks causing pain to others as a way to remain oneself at a relatively pain-free state. Although he has created Kafka-like backdrop analogous to *The Trial*, the novel ends surprisingly with a happy note after the grotesque and chaos forwarding a persuasive voice that reconciliation and peace becomes possible even after devastating and destructive conflicts and interactions between human beings.

It is quite interesting to see how a police interrogator takes an innocent school teacher to the interrogation cell and causes massive pain violently beating, scolding, piercing pins into finger nails and enjoys at his pain. It is more interesting to see the way the interrogator fools the judicial system and Human Rights by hiring a doctor, the one who forgets his professional duty and invests all his medical skills into the depth of torturing the suspects and creating massive pain. A doctor is supposed to treat the patients and mitigate their pain quite like the way a police officer is supposed to save people's lives from danger, threat and violence. But the same doctor turns out to be the interrogator as well as the victim at the hands of police interrogator. Like the school teacher, he too becomes meek and feeble, and undergoes the same post-traumatic stress disorder paving way for the novel a tragic end although with an abrupt ending Thapaliya interestingly goes for the reverse stressing on the management of the disorder itself. Relying on both the aspects of post-traumatic stress disorder, this study has attempted to see how the novel relates the morbid human instinct and revenge psychology in the creation of post-traumatic stress disorder, and how its management takes place. It has tried to bring in-depth analysis of the causes and management of post-traumatic stress disorder revolving particularly around the principal characters like Vivas, Agni, Bonza and some others.

Review of Literature

Despite having many years of publication by a Nepali writer writing in the English language, very few criticisms have been published on *Echoes of Pain* leaving many issues to be analyzed and interpreted in the days to come. Of course many readers might have gone through it and observed particularly the way the author, who is a medical doctor by profession, has mixed fictional world with the medical one. Yet there is no sufficient systematic analysis of various issues raised in the text.

One of the reasons for no availability of wide array of literatures on this novel may be similar to what Deepak Adhikari in an interview with the author states, "When I fished out a novel called *Echoes of Pain* from inside Sajha Prakashan's book stall at Bhrikutimandap, Exhibition Road, Kathmandu, it had already gathered few layers of dust" (1). Adhikari's comment can be a vantage point to glimpse on why the novel has not been interpreted and analyzed by many scholars hitherto.

The available comments and criticisms, no matter they are limited, have praised the literary talent of Thapaliya and significance of reading *Echoes of Pain*. Hemang Dixit at the Department of Medical Education at Kathmandu Medical College, for instance, has compared Thapaliya with a celebrated English author Richard Ostlere, a medical doctor whose writing career went so successfully with the pen name 'Richard Gordon' that he finally gave up his medical profession and wrote many books, films and novels. Interpreting this novel valuable similar to Gordon's book on Forensic Medicine entitled *The Final Witness*, Dixit goes on recommending the readers to read it as, "Another book which I have been recommending to many people is "*Echoes of Pain*". ... This book is set in Nepal... and deals with what a Nepali doctor may have gone through during those times" (884). Along with recommending the readers to go through the novel for its worth of replicating the experiences of a medical person during the time of conflict in Nepal,

Dixit too, almost similar to Deepak Adhikari, further says, “I have recommended this book to many but it too may be out of print now, its readership being limited in Nepal” (884). By this Dixit is indicating the possibility that the novel might be limited to the Nepali readers and printed no more editions.

Methodology

This study has been conducted by following what Carolyn Steedman calls ‘archival method’ referring to the research conducted based on consulting the wide array of materials available on physical library to the online sources (18) for the systematic analysis of the issue including the textual analysis of the novel in the light of the theory of trauma.

Trauma refers to the psychological and emotional response to the deeply distressing or disturbing events such as rape, accidents, torture, assault, scandals, catastrophic incidents, economic depression etcetera that particularly lasts for a long period. It can cause the victim to have disordered psyche often resulting into personality disorder, anger, paranoia, sleeplessness, suicidal attempt, irrationality, mood swings, odd rituals, frustration, hopelessness and many more. It, as Cathy Caruth in “Unclaimed Experiences: Trauma and the Possibility of History” defines, is “an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (181). Dealing with such experiences, trauma studies came forth with a renewed interest in 1980s particularly when “the critical perspectives provided by poststructuralism and deconstruction were being accused of not paying sufficient attention to history, politics and ethics” (Craps 5). Referring to the study on reoccurrence of persistent and frightening thoughts and memories of the ordeals, American Psychiatric Association also codified the term ‘Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder’ (PTSD) that “reflects the direct imposition on the mind of the unavoidable reality of horrific events, the taking over of the mind, psychically and neurobiologically, by an event that it cannot control” (Caruth58). The growing interest on trauma can “certainly be mapped by reference to the publication of particular texts that have become seminal within the field” (Radstone 9) such as by the scholars like Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Geoffrey Hartman and Dominick La Capra which led trauma studies to enter the door of Humanities in the early 1990s as one of the most relevant frameworks for literary analysis.

The act of setting things in right order in the self of the traumatized person can resolve the trauma despite the fact that it is really a complicated action. For the treatment of traumatic personality different trauma recovery centers could be found in medical practice. Talking in a similar context, La Capra avers, “The TRC also provided a forum for the voices often the suppressed, repressed or uneasily accompanied voices of certain victims who were being heard for the first time in the public sphere” (696). Capra believes such trauma recovery centers to manage trauma and establish livable human society. Such centers have been practicing different trauma therapies and treatments effectively.

Departure

As an in-depth analysis of the novel in the light of the theory of trauma centering on the way the major characters undergo post-traumatic stress disorder and the way they overcome it, this study has keenly observed both the causes and the elimination of PTSD. Besides adding a new dimension in the analysis of this text, it has attempted to link literary criticism with the practical aspects of medical science particularly the treatment of psychic disorder. As such, it has presented a careful observation on how beautifully the author has amalgamated fiction with fact by bringing together the imaginatively created story and the realistic dimensions of PTSD.

Formation and Elimination of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Fiction with Facts

Echoes of Pain beautifully blends various causes of post-traumatic stress disorder and different strategies undertaken for its treatment including the elimination of causal factors behind such psychic disorder itself. It foregrounds the revenge psychology at the background of the morbid human instinct that motivates to inject pain in others for accumulating the pleasure for oneself as a basic cause of PTSD. Besides extreme torture, the massive fear of similar tragic misfortunes as well as the possibility of being the victim of revenge results into psychic disorder and repetitive occurrence of hallucination causing more disturbances in the lives. However, by exploring how the devotional family care along with proper medical treatment and the changes of enmity into friendship could transform PTSD into normal life, it has shown the resolution of the disorder itself. The novel consists of Bonza, Agni and Vivas as its principal characters. Bonza is a police interrogator running an interrogation cell where the suspects are brought and interrogated. Agni is a doctor at Teaching Hospital but he happens to work for Bonza. Vivas is a music teacher in a private school in Kathmandu who is brought to Bonza's cell for interrogation. The unbearable pain of massive torture makes Vivas suffer from PTSD even after his release. Bonza also traps Agni and uses his medical skills for creating pain in the suspects in the name of interrogation since doing so he gets pleasure. The circumstances not solely shatter Agni's humanity, career and goodness but also make him mad, violent and criminal. Like Vivas, he too suffers from repetitive nightmares and psychic disorder until the final resolution comes along with the management of the disorder.

Revenge Psychology and Morbid Human Instinct

The novel is set at the background of the pro-democracy era when monarchy was ruling through Panchayat political system. The king was all in all and nobody was supposed to question the royal family. Armed forces were suppressing people's voices. Bonza represents the bi-product of that rule. He can take the suspect in the cell and torture in the name of interrogation. Although his cell is the part of police investigation, he is making it a site of taking revenge with the whole humanity. His parents died of cholera in a village when he was just two years old. Later on, he came to Kathmandu, became a street boy and suffered great pain that developed his anger towards the society as narrated by himself in the novel:

I was a street-child. You know, people call them *khaate*. ... We just roamed the Kathmandu streets scavenging for food. The summers were ok. ... But the

coldness of winter reached everywhere. It was hard. But with so many stray dogs around, we slept OK embracing them which gave us enough warmth to live through the nights. The municipality people played the villain. They poisoned the street dogs from time to time. They still do it. That's bloody cruel. (332)

As clarified by Bonza's statement, the experience of growing up as a street boy and receiving massive suffering developed his hatred towards people as villain, thereby setting up his mind to take revenge which he materialized as a police interrogator. He began to create pains in others and get pleasure as he further narrates, "In my case, it was to put others in physical or mental pain so that I could be in pleasure, Right?... I didn't bother to see if they were criminals or not. As long as I could hurt them, I would take them for interrogation. If I didn't have a case, I wouldn't sleep" (334). To search the suspects and enjoy torturing became his daily routine often fooling the judicial system and Human Rights by hiring Agni, a doctor and interpreting it an interrogation.

Bonza's desire for revenge further activated his morbid human instinct that pleased him to see pain in the suspects. He also made Agni interrogating and torturing Vivas by developing the sense of revenge in Angi saying that Vivas was the bank robber. Agni remembered that his wife lost her job in a bank when it was robbed. She was covered by a robber and was under the nozzle of his gun. Agni thought Vivas to be that robber and decided to take revenge. So, he created massive pain by injecting pins into Vivas's fingers, tortured by using the torture gadgets as well as giving electric currents, and beat violently as the narrator narrates in the novel, "Agni became morbidly fixated on Vivas. He wouldn't hesitate to do things like beating him up randomly, kicking him, and using the torture gadgets that Bonza had accumulated" (110). Massive beating and torture made two holes into Vivas's guts. Agni conducted the quick operation with the assistance of Bonza, Sirdar and other guards to save Vivas out of his desire to further torture and take revenge. He got more confidence in torturing thinking that he could go to any length of interrogation since he could save the patient.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Vivas

Vivas was arrested when he was going to his school only because he muttered something when a police van nearly hit him. He was taken to local police station and then to Godavari police headquarter and finally to Bonza's cell. In the cell Bonza, Agni and other interrogators tortured him.

Disappearance of Vivas disappointed his wife Preetishma and relatives. She went into the depth of pain and suffering, left her office and lived a deserted life. She searched him everywhere in support of her maternal uncle. She visited police station, requested Human Rights, consulted *Sadhu Maharaj* and prayed the gods and goddesses. When Vivas was released on 17th of Jestha of 2046 her happiness knew no bounds although the problem increased due to his psychic disorder called post-traumatic stress disorder. He suffered from various features of PTSD in the line of Caruth's definition as stated in her introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* as:

While the precise definition of post-traumatic stress disorder is contested, most descriptions generally agree that there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive

hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event. (4) Similar to Caruth's definition, Vivas suffered from PTSD as evident in the nightmarish dreams, repeated thoughts and images of how pins were inserted into his fingers, sleeplessness, paranoia, feeling of insecurity, trembling hands, forgetfulness of the notations and tune of guitar, and excessively restlessness.

The disturbed mental condition of Vivas made him to mistrust his own wife and develop suspicion in her character. Feeling similarity in the eyebrows of his son and the doctor, he said, "Look, I've always had this thing in my mind. He looks like the doctor, doesn't he?...Everything else is fine...but tell me why he looks like the doctor? Is he the doctor's son?" (305). The suspicion that Preetishma might have developed extramarital relationship with the doctor, and Sarbon could be his son made her cracked. She decided to commit suicide as narrated in the novel, "Preetishma wanted to die. There was no point in living now. ...She washed her face and went out. She had a tough time buying Metacid. Just a quarter of bottle would be enough. But a full bottle would make it certain" (307). Vivas's madness due to the traumatic experience of the cell did not let him act, think and behave properly such as his blame on her character without any logical reasoning.

Preetishma, however, realized that her husband suspected her out of his post-traumatic stress disorder. Her uncle's complaint of feeling pain in his imputed leg also gave her a realization that she could feel pain and suffering even after her death just as her uncle did even though his leg was cut off. She felt that it would be more tragic if her 'I' remained there without body as she would be unable to do anything to her helpless husband and her son. She returned back from her decision.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Agni

Like Vivas, interrogation cell changed Agni's life too. He became a drunkard regularly going to *bhatti* for drinking, going home late and becoming reckless towards his spouse and daughter. Interrogation at Bonza's cell brought money home but what was earned was poverty in the kitchen. His earlier realization of 'money does the same thing no matter how it comes' as well as 'nobody believes in poor man's philosophy of simple living' turned out to be wrong. A huge turning point came in his small family and he became hysterical as well as mentally ill.

Bonza's decision of releasing Vivas developed the sense of fear in him. He feared that Vivas could take revenge. Thus, he wanted to keep Vivas in the cell for more days and said, "I don't think we should release him" (193). But Bonza did not accept it. Agni became more restless when he knew how Bonza fooled him about Vivas's involvement in bank robbery.

Agni felt that his wife Rita too was also against him since she had brought Preetishma home. He also blamed her for giving secret information to DD, a doctor in Nepal Government's Hospital and a leader in Nepal Medical Association and close friend of Agni as well. DD tried his best to take Agni out of Bonza's trap but Agni suspected the same gentle man. He also blamed DD for conspiring against him and suspected his

involvement in the decision of the council to deregister him. His increasing madness made his becoming violent at DD. He shared his problem with Bonza but it turned out to be conflict and fight. After being beaten by Bonza, he went to the Council, got his name deregistered, faxed the letter to the press and returned home as failure, weak, insane and terrified man.

The cell turned Agni's life a miserable being. He failed even to defend himself when the landlady's son called him criminal and threw all his belongings all over the yard ordering him to vacate the room. He found problem, insecurity and conspiracy everywhere, and developed fear, sleeplessness, paranoia and nightmares. All the events and incidents of the cell began constantly coming into his mind. Rita tried to make him sleep in her lap but he woke soon dreaming about Bonza, Sirdar, Vivas and many others skilled in the cell and the custody. Narrating such a pathetic condition of this doctor, the narrator avers:

Night came that day too. It brought with it more memories of the past. ...
Bonza and Vivas frightened him time to time. He didn't sleep deeply but he still dreamed. He saw them every time he dreamed. He was frightened that Vivas would recognize him outside. And those medical professionals were set to expose him. Then he would be safe nowhere. (208)

The excerpt gives a much clearer picture of how Agni's restlessness increased often waking at night in hallucinatory state listening the sound calling him 'doctor'. He suffered from his sleep, half-sleep, dream, sound of the dead and such other many things. He became the victim of post-traumatic stress disorder just as his victim Vivas Thapa.

Actually, trauma narratives tend to show a particular set of stylistic features which replicate the fragmented psyche of the characters. Anne Whitehead states that "novelists have frequently found that the impact of trauma can only adequately be represented by mimicking its forms and symptoms, so that temporality and chronology collapse, and narratives are characterized by repetition and indirection" (3). Whitehead believes on representing the traumatic reality by mimicking the forms and symptoms of the trauma itself. So, she believes that "if trauma fiction is effective, it cannot avoid registering the shocking and inassimilable nature of its subject matter in formal terms" (83). She also argues that the effective trauma narrative have the characteristic features intertextuality, repetition [at the levels of language, imagery or plot] and a dispersed or fragmented narrative voice. *Echoes of Pain* consists of such features in terms of nightmarish dreams, flashbacks, repetitions, and intrusive memories, thereby giving the proof that Thapaliya drew his principal characters like Vivas and Agni as the victims of a traumatized psychological condition.

Agni was disturbed in terms of every aspect of life. The image of the cell, fear of Bonza and Vivas and deregistration gave him unbearable torture. He was ruined without any means of living and thus wept, cried almost as a child and as a mad man. He dreamed about torturing DD in the cell, DD's death, Bonza asking him to certify DD's death due to cholera, signing many certificates without any name and many more things.

Rita shifted her family in a rented room in Khokna assuming Agni to be normal but in vain. Instead he developed hallucination and felt Bonza and Vivas torturing him. Although it was his illusion, he perceived the things as real quite like what William

Fish in the book *Perception, Hallucination, and Illusion* states, “In hallucination, we are in a state that seems to us just like a veridical perception of a worldly fact or facts, yet in which there are no suitable facts for the hallucinatory state to acquaint us with” (Fish 80). Agni’s hallucination led him buying a knife to defend himself from Vivas, Bonza and Sirdar. Carrying the knife, he tried to go out. When Rita attempted to stop him, he stabbed her and said, “Ritu, I hope I’m your last disaster. Last pain” (296). Rita was stabbed time and again by her own husband for whom she did everything being devotional.

Setting the Things into Right Order: Management of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The scholars of trauma theory argue that setting the things into right order can resolve PTSD. They argue for different trauma therapy to heal the patients from emotional and psychological trauma and make them learn to feel safe again. Thapaliya experimentsthe same thing on his fictional characters Vivas and Agni regarding the management of the post-traumatic stress disorder with positive results and conclusion.

Besides taking proper care with spouse’s love, Preetishma took her husband to the hospital for treatment under the supervision of Dr. Thapa. The medicinal treatment and doctor’s counseling brought Vivas in normal condition that justifies the success of curing PTSD with medication often reiterating what Ronald C. Albucher and Israel Liberzon at the University of Michigan in a paper “Psychopharmacological Treatment in PTSD: A Critical Review” state, “Numerous medications are effective in treating PTSD. These include tricyclic antidepressants, monoamine oxidase inhibitors, and serotonin reuptake inhibitors” (355). The proper treatment brought Vivas to be able to join his school, earn money by writing articles and help his family members conduct their regular task.

Like Vivas, Agni too went hospital for treatment under the supervision of Dr. Thapa with great success. Despite being stabbed, Rita too survived and poured her love for Agni’s treatment. They got normal life. There was another important thing behind the proper cure of Vivas and Agni. Vivas forgave Agni and Bonza. Forgiveness does have a great value in human life. Steen Halling aptly said, “Forgiving another and forgiving oneself are both experiences that bring relief and a sense of a new beginning in life” (107). Going ahead in the line of Halling’s argument, Vivas developed friendship with Agni that mitigated their pain, brought relief and slowly redeemed from PTSD. Preetishma and Rita had already become close friends. Their friendship resulted into family gathering. Comfortable relationship got developed between two families wiping out the state of paranoia.

To set the things into right order, it was essential to make good relationship with Bonza. Agni inquired about Bonza and found Bonza as Bodh Ram. His interrogation cell had already been turned into local government office. Agni and Vivas went to his house in Sallaghari and found Bodh Ram as old, weak, simple and greatly changed like his name. He was no more awesome with the realization that an echo of pain is also a pain but not pleasure. He happily welcomed Vivas and Agni who had already forgiven him. Accepting his friendly relation and invitation for dinner, they took their families for dinner and curiously listened his narration about his life and profession. Being able to tell his stories

to Vivas and Agni, he felt satisfied while they too became happy to know how he had become social often giving all his property to a social organization. More than this, he had convinced Medical Council to reregister Agni. They felt light and fresh to be able to surpass the obstacles of their lives. Preetishma and Rita felt great relief to find their husbands normal and out of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Conclusion

By presenting the major characters in a trap of a police interrogator, who is guided by his revenge psychology massively torturing the suspects so as to get pleasure by seeing their pain, the novel exposes the morbid human instinct as a source of the traumatic experience. Dreadful experiences and the fear of uncertain future filled with the possibility of similar tragic happenings again and again result into post-traumatic stress disorder. Even after the end of torture and real event, the psychic disorder brings nightmarish experiences, hallucination, madness and depression. However, they overcome the tragedy and change the psychic disorder into a normal mental condition for a better life bringing everything to its regular tune. Unfathomable love of family members along with appropriate medical treatment mitigates the terror and depressive mindset. Elimination of the causes of disorder eliminates the disorder itself, thereby justifying how the management of post-traumatic stress disorder can take place surpassing the long period of nightmare and suffering. The people or the family undergoing similar circumstances could assimilate the practice and bring PTSD management in their lives.

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